



TRASHING THE WORLD WITH TRUMP: MIRRORING THE MONSTER SIDE OF AMERICA

Los Angeles Sentinel, 01-21-16, p.A6

DR. MAULANA KARENGA

SURELY, IT IS NOT sacrilegious to assert or even unpatriotic to affirm what history and current practice already prove: that “America the Beautiful” has an ugly side, indeed a monster side, in spite of its songs, tweets, Facebook “likes” and general propaganda of self-praise. Such a Janus-faced, two faced, character was present at the beginning of America’s creation, but its “beautiful” side was put forth as the whole of what it was. The image was cultivated with racial and religious arrogance, untruth and exaggeration, recruiting religious language and leaders to support its claims to other peoples’ lands, lives and resources through conquest, colonization, enslavement and occupation. And in the midst of all this destruction, there was/is a studied denial of the devastation being imposed on the targeted people in these systems of suppression and slaughter, whether at home or abroad.

Thus, in spite of fake and feeble attempts to define Donald Trump as rich White trash, a rogue, renegade or rare occurrence, as he trashes the world and promises to do more if elected, he mirrors the monster side of “America the Beautiful”. Trump mirrors the monster side of America in political campaign costume, unmasked and without subterfuge, reality TV raw and on primetime, straight out and straight down dirty, nasty, mean-spirited, racist, religiously chauvinistic, constantly seeking an easy kill. And he does it with the arrogance and know-nothing cockiness of the uninformed and small-minded who are sure of what they claim to know, because they know so little and could not be less concerned with complexity, deep thought or truth.

His money has made him, and too many in America respect that more than other peoples’ lives, lands, rights, needs or aspirations also for a good life for themselves and their children. Trump’s appeals have not only been to the racist and anti-immigrant audience who feel the immigrant, refugee, residents and citizens of different colors and kind are taking their jobs, changing their country and ruining their lives. Equally

important, he carries the water and “let-us-prey” position of the predatory billionaire class to which he belongs. These ruling class billionaires want to make the world safe, not for pretensions of democracy, but safe for their wealth and power and the predatory ways they acquire them.

Trump has directed his attacks against the vulnerable and different—African Americans, Mexicans and other Latinos, Asians, Arabs and Muslims, disabled people and women. He won’t say internment Japanese Americans was wrong and proposes building a racial and religious apartheid wall at the border, registering all Muslims, surveilling their mosques and banning any Muslims from entering the U.S. And he claims America “has become a dumping ground” for undesirables. His language is America’s language of an unrestrained violence by self-proclaimed racial and religious superiors, i.e., attack, torture, kill, destroy, “shock and awe”, “bomb them to hell” and kill the whole family of a suspect. He contrasts the White winner, wealthy and powerful with those of another color, characterized as losers, weak, poor and unworthy of respect.

The Republican politicians, self-declared guardians of the realm and guides to the patriotic and perplexed, tried for some time to out-Trump Trump in cultivating fear, hatred, and the will to violence against the vulnerable and different. From among them comes the language and discourse of racial and religious supremacy, calling for carpet bombing, making the sands glow with radiation, indicting and ruthlessly attacking Islam and its adherents, and urging and approving governors’ closing the border to refugees fleeing from the chaos and killing in Syria, which is a product of U.S.’ policy of regime change and policing and parenting the world. If Dr. Martin Luther King called his country, America, “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world” in the 1960s, what would he say of it now with its enhanced technology of war and the demonstrated will to use it?

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Even in efforts to distance from or disavow Trump, what is stressed is not what these calls for hate, fear and violence against the vulnerable and different do to its human targets and victims, but more of what they do to damage America's reputation, the image of its beautiful side. This fits well within America's monster side morality where what is hated and condemned is not so much untruth and injustice, but being caught and being unable to justify it, turn it around on the victim, win the gullible to endorse and/or excuse it, and explain it away with another virtue or value one is perceived to have.

Thus, it is said: yes, he lies, but he is consistent; yes, he is irrational, but he speaks from the heart; yes, he wants to kill whole families in pursuit of suspects, but he is concerned about our security; and yes, he is mean-spirited, narrow-minded and petty, but he wants to make America great again. And yes, he's, irreparably flawed, but look at the polls—he's winning.

Trump and his trumpeteers say he wants to "make America great again". But what does this mean and down what road of ruin will it take the country? He sounds like historical counterparts whose road to "greatness" was fascism, i.e., a system of fear, hatred, scapegoating, grievance and violence toward the different and vulnerable, racism, suppression of all opposition, sacrifice of human and civil rights and democratic rule for a false sense of glory, security and supremacy, worship of technological weapons within a religion of war and practice of aggression and the cultivation of conditions and consciousness that unreflectively support and even demand it.

And when he and they speak of "making America great again" are they conjuring up an imaginary and ideal time when White was right

and without question; when imperial aggression, colonization, genocide and enslavement took on a religious tone and texture and claims were made of a "Manifest Destiny", a divine right of conquest and a divine gift of a "promised land", unjustly and savagely dispossessing its original inhabitants? Or do they dream with drones of the long period of White terrorism dressed in Christian clothes and claims, of the physical, legal and psychological lynching and imposition of social death and other savage practices of White segregation of and against Black people—as well as other people of color in varied forms?

It is in this period of American history that Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer stood up among the millions of oppressed and struggling African Americans and called on us to *question America* through *criticism and struggle*, question its self-congratulatory claim to be "the home of the brave and the land of the free" in the midst of so much cowardice, unfreedom, injustice and official evil. In this King Week, it is good to remember Dr. King's teaching that *greatness* is rooted and reflected in service to others.

And it is good also to remember always the **A**ethical teachings of our ancestors in the midst of current and continuing confusion of wealth, power or even technological knowledge with greatness. For they teach us to focus instead on what we should do with these capacities, i.e., use them to improve the human condition and enhance the well-being of the world. Thus, they teach in the *Husia*, "the wise are known by their wisdom but *the great are known by their good deeds*" in and for the world. It is good to struggle and good to serve, then, and this, our ancestors reassure us, is the real and righteous road to greatness and shared good in the world.

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