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Being born on the cuff of desegregation and later growing up I found that there's a gap in the social fabric that has created a social foundation that has marginal separation in the races once again, establishing the arena of classicism.

Classicism: Adherence to traditional standards (as of simplicity, restraint, and proportion) that are universally and enduringly valid.

As one who is personally warehoused in the Missouri Department of Correction, and who is also labeled black, my eyes have been reopened to the meaning of classicism that is wrapped in the bow of misuse of power along with the blatant abuse that I and many others before me had to endure, rather being enslaved or incarcerated. This is an extension which leads to the constant misunderstanding of bond-vs-free, rich-vs-poor, black-vs-white, and master-vs-slave. Traditional standards for which classicism is falsified, in my opinion. This sort of classicism is social disconnect which embeds itself into a misunderstanding amongst society as a whole, especially to the disadvantaged and under-privileged. In mere words society re-enforces separation amongst the races by drawing a narrow line in the sand. The black neighborhood, aka the hood are war zones not just for injustice, racial profiling, segregation and political propaganda which leads to poor housing, poor education, poor health care and ect., the narrow view of classicism is evident. There are no liquor stores and churches on every corner of most black neighborhoods while white neighborhoods have malls. Why is that? Is it to keep the controversy of classicism vital for the eyes of the world?

One reason I believe, is because it keeps the division of oppression and repression alive. For instance the crime rate within the black on black crime, police killing blacks and the increase of blacks going to prison, creating a pit

courts believing the motto: **Guilty until proven innocent**. The trenches of blackhood are often met with unskilled interpersonal training, social discard, and self destruction, aided by the constant reminders on every other corner. For example: dilapidated buildings, bare lots, under attended schools, and full churches quick to collect tithes and offerings, but failing to provide a true spiritual foundation and the necessary social services of out-reach within their surrounding communities, allowing the stigma of classicism to flood the streets with gang members, drug dealers, and lost boys and girls to the streets while having to take care of themselves, parents, children, while trying not to align themselves with prison.

The generation of our so called symptomatic system makes false states that **All Men Are Created Equal**, yet black neighborhoods are the poorest in the country. Our history of being sold on auction blocks are being referred to as a moment of history but yet the ashes of classicism are still burning fresh. We weren't allowed to come through the front door but we can come through the back door of prison. Blacks and whites weren't allowed to walk side by side on the sidewalks, often times blacks had to walk in the streets giving whites more privilege. In 2014 I experienced a some-what similar ordeal at Southeast Correctional Center, in Charleston, Missouri. I was walking down the general walkway that led to many of the prisons' offices which included the prison chow hall. As I was about to approach the chow hall I noticed a crowd of correctional officers talking and blocking the general walkway, they were conversating but aware of their behavior. I then noticed a female cook who was white coming out of the chow hall door. Now this places her in the path for which I was already walking, and since the CO's had one part of the sidewalk blocked I decided to proceed on the path for which I was on, which meant I was about to cut the female cook off. Suddenly I heard this CO say, "Hey you." I proceeded to walk and was addressed again with, "Hey you," I then turned toward the CO and he states to me, "Don't let me see you cut in front of another white woman again." He quickly changed his wording to staff, "You hear me ?" I could not believe

what I was hearing, here I was in the 21st century and I was told I had to move out the way for some white woman in Southeast Correctional Center.

Since my arrival in Charleston, I have encountered some staff who are blatant racist, caseworkers and correctional officers call black offenders Niggers, and when you write them up or file a grievance, the warden here and those over him in Jefferson City, Missouri ignore the behavior, refusing to look at the abuse, but most of all not seeing those in prison as humans, creating a sub-culture of classicism. My experience here in Southeast Correctional Center caused me to review my own sense of bigotry while looking in the eyes of my abusers over and over again. Beside facing injustice in the courts, behind prison gates and walls black offenders receive harsher treatment than white offenders. The advancement for people of color is often met with society's umbilical cord of injustice and segregation strangling them purposefully from having a real chance at life. The re-enforced attitude of superiority challenges black culture to adapt and re-adapt time and time again. I believe this is to hinder our growth and our contribution in society and history. This constant scrutiny that others are always conveying in their actions, hearts, and minds, and now in the media only re-enforces blacks as people of handouts and obligation. The negative light that shadows our position and placement in white history lays in the hands of those who create his-story.

An evil man is snared by his own sin, but a righteous one can sing and be glad. The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

Proverbs 29:6-7

Racism and white privilege has been the key component to bureaucratic discrimination which in turn develops into injustice. I pose this question; When did under-privilege equal being black ?

