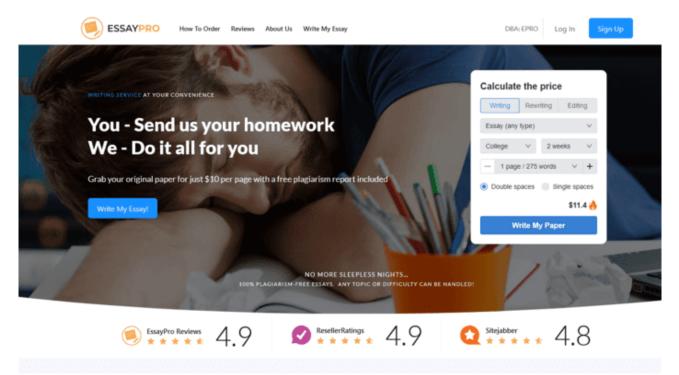
## Racism, Society, and Martin Espada's Beloved Spic



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Racism, Society, and Martin Espada's Beloved Spic

On April 4, 1968 America experienced the tragic loss of one of its greatest social leaders, Martin Luther King, Jr. He was a pivotal leader in the civil rights movement who permeated American history as a man who maintained the importance of nonviolent social change. He fought racism within the public domain by pursuing school integration and basic civil rights for the African-American community. Thirty-one years after his death, America is forced to evaluate the exact implications of his legacy on modern society's attitudes towards race and race relations. Did the civil rights movement really promote positive changes in race relations? How far has American society really come?

Despite the efforts of King and many of his comrades, racism is still prevalent in modern society. However, its presence is evidenced primarily in the attitudes and values which are taught to individuals in the private sector of American life as opposed to the laws and restrictions placed on individuals in the public sector during the civil rights era. Therefore, while racism appears to have dissipated within the public <u>arena</u>, it is most powerfully present in the privacy of our families and homes. This is also the most destructive arena for racism as seen in the poem "Beloved Spic" by Martin Espada. Espada uses his own life

experiences to illustrate racism's continued effect and presence in American culture today. Despite society's best efforts to keep racism contained within the private domain, its effects filter through familial boundaries and mock the efforts of past martyrs for social change.

There is a marked dichotomy between attitudes and behaviors exhibited within ...

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...So the question still remains, has American society really come that far in race relations and where do we go from here? Martin Espada answers the question by illustrating the intense level of racism experienced by a minority living in modern society. The civil rights movement did make positive changes for the African-American community on various different political and social levels. However, racism needs to be broken down to its smallest components, which are the individuals who support and teach racist attitudes. The family itself is the basic unity of society. Therefore, the only way racism will be completely eliminated on a social level is if it is stopped on the individual level. Treating racism as a social phenomenon will provide short-term solutions, but will not treat the virus of hatred perpetuating its continued existence in our society today.

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