


The Nigger Factory

Gil Scott-Heron

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Originally published in 1972, Gil Scott-Heron's striking second novel, *The Nigger Factory*, is a powerful parable of the way in which human beings are conditioned to think, drawing inspiration from Scott-Heron's own experiences as a student in the late 1960's and early 70's.

Earl Thomas, student body president at Sutton University, is in a difficult position: struggling with the fact that even a historically black college could be part of a system that still privileges whites, he's also threatened by his fellow students, members of radical activist group MJUMBE. Claiming the time has come for revolution, not reform, the leaders of MJUMBE are poised not only to bring Earl down personally, but also to instigate larger scale acts of violence.

An electrifying novel, *The Nigger Factory* is a penetrating examination of the different forms of resistance and the motivations behind them, and a major document of an era of black thought.

The Nigger Factory Details

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Author : Gil Scott-Heron

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From Reader Review *The Nigger Factory* for online ebook

Batuhan Sarıcan says

Zenci Fabrikası, sadece üç gün süren bir ayaklanmaya mercek tutuyor gibi görünse de aslında ABD'nin kanla dolu siyahî mücadele tarihinin tamamına ayna tutuyor. Sadece Sutton'da değil, o dönem baskı altına alınan tüm siyahîlerin Kent State, Orangeburg, Jackson State ve Selma'da havaya kaldıkları tek yumruğun, yönetim gücüne sahip olanlara karşı olmayanların, kurulu düzene karşı deşimin, baskıya karşı özgürlüğün hikâyesini anlatıyor.

(K24'teki kitap incelememden bir kesit)

Mert Toparlak says

Muazzam, kesinlikle muazzam bir kitap

Matt says

I picked up this book because I'm a big fan of Scott-Heron's music and wanted to see if Scott-Heron the novelist was on par with Scott-Heron the musician. In short, the book did not disappoint.

A look at student unrest at a fictional black college in Virginia, *The Nigger Factory* follows an interesting cast of characters as they try to overthrow the university's status quo against a hard-headed and strict university president.

The story moves slowly in the beginning, but makes up for it in the end--almost too much. I found myself wanting the book to continue, not because the writing was so great (the writing is good), but because so much action was packed into the last 30 or so pages. The ending itself felt too abrupt and I found myself without closure for most of the book's characters.

All in all a good read and the fact that it was written by a musical icon certainly helps.

Mark says

This early novel by Gil Scott-Heron is set in the heated campus politics of the late 60s, where a black establishment comes into conflict with the radical forces of black power. Ironic and angry, just as Gil Scott-Heron's lyrics are.

Tunde says

i loved this book. as a product of two hbcu's i could relate to the struggle that the the student's faced in the book and the methods they used to try to resolve these issues. the one thing i didn't like about the book is its abrupt ending.

Les says

This was so divergent from anything I've ever read - hard to rate it and I don't know if my 2.5 does it justice. It's been called satire and a parable. I dunno about that. What he was saying was pretty direct. This was not some sort of Candide at a 1970s HBCU deal. It was also called explosive and enraged - that's definitely true. I thought I knew where he came down on women until the end and it didn't go where I expected it to go, though there is some serious twists, turns and tension in the middle. Simple, complex and more about black males than anything else. A surprise find for me at the library.

Susan Steed says

Fuck, this book is depressing.

I picked it up thinking it was going to be a satire about the state of the American Education system. The authors note contains this statement:

“Change is overdue. Fantasies about the American Dream are now recognized by Black people as hoaxes and people are tired of trying to become a part of something that deprives them of the necessities of life even after years of bogus study in preparation for this union. A college union is not a ticket on the Freedom Train. It is, at best, an opportunity to learn more about the systems that control life and destroy life: an opportunity to cut through the hypocrisy and illusion that America represents”.

But the stuff it makes you really think about is about how change can happen and if it can happen. Who is fighting for what, who is leading the fight, who you are for and who you are against.

Amanda Webb says

I seem to have read loads of books set on college campus but this one was different as it's about an all Black college and revolution. I don't know enough about history to know if the two student factions were base on Martin Luther King and Malcolm X but it appears that way. Maybe because of the subject matter it reminded me of Do The Right Thing.

I love Gil Scott Heron and until i was given this book at Christmas I didn't know he wrote books. I want to make a corney joke like "This revolution might not be televised but will be written as a novel... but I won't."

Jeff says

Despite its inflammatory title, Scott-Heron (yes, THE Scott-Heron--as in, the musician)'s novel is an excellent allegory for the institutionalized racism in contemporary American education. Microcosmically, the concerns of the novel's protagonists are how to progress against the latent, deeply-rooted prejudices of higher education. With its origins in Greek culture, academia (note the Greek word) remains in a system of hierarchies which subjugates members of groups not associated with the hegemony. On Sutton University's campus, the black students no longer wish to participate in an education that falsely promises a future for them.

