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THE AMERICAN DREAM, A SEGREGATIONIST SOCIAL FABRIC IN
BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME BY TA-NEHISI COATES

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ABSTRACT

This work addresses the theme of the American Dream critically in the book *Between the World and Me* written by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Better, through the lens of critical race theory, it aims to challenge the traditional idea of the American Dream by highlighting the racial inequalities and complex realities faced by African Americans. The analysis has led to the presentation of the American Dream as a biased concept that has historically excluded African Americans and been built on exploitation and oppression. It highlights the systemic violence, structural racism and injustices that have been inflicted on the black community throughout US history. While emphasizing that the idea of the American Dream is a myth that fails to take into account the experiences of African Americans, the analysis highlights racial disparities and concludes that, for many African Americans, the American Dream remains out of reach due to systemic barriers.

Keywords: American Dream, racial inequality, systemic violence, structural racism

Introduction

At the core of Ta-Nehisi Coates' poignant work, *Between the World and Me*, resonate the echoes of an America shaped by the enigmatic and often contested dream: The American Dream. However, through the pages of this deeply personal narrative, Coates unveils another aspect of American reality, highlighting a social fabric marked by segregation. By exploring the experiences of African Americans and delving into the depths of history, the author calls into question the universal viability of the American Dream, revealing the invisible threads of a system that has often denied its promises to members of the Black community. Using the Critical Race Theory that seeks both to understand how white supremacy as a legal and political condition is maintained in the United States context and to show that Race is invented to oppress people of color and how the Law and the legal institution in the United States are inherently racist insofar, this study will delve into the pages of the work, revealing

the complexity of the American Dream in a context of segregated social tissue, highlighting the often omitted realities of American history and the persistent consequences for the quest for equality. To carry out this study, this work will be structured around three axes, the first of which will be to carry out this study, this work will be structured around three axes, the first of which is to decipher the myth of the American Dream. Then, it will show how African American's Prevailing fear could represent an impediment to the American Dream and finally show the extent to which Dreamers' obsession with achieving the American Dream ends up harming other communities living on American soil.

1. The Mythical American Dream

The traditional idea of the American Dream stems from a widely held and cherished belief that in the United States, every individual has the opportunity to succeed and prosper through hard work, determination and personal merit. Some of the essentials of the American Dream involve upward mobility, equality of opportunity, individual freedom and the pursuit of happiness.

Historically, the American Dream has often been associated with the idea of upward social mobility, where someone can start from any social background and, through hard work, achieve a higher status. The accumulation of wealth, home ownership, education and the possibility of improving one's economic situation are often seen as components of this Dream. This idea of the American Dream has been reinforced through literature, popular culture and political discourse, reflecting the image of a nation where obstacles are surmountable and everyone can achieve their aspirations. However, it is important to point out that the fulfillment of the American Dream has not been consistent for all individuals, and critics have sprung up underscoring persistent inequalities based on race, class and other factors. Some authors, notably Ta-Nehisi Coates, argue that the American Dream may be harder to achieve for certain communities due to systemic and structural barriers.

Indeed, Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me* does not celebrate the traditional idea of the American Dream, but challenges and critiques it, especially from the perspective of African American in the United States. Coates explores the reality of the Black experience in America, highlighting the systemic injustices, structural racism and violence that persist in American society. In the book, he addresses the concept of the "American Dream" as a social construct that has often excluded African Americans. He highlights how the idea of upward mobility based on hard work and meritocracy is often unattainable for Blacks due to systemic barriers and the legacy of slavery and segregation. He challenges the notion that America is a land of equal opportunity for all as promised by the beautiful words of the Declaration of Independence (Lark 154).

The enslaved black people were off-stage of the American creed and they acted in the background, in plantations. It seemed the freedom and pursuit of happiness did not concern Blacks, rather concerned White people only. And many people ranging from white communities did support these statements to justify white oppression toward black people in the United States. For instance, according to the Democrat Stephen Douglass, "in speaking of equality, the Founding Fathers were talking about equality among white people; they meant British subjects in England; and Negroes had nothing to do with it" (Cullen 144). As such, black people in America were held as slaves and worked hard in cotton, sugar, tobacco plantations. Ta-Nehisi Coates comments this bitter experience which was a serious hardship time for black people in the United States. He did declare in the book, "The soul was the body that fed the tobacco, and the spirit was the blood that watered the cotton, and these created the first fruits of the American garden" (104). Through, this assertion of Ta-Nehisi Coates, it is clear that African Americans were working hard in the cotton and tobacco plantations so that to satisfy their White masters. And their hardworking and too many efforts were the source of the very foundation of American wealth because the cotton and tobacco was the first exportation products in the United States.

