

# [The theme of oppression in the fire next time](https://assignbuster.com/the-theme-of-oppression-in-the-fire-next-time/)

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James Baldwin was a writer in the mid twenty centuries. He was born 1924 and died in 1987. The time period of he lived was the period of the turmoil and oppression. During his life time he experienced the second world war and the cold war which bring him very large influence on his advocate later on the of the freedom of African-American movement. The effect of the second world war was not seems very dominated in Baldwin’s idea, it do bring him, actually to most of the people who experienced the war that how serious grieved the extreme violence could cause. To see the great tragedy of people, Baldwin’s idea was more peace rather than radical. It also because of his experience in church, he used convert to Christianity in his second essay he mentioned about that. Which also help to shape his idea of achieve the freedom by peace way and love. After the cold war, the civil right movement was began to grow again and the book “ The Fire Next Time” was finished in 1963 at similar time period. The oppression for many minority groups during the cold war period were expressed after the cold war and massive movement began to growth at that time period.

Baldwin clearly point out who was his audiences in the first letter that he was writing for his nephew. Also to extend, his audiences were the youth African-American like his nephew who just began to noticed how the society sees them and defend their identities. Moreover, Baldwin in his letter especially indicated that which group is not his audience — “ the innocent white” who was also a important part that Baldwin used to reach to his audiences. In the first letter Baldwin wrote to his nephew, he told his the nephew James the restriction and racism that he might faced when he got into society. Then Baldwin discussed the reason of what causes these restriction and racism and who is responsible for these action. Finally he came up the solution for the American to improved. What’s more the word “ love” was frequently appear in his letter which was Baldwin advocating his idea.

To reach to his audience, Baldwin first discussed the “ innocent white” was the culprit of pushing the African-American into the plight at that time period. Even though the slave system was not exist anymore, but the misunderstanding of African-American by the white were still strong. Even more the white American refused to admit this circumstances. In the letter he wrote: “ This innocent country set you down in a ghetto in which, in fact, it intended that you should perish.” and “ because you were black and for no other reason. The limits of your ambition were, thus, expected to be set forever. You were born into a society which spelled out with brutal clarity, and in as many ways as possible, that you were a worthless human being. You were not expected to aspire to excellence: you were expected to make peace with mediocrity.” There sentences shows that Baldwin thought what the society expect to the African-American was being obedience, non- ambition and stay where they are which is the bottom of society- the “ ghetto”. These expectations didn’t have much difference with the characteristics of slave, so the Baldwin knew the physical oppression like chain or whip was gone but the invisible oppression from the society that push his race down was never disappear. Therefore, those innocent white was the cause. They choose to escape from the realty, refused to recognize African-American, ignore African-American, afraid that they will losing the idea of who they thought they are because they could feel that African-American do make contribution to united states community.

Of course Baldwin told his nephew how to faced those dilemma that he meet faced and what he believe the way to eliminate that. Love was the method that Baldwin believe that make his prospect of the freedom of African-American pretty optimism. In the letter Baldwin first told James that his family always love him, then underline within the nation we need to love each other. In letter Baldwin said : “ we were trembling. We have not stopped trembling yet, but if we had not loved each other none of us would have survived.” Moreover, Baldwin also told Jams how faced the innocent white and the oppression from society, he want to his nephew know that the when he face racism it was not his fault but the ignorance and hostility from the white. But he should accept it accept it with love, and the white should accept them. (p. 8) But Baldwin was tell to accept the whole white idea like his father, instead he should also try to avoid these limitations from society. At last Baldwin point out : “ The country is celebrating one hundred years of freedom one hundred years too soon. We cannot be free until they are free.” Therefore, Baldwin believe to free the black, the white need to free first and what connect these two race was the love, he believe they could show that they are as American as the white population.