The percentage of black men imprisoned outweigh other races who are imprisoned, this has been the societal norm. The truth of equality and racism has been a continuum of sweeping it under the rug. Many of us are being forced to see with this presidential election that classicism is in the forefront of society and the world. The hidden ignorance can no longer be ignored in regards to the lump that is obvious, can't continue not to involve ourselves in a system that encourages hate. The governing body for who we elect for such laws to be changed are to be held accountable for not enforcing the laws of equality. We as a society are quick to preach change but never actually commit to it because it would establish a unified body of races. Classicism breaks down the walls of equality and cracks the foundation of conformity which keeps us separated in our hearts and minds.

Equality: the quality or state of being equal.

Equal Protection: a guarantee under the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution that a State must treat an individual or class of individuals the same as it treats other individuals or classes in like circumstances.

Black Americans have not received this sort of fair treatment since the establishing of the 14th Amendment. After all it was blacks that were told to believe that civil rights will give black people a fair shake, this too was and is a lie, look at the courts which are mostly seated by white men who violate every statute of civil rights of every black man who is imprisoned. We find it to be a lie then and now. It's even more evident white society has told blacks to let go of the past and live in the present. I find that somewhat ludicrous, after all it was whites that enforced slavery, it was whites that raped and beat black men and women, it was whites that lynched blacks for entertainment. It is still whites who are the oppressors and who continue to encourage bigotry, biasness, racism, and other expressions of separation. After all it has been white society to tell black people to accept being called, nigga, nigger, negro, colored,

black, picnicky, african, african american.

When blacks are confronted with racism we are often told to accept the hand that was dealt because it could have been worst. If history is true wasn't the capture of a race of people force to deny themselves their culture and their heritage ? It is white power that established a pattern of fear within the minds of black culture. Forefathers who related that fear throughout the generations of black cultures by subliminally saying accept this as your norm, accept this as your fate, accept being poorly educated, accept mediocre wages, sub-standard health care, inadequate housing, but most of all accept your socioeconomic standing and don't question or bite the hand that's holding you down. Slave masters use to inform their slaves to show gratitude to them for giving the scraps from their fields and tables. In other words you accept this mistreatment and misuse. Slavery created classicism amongst blacks and whites, and at times white-vs-white, but classicism also created a godlike mentality amongst white society establishing wealth-vs-poor, the haves and have nots. The bible addresses such topic:

These men who were hired last worked only one hour, they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day' But he answered of them friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius ? Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money ? Or are you envious because I am generous ? So the last will be first and the first will be last.

Matt 20:12-16, NIV

How true is this passage of scripture (?) that it reveals envy amongst a man who's been hired to do a job and gets upset when he hires another person at a later time and decided to pay them both an equal wage. But the message is deeper, it reveals that those who promote classicism will find themselves on the lower side of the

spectrum of society and those who are already on the lower side will find themselves at the top. The backs of blacks for which this fundamental foundation was built is often mocked, denied, or ignored leading many to believe that black people haven't had any contributing factors in society or American History.

My late great grandmother was a slave and my grandmother grew up in the Jim Crow south. She faced injustice, discrimination and classicism for most of her life, causing her to hate white people. Despite her negative experience she became a Lpn and worked for one of the most prestigious hospitals in St. Louis. But I recall her once telling me if you don't want a black person to know something then put it in a book or newspaper. At the time I found the thought somewhat true until I realized how stereotypical the statement was. We are easily persuaded to believe the negative perception regarding black culture, but these stereotypes loom within the minds of other cultures, for example all black people love watermelon, fried chicken, all black men are rapist and robbers. These are mental splinters that are embedded in the fabric of white society, but this stigma also becomes I want to believe an unintentional re-enforced ignorance of biasness and bigotry that shrouds the mind of black people also.

Since being in prison I've seen old and young alike who are black, lack the basic educational skills such as reading, writing, spelling, and basic math. And then there are some who are highly educated and enlightened in history, current events, as well as the social climate change but still lack self confidence because prison society demoralizing attitude. There is classicism within the prison walls, white-vs-white, black-vs-black, black-vs-white, gang-vs-gang, gay-vs-straight, and most of this is being manipulated by the department heads in the prison which I believe is somehow translated into brainwashing of the culture of people represented in prison, and maintaining an inferior environment, which are the components to self destruction that are death traps within the currents of prison. Many of us are unlawfully in an unconstitutional pen hold. And I believe

this stagnates the belief and faith along with the minds and souls of todays young black men who will bare tomorrows issues. Crime is often associated with black face 3x more then any other race. The proclivities for which black culture endures on a constant bases such as:

Living Conditions (poor housing, poor credit)

Unemployment (low wages, welfare, inadequate education)

Poor Health Care (can't afford quality healthcare, or good insurance)

Crime (drugs, guns, profiling, and racism)

Voting Surpression

Violation Of Civil Rights

these are just a few of the vagaries and vicissitudes that nails many of then and now cross of nay sayers.

