

Push vs. precious essay sample

Life



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Throughout American history race has been a huge component of all kinds of movements and resulted in many of new laws for our nation. The connection between race and popular culture can sometimes lead to many negative views and opinions on in modern day society. In both Push, by Sapphire, and " Precious," we see how some of these ideas in action in within the context of popular culture, American society, and how they correspond with the lives of people in these situations. " Push" and " Precious" explore the concepts connecting race and the ideas of popular culture. The novel and the film portray identical themes; however, these themes are just brought about in different ways in each. These three themes are evident in both popular culture and the ideas of race.

In both texts, Precious is caught up in the vicious cycle of sexual abuse, the utilization of the welfare system, and her chase for the American dream, which is how we can relate race and popular culture to each other. Although the book and movie are similar, the movie differs from the book in that it is not as specific when detailing the series of events that is happening in the book. This leaves out some of the details that could help make some of the key connections between welfare in the two stories. One of the key components between today's culture and this book is the welfare system. This system was considered an " open-ended right" until the government thought it was being abused. In the film, Ms. Weiss, a social worker, realizes the tough situation that Precious is in and takes a liking to Precious. While it is her job to help family in these positions, she for one reason or another takes a special liking to Precious. She tries to do whatever she can to help Precious and to give her an opportunity to get out of the situation she is in.

In the United States, popular culture tends to downplay rape and sexual abuse because it gives negative impressions to everyone who sees it. It is often swept under the rug and not put out there like much of the other news and activities in modern day American society.

Ms. Weiss also tries to help Precious escape from her crazy life at home, not physically escape but just to help her deal with all of the troubles that she deals with everyday. She sets up a meeting with Mary, Precious' mother, and tries to figure out when the abuse started and how it happened. Although this is part of her job is to help people of different races and cultures, who have problems within their families, she decided to go above and beyond her duty to try and help Precious get past the stereotype of minorities in poverty. Another difference in terms of the abuse that Precious undergoes in the book, is how her mom handles the blame. In the movie, Mary will have nothing to do with it and puts all the blame squarely on Precious' shoulders, telling Ms. Weiss that it is all her daughter's fault and she should not be blamed for any of it.

The idea of the American Dream is that all people, regardless of their race, have the opportunity to succeed if they work hard enough. The assumption is, that no matter their situation everyone has the ability to chase their dreams and to do whatever they want to do with their lives. Throughout the movie, Precious battles the stereotype of a black girl in her situation.

Typically young black girls in her situation are not able to figure out a way to get out of it and tend to be stuck in this rut for much of, if not all, of their lives. This counters the very idea of the American Dream because Precious does not even have the opportunity to attempt to get out of her

predicament. In order to gain some of the opportunities in education that she has missed back she tries to learn to read and write with the help of her teacher, Ms. Rain, at Each One Teach One. She hopes that with her help, and if she can become literate, that she might be able to make it out of her situation and on to a better life. In contrast to the movie, the book Push has a different perspective on Precious' life.

Unlike in the movie, Ms. Weiss is not as involved with helping Precious. In Push, Ms. Weiss is much more appalled by what Mary and Precious relay to her. In the book she comments ““ you mentioned something about hygiene in connection with...with...’ Ms. Weiss can’t finish” (Sapphire 135). She is so shocked at what she has been told that she cannot even muster up something to say back. Often times popular culture doesn't understand what people go through on a daily basis, because it only takes into account what the majority of society does. This is just an example of how Ms. Weiss is not prepared for what she hears takes place every day in Precious' life. At this same meeting Ms. Weiss tries to get Precious to talk about Each One Teach One, the school that she attends. Although Ms. Weiss already knows about it, she wants to get Precious to discuss it herself so that she can decide whether or not the family gets the welfare money based on her home life and the experiences she goes through everyday The representation of sexual abuse in the book is different than in the movie.

In the movie, Mary puts the blame all on Precious for the problems they have, but in the book, she does not put the blame anywhere, she just deflects it to everyone, not wanting to take responsibility, but not blaming anyone either. In the book, we also see more abuse from Mary and not just <https://assignbuster.com/push-vs-precious-essay-sample/>

Precious' father. Mary will beat Precious just because she does not cook the meal right. In the movie, the focus is more on the sexual abuse of Precious by her father than by the physical and emotional abuse constantly coming from her mother. Although Precious' mother sexually abuses her in the book as well it is played more like popular culture in the movie and swept under the rug. Mary would make Precious cook the food and clean the house while she would sit on the couch and watch TV all while giving commands to Precious.

Despite some of the differences between the book and the movie, there are some clear similarities. The first one is Precious' family's dependence on welfare and how it is viewed as negative in both cases. Unless Precious or her mother get their welfare checks and go and get as much as they can, they cannot survive. This just goes to show their dire situation. Mary even tells Precious, " go down to welfare, school can't help you none, now" (Sapphire, 22). Another key similarity is the flashbacks that Precious has. Throughout both stories she continually has flashbacks to when she is getting sexually abused by her father or when her mom beats her. In addition to these flashbacks, she daydreams of better things to come, wishing that her life was different. She dreams of being a movie star, she wants a more glamorous life and will do whatever she can to get it.

Perhaps one of the most important similarities between the two is the role of Ms. Weiss. In both situations she has a key role, even though that role is slightly different, she tries to make Precious confident in the fact that she can have a better life than the one she is living now. With her going to school everyday, hopefully Precious can escape the bonds of her family and the life

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that she currently lives. The role of Ms. Weiss is the role of hope. Ms. Weiss is the character that gives Precious hope about what lies ahead. She will help her to mentor Precious, get her life changed for the better, and help her realize that Precious is better off without her mom.

Both of these stories, although they have the same content, are conveyed to the audience in slightly different ways. The ways that they are presented give us the ability to gather different important messages from each.

Although the message is the same, different types of feelings are communicated based on what images and messages are more prevalent in the presentation of the facts. Whether we side with the view of the characters in “ Push” or in “ Precious” we are thinking about the opinions of the stories and that is the important thing. “ Push” and “ Precious” both tell the story of a girl who against all odds, tries to become successful, overcoming all of the different obstacles that can possibly be thrown at her. Along the way, the audience is given many opportunities to decide for themselves how we should interpret the story. Through our view of popular culture and American society’s view on race we can fully grasp the meaning Precious tries to push through to us and apply it to our everyday lives.