

*Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates:  
Close Reading/Personal Interaction Questions (to pg. 71)

1. Why were Coates and so many other young black people drawn to Malcolm X 25 years after his death in the 1990's?
2. What lessons did Coates learn at Howard University? Out on "the Yard"? At the Moorland- Spingarn Research Center? From his history professor Linda Heywood?
3. Who is Queen Nzinga? How is she first one of Coates' trophies and later the source of one of his heaviest realizations?
4. Who said, "Who is the Tolstoy of the Zulus?" How does this statement send Coates off on a journey that results in "intellectual vertigo"? What does he come to realize is the problem? Who then, is the Tolstoy of the Zulus?
5. Who is the girl "with the long dreads" who lived in a house . . . What does he learn from her and those who live in that house? Who does she introduce Coates to that he will never forget?
6. What two things change Coates' life that he is "free" from the past, the schools, the streets, and trophies?

WORDS AND ALLUSIONS TO LOOK UP: diaspora, Mecca, the Middle Passage, simian, presumptions, Saul Bellow, Tolstoy, Samori Toure, struggle, slavery

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Part II. Notice how these questions shift the perspective. What does this do to your involvement with the text now that you are writing from your experience and in your voice about how it is between "The World and You"?

1. Coates writes **repeatedly about his "curiosity"** - what are you curious about?
2. Coates also asks a lot of questions (most he does not answer). What are some questions that you have - write them out in question form - **don't answer them.**
3. Coates declares that what he most wants is **"to be truly free."** What do you want most?
4. Coates confesses that **"it began to strike me that the point of my education was a kind of discomfort."** When have you had this experience and what are you going to do about it?
5. Coates realizes as do others **he reads that because of his race's history in America that he has inherited "the faces at the bottom of the well."** Who are your faces at the bottom of the well, given your race's (gender's) history in America?

6. Coates found journalism and parenthood and became an adult. Imagine your life in 10 years. How old will you be? What kind of life will you be living? Will you be an adult? If so - what will you be responsible for?
7. **Coates learned “That love could be soft and understanding; that soft or hard, love was an act of heroism.”** What have you learned about love?