In the South of the country, Black people were the source of wealth and notoriety for white people. Slavery institution was developed and the economic was totally slavery-based. So, to have an upwardly mobility in the society, White master resorted to whatever means through bondage practice in order to comfort their economic possession and welfare. As such, the slaves' social situation was characterized by their labor. They were reduced to the status of beasts which were useful only in farm work. Most of them were used in agriculture and occupation relation to it. A census made in 1850 revealed 2, 5 million of slaves were employed in agriculture. Their hard work for the White produced huge sum of money for white masters after each cropping season. For instance, an investigation made during the same year proves that 1.8 million of enslaved black people were producing cotton. These slaves were producing over two billion pounds of cotton per year. Cotton was then an important economic product for White masters in that it brought extraordinary money (Kendi 257). This can be the reason why by the time of the Civil War, South Carolina politician James Henry Hammond confidently proclaimed that the North could never threaten the South because "Cotton is the king". Through this declaration of the Senator, we understand clearly that enslaved Black people were perceived by white masters as machines or devices which were generating important money to their economic wallets. In others, the upward mobility, success, prosperity or the achievement of American Dream of White masters was rested on the hard work and determination of the enslaved Black people; hence the use of the term "cotton is the king".

Furthermore, this group of words implies above all the American Dream as an ideology sustaining a capitalistic interest from a Marxist perspective. Indeed, for Marxism advocators, the world is engaged in a permanent struggle of classes involving the Bourgeois, owner of the means of production and the Proletarian, the working class, the oppressed people. This approach of the society stratified into antagonistic classes can be correlated with the clashes that occurred between the White Americans and Black Americans. Whites are synonymous with the Bourgeois, while the Black people are the equivalent of the Proletarian and oppressed by Whites through Slavery institution. this one keeps Blacks out of American Dream as depicted by Ta-Nehisi Coates:

For the men who needed to believe themselves whites, the bodies were the key to a social club, and the right to break the bodies was mark of civilization. Two great divisions of society are not the rich and poor, but white and black" said the great South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun – the soul was the body that fed the tobacco, and the spirit was the blood that watered the cotton, and these created the first fruits of the American garden. And the fruits were secured through the bashing of children with stove wood, through hot iron peeling sky away like husk corn. (104)

Ta-Nehisi Coates used the comments of the Senator John C to emphasize the fact that Blacks were the source or backdrop of Whites' wealth and wellbeing through their hard work on the plantations or fields. They did make American Dream possible for whites in that they were making considerable money and gaining the happiness promised in the Declaration of Independence. A declaration which promotes the idea that all the people living in the country had to participate in the process of the nation ruling. All the people irrespective of race were normally also the owner of the country. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

African Americans have been kept out of the rights to vote. The different states especially those from the South passed laws in order to impede African Americans in taking part in the process of electing officials and representatives. Even when it was logical and normal for Black people after the Civil War in 1865, White Americans passed more severe laws to prevent African American from voting. They initiated Literacy tests to make their staying away effective. African American whose population suffered a high rate of illiteracy due to the centuries of oppression and poverty made it difficult for them to pass the Literacy tests. Then, they were told by the election officials that they possessed insufficient literary skills to poll (Ligon 282).

In addition to that, many states from the southern parts of the country passed taxes for African American who wished to vote. Since many African Americans were kept out or deprived of their hard work fruits, it was not easy for them to vote. As such, this kind of attitude was then at variance with “the sovereignty of people” in the sense that it promoted only the sovereignty of a people; the White people. Ta-Nehisi Coates confirms these statements in the narrative when telling how White Americans mis-interpret the true meaning of democracy. He believes that the government by people promised by Lincoln was not really sincere one vis-à-vis African Americans. In declaring this in 1863, Lincoln meant government for White Americans; other people were not concerned by this promise. Ta-Nehisi Coates argues in the book, “The question is not whether Lincoln truly meant “government of the people, our country has throughout its history taken the political term “people” to actually mean black and white. In 1863, it did not your mother or grandmother, and it did not mean you and me. ” (6)

Furthermore, the democracy promoted by White Americans in the United States had nothing to with the ideals stated in this declaration of the scholar Diane Ravitch. For the latter, a democracy operates with in accordance with a constitution that limits the powers of the government and guarantees fundamental rights to all citizens. But that was never the case for African Americans in the United States. African Americans were deprived of their human rights. Concerning that, Ta-Nehisi Coates believes America has made Racism a belief; national ideal that people who believe in the Dream have to cherish. He wrote, “Americans believe in the reality of “race” as a defined indubitable feature of the natural world –Racism- the need to ascribe bone-deep features to people and then humiliate, reduce, and destroy them” (7). He also states, reacting on the Emancipation Proclamation issued by the President Lincoln, that “When the Founding Fathers were saying all men are created equal, they were talking about equality between White Americans between the British; it has nothing to do with the Negroes.” (9)

