

BLACK EXISTENTIALISM AND URBAN AMERICA

“Most of us in the Black/Afrikan community very understandably worry more about our children being killed on the streets than by lethal injection. Some of our neighborhoods are devastated by drugs, poverty and violence and so discussions around the uneven application of the death penalty are a glaring non-issue when so many of us live on the frontlines of these war zones. Each day we hear and read of horror stories that fill us with disbelief, anguish and rage and many want an eye for an eye!”-

Angela davis (words on the American death penalty)

Nostalgic of the Harlem Renaissance of the early 20th century, this critical essay is written in the spirit of the ancestors: Ida B. wells, Richard wright, and W.E.B dubois. Why? This essay chronicles the 21st century extension of Black america; Africa Americans, people of color, and all those breathing under the banner of Urban America. This particular outlook is fundamental in nature similar to the NAACP; in regards to where the peoples/nationalities along with the plight of the African diaspora, is held inclusive within its struggle; especially within urban America.

“Africana critical theory is a [school](#) of thought that "critiques domination and affirms the empowerment of Black people in the world".^[1] Although it shares a word with [existentialism](#) and that philosophy's concerns with existence and meaning in life, it "is predicated on the liberation of all Black people in the world from oppression”-

-Wikipedia

With these words quoted, this settlement of this critical essay is grounded on a manifesto; a vision of the greater future of urban America, and a social renaissance birthed out of what has overcast those considered within the confines of the term, “Minorities”. In retrospect, by observation according to the quote above, any continued oppression and its roots can initially be found in its generational standard. Considering the African diaspora, most of the generational traits of oppression, and dysfunction originates from institutionalized slavery. As far as urban America, factors include the socio-economic plagues, from criminal enterprise, the prison industrial complex, to an economy balancing the wealthy to the dirt poor in its scales. Those “conscious” amongst us continue to understand the ties that bind its ethnicities, its facets of its cultures, and its collective industries. Black existentialism was and is reflected in the arts. Also having its origins in education, which within those times (17th to 18th century) was even more exceptional, and imperative. In the case of urban America, this extentialism is extended culturally, through the grassroots, through an outreach of wanting a rebirth and social reform to the issues that have plagued urban america to the present day.

“Pain is Gods Megaphone”-

Anonymous

This illustration is based on the symptoms of chronic pain the human body feels under a ongoing medical condition, calling for specific attention . In this case, within urban America, social issues within a body of people continuously, call for resolves.

CULTURE

In relation to the opening reference, an eye for eye, from ancient civilizations has become a known social principle. Among urban America to meet her socio political issues with freedom of speech, activism and legislative reform. But in light of black existentialism, the recording, expanding, and enriching of multi cultural attributes within community struggle is also potent. For further solidarity between ethnicities and a cultural foundation, for the next generation. Reform begins with social consciousness of urban America, down to recognizing its differences. There is something that happens to a community when elements of its culture dies; in black existentialism, among its racial divisions through its history in America, the problem is also economic. Than from initially pulling together for a community's/society's survival, the instinctive reaction to poverty and economic struggle is to “feed off its own resources to survive”. Which is to pillage , steal, and destroy(drugs and its presence in America). Existentialism is affirmation, the understanding of the value of human life. This is something that needs reiteration. Existentialism is as important, as knowledge of self.

FAITH

Fundamentalism has always been incorporated in black existentialism, even now in urban America. Faith and religion is a deep part of its fabric. From faith in perspective of through the 14th through 18th century(pre emancipation proclamation), to the spread of Islam among north and east Africa, the foundations of the black church in America, to the movements of pan africanism and black nationalism. Aside from negative media stereotypes, grassroots solutions to social issues are generally and always drawn from the community, a collective bird's eye view of the conflict. I recall an argument on the issue of social justice, a few years ago by the Ex Fox news commentator/conservative Glenn beck:

Christians Rip Glenn Beck Over 'Social Justice' Slam

By HANNA SIEGEL
March 12, 2010

Glenn Beck has stirred the pot again, but President Obama can rest easy for a few days because he was not the central target this time. Backers of the concept of Christian "social justice," however, were not so lucky. Beck compared it to communism and Nazism -- and at least one religious leader is calling for Christians to stop watching the conservative broadcaster, radio host and best-selling author. On his radio and television shows, Beck suggested any church promoting "social justice" or "economic justice" merely was using code words for Nazism and communism."

Abcnews.com

This was recorded early 2010. Mr. Beck clearly disregarded "Social Justice" from religious institutions as being under a banner of the extreme right, or themes of totalitarianism. He concluded with statements against Black theology, another chapter of Black existentialism birthed in the 60's by author James Cone. Many groups were outraged by these statements, in which I and many concluded as irrational and insensitive to current situations as urban America; statements against a common community/societal interest: social activism, for social justice. Black existentialism, the plight of the American "blue collar", and urban America find it hard to accept some views and policies of "politically correct" conservatism. Struggles among these groups invokes the need to challenge social ills to further secure a people, nation, and community /society's survival.

REPARATIONS

Aside from what dysfunctions that plagues urban America, that is glorified, under multi cultural exploitation and perpetuated, reparations post 21st century is still needed. Consultation, grassroots initiatives, and community awareness never go outdated in any generation. As a younger man, I remember walking in my neighborhood, predominantly black, witnessing multiple accounts of open air drug sales, living in a environment where drugs, prostitution and homicide traveled hand in hand. As I spent time among my college campus trying to complete studies and inclining, one theme stuck out to me personally among the college activism/event board: Black reparations. Through the years learning of such, I found it is one imperative agenda among pan-Africanists, whether agnostic or socialists. I personally brought it to a collective view, of the ultimate reparations of urban America in general. As its been said before, I reiterate the initial purposal of reparations: the institution of family, with its first extension being the community. It is a continual process, of community participation, workshops, and collective council. In 2012, in the modern day we are in a healing economy. My critical input in reparations within urban America, is while homes are being built, property taxes are being adjusted, jobs are being created, community centers are in the blueprint, and reform in social services are being implemented, family in a collective consciousness must be considered. Another aspect is to look into what devastates urban America; from the entrance of drugs in America to the profits accrued. This includes understanding a community's political leaders, the worth and importance political offices, and one element, as the ancestors would stress even now, to teach the babies of the next generation. This is imperative in black existentialism, all forms listed are elements of reparations, all grassroots, some personal and having to deal within the fabric of sociology, some economic and having to deal within the greater livelihood of its relationship to the economy. Among what is generally chronicled as "Minorities", African Americans still hold a great percentage. Others included are Latino's, some Asian, and some Caucasian. Black existentialism and urban America are one in the same, and both cry out relentlessly, for social reform.

Consciously Yours,

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