The recidivism rate for blacks are record higher then whites because parole officers are quick to violate someone of color faster. Lets also not forget to mention a broken system which includes; The Department Of Corrections, law enforcement, lawyers, public defenders, prosecutors, judges, along with the parole board. Crime is a social sickness, there is no denying that, but man's first crime started in the Garden Of Eden with the creation of man.

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Lets go out to the field." And while they were in the field Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel ?" "I do not know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper ?" The Lord said, "What have you done ? Listen ! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground."

Gen 4:8-10

How is it that crime and evil are only associated to a class of people who are thrown away, disadvantaged, devalued, under-minded, disrespected, as well as under-privileged ? Classicism's increasing gap continues to leave many blacks questioning an unfair system.

While whites live in the mindset of privileged along with hiding their lies within the pages of history which includes rape, murder, senseless killing, robbery and so on to every culture and race within the world, excusing their spirit of enforce supremacy.

Slavery is a harsh reality for many to accept, and many rather ignore the history and pass the buck, but slavery is alive and well within the institutions of Missouri prisons. Forced labor, threats, non compatible wages, poor educational programs to which could provide better opportunities for those being released from prison. Those like myself who are incarcerated are treated as sub-humans, spoke down to and mislabeled in and out of society, especially those of us, of color.

Black: Having color of soot or coal. syn: ebony, pitch black, pitch dark, pitchy raven, sable.

Dark: Being without light or without much light.

Nigger: A black person, a member of any dark skinned race, a member of socially disadvantage class of person.

African: A native or inhabitant of Africa, a person and especially a black person of African ancestry according to Merriam Collegiate Dictionary.

Makes these references false, ignored and racist, and classicistic.

We as a society of all races must not become complacent in our attitudes and culture mindset. We must not settle for being a sub-standard human or allow society to continue to dictate black culture as a sub-standard heritage. Being in the custody of the Missouri Department of Corrections I have encountered many black men young and old who stated that their attitudes, beliefs and views are molded by their conditions and environment, which made them the man they say they are. So I pose this question, can we say that prison plays a role in re-enforcing the negative self image and destructive nature many come to prison with? Can we as a culture of people who are

rich in culture, tradition and ancestry be persuaded to believe that only black people are prone to criminal behavior because of our conditions or environment ?

I will admit that the social dynamic of the black family are more fractured than the average white family, however there are changes taking place. Those changes are within young black men and women who lack respect, integrity, self esteem and morality. These characters are a point of reference that is necessary to change our own personal out-look and out-come. Right now it is just mocked at.

It use to be said that it takes a village but there are no more villages, joint communities, there are only (Hood) and the rules in the hood are not to take care, nor have a watchful eye for your neighbors child or home. What use to be a platform for enstalling morals, honor, and self respect in the past is now impossible today.

In the path of the wicked lie thorns and snares but he who guards his soul stay far from them. Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.

Proverbs 22:5-6 NIV

Influence: The act or power of producing an effect without apparent exertion of force or direct exercise of command (b) corrupt interference with authority for personal gain (c) The power or capacity of causing an effect in, indirect or intangible ways: sway.

How do we repair the moral fabric that is torn within the classes, as well as meet the challenges of faithless homes, incarcerated parents, babies raising babies, drugs and gangs ? It's impossible to mend the hole of biasness and racism while the hands of injustice continue to rip the fabric, and fray the influence of others by crippling their hopes. In order to resolve these concerns we must first address that those are classified as disadvantaged, devalued, discarded, or etc, and start viewing all people as equals.

You hear that America is the land of the free and land of opportunity. If this is true then why are blacks still denied fair treatment all the way around? In order to close the gap on racial biasness on both sides we first must admit that there is a problem and accept the responsibility we all play in the past and present. Learning to really listen to one another can be the start to rebuilding trust. Change and acceptance cannot be one sided.

"Equal rights, fair play, justice, are all like the air. We all have it or none of us has it. That is the Truth of it."

Maya Angelou

Lawrence Smith

Southeast Correctional Center

Charleston Missouri