Ta-Nehisi Coates purports that this White concept of American democracy is a lie because the slaves, his grandparents were disregarded and not counted as human being. In other words, White American democracy did not consider African Americans as people to be protected but rather as beasts, barbarian, and primitive which struggled to be like human beings. After analyzing White obsession with the American Dream, Ta-Nehisi Coates believes that that Dream is a myth or a total disappointment for people of color. American Dream is a mirage for Black people in that White American legacy made it difficult to attain it. The severe oppression that African American underwent from White Americans has created a considerable wealth disparity between Americans. Today this is perpetuated through the system of inheritance between families. Thus, American Dream is a lie according to Ta-Nehisi Coates because it was made and facilitated for just a category of people and other people were concerned. This is true today in that many million White Americans do float easily on the tide of American’s fantastic wealth while others are still crippling at the bottom line or suffering from squalor.

Here, we should understand that while for some so-called minority communities, notably African Americans, the realization of the American Dream seems utopian, for White Americans it is an obsession. Obsession that should be seen as an unhealthy interest in something or worrying about something, which stops you from thinking about anything else. In other words, American Dream is for White Americans the greatest thing that whoever wants to have or achieve in the United States; it is the only thing that matters in life. So, no matter how they proceed to achieve it, the only thing that matters is the achievement of it.

2. African American’s Prevailing Fear, An Impediment to The American Dream

Fear can be a significant brake for African Americans in fulfilling the American Dream due to a variety of factors, often linked to historical experiences, systemic discrimination, and persistent

inequalities. In such a context, fear of discrimination because of skin color can discourage African Americans from pursuing certain opportunities, whether in employment, housing or other areas of life. Also, fear of racial violence and police brutality affects African Americans' confidence in their personal safety. This anxiety, stemming from the history of segregation, slavery and other forms of racial injustice, is as much a brake on geographic mobility and the exploration of opportunities as distrust of institutions.

This suspicion deters some African Americans from fully engaging with institutions that are perceived as potentially discriminatory in that economic and educational inequalities persist, and the fear of not having equitable access to these resources hinders the pursuit of the American Dream. Exposure to racial discrimination has negative psychological effects such as racial stress, anxiety and depression. These factors can undoubtedly act as barriers to the realization of the American Dream, impacting mental health and overall well-being (Jim 125).

Significantly, these barriers are not inherent to the black community, but often result from systemic structures and specific historical experiences. However, African American intelligia is unanimous in saying that fear remains manifest in Black experience. Whether historical or contemporary, two main factors account for the obdurate fear of African Americans: lack of security and no justice or protective justice.

For the former, we could read throughout *Between the World and Me* that the notion of lack security for African American in the United States is arguably recurrent. For Ta-Nehisi Coates, firstly being African American in the United States means being in a constant state of fear for losing one's body. In fact, Ta-Nehisi Coates represents or portrays the insecurity that threatens African American in today's America based on his own experience when he was young. When growing up in West Baltimore, Ta-Nehisi Coates feared the streets he would cross to get to school, go downtown and come back. The neighborhoods were very violent and he or everyone else was in perpetual fear for his body in that it could be taken from him or her at any time by people who believe to be White. He firstly truly understands this when he had a clash with a boy in the neighborhoods. That boy with the small eyes as Ta-Nehisi Coates describes him pulled out a gun from his ski jacket and brandished it on him. He untucked, tucked, and then untucked once more. He did not finally shoot Ta-Nehisi Coates because his friends impeded him to do so. That particular moment represented a threat and great danger for Ta-Nehisi Coates's life. At that moment, Ta-Nehisi Coates viewed the destruction of his body coming true. He wrote in this context in the narrative, "In his small eyes, I saw a surging rage that could, in an instant erase my body—I myself to be drowning in the reports of murder" (19). Likewise concerning the destruction of black body, Coates believes that the long-standing oppression in the past still affected black people economically. So, to survive, some of these people decided to eradicate these fears through the use of violence. In speaking of this strenuous violence that prevails in Black communities, Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote, "The streets transform every ordinary day into series of trick questions and every incorrect answer risks a beating, a shooting or a pregnancy – this is what the rappers mean when they pronounce themselves addicted to "streets" or in love with "the game". (22)

These very people who have transformed their fears into beating, killing, and shooting were a great danger for Ta-Nehisi Coates's body because he could be victim of their rage at any time. He believes as he describes these people as crews which could break jaws, stomp faces, and shoot down to feel a sense of security and power (23). This violence was absolutely a bitter phenomenon in the neighborhoods where Ta-Nehisi Coates lived. Thus, to survive the African Americans had to learn how to defend themselves.

