



## CONFINEMENT BLUES: will they lead to the end of Trump ... and the purging of his clones from leadership roles?

*... Is the corona virus a mini-Jesus, here to cleanse us of our sins?*

Locked in by Covid-19, one begins to ruminate on past experiences and more disturbingly, to question internally whether those care-free days will ever return. Prior to household confinement there were a multitude of choices to meet insatiable appetites, so that now when confined to inbound activities, the outbound adventures of yesteryear start to assume the guise of the holy grail! Everyone begins to cherish what has been lost.

On a personal level this microscopic molecule is forcing us to address and respect the lives we led prior to the pandemic. What we thought were rights now appear more like privileges. Looking at the wider frame – the state, the nation, the world – perhaps this tiny beast is here to highlight the fact that we have gone too far down the wrong road and that for humankind's sake, changes are required to put us back on the right track: a mini-Jesus for the modern world, come to cleanse us of our sins ... one might argue!

There was a lovely (and pointed) aside from musician John Prine, which gains even more significance considering how, just a few months ago he succumbed to Covid-19. Finishing one of his own compositions entitled *Caravan of Fools* he remarked: “**Any likeness to the current administration is purely ... accidental.**” Such a subtle reference said all we need to know about the wrong road taken by this current US presidency, resulting in unimaginable mayhem in its fourth and final year. In a similar vein, but not just with reference to the USA, the brilliant historian/philosopher Yuval Noah Harari observes that ‘**humankind has an immense capability for stupidity!**’

In my continuing confined state, I happened to turn back to Barack Obama performing at his last dinner for the press corps. It was like watching a well-managed, well-timed stage performance: brilliant oratory, hilarious jokes, underscoring a genuine guy, fully in charge of his agenda. Such a stark contrast to the orange-faced alien that we have become used to enduring today. Which suddenly made me realise how much the USA and the world has lost. We have become so used to living with a misguided misogynist at the helm, that I for one had almost forgotten what good leadership looks like.

It has taken less than four years, to go from one of the most accomplished presidents America has managed to produce, to the worst leader since Andrew Jackson, the dictatorial racist of the mid-1800s - or on second thoughts, maybe including Andrew Jackson – and it feels now that the positive years of Obama are light years behind us. Much of the progress Obama made, faced with a hostile congress, has been blown away by Trump. That would seem to be stupidity, in the extreme!

Yuval Harari also talks about three main challenges that face the human race in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The first is **Climate Change**, the second **Nuclear Holocaust**, and the third **Artificial Intelligence**. So how are we doing with Trump on these three? On climate change he is in denial, preferring to bolster the fortunes of the fossil fuel industry. On nuclear, who could know when he might push the boundaries too far with Iran or China, or any other nation. And on A.I. the likelihood is a stereotypical ‘**If it’s good for big business, it’s good for him**’ scenario: not the best approach to take on the issue that Harari rates as possibly the most demanding - and potentially most dangerous - of all.

Faced with these three challenges that loom so large, it is then quite a paradox that in the end Trump's exit from the political world could be brought about by a microscopic virus. As for all the preceding topics which challenge his dominance, he ducks and weaves, hurling lies and insults at his assailants, like a punch-drunk, talking parrot. But amazingly, he remains there on his perch. No one person; no one incident, or collection of incidents - now stacked to the rafters - seem to be able to deliver the knockout blow. But in the final analysis it could indeed be one of the few positives that Covid-19 delivers: the end of Trump and a return to something that resembles normality ... or as many progressives are saying: to something that builds back to a better normal!

In both the USA and other parts, we can hope and plan for a reverse swing of the pendulum, due to the incompetence (and denial) of self-aggrandising leaders, during the pandemic. Trump and his clones - *Putin, Johnson, Erdogan, Bolsanaro*, and others. – all have one thing in common: they subvert the truth to suite their personal needs, and part of that need is a craving for endless power. But the corona virus has had the positive effect of drawing back the blinkers; it has pulled the blinds away from the eyes of people who mistakenly voted for these authoritarian figures, in the first place. The emperors are suddenly without their clothes – defrocked by Covid-19 - and now more and more people are able to see them for what they really are: fakes, who peddle untruths!

But the mind-challenging question is: why do people get sucked in by the obvious lies and phony, rosy pictures, put about by these so-called populists, in the first place? Everyday life is not like that. For most people, panaceas do not drop from the sky, miraculously presenting a world where everyone mingles with their own kind, earns a high salary and lives in an unlikely, mixed state of calm and euphoria. *Peter Pan* and *Alice in Wonderland* (like *the Emperor's Clothes*) are not true stories! ... they are works of fiction. There is no free lunch! Where is the massive re-claim from Europe, to fund the NHS? Where is the wall and when will the Mexicans pay for it? Why are we conned into believing such bullshit: fake fairy stories from fantasy land?

And when our self-made megalomaniacs get the urge to come forth, lie, and control, why don't we treat them with the ridicule they deserve. There is nothing like a humorous

put-down to put a control freak off his stride, as many women can testify to: laughing at a male's member or his bedroom abilities, has an instantaneous damping down effect. Similarly, comedienne *Michelle Wolf* chose insults to hurt Trump, by discarding the obvious and going for the jugular: ***“Mr President, I don't think you're very rich!”*** (She was dead right there, of course!) ... then to her audience, ***“You don't really think he's good in bed, do you?”*** Impotency at the bank and in the bed: his worst nightmares!

I recently caught a wonderful line from a contributor to the *France24 Debate* when he said: ***“After this (US) election, we can only hope that Trump will be thrown into the dustbin of history ... and maybe a jail cell”***.

For the sake of humankind, and the planet we exist on, let us hope that the first part of that quotation will become fact. For the second part, well that could be an added bonus, though I am sure DT's many Christian followers would say we should *turn-the-other-cheek*. (Said, I might add, with this writer's tongue stuck firmly in his own cheek!).

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