Sinead Scott

4/21/20

QCQ#19

Quotation:

“It was in these early years that Ross began to understand himself as an American—he did not live under the blind decree of justice, but under the heel of a regime that elevated armed robbery to a governing principle. He thought about fighting. “Just be quiet,” his father told him. “Because they’ll come and kill us all.”

“One man said his black neighbor was “probably a nice guy, but every time I look at him I see $2000 drop off the value of my home.”

Comment:

These two quotes, though picked from different parts in the article, have an interesting connection which struck me both as important and as disturbing. The first comes when Coates is talking about the Ross family and their struggle and suppression as sharecroppers. I think what was particularly striking was how it was during these experiences, when Ross came to the realization that he lived not under the “blind decree of just, but under the hell of a regime that elevated armed robbery to a governing principle” that he considered himself an American. Coates then continued on to discuss some of the ways in which black Americans were forced into certain neighborhoods and out of others and how the segregation applied, extensively, to separating white neighborhoods from black neighborhoods; the first being wealthier and the second being not just poor but “economically distant.” Because of this there was almost an economic value that was placed on black Americans, and even though slavery may have been “over” they were still reduced to a value, something less than human that lowered the value of neighborhoods. It reminded me of the writing assignment I just did where the justice topic focused on the stimulus package being biased in that many of those who pay taxes, while potentially illegal immigrants, will not be included. It seems that so often there are those who are otherwise, and already, suffering from inequalities and disadvantages who are further suppressed or excluded.

Question:

How could neighborhoods like that of North Lawndale be “desegregated” (in all aspects but especially economically) without gentrifying it?