At a macro level, the novel represents far more complex issues with racial progress, particularly within the black community. Earl, the SGA president, has ideas of using the system for the advantage of his people. The radical MJUMBE student group, conversely, believes the system must be destroyed altogether and be rebuilt. These interests collide with the black president, Calhoun, who has given up his progressive ideas for a seat within the academic hierarchy.

Well-written (except for sentimental sections concerning boy and girl relationships) and poignant, it's also important to point out the occasions of sexism in the novel, suggesting Scott-Heron is not beyond recognizing the multi-layered effects of prejudice.

Ultimately, Scott-Heron seems to advocate for non-violent approaches to racism. He illustrates the destructive problems that occur when peace is not available.

Angela says

The authentic voices of the main characters, young black men and women, were very well-written. Heron touches upon the zeitgeist of the time, that civil rights that were won in the movement in the '60s needs to go further and recognise that black students may not want to study in whitewashed universities with Eurocentric values and ideals. A very interesting and thought-provoking read, certainly relevant back then.

Intortetor says

siamo in america, nel post-68, in un'università frequentata da neri: il luogo ideale per permettere all'immenso gil scott-heron di mettere in scena i due aspetti della rivolta giovanile, quello "legalitario" che cerca di usare leggi e regolamenti per cambiare lo status quo e quello "movimentista"/"stradaio", che è stanco di aspettare ed è pronto a prendersi i suoi diritti "con ogni mezzo necessario" (citazione NON casuale e peraltro presente nel romanzo). i secondi -il gruppo informale mjumbe, che già solo dal nome ti evoca un mondo simil black panthers con il miles davis più funk a far da colonna sonora- voglion far le scarpe al rappresentate dei primi, ma non tutto andrà come avevano previsto. intorno varie storie black di quelle che abbiamo conosciuto da ste parti attraverso film e canzoni, e la storia sembra assolutamente verosimile. e allora? e allora manca qualcosa, ti alzi da tavola non ancora sazio: ok. forse è giusto così, sappiamo che il finale sarà più cronaca da quotidiano che romanzo, però l'avremmo letto volentieri. e certi personaggi avrebbero meritato qualcosina in più. insomma, mancava pochissimo per avere un piccolo capolavoro. abbiamo comunque una spaccato di una pagina di storia -le rivolte nere dei 70s- che hollywood non ci ha sempre raccontato bene e che non sempre filtra dai romanzi. right on, brothers and sisters, right on...

Ben says

surprisingly easy to read, some good characters. It starts off off like you're looking in on something that's maybe important to this handful of students but by the end of it you're drawn in and realise this is some pretty serious stuff.

jeremy says

the nigger factory, published in 1972, is gil scott-heron's second novel. altogether different from his first work, *the vulture*, *the nigger factory* relays the tale of campus unrest at the fictional sutton university, a black college in virginia. more overtly political than his previous novel, this story is the result of scott-heron's obvious frustration with the american higher education system. in the author's note that precedes the text, he writes, "change is overdue. fantasies about the american dream are now recognized by black people as hoaxes... a college diploma is *not* a ticket on the freedom train. it is, at best, an opportunity to learn about the systems that control life and destroy life: an opportunity to cut through the hypocrisy and illusion that america represents. new educational aspects must be discovered... the main trouble in higher education lies in the fact that while the times have changed radically, educators and administrators have continued to plod along through the bureaucratic red tape that stalls so much american progress."

whereas *the nigger factory* is perhaps more predictable than *the vulture*, it is possessed by a far greater urgency and sense of purpose. at no point does scott-heron delve into proselytizing, instead he merely offers an all too realistic scenario of what happens when a progressive, dynamic force for change confronts an unyielding, entrenched power system. this book is a fascinating exploration of a turbulent period, but also of an ongoing struggle yet to find resolution. gil scott-heron's observations are keen, his storytelling ability well developed, and his sense of justice carefully considered.

with canongate books republishing both *the vulture* and *the nigger factory* this year and a new album due out in february (*i'm new here*), the godfather of rap, and his art, ought to be enjoying a well-deserved resurgence in popularity.

Emre says

"Tanr? olsayd? bunlar olmazd?." Sf:122

Frightful_elk says

I started this book constantly looking out for what Heron was trying to say. Half way through I relaxed and started enjoying it as a book, and was much better for it. This isn't propaganda, it's a good story about how we can get caught up in politics.

A great read from an exciting thinker. My one disappointment is that Heron who was so brilliant at deconstruction fails to deconstruct his idealised notions of masculinity and manhood.
