Spoken word performed by the author, video: <https://youtu.be/q0qD2K2RWkc>)

Audio only: <https://princeea.bandcamp.com/track/i-am-not-a-label>

**I Am NOT Black, You Are NOT White**

by Prince Ea

I am not Black
I mean, that’s what the world calls me, but it’s not... me
I didn't come out of my mother's womb saying, “Hey everybody, I'm... Black.”
No, I was taught to be black
And you were taught to call me that
Along with whatever you call yourself
It’s just a label

See, from birth the world force feeds us these.... labels
And eventually we all swallow them
We digest and accept the labels, never ever doubting them
But there's one problem:
Labels are not you and labels are not me
Labels are just ...labels
But who we truly are is not... skin... deep
See, when I drive my car, no one would ever confuse the car for.... me
Well, when I drive my ...body, why do you confuse me for my...body?
It's my…body...get it? Not me

Let me break it down
See, our bodies are just cars that we operate and drive around
The dealership will call society decided to label mine the "black edition,"
Yours the "Irish" or "White edition"
And with no money down, 0% APR, and no test drive
We were forced to own these cars for the rest of our lives
Forgive me, but I fail to see the logic or pride
In defining myself or judging another by the cars we drive
Because who we truly are is found inside

Listen, I’m not here to tell you how science has concluded that genetically we’re all mixed
And race in the human species doesn't exist
Or how every historian knows that race was invented in the 15th century
To divide people from each other and it has worked perfectly...
No.... I'm not here to lecture
I just want to ask one question
Who would you be if the world never gave you a label?
Never gave you a box to check
Would you be White? Black? Mexican?
Asian? Native American? Middle Eastern? Indian?
No. We would be one; we would be together
No longer living in the error
Of calling human beings Black people or White people
These labels that will forever blind us from seeing a person for who they are
But instead seeing them through the judgmental, prejudicial, artificial filters of who we THINK they are
And when you let an artificial label define yourself
Then, my friend, you have chosen smallness over greatness and minimized your.... self
Confined and divided your .....self from others
And it is an undeniable fact that
When there is division, there will be conflict
And conflict starts wars
There-fore every war has started over labels
It's always us... versus them
So the answer to war, racism, sexism, and every other -ism
Is so simple that every politician has missed it
It’s the labels...
We must rip them off
Isn't it funny how no baby is born racist
Yet, every baby cries when they hear the cries of another
No matter the gender, culture or color
Proving that deep down, we were meant to connect and care for each other
That is our mission, and that it's not my opinion
That is the truth in a world that has sold us fiction
Please listen, labels only distort our vision
Which is why half of those watching this will dismiss it
Or feel resistance and conflicted
But, just remember...
So did the cater-pillar
Before it broke through its shell and became the magnificent butterfly
Well, these labels are our shells and we must do the same thing
So we can finally spread our wings
Human beings were not meant to be slapped with labels like groceries at supermarkets
DNA cannot be regulated by the FDA
We were meant to be free
And only until you remove them all
And stop living and thinking so small
Will we be free to see ourselves and each other for who we—truly—are