

Wilderness House Literary Review 19/4

Jacques Fleury

Branded: Black as Means of Commodity

[Originally published in the Somerville Times and in Fleury's Book: "Chain Letter to America: The One Thing You Can Do To End Racism"]

Modern day black commodity, a derivative market of slavery...

Black body;

Black culture;

Black branding;

Fetish objects of capitalism?!

Devalued laborers as fraught consumers,

Filling the coffers of their oppressors.

In history's vault...as Cedric Robinson wrote in *Black Marxism*:

"To be black was to have

No civilization

No culture

No religion

No place

No humanity

Worthy of consideration."

In the cacophony of this capitalist country, black men were detained in their disparate

But imbricated roles,

Like a run of toppled dominoes...casted as commodified bodies,

Disparaged workers and thronging consumers looking to escape their shame,

By wearing labels bearing someone else's name...today that is their game;

Yet still they use their style and swagger

In protest and in search of a new maneuver, as they watch the usurpation of their culture

Scattered along the margins of the society which excludes them;

Their humanity and masculinity secondary to their race in a capitalist society

Whose primary ideology is the working male body;

But black men's souls become darkest at the

Crossroads of patriarchal privilege and racial repudiation;

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That is to say...a real man must work no matter what!

But that work is hard to come by especially when that man is black!

But as commodity they can "be like Mike" like professional athletes like Michael Jordan;

That is if they're willing to see their remarkable ability commercialized...

Successful blacks used as trope to sedate and tantalize, elevate and emphasize,

The promise of success for those blacks who are marginalized...

But history manifested in our memory has taught us that tropes are in fact

Like the black characters in a horror movie...they are usually the first to get the axe!

Simply put black liberation is our collective investment,

But as capitalist commodity it compels our collective divestment!

Blacks need not succumb to being branded as "worthy"

By capitalist elites who place no "worth" on their humanity.

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Tainting "The Other" in America

America declared its independence from British dependence,
But continues to depend on hating the other and
Hate has always been and will always be about fear

How ironic that America was instituted by members of the other
That is other than the indigenous natives of the Americas
fleeing persecution for being the other in their homelands...
Only to persecute the natives and project "the other" identify upon them

What is the American "value" system
Other than "systemic" racial suppression?
A questionable choice to uphold
Despotic ideologies of white supremacy!
To choose to demonize and otherize the marginalized
Without accounting for the margins of error in judgement of the ostracized.

Who's casting the stones?

The silent and the complacent
for through your silence,
Imposing imperialists have garnered your consent.
Don't be a voiceless puppet and voice your dissent!

Reacquaint yourself with your history
Reaffirm your contributions to humanity
Do NOT let colonial dictators dictate your story!
For it was "the others" who built this country
This American land of freedom and liberty?!

The enslaved Africans,
The FIRST known civilization in human history
Who toiled and sowed the earth only to reap
Inequality and brutality.

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The indigenous American Indians:
The original "founding fathers"
Initially labeled "savages"
Unfit to inhabit American lands
They already cultivated for over 10,000 years,
That is longer than the Europeans were in Europe!
Only to coincide with European tribal genocide...
Later a great lot would succumb to suicide!

The Asians who built the transcontinental railroad
Connecting the east to the American west only to be deemed
Unworthy dog and cat eating slobs
who threaten white American jobs...

Now that pejorative has been projected onto Haitians from Haiti,
the once RICHEST country in the Americas,
Whose monetary fluency France used to supplement
The American fight for liberation under the toe of British oppression
Les Chasseurs Volontaires D'haiti,
The Volunteer Chasers from Haiti
Who chased the Brits from Savannah, Georgia
The largest group of fighters of African descent
WERE the Haitians now immortalized through a monument for posterity.
All the enslaved Africans who quite literally
"Built" America are ALL worthy of human dignity.
For it was Afro-Haitian explorer Jean Baptiste DuSable
Who was the "founding father" of Chicago!
Cut from the cloth of the same persecuted people
Who are now being branded as "dog and cat eaters"
To supplement the cause of socio-politico fearmongers...

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What is the American “value” system?

Besides “systemic” racial suppression and

Despotic “values” and ideologies of *White Supremacy*?

Bearing in mind that “hate” is *NOT* a «value».

It is the narrative of “fear” from *the oligarchy*!

**Please Note: Inspired by Guardian Scapegoating article on Asians and Haitians eating pets*

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/sep/14/racist-history-trump-pet-eating-immigrant>

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Random Musings about Submission

[Originally published in Synchronized Chaos: Interdisciplinary journal of art, music, culture, science & literature and in Fleury's book "You Are Enough: The Journey to Accepting Your Authentic Self"]

Let's just begin in
medias res...or in the middle of things...
You see, we had artistic differences,
I was the artist and they were indifferent...
"Thank you for your submission..." but I never
Submitted!

At least not in the way that they wanted me to.
If I wasn't fiscally challenged, I would board a jet plane
And head for a luge run at Saint Moritz Switzerland,
A psychotically dangerous sport.
Maybe they've driven me to psychosis!

Luge, a sport rooted in Germanic tribal wars against the Romans.
Bored aristocrats on vacation looking for a distraction.
Although I am distracted by my own tribal war here in America,
I am nothing like a bored and puerile aristocrat...
This landed me in a mawkish quagmire of self-pity.
In my mind I absconded into a journey of devilment to topple my torment.

Writing can be an exercise in discernment that you are inevitably
Obliged to submit for judgment; that is if you expect to make
An impact other than justifying your own derangement due to
Maladjustment...
"Your writing is not a good fit for our publication" was the nadir of my
existence!!!

What did I write to warrant such specious offerings you may ask?
Well I wrote from the voice of an ignoble omnivorous muskrat
Whose sexual identify is non-binary;

Both a strumpet and a sthumpet!

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And as an exponent of socio-political justice wrote hither and thither
An apocalyptic reverie about mutant muskrats.
A germane allegory or political fodder for the purpose of unveiling
pejorative prejudice.
Deciding to introduce a foreign element into an established
Yet insecure environment so to demonstrate the ensuing behavior
Of those who deem themselves superior.
The muskrat representing the only POC or person of color
In an all-white order where WASPS Rule!

WASPS being descendants of
Wealthy Anglo-Saxon Protestant Males
Feeling their long history of imposing their cultural values and
Socio-political power over "the other" that is
women and minorities...
Threatened by a neo-progressive era geared towards changing the status
quo.
Clamping down on their suppression in retaliation to the
Nascent and unrelenting movement towards socio-political
And economic progression and equality
In this American Nation!

"Thank you for your submission
But your work is not a good fit for our publication..."
Really?!
So here I am, randomly musing about not being chosen...
Am I just a titular poet?
A deuteragonist in my own story?
When do I get to be the protagonist hero despite my AFRO?!
When do I get to be the plucky character in epics akin to

19th century iconoclastic South African king Shaka Zulu whose heroic
story depicted
How he united tribal factions to create notable states and powerful African
identities...or even
Anglo-Saxon and French epics like Beowulf together with Le Chanson De

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Roland?

Or even the archetypal Mesopotamian great:

The Epic of Gilgamesh.

Regarded as the earliest prototypical literature and the second oldest religious text...

"Your submission is not on par with our vision..."

Really?!

Even in the midst of global

Dissent and division?!

So, we had artistic differences...I was the artist and they were indifferent.

But I decided to muse about it to manufacture

My own moment,

Fashion my own non-contentious and all-inclusive literary faction,

Where ALL postulatory voices are worthy of publication.

Because the acrimony of exclusivity is

A damnation!

I will continue to submit but NEVER to their behest for

Submission!!!