In his childhood in west Baltimore, the learning of the streets' language was instrumental in preventing the gangs or people addicted to the streets to destroy his body. In order to survive, Ta-

Nehisi Ta-Nehisi Coates practiced the culture of the street and knew even better these laws than his lessons because this new form of learning was essential and played a significant part to the preservation of his body. Ta-Nehisi Coates decided to learn who to smile at, which neighborhood he should go or block he should go to, who he should greet, and who he should have friendship with in order to stay alive.

Secondly, police brutality against Black people is a recurring phenomenon that frames Ta-Nehisi Coates's fears of losing his body in American society. Indeed, for him, this brutality as an extension of racist ideology that has existed since the founding of the United States of America is something that endangers black bodies in today's America. In other words, there's an extreme and structural violence from police officers that targets African American in the United States every. This does affect the physical safety as well as health of people of color, creating a kind of generational trauma in which children are brought up to be fearful of the police.

Thirdly, the insecurity that threatens Black people lives in the United States is visible through the fears black parents have for their offspring's safety. Indeed, Ta-Nehisi Coates is a good example of these parents. He feels a constant for the life of Samori in that it can be taken away anytime and he could not save him from it. He believes that America is a system in which being black does not matter for people who believe in race. So, the destruction of black body is seen as something logical and normal for these people. This is the reason why African American are always reported in murders cases as victims. In this context, Ta-Nehisi Coates tells his son the truth about what America expects for him as a black man. He talks to him with these fearful words, "Here is what I would like you to know: In America it is traditional destroy the Black. It is heritage" (103). Through these weight words full of truth, Ta-Nehisi Coates alerts his son that the pillaging, killing, torture, rape, lynching, humiliation, beating, looting, and dehumanization are not over in today's America. They are far from ending in that police perpetuate American legacy in taking away innocent lives; blacks' lives.

To back up his claims, Ta-Nehisi Coates mentions the cases of Eric Garner. He states that the most important thing Samori should bear in mind is that the officer who took Eric Garner's life away carried with him that day the power of the American State and the belief that black bodies should be destroyed every year in order to conjure the Dream. This was evident with the death of Trayvor Martin and many other innocent black men.

As far as the lack of justice or protection of the African American is concerned, Ta-Nehisi Coates's work reveals that America is a country where justice does encourage the destruction of black bodies by the people who believe in race construction. In other words, law enforcement agencies in the United States make no proper efforts to enforce the Law when police officers take African Americans' lives away. Indeed, Ta-Nehisi Coates recalls the dramatic case of a Black American whom the death shocked his son Samori when he was young. In fact, that was case that of Michael Brown. According to the channel AP News which has given a timeline of events in that shooting in August 19, 2019, Michael Brown and his friend were walking in the middle of canfield Drive, a two-lane street in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, Missouri when a police officer drove by and told them to use the sidewalk. After, words were exchanged stating that Brown was known as suspect in cigarillos burglary affair. The White officer confronted the 18-year-old Brown who was Black. The situation escalated, with the officer and Brown scuffling. The officer shot and killed, who was unarmed Brown's bloodied body remained in the street for four hours in the summer heat. People in the neighborhood later lashed out at police, saying they mistreated the body of the poor Michael Brown. Then people started a huge protest to show their discontent with this racialized killing. The FBI opened thus an investigation, and two men who said they saw the shooting told the reporters that Brown had his hands raised when the officer fired him repeatedly. That night, police in riot geared fire tear gas and rubber bullets to try to disperse the crowd of protesters. Then, a grand jury was called and given extensive evidence from Robert Mc

Cullohch, the St Louis County Prosecutor. On November 2014, the jury announced that it had decided not to indict the killer of Michael Brown who was known as Wilson.

About this racialized killing of a poor Black, Ta-Nehisi Coates recalls in the book how it hurt son emotionally. In paraphrasing Ta-Nehisi Coates, when this happened, Samori expected there should be a punishment for the white racist who took Brown's life away. But when they announced that there would be no punishment for the killer, he became sad and started crying though, he did not personally know Brown. Although, he was crying his father Ta-Nehisi Coates did not comfort him because he knew that this was not a new phenomenon in the United States of America. African Americans throughout their passage in America have always undergone this kind of injustice from Law Enforcement Agencies or American justice. In other words, Ta-Nehisi Coates believed that it should be wrong if he comforts Samori because that was something created to be perpetual. It would not be "Ok" one day; innocent African Americans should continue dying from police and the very American justice should continue doing its utmost not to recognize the murderers as responsible.

