

Book:

Cole Arthur Riley is the author of *This here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, and the Stories That Make Us*. In addition to being on the New York Times bestseller list the book has been featured in The Atlantic, Guernica, The Boston Globe, and The Washington Post.

The Author:

Cole Arthur Riley is a bestselling author. She was born and raised in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Ms. Riley studied writing at the University of Pennsylvania. Cole was raised by her grandmother and father. Cole Arthur Riley serves as a spiritual teacher in residence With Cornell University's Office of Spirituality and Meaning Making.

Analysis:

This Here Flesh is a book of Black "poetry" reminiscing the three generations of her maternal ancestry. The book entwines the history of her relationship with her grandmother, her father, and her struggles. The book focuses on connecting the reader with our belonging, dignity, and liberation. The book is poetry, biographical, spiritual, truthful, captivating, and well-written. Ms. Cole frequently quotes other African American female authors, for example Alice Walker and Maya Angelou. The book deals with issue that African Americans face on a daily basis. Lament, rage, anger fear, injustice dignity, hope and calling. One point that hit home to me was on page 118. "A mob of eight hundred insurrectionists storm the U.S. Capitol, and they are handled with great sympathy. But a Black man takes a knee during the national anthem, and its equated to treason." This is the reason why so many Black men are filled with rage and venom.

Target audience:

The author's target audience appears to be directed to Black families. It would also be helpful for young women growing up in poverty and needing a mentor to look up to. The book could be required reading could for English 101 for college students. The book can also be used as a guidebook for those feeling left out and not fully engaged in society.

Strengths:

The book is clever and well-written. Ms. Cole introduces life experiences in a thoughtful, skillful, and engaging way. Ms Cole weaves in the experiences of enslaved people, one would never suspect that the trials and tribulations of captured, tortured, and tormented Africans would be developed in There is a correlation between the experiences of Ms. Cole and the and “the transatlantic, abduction, enslavement, and purchase of Black bodies”.(p.23).

Critiques:

Their author referred to God as she at least twice. I take great offense to anyone referring to God as a female. Jesus asked us to pray to His Father, not His Mother. There are no scriptural references indicating that God is a female. Christians should not allow progressive thinkers to introduce this method of thinking into the church. The book is a combination of prose and poetry and a dose of a good sense of humor. This is the first book where I noticed the author began a sentence with the word “And”.

Usefulness:

The book is encouraging and uplifting. It can be used as a method to encourage those who are feeling hopeless and useless. MS. Cole accepted her life and its challenges as a pilgrimage. A

pilgrimage to the genuine Cole Arthur Riley. It can be used in the same way to arrive at the genuine reader.

Take a Ways.

1. There is diversity and beauty in God's family...
2. I will not allow people to refer to God as a "she",
3. The lament is biblical, it's a beautiful thing to behold.
4. There is no liberation without justice, there is no justice without repentance.

Significance in Ministry

I am not sure how this book would be significant in my ministry. One way that might be helpful is using it as the book of the month to be read by men. It would be interesting to see how young Black men interpret the writings of Ms. Cole. I must continue to lead the fight for justice for men of color.

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