If I Could Write This in Fire, I Would Write This in Fire

The Spanish were the first colonizers, and they passed the colony to Britain. It is part of the Commonwealth.

History of Jamaica:

The day of colonization and the day of freedom.

Original habitants

The original habitants of Jamaica are believed to be the Arawaks, also calledTainos. They came from South America 2500years ago and name the island Xaymaca, which meant “land of wood and water”. The Arawaks were a mild and simple people by nature. Physically, they were light brown in colour, short and well-shapped with coarse, black hair. Their faces were abroad and their noses flat.

They grew cassava, sweet potatoes, maize (corn), fruits, vegetables, cotton and tabacco. Tobacco was grown on a large scale as smoking

(…)

Jamaica served mainly as a supply base: food, men, arm and horse were shipped here to help in conquering the American mainland.

The little attention the colony received from Spain soon led the major reason for internal strife. This contributed to the weakening of the colony in the last years of Spanish occupation. The governors were not getting proper support from home and quarrels with church authorities undermined their control. Frequent attacks by pirates also contributed to the colony’s woes.

The English attack:

On May 10,

**Maroon**

(…)

The Slave Trade

The English settlers concerned themselves with growing crops that could easily be sold in England. Tobacco, indigno and cocoa soon gave way to sugar, which became the main crop for the island.

1672: the Royal Africa Company, a slave-trading enterprise, was formed. The company used Jamaica as its chief market, and the island became a centre of slave trading in the West Indies.

The slave trade became a profitable venture for the colonists. The transportation of slaves from Africa to the West Indies became known as the “Middle Passage”. The journey of a British slaver was 3-sided, starting from England with trade goods, to Africa where these were exchange for slave. Afterwards, the journey continued to the West Indies where the slaves were landed and sugar, rum, and molassestaken aboard for the final leg of the journey back to England.

The frequent slave rebellions in the Caribbean were the factor that led to the abolition of the slave trade and slavery. Huma

**Emmancipation of slaves (**workers that were brought and transportation was paid for them, but they had to work under the very hard conditions to pay the money back. They were always in debt. Very close to slavery**).**

The struggle towards independence:

The island’s capital was moved from Spanish Town to Kingstown (1872).

The economic and political crisis of the 1930s: world-wide economic depression, ruin of the banana industry, falling sugar prices, growing unemployment aggravated by the curtailment of migration opportunities, a steeply rising population growth rate. In 1938 things came to a head with widespread violence and rioting.

Norman Manley was the founder of the National Workers’ union and the political party the People's National Party (PNP).

Rastafarianism:

The history of Rastafari begins with the colonisation of Africa, or ‘Ethiopia’ as it is known to believers, by Europeans.

The European powers took many Africans as slaves, and the people of Africa were divided up and sent into exile as captives thourghtout the world. The areas of captivity became known ‘Babylon’.

For Africans this exile marked the suppression of their culture by whites. However, Rastafarians believe that the suppression of blacks in Babylon is ending and that soon they will all return to ‘Ethiopia’.

(…)

The prophecy was rapidly followed by the crowning of Emperor Haile

Tafari: name + Rast: the head of…

Rastafari became known because of the reggae.

In Britain there are so many black people that mainly all black people are considered Jamaican. They even have their own dialect.

Marihuana as part of their religious believes.

(…)

The Lion of Judah…

Referecenes to the Rastafaries, the lion of Judah…

(…)

Reggae music: style of popular music…

(…)

Colorism:

Jakson-Lowman’s 2013 definition of colorism: “a form of progression that is expressed through the differential treatment of individuals and groups based on skin color. Typically, favoritism is demonstrated towards those of lighter complexions while those of darker complexions experience rejection and mistreatment”.

The “Red Ibo” or “Red Eboe” was used to refer to the Igbo slavers in Jamaica

In the essay, the protagonist could pass like white. The effect that has on her to pretend that she was white. She realised that she cannot continue doing that, she has to be critical with her own community (the exploitation).

Rape. They believed that rape was a way to increase their value, as they would have children. Their color, being lighter, made her easily to be raped.

(…)

Languages in Jamaica:

Patois means that both are equal.

Creole.

DUB poetry: poetry accompanied with the Jamaican music.

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Class 15/11/2022

The essay is date from 1985. The story can be taken place in the late 1950s. She is talking before the liberation of Jamaica.

This is a new genre: essay, which serves for argumentative. Who is speaking here? The voice usually speaking in an essay is usually the author. This is an autobiographical essay. We can also argue that the voice that speaks it is a very reliable one. It is an essay about lived experiences. The author is explaining the reason that led her to become a writer and to write about Jamaica, the conflicts that she was in.