It is obvious that there is no truly protective justice vis-a-vis African American citizens in the United States. This situation encourages then police officers to continue their unfair killing since Justice turns blind eye on their actions. Likewise, Ta-Nehisi Coates presents America to his son as a nation which exercises injustice over African American citizens based on the killing of his friend Prince Jones. Indeed, Princes Jones was a classmate and good friend of Ta-Nehisi Coates. He attended private schools as a boy and was a very hardworking student. One day while in road to visit his fiancée Prince was gun down by a police officer who according to his understanding Prince run him over with his car. The officer was then charged with nothing and went back to his duty. However, weeks passed and one day it was revealed that the police officer who had taken Prince Jones's life away was known to be dishonest and incompetent, and that he had killed Prince on false pretext. Though the authorities found this information about the killer, he received no punishment from law enforcement agencies or criminal justice. Consequently, about this death of Prince Jones and the fact that the killer did not receive any punishment or indictment from the competent authorities, Ta-Nehisi Coates would say to his son the truth about justice in America:

They sent the killer of Prince Jones back to his work because he was not a killer at all. He was a force of nature, the helpless agent of our world's physical laws – the police departments of your country have been endowed with the authority to destroy your body. The destroyers are merely enforcing the whims of our country and interpreting his legacy. (83)

Throughout these bitter and painful words, we clearly infer that African Americans are not truly protected by the American criminal justice. This is the reason why the police officer who killed Prince Jones was returned back to his usual duty instead of being in jail. The killer was expressing what the United States of America has always stand for and defend; the pillaging, lynching, torture, beating, scorching shoulders, mangling kidneys, livers, and lungs, dehumanization of black bodies.

As such, this predicament of injustice puts African Americans in a constant state of fear in that these folks are being destroyed and the Justice that is supposed to protect them encourages rather the destroyers in their actions. It also makes people from African American community to think that they are into a kind of trap where they cannot escape from the danger and pain.

This predicament of injustice is also symptomatic of the reality that White Americans believe in the construction of race as a way to oppress and subjugated people of color, then express their supremacy as a superior race to the others races existing on the earth. They express this belief based on the heritage and legacy of America. Indeed, throughout its past, America has always believed in the construction of Race as something instrumental in organizing and construct their beloved country. This

is the reason why throughout their history, they oppressed African Americans with discrimination or racist laws supported and voted by justice systems. Unfortunately, this continues today; White Americans or the Dreamers as called by Ta-Nehisi Coates are still practicing this visceral racism on African American citizens and the justice is still implicitly supporting it. This view is shared by Ta-Nehisi Coates who believes that the Dreamers believe in Race as they believe in their God or that Americans believe in Race as a God given. He wrote in this context, "Americans believe in the reality of "race" as a defined, indubitable feature of the natural world. Racism – the need to ascribe bone-deep features to people and then humiliate, reduce, and destroy them – inevitably follows from this inalterable condition." (7)

Actually White Americans have created unfounded stereotypes in which they unfairly perceive and portray African Americans as criminals or violent, thus making the violence against them seem justified or even necessary. African Americans have been and are still targeted by a constant threat of destruction of their body by police or racists in the United States. They constantly fear the lack of security that prevails in black communities. This fear has become more corrosive with the justice that partakes in encouraging implicitly African Americans' oppression by America, which in turn would exclude them from the Dream that carries the same name.

3. The American Dream, A Malicious Obsession of Dreamers

The American Dream, which suggests that every individual in the United States has the opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through personal effort and determination, has often been questioned in terms of its accessibility to African Americans. They have long lived in a climate of fear, deliberately created by systemic racism. This racism remains dependent on factors such as racial segregation, systemic discrimination, redlining policies, economic disparities between Blacks and Whites, police violence and injustice.

For centuries, African Americans have been subjected to slavery, followed by racial segregation and systemic discrimination. These historical factors created structural inequalities that have an ongoing impact on opportunities and access to resources. Redlining policies, which involved denying loans or financial services in certain areas based on ethnic composition, had a significant impact on the ability of African Americans to access property and wealth. Persistent racial segregation in many areas also contributed to the creation of disadvantaged neighborhoods. Despite significant progress, African Americans tend to have lower average incomes, more limited access to quality education and fewer opportunities for economic mobility. Systemic discrimination continues to affect African Americans in areas such as education, employment and the justice system. Practices such as racial profiling, wage disparities and disproportionate incarceration rates contribute to maintaining deep-seated inequalities (Rothstein 91). Cases of police violence against African Americans underscore the existence of persistent racial discrimination and can discourage confidence in the system. The convergence of all these factors is explained by the obsession with what Ta-Nehisi Coates calls the Dreamers or the Whiteness. In American Past, the Dreamers as Ta-Nehisi Coates calls them used slavery in order to build their economic Wall.

