

I CHOOSE PAINTING

In the era of the female artist and her powerful texts, articles, lectures, performance, memes, installation, videos and internet stuff I choose painting. I cannot compete nor argue or disagree; I don't want to. The radical thoughts and positions concerning structure, politics, war, theory, language, the sexes, anthropology, archives, the digital etc., is impressive and topical.

I can't stake out my pitch as I keep thinking about bananas and melons. My playground is the one offered by such confluences of that in which the novels *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Jean Rhys, 1966) and *Frenchman's Creek* (Daphne du Maurier, 1941) evoke. These are about how romance fades in and out of complex social structures. Both stories star heiresses who very differently experience desire and loss in the same era, in countries linked by a trade in people and exotic goods, at the hands of men. The former is a prequel to *Jane Eyre* (a proper novel) set in Jamaica where Mr Rochester meets his Creole wife-to-be Antoinette Cosway (Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*, whilst *Frenchman's Creek* (a pot-boiler) is set on the rocky coast of 18th Cornwall: *pirates ~ travel ~ the colonies*. A bottle of *Jamaica Rum* was the beginning; the rest was a mango ice cream dessert that sounded like someone imagining the scent of WOMAN. I see two sides of my femaleness or more delicately, my uhmhm *delicate*, one repressed and the other *rampant*. Both novels end with the failure of love, one catastrophically, the other through social mores. The sense of defeat, in one, justified (both on the part of the subject and the reader), in the other, pure romantic longing (unjustified definitely, except if measured against the constraints of a patriarchal society). (Thankfully in another Du Maurier, *Jamaica Inn* the heroine does get to go off with a horse thief – he admires her riding skills).

But as I find myself reeling and curling away from this nonsense and start thinking, thinking, thinking of politics, sexual politics, psychology, philosophical trajectories, employing contemporary materials, I am scrambled and I realise I can only deal in the insular, with full frontal surfaces, images identified.

I can't even be bothered to try to take on these complex notions. I guiltily seek pleasure. Instead I can adopt the position that women are still ascribed to in the main (that of being the producer of obedient compromise, that the male might still be able to go out and kill (even if it's just killing a keyboard))), and just accept the hegemony of male materials and let myself scramble in male shit for breath. My thoughts are only of escape, simplicity, sensuality. SO I CHOOSE PAINTING.

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