The essay is divided is several parts. Part 1 has that connection of friendship, as it begins with “we” (she and her best friend). Friendship that are from African precedence, but that they have different features.

2 girls with the changes in her bodies, because of adolescents (feminism). The essay is about becoming a lesbian.

Having a lighter complexion gave her some privileges, but that also makes her feel guilty because of enjoying those privileges.

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Interactive class 16/11/2022:

Significant paragraphs:

Analysis of the Postcolonial analysis. Physical punishment in contrast with the one for the lighters.

*PAGE 919: Zoe lived with her… same place.*

Coloured ≠ Black: Michelle is coloured because of her light skin. Black is darker than her. Sometimes in the essay a synonym for coloured is “pale”.

The building, the uniforms, everything was in imitation of the English schools (+English hymns).

The colonizer brings her school to Jamaica 🡪 Colonial patronage.

*PAGE 919: Occasionally… get chilled*.

Discrimination withing the same school. This discrimination is quite shocking. What the teacher does or what they do not do? They continue with the singing as nothing had happened, as if the girl was invisible. “They won’t touch her”.

There is another example of not touching black people: as when the gave a present to a dark woman and they did not hug.

Toward the end of the essay, Michelle gives like an explanation for not touching the darker people. “*Our souls were affected by the beauty of Jamaica, as much as they were affected by our fears of darkness*” (928), they are afraid of what they represent, of what the blackness represents. Fear of darkness 🡪 fear of being considered as black.

*PAGE 919: Were the other women unable to touch this girl because of her darkness? I think… outpost of civilization.*

Which are the features of characteristics of colonization she is denouncing?

Creole Jamaicans: referring to the teachers. Why are they creole, what does mean? They are probably of mixed ethnicity. If they are pale maybe is because of the rape of black people in plantation. They have a different role, different from whom? The talk first of the white teacher and then, the creole ones. The whites were teaching white people. The colonized people had to be “participant”. Success to colonial discourse: the mission. Interiorization of that colonial discourse. “We are superior, they are inferior”.

The idea of considering the white teachers “ladies” and that student had to be “ladies” as well. We have an intersection of race, gender and with social class. “Being a lady” does not correspond to the low classes but to the middle classes. Femininity is considered to be that privilege.

The paragraphs are usually long because is an argumentative essay. That is the reason why the short paragraphs, contrast so much.

*PAGE 920: “Looking back: To try and see…became master”.*

Who are the “we” here? People who are not black nor white people. Light skin middle class Jamaicans. What does she say about this class? That they have become oppressor of that Jamaicans that are black or dark skin. The sentence that summarizes this is the last sentence: “When the house nigger became master” 🡪 reference to that they used to be slaves and now they are masters.

*PAGE 920: “Great expectations: a novel… Pip and Estella”.*

Which ideas do we have to highlight? We have the tile “Great expectation” (a novel by Charles Dicken, an English novelist. Dickens is concerned with social issues: class differences). Great expectation: you are from a low class, but you have the expectation to be better. Regarding the culture 🡪 colonial patronage.

Which is the difference between how “Great Expectation” is told at school and the way she reads “Great Expectations”: the teacher focuses on the love affair, ignoring the social conflict, the social struggle. How Michele understands it? 1 Assimilation: it is trying to totally adapt to the social class. 2 Assimilation entails denial: you are denying your Jamaican identity.

PAGE 922: “WE ARE HERE BECAUSE YOU WERE THERE… (in Britain)”

What are the slogans about? They talk about the oppression of dark skin people. Racial activism.

Why black movement in Britain? It is related to her experiences of a Black Jamaican.

WE ARE HERE BECAUSE YOU WERE THERE 🡪 forced them to become like them. And took them and made them slaves. It is about the Jamaican population in Britain. Many of the black people is from Jamaica. WE ARE HERE BECAUSE YOU WERE THERE 🡪 The Black Jamaican are in Britain, because the English went to Jamaica and took them. Colonial discourse: represents the metropolis. In Jamaica they were told about the good thing of Britain. There are many reasons for Jamaicans going to the metropolis: -totally exploited the natural sources of Jamaica and so they do have works 🡪 emigration. Where would they emigrate? To the metropolis. Why to the Metropolis?

They are asked to leave Britain and to come back to Jamaica as it is not needed. Cheap labour. They encourage that labour from the colonies. The experience of colonization created many transport means, also the language, as they already spoke English.