



“To Pimp a Butterfly” and Racial Inequality

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Background Info

- Kendrick Lamar's father was a gang member, parents moved between cars and motels before moving into apartment where Kendrick was born

- Witnessed first murder at the age of 5 outside apt. Building, teenage drug dealer shot and killed

- Witnessed second murder at age of 8 at a fast food restaurant

- Lamar himself stated that many eventually become "numb" to their

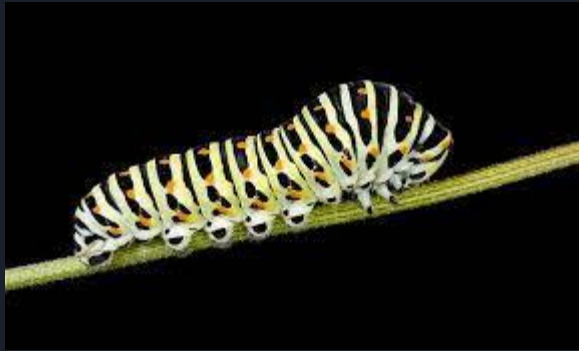
Environment

- Traveled to South Africa, visiting Nelson Mandela's prison cell and places like Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg which inspired album



The Story of the Album

Caterpillar



Cocoon



Butterfly



Product of Environment, consumes
everything

Caught up in trap, forced to realize self

Transformed, rose above the trap

Part 1: Systematic Oppression



-The intro song: Wesley's Theory: "What you want? A house or a car? Forty acres and a mule, a piano, a guitar? Anythin', see, my name is Uncle Sam, I'm your dog, Motherfucker, you can live at the mall"

"But remember, you ain't pass economics in school, And everything you buy, taxes will deny, I'll Wesley Snipe your ass before thirty-five"

-Wesley Snipes was an actor who got arrested for tax evasion

-The idea of reaching success and getting anything desired but lack education due to society's structure, leading to the cycle continuing

Part 2: Capitalism

“The element of institutions is very significant. The poor are disenfranchised by an economic system of greed and warehoused in prisons for more money-making schemes”

-Kendrick discusses that the ones in power use what they have to create a prison cycle for blacks, where they fall for the bait within their environments

-Puts more money in the pockets of the rich, keeps poor where they are

-Lack of understanding and awareness because of the system



Part 3: Police Brutality

-The concept of police brutality is very evident in today's society, where blacks are still facing terrible situations and not enough change

-The most popular song of the album, "Alright,": "Homicide be looking at you from the face down, What MAC-11 even boom with the bass down?"

-Kendrick is mentioning the continuation of police violence and how it is a major issue in society

- "We gon' be alright," highlights the optimism that Lamar has in the song, the idea that blacks as a collective can rise above these circumstances by spreading awareness

-This is the end of the transformation, where knowledge and understanding are accomplished



The Importance and Relevance

- These are prominent issues in today's world where many blacks deal with the underlying effects of racism and systematic oppression
- Change is not occurring on the level that it should
- Kendrick illustrated the drawbacks and reality of America, where it is not helping blacks in their environments but is actually negatively impacting
- The album serves as a representation of the process of awareness

