

# The lesson by toni cade bambara

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Howsoever intelligently one may try to sweep under the carpet, an author cannot help recollection of one's own experiences in life. In this story Bambara recalls her college days in the 1960s. Through the main character Sylvia, she exposes the grim realities of the African American life in that period. That community suffered inequalities and humiliation in every area of social life. Though the Constitution of America guarantees equality to all its citizens, in real terms, the privileged society practices all sorts of inequalities, and the African Americans face hurdles at every turn of life. The story "The Lesson," by Toni Cade Bambara elucidates the situations of trials and tribulations in the life of blacks. What a contrast of life in different parts of the same city! The type of hardships undergone by Sylvia and her friends in the slums of New York, the type of environment they were brought up and the glaring imbalance as compared to the ambience of the Fifth Avenue can lead to two types of reactions. One is the black children may be fired with ambition to excel in life, improve their economic prospectus and achieve the rewards comparable to life in the Fifth Avenue. The other could be one of jealousy and revenge. Evaluate the reaction of Sugar, an innocent child who says, "You know, Miss Moore, I don't think all of us here put together eat in a year what that sailboat costs." (cai. ucdavis. edu) This is the pointer to the standard of life of the black children.

Bambara creates poignant story how a college educated black woman arrives at the slum neighborhood on weekends and takes the children to a sort of picnic to posh areas like Manhattan. From the time the children leave from their slums until they return home, what are their feelings after being

exposed to richness and luxury? How disturbed could be their emotional world comparing own plight and the affluence they saw throughout the day? The plot of the story is simple, but the philosophy behind it is profound.

#### Works Cited

Bambara, Toni Cade. The Lesson. Web: [cai.ucdavis.edu/gender/thelesson.html](http://cai.ucdavis.edu/gender/thelesson.html)