Remember that for Ta-Nehisi Coates, American Dream is something more than achieving just upward mobility and comfortable lifestyle. It includes also notoriety, exceptionality, and fame for America and its citizens. In order to have or achieve these ideals, White Americans did oppress other humans. He recounts this fact of White Americans who in regards with their Dream use African American against their will to build their economic sector, then notoriety in the world. He wrote, "White America's progress or rather the progress of those who believe that they are White was built on looting and violence" (6). White people have no respect for the quintessential American dream as enshrined in the LONGMAN Dictionary of Contemporary English. In this dictionary, American Dream

is an ideal or ethos according to which anyone regardless of where they were born or what class they were born into, can attain their own version of success in a society in which upward mobility is possible for everyone. In other words, the opportunity for prosperity and success for the family and children is achieved through hard work or determination.

History reveals that White American pioneers did not subscribe to this definition of the American Dream. For these Founding fathers of America thought, they got a special history and were special people. They were convinced that their exceptionalism was something will by the holy Providence. As such, they should be looked as a model nation within other countries of the world. Since it was so, they could do anything in order to succeed in life and become a great nation. This predicament is fully expressed in the declaration of Merk and Lois Bannister, "Our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given to us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us " (214). By providence, these pioneers mean God. In their minds, god has given them the power to possess this America and to dominate over everything in it, even the power to subjugate other communities and treat them as if they were subhuman.

So, enslaved Black people is part of the rights conferred on them by god, they also oppressed severely the Native Americans. Regarding the latter, to make a brief incursion into the history of this people, the true owners of the land, we could say that in 1830 Andrew Jackson as the president of the United States initiated the Indian Removal Act. This Law forced Native Americans to leave the land they had lived for many years to go to a place called Indian Territory, now state of Oklahoma. In their journey, many of them died. For example, of 1,500 Choctaws, who started the trip west in November of 1831, only about 9000 arrived in Indian Territory. As for the Seminole, they refused to move, resulting in a long war that cost the lives of thousands of colonists and Seminole. The latter abdicated and settled down in Indian Territory. Only about hundred Seminoles stayed in Florida, their motherland.

The Creeks Tribe, who helped the United States during the war of 1812 were also tricked into giving up some of their land. However, The Chickasaws Tribe move was different. Indeed, unlike most other Native American tribes, the Chickasaws were paid by U.S. government to leave their land in Mississippi and went to Indian Territory peacefully. As far as Cherokees Tribe is concerned, they asked the Supreme Court to help them. The Supreme Court agreed with them. However, President Jackson forced the Cherokees to leave anyway by sending the U.S. soldiers to this mission. Consequently, this trip was known as the "Trail of Tears" in that many Native Americans of all tribes died.

In fact, during the move, there were not enough wagons, foods, or clothing to keep them safe and warm. Many died of hunger, sickness and the cold temperatures. The U.S. soldiers also treated the Native Americans badly. After these trips, about 90,000 Native Americans had been forced to leave and move to Indian Territory (McDonnell 189). About that severe oppression of White Americans against the Indian people, Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote to point out American barbarian practices on other humans in the quest of success and exceptionalism, "The bodies were an inspiration, lucrative as Indian land – for the men who believe themselves white, the right to break bodies was a mark of civilization (105)

Here, Ta-Nehisi Coates shows how lucrative the land of the Native Americans was. Since the land was full of natural resources or wealth. For this reason, they are ready to lynch, beat, kill, rape, humiliate ignoring the divine principle that forbids any human being to kill his neighbor at the risk of suffering his punishment of African Ancestor in the American Past. What Ta-Nehisi Coates fears truly is that when the holy God would decide to punish the Dreamers, all the citizens, White Americans as well as African Americans would suffer from the consequences of the punishment:

The Dreamer's parameters were caged by technology and the limits of horsepower and wind. But the Dreamers have improved themselves, the damming of seas for voltage, the extraction of coal, the transmuting of oil into food, have enabled the plunder not just the bodies of humans but the body of the earth itself. The earth is not our creation – its vengeance is the fire in sky-- knowing that should the Dreamers reap what they had sown we would reap it right with them. (151)

Unfortunately, these fears and worries that Ta-Nehisi Coates had for God punishment related to the destruction of the planet by the Dreamers seem to come true today. The State of California is undergoing huge forest fire due to climate change. This fire with huge wind killed incredible number of people. And people who died in it are not only those Ta-Nehisi Coates call the Dreamers, but also many innocent African Americans perished in it with the illusion of this complex American dream that obsesses so much the dreamers.

