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Race in America

notes on the movie *Get Out*



I have seen *Get Out* the other night, and it prompted a few reflections.

The movie so far has enjoyed considerable, unanticipated success. It is a movie about racial tension cast in the thriller-horror genre, and it said (by The Guardian) to have

“struck a raw nerve with US moviegoers,” “at a time of post-election tumult and terror among the country’s minority population under President Trumps’s first two months in office.” Critics further ventured that it is the sort of “horror movie Obama would love.”

Let me introduce the problem of racism, as I see it, before delving in the discussion of the movie, after a brief summary of the plot.

Spoilers ahead.

The Racist Mindset & Technocratic Structure

In general, the contempt whites feel for “non-white inferiors” stems from a world-view based on a general belief and two associated principles.

The general belief is what we may refer to as the Law of Violence (after L. Tolstoi). The belief, that is, that life is struggle and that one has to fight (vehemently, if needed) and compete his/her way to the top, always. It is a predatory conception of life. It is based on

aggressiveness and the constant (most often subtle and psychological rather than physical) bullying of the other.

The two consequent principles say that, *in the fight*, the success of ethnicities, of nations, of peoples depends on 1) technological mastery; and 2) especially technology harnessed to business (as an instrument of commercial competition) and, most importantly, the arts of war.

This is, in essence, a quasi-religion that has been created by the white elites, which are clustered in western metropolises. They radiate this creed out, and the lesser and peripheral (white) strata imitate; they echo, reflecting this supremacism, with (patriotic) pride.

At this time, the western white is in control of the greatest apparatus of power; he is the richest, the most technologically advanced, and the cruelest of men.

It so follows that all those racial groups that have proven themselves unfit in point of technological mastery, wealth, and war are *ipso facto* regarded by him as “inferior.”

Racism in the US is, furthermore, sharpened by a “cult of work,” by which all those ethnic groups that have landed in America in search of work —i.e. as “migrant workers” (including intellectuals), let alone as slaves— are immediately marked thereby with the stigmata of indecorous labor, of vulgar employment. Employees, hirelings of varying skill,

inferiors all of them. In this view, these groups are —still, several generations later— consistently regarded as races of underlings.

Not all inferiors are equal though. In the Anglo-American view, Germans and the Japanese are almost semi-respectable for they were decent warriors (though too sadistic, and, thus, deservedly and irremediably “pacified” in the last war) and have remained competent engineers. The Latins — Frenchmen, Italians, and Spaniards— are a whole notch below the latter: these fops are tolerated only as “cultural entertainers” (for tourism, food, and fashion). Asia is regarded as one giant “outsourcing” (manufacturing) sweatshop; and Latin America as a pool of nannies, hedge-trimmers and

janitors (lowest tier of modern-day slave-work). The “rest” — Africa, the Middle East, above all— just does not count, except for resource-extraction.

These are the givens for America’s game of contempt.

Now, over a generation ago, to have social peace (truce), the System came up with an idea that was as simple as it was clever: i.e., to have the whites sing the (insincere) praise of (the despised) non-whites and suppress all racist adjectives and expressions from common speech. Racial quotas were concomitantly enforced and cohorts of non-whites came, ever more conspicuously, to staff the administration at increasingly higher levels. It was a giant exercise in social window-dressing and collective

hypocrisy, and it has worked wonders.

It was an ultra-conservative move, of course, for its design was to freeze the *status quo ante* as rigidly as possible: nothing whatsoever was to change, not race relations, not the economic system —the mindset, least of all. It was a regime of discursive apartheid, so to speak.

All “races” have been compartmentalized and insulated from one another by a conventional code of “respect,” respect for “diversity.” As for the rest, it was business as usual. And for thirty years, the heading of racial confrontation virtually disappeared from the headlines (except for the late, and singular, flurry of police brutality against blacks).

It was, literally, a repressive system, for, beneath the surface, racial aversion seethed just as intensely as yesteryear. And we see the effects of this today, at a time when, under the brand-new presidency of D. Trump, this regime is being, apparently, shattered and re-configured.

