“Merry Schadenfreude!”

(SHA- den- froid- dah)

(An alternate holiday greeting for our newly altered world.)

November 21, 2017 By Lora René Tucker

Warning:

The above greeting is an oxymoron… And made up. But not the words.

‘Tis the season of Schadefreude…

HUH?!

“SHA - den - froid (like Sigmund Freud) - dah”

It’s a noun; it’s origin is German, meaning: Schaden = Harm Freude = Joy

“Pleasure derived by someone from another person’s misfortune.”

Wikipedia states: “Schadenfreude is the experience of pleasure, joy, or self-satisfaction that comes from learning of or witnessing the troubles, failures, or humiliation of another.”

Untranslatable German Words: Teil 2 explains:

“This refers to the secret glee you feel when a co-worker you don’t like gets reprimanded by your boss, or the maliciously happy feeling you get when someone who thinks they are perfect makes a fool of themselves. The best translation I’ve seen of it is “malicious pleasure”.

Sounds familiar? Why am I bringing up this obscure word?

Because, like Alice climbing out of the rabbit hole into a strange land, or Dorothy stepping off of Auntie Em’s porch, I feel as if we have stepped into a strange new world that doesn’t feel particularly nice… or safe. It’s like walking into an altered world – where the house fell and landed on our national morals and values, allowing hate to pin us down and begin destroying our foundation (that we call the U.S. Constitution) … and the ruby red shoes that get us back “home” have been stolen and auctioned off on E-bay.

In this alternate world, there is no celebration of Thanksgiving; New Years is more like Ground Hogs Day, and people greet each other with sarcasm, aloofness, or melancholy stating:

“MERRY SCHADENFREUDE!”

“SHA- den- froid- dah…” Whatever.

There are no cards, no gifts or decorations. And the ones who relish in this “season,” in the land of Schadenfreude, are putting AR-15s out for Un-Santa, Jägermeister for the Grinch, and talk about Scrooge “Before the ghosts.”

Fa La-la-la-Laaaa… Yadda- yadda.

“Schadenfreude Carols” are being sung everywhere:

“We wish you a “Scha-den-freud-dah…”

“…Although it’s been said, many times, many ways, Merry ‘Sha-den-freud-dah’ to you.”

(There are still nuts on an open fire… but whose?)

‘Tis the season!

In this alt-world, there is an “Un-Santa,” (not to be confused with the “Un-cola”). He’s the evil sibling of Biily Bob’s “Bad Santa,” who resembles Steven King’s “IT” …Just waiting for you to sit on his lap… little boy or girl… (Can you hear the typical horror soundtrack coming at you in the background? Not Jingle Bells.) In this world, Rod Serling is too scared to do his prologue, but trust me, we ARE in the Twilight Zone. This Un-Santa puts coal (or some other fossil fuel) in every stocking for those who are “good,” while stuffing an alibi or excuse for (himself and) the “naughty.” You know he’s coming, because he sucks the oxygen out of the air whenever he appears in his coat of orange; touching hearts and turning them into stone, then taking away their health care so they can’t get treated…

Yes, “It’s a holy, jolly Schadenfreude.”

The Un-Santa travels in his gas-guzzling Hummer, riding his “cabinet;” hard, beasts-of-burden that are pulling his weight as fast as they can:

“On Pence, on Sessions, on Ryan, and Perry; on Kushner, on McConnell, on Mnuchin and Kelly…” (with Bannon as the red-nosed zealot and flood light; Tillerson the “Head Elf.”)

Yes, in this alter (right) world: Stress is in the air… hate is everywhere…

And people are getting joy from other people’s pain. Even a few people – maybe only one or two – are basking with joy while creating a world of chaos, pain, and fear. This is Schadenfreude.

Robert Tracinski of The Federalist wrote about “The Schadenfreude Phase of the Trump Administration is Hitting Already”, on September 11th, 2017… 9/11… NBC News has had segments called: “This Week in Schadenfreude.”

I don’t know if it is comforting that I am not alone in thinking this way…

So how do we fight against this season of Schadenfreude becoming a tradition? How do we make sure it doesn’t become as common as the horrid domestic and extremist terrorism and sadistic murders we are reading and viewing on our “electronic devices?” As accepted as the Tiki lamp marches and scores of fundamentalist lemmings that would rather unite to support a bully/creep or support exclusion and hate rather than stand on moral and social accord and justice?

DO NOT LOSE HOPE! I always think of my ancestors, most were enslaved and held hostage to an institution that I cannot imagine; living a life knowing that all is against their very existance. Even after “emancipation,” they were subject to a racism so entrenched that they were still held in captivity… But they persevered and survived so that I could survive and even thrive. They did not lose hope, therefore, I will always honor my ancestors. Find your hope and hold on!

KEEP CALM AND BE KIND. First to yourself. A friend of mine, Michael Mut, is an artist and the president and founder of the “Love Yourself Project” (loveyourselfproject.org). He gives out these stickers that simply state: LOVE YOURSELF. I have used them all over, one on the cover of my journal, another on a screen next to my bed, also on my date book… so I can be reminded to put that “beat myself-up” machine (with the boot at the end) away and give myself a hug. Only then I can reach out to others.

STAY AWAKE! Or according to the current lexicon: “Stay Woke!” Don’t let that pod hiding in the coat closet roll out and open. Don’t allow tribalism to seep into your eyes, ears, and nose and infect you. We are all in this together, so have an oar and paddle! Don’t just lull yourself into aloofness, ambivalence, or tribalism; keep informed about everything AND everybody! Try to understand the “others” in your life.

PAY IT FORWARD; DO A SIMPLE R.A.K. (Random Act of Kindness) It doesn’t take any extra energy or oxygen to do something nice. Volunteer - but if the idea of doing that makes your head explode (no judgement,) just do something beyond your “little box;” just get out of that box! Consider it a selfish act… to make YOU feel good. Go on, dammit! Put a smile on someone’s face… kick Schadenfreude in the ass!

So, as I struggle through the season of Schadenfreude, I keep those points in front of me. But even I, witnessing the past year, often experience “Fremdscham.” But I’ll survive.

What is Fremdscham? that’s for a future post… And believe me, we are “fremdscham-ing” all over the place… I know, you want a head start and know what Fremdscham is?

GOOGLE IT!

And have a safe and Happy Holiday.

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