We should not forget that historical inheritance proves once again that the Dream does promise equal opportunity for all Americans. Indeed, under slavery, Black people were looted, pillaged, killed, beaten, lynched, dehumanized, and treated as beasts; then, during Jim Crow they underwent discrimination and blatant racism from White Americans. They were locked out of a fair chance at prosperity and success. Though Slavery and Jim Crow Laws were outlawed by the Constitution, there was still racism and unfair discrimination at any stage of life. though the fundamental law that is the constitution stated all Americans should be treated equal, there was and are still massive inequality between Africans Americans and White Americans in terms of wealth possession. The Black-White wealth gap was and is still very large in these days. Bloom Harold points out that the median white family had eight times the wealth of the median black family. And the more wealth a family has the greater advantage parents can transmit to their children (98). This assertion is also confirmed by James Baldwin when he declared in 1965, "The inequality suffered by the American negro population of the United States has hindered the American dream." (125)

Social mobility and happiness in American ideals remain then in the hands of the whites who had the means of production and miscellaneous powers. About that wealth disparity between Whites and Blacks, Ta-Nehisi Coates would believe that it is not something aberrational or natural but a system structured longtime ago. Therefore, America is no more a land of promises where everyone regardless of race, color and origin, enjoys the equal opportunity of in the pursuit of success, but a land of oppression. In this context, Ta-Nehisi Coates would define America as follow, "America is a syndicate arrayed to protect its exclusive power to dominate and control our Bodies – the power of domination and exclusion is central to the belief in being white." (42)

Then, American Dream seems a delusion for African Americans who are constantly targeted by police Brutality. Indeed, even if Black people work hard, achieve a wealthy lifestyle, and an incredible upward mobility in the United Sates, White Americans in the name of their Dream will do their utmost to put an end to this happiness or bliss (Mark 61). The predicament that the character Dr Mable underwent in the narrative is useful evidence of what Ta-Nehisi Coates thinks of the Dreamers. Dr Mable comes actually to realize that American Dream was only attainable by White Americans. In fact, she comes from a poor family and work hard to make it in the United States where it was really difficult for people of color to do so. She did her best to succeed and she took responsibilities in order to profit by the American Dream promised by in the Declaration of Independence. But, unfortunately, her bright success in life could not protect her children from police Brutality that prevailed in the United States. The Dreamers conjured the Dream on her beloved Prince Jones and took him away out of the earth. Based on the disappointment of Dr Mable, Ta-Nehisi Coates would believe that Black Americans are mired in American Dream where there is no a way out because no matter whatever might have been their great deeds, they will still be targeted by racial violence from the Dreamers. He wrote in this context that, "We are captured, brother, surrounded by the majoritarian bandits of America. And this

happens here, our only home, and the terrible truth is that we cannot will Ourselves to an escape on our own.” (146)

Furthermore, the capitalist foundation of the American Dream aligns it seamlessly with Marxist ideology. In this, it manifests itself as a system in which people dream of rugged individualism. This sense of individualism which is a cornerstone of the American Dream is an ideology that romanticizes the individual, who strikes out alone in pursuit of a goal not easily achieved, a goal that often involves risk and one that most people would not readily undertake. It keeps self-interests above and the needs, and even the survival of other people. By keeping on “me” instead of “us”, rugged individualism works against the well-being of the society as a whole and particularly the underprivileged in the society. This situation is well perceived throughout *Between the World and Me* in which Ta-Nehisi Coates points out it out. He also stresses the severe oppression that White Americans perpetrated on Black people made it difficult and still making for them harsh to enjoy the promises of American Dream. Today, the majority of American wealth is in the hands of White Americans; the masses are suffering between squalor and the racial profiling. He proclaimed this in the narrative in giving advice to his son about White Americans:

The Dreamers accept this as the cost of doing business; accept our bodies as currency because it is their tradition. As slave we were America down payment on its freedom – our bodies became this country’s second mortgage – today with a sprawling prison system, our bodies refined the Dream of being white. In America, black bodies are natural resource of incomparable value. (131)

Consequently, the Dream became something attainable only for White people in the sense that in the name of the ideals of American Dream, White folks did their best to keep the happiness, wellbeing and fruits in white communities and let Black people out them.