The title of the book was at the end of second essay also the epigraph for the first section of the book: “ God gave Noah the rainbow sign, No more water, the fire next time!” According to Baldwin’s life he was a religious man. So at the end of the essay he warn the people up on the example of bible that god will punished the sinner by fire, it also might means if the problem was not solved the conflict would eventually turn into blood and fire to. The title was a strong title that shows the importance and critical situation for the African-American and for United States. The title of the letter for his nephew was “ My Dungeon Shook” which also came from the sentence at the end of the letter: “ One of them said, The very time I thought I was lost, My dungeon shook and my chains fell off.”. This sentence was to remind James he was from the nation that was heavily oppress before the ‘ dungeon” and “ chain” was the symbol of slave to African-American, but after “ dungeon” and “ chain” was the words “ shook” and “ fell” which means the free. Baldwin used this poem as a excitation to show that the captive and oppression will fall and yield to free because this was the letter for his nephew who was youth and represent the hope a his nation. Baldwin use the title “ My Dungeon Shoot” to encourage his nephew to make change and reach the truly free for African-American in United States. The title for the second essay was from one of the epigraphs at the precede between the first section and the second section. The two epigraphs were “ White Man’s Burden” wrote by Kipling and the poem from “ Hymn” these two epigraphs provide the reader that how he would the discussed the issue of African-American in Untied States which was the religion. Therefore the title “ Down at the Cross” was the way that Baldwin ponder the issue of black oppression in United States under the circumstances of religion as a believer of christian.

The second section of the book talked about two main point one is the Baldwin’s personal experience in church and his opinion about the Islam. First of all he told his own experience about the life of being in a christian community and how it associated with the African-American culture. Baldwin first accept the religion very quick but as he was growing he saw his friends were fall into the oppression and even didn’t noticed that was a oppression and he share his own experience when he was thirteen crossing the street the cop in the middle of the street muttered as Baldwin passed him, “ Why don’t you niggers stay uptown where you belong?” and “ When he was ten, two policemen amused themselves with him by frisking him, making comic (and terrifying) speculations concerning him ancestry and probable sexual prowess, and for good measure, leaving him flat on my back in one of Harlem’s empty lots”. Baldwin at that time period thought the boy need to himself a “ thing” to do so they could avoid the crime and for himself was the church. For now the issue and oppression for him still blurry he knew they were there but haven’t a very clearly way to solve that. However he idea would develop and changed after he fell to floor of the church one night after a sermon landing in front of the altar. He remembers pain and the feeling that he was yelling up to heaven and receiving no reply, which led to a hopelessness that could consider as a turning point for him. He suddenly released the God was for the white not African-American which make him sort off put his attention on being a young minister. But the experience of church do provide Baldwin a perfect experience that make him thought about how religion play role in society due to the oppression of the black. Baldwin released religion itself can oppress to any group in society even though it could unite different group to some extent. White population was the beneficiary from this and they were the group who dominated in society at that time period, so with their pride it was impossible for them to initiatively know the achievement that African-American made to United States. And been believe what they had been told that they are superior to African-Americans. Baldwin was also paying his attention on the history of the christianity that he point out that church was representative of oppression, he calls this the “ sanctification of power.” So that the action of spreading of the Gospel was an excuse for depression and the imposition of authority on nonwhite countries and nation. From the history, Baldwin figure out by the church made the white ignore the black in society it’s because the religion endow the superiority to the white population.

After discussed the christianity, Baldwin put on his attention on another religion — islam. The Islam used to came up with the statement of the with devil. Baldwin didn’t really believe this idea. However he choose to accept some part of the statement. Baldwin showed interest o how the Islam united people together. However, the advocate of the Islam was opposed to what Baldwin promote which is love. So even though Baldwin had meet Elijah, the advocate of Islam was not as same as Baldwin’s idea love.

Nowadays, as Baldwin quotes W. E. B. Du Bois who wrote, “ The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.” in 1890. The problem of color line were never get completely put an end. Even though people were get more aware of racism, it were only stay on the speech aspect. Sometimes people might think that if they won’t say the words of racism or trait they unequal in daily life then the color line problem will not existed. However, the truth is the color line won’t disappear like that. What’s might the society of United States not noticed yet was the slums that created by the government before in the city was still there, many African-American there still live there and struggle for their life. It would very difficult for a African-American child to try to work hard for a better life if he or she live in the community like that. Obviously the society again ignore the problem that African-American have, the oppression was still there.

Because I am an international student from China, I do not really know how the color line play the role in Canada, but in recent years as China begin to cooperate its some African countries and international student from African came to the China. The idea of African was changing in social media, according to my personal experience there were some people will first declare they are not racism, but then begin to saying the bad thing of them and their nation. In my own opinion this self-contradictory speech was probably influenced by the idea that from United States where the main western country that influence Chinese society today. First some people in China influence by United States which thought African-American was violent and had high crime rate in their communities, but they don’t know the causes of the these conclusion because their people sees these social issue as foreigners. However, it is still very difficult to say the idea of color line problem China was consider as the racism or just xenophobic. Because China was not a immigration country for long time Chinese sees their race as their nationality. So the color line right now appear China was might be the idea of xenophobic and the influence mainly from United States but without knowing the reason.