The Movie

Get Out tells the story of a young, inter-racial, and much-in-love couple —he, Chris, is a successful photographer, black, and she, Rose Armitage, is an upper-middle-class white— on a visit to the posh mansion of her parents, who have yet to meet their daughter's boyfriend.

The visit sets off a general sense of discomfort, as we are shown through the mansion to see that its servants are black,

and somewhat hallucinated, while the master and mistress of the house affect before their guest that false air of “respect,” which fools no one (the father unctuously asseverates that he would have elected Obama to a third term).

Tension mounts until we finally discover that the Armitages are a demoniacal organization: Rose is deputized to bait black lovers to the house, where they are hypnotized by the mother, who is a psychiatrist, and then, once entranced, operated on by the father, who is a neural surgeon. The (sci-fi) purpose of the operation, which is carried out as a commercial service on behalf of the community of super-wealthy whites orbiting around the Armitages, is to provide decrepit white people with fresh black bodies, wherein they may “transfer” their life

and thereby prolong their existence. The soul-swapping in this tale of fantasy is represented by the substitution, into the black body, of a white brain for a black one.

The blacks that are, through the surgery, thus “integrated” into white high-society are, factually, old whites navigating younger, stronger “slave bodies.” And the air of hallucinated unreality, “the weird vibe,” given off by these “blacks” living amongst whites is precisely due to this “spiritual disfigurement,” which is the precarious result of the “surgery,” and which is precariously shored up by the constant hypnotizing touch-ups of the mother.

This for me is the most powerful representation of the film. There are other good moments (the very final scene,

especially), but I leave those to the viewer.

Fear

Critics have appreciated the movie, commending it for a refreshing reprising of a theme —racism— that is tackled either disingenuously (as in all those phony Hollywood scripts in which blacks and whites are portrayed as bosom brothers and sisters) or, more often than not, not at all. Some have seen in this movie an imaginary play on the new ways “white people have found to perpetuate the peculiar institution of slavery.”

This is a standard reference to the technocratic management of things in contemporary America, which finds blacks useful only for sports and entertainment.

This is certainly true. The uglier reality, however, is that the unsavory pantomime that insincere whites play by affecting “respect” for blacks —dapping, interjecting ebonics, or rappin’— veils the fact that, again, from the technocratic viewpoint, white elites truly have no use for black people at all. (Think of all those years of loud and envenomed remonstrance by the conservative Right against the “intolerable waste” of the welfare state; or of the incarceration rate of American Blacks). And they fear them. Black Americans make up nearly 15 percent of the US population, and it is a group with concrete destabilizing potential. They want indeed to be part of the middle-class, but the whites will not allow it. What the whites would allow,

instead, is that they, say, trim bushes, like the Latin-Americans. But in light of their history, blacks will obviously not acquiesce in that kind of docility. They will defy, if pushed to it. And that is why they need to be heavily sedated. Drugs galore are thus injected in the system, which are purchased, in fact, with welfare checks.

The fear, on the part of whites, is tangible. It is significant that those who are instinctively bound to react most violently against racist behavior —or what may be perceived as such— are not so much the blacks themselves as “progressive” whites, in fact. And that is because the latter are the ones who have been tacitly entrusted with the daily management and upkeep of political correctness. They will

act with swift, corrective ferociousness against other “transgressing” whites not out of moral and civil compulsion, but out of fear. Fear that the racist loud-mouths might so disrupt the equilibrium of the social truce so painstakingly arrived at (like the state of ongoing hypnosis enforced by the mother in the movie) as to trigger—in the worst case scenario—a blazing and contagious mutiny from the ghettos of America.

Speaking of film, again, it has been advanced in [some quarters](#) that the late spate of zombie movies and TV shows is just another form for whites of

exorcizing their fear of an “insurrection of the Black proletariat.”

What is to be done? Clearly, the very *mindset* that drives the technocratic management of things is the problem. The source of it all. All our energy, pedagogically speaking, should therefore be devoted to dismantle, one nasty brick at a time, the Law of Violence and replace it, one sweet layer upon another, with the Law of Love. We perfectly know what that means and what it entails. It is now just a question of doing it, after the basic elements of this problem have been clearly laid on the table.