Likewise, for Marxist criticism, the creation of ideologies contributes a lot in the disappointment of Black people with American Dream. Ideology actually works as a means of profit for the ruling class in the sense that it encourages people to make the dominant class or power owner more rich and powerful. This allegation can be accounted for through the concept of Consumerism. Consumerism or shop-till-you-drop-ism is a cornerstone of the American Dream. Indeed, according to Marxist perspective on capitalism, Consumerism is an ideology that says “I am only as good as what I buy” (Marx 254). Thus, it simultaneously fulfills two ideological purposes: it gives the illusion that we can be “as good as” the wealthy if we can purchase or buy what they purchase and it fills the coffers of the wealthy who manufactures and sell the consumer products “we buy” and who reap the fifteen or twenty percent interest on “our credit-card bills or my money”. Consumerism ideology makes people think that if they buy goods with high price, it means that they are now good people or moving to level of those who have money in the stuff. It makes people think that when they work hard to achieve huge wealth and prosperity, they can spend or squander it anyhow; they do not need to help the have-nots because the rule says what we have worked hard for belongs right to us, the idea of individualism. This situation is clearly seen today in American society. Black American youngster and the middle class of today prefer buying luxury things just to prove that they got plenty money instead of helping their brothers and sisters who do not have good lifestyle in terms of money. They spend all the money in expensive goods to try to look like the ruling class. By having this kind of attitude, Black people are making unconsciously and implicitly White Americans more rich and powerful since all the great business belong to them. This situation bolsters up then White perpetual oppression over Black people.

It is clear to Black people corrupted by the lure promoted by consumer society that American Dream is also a trick ideal which dogmatizes underprivileged people in the United States of America. It tells people what they want they hear. In fact, the Dream like lotteries opens the possibility that anyone can win that game if they play it. So, if a person does not play it, he or she would not win

anything. In other words, the belief according to which the ideal factors such as democracy, freedom, rights and equality allow every citizen equal opportunity to prosper and achieve their set goals can be also possible or a reality for those who subscribe this philosophy or vision. It can be attainable for those who subscribe to hard work and determination. So, if a person does not subscribe to these ideals, he or she would not reach or attain American Dream promised for everyone. Therefore, if a person does not attain the Dream, it is because this one is shiftless and lazy (Heather 43). We are thus encouraged to forget, for example, that a homeless person cannot get a job without an address and cannot get an address without a job. We also forget that most homeless people become so in the United States due to economic circumstances wholly beyond their control and that many people become so because of egocentric political leaders who placed America's interests above the wellbeing of the citizens. Fuller Torrey, in his book *American Psychosis: How the Government Destroyed the Mental Illness Treatment System*, points out that the former President:

Ronald Reagan is useful evidence of what we are saying. During his presidency in 1981, he did close mental health institutions that profited by many American citizens creating then a huge number of violence cases and homeless persons. Among these persons, African Americans suffered the most. About that, Coates in the narrative would say, "this view of things was connected to the fear that passed through the generations." (43)

Consequently, American Dream is a lie for millions of African Americans in that it does promote the myth according to which financial success, equal opportunity, and the happiness promised in the Declaration of Independence is possible for everyone in the United States. It seems a mirage for most of Black people for these folks have undergone a long-standing oppression from White Americans, making it difficult for them to have equal opportunity with White to pursue the Dream. Likewise, the Dream is an illusion in the sense that even though some Black people made the exception in attaining financial success, they still remain targeted by racial violence from their White peers and often from law enforcement agencies as can be seen with Prince Jones in the book. Black people are disappointed of American Dream because it dogmatizes them in a capitalistic view and makes this people view America as a special country which promotes good ideals instead of seeing it as a nation which has exploited, oppressed, humiliated, dehumanized and destroyed them viciously in the Past (Ownby 261).

Conclusion

This work explores the experiences of African Americans in the United States and critically examines the concept of the American Dream. It delves into the history of systemic racism, the struggle for Black identity, and the impact of segregationist policies on the social fabric of America. Furthermore, the analysis enables the recognition of the persistent challenges and inequalities faced by African Americans despite the notion of the American Dream. The Dream, as traditionally defined, has not been equally accessible to all citizens. Instead, the work emphasizes the existence of a segregated social fabric, wherein systemic racism and historical injustices continue to shape the opportunities and experiences of Black individuals. This work favors a deeper understanding of the historical context, systemic racism, and the impact of policies such as redlining, mass incarceration, and police brutality is essential for addressing and dismantling the barriers to equality. Above all, this work invites to confront uncomfortable truths about the American nation's history and to engage in conversations about racial justice and systemic change. Also, it encourages reflection on the complexities of the American Dream and the need for a more inclusive and equitable society that addresses the deep-seated issues of racial injustice.

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