

British values, Brexit and Trump – the states we're now in

A MEDITATION FOR TODAY

Presentation by Robin Richardson at the annual conference of the Consortium of Development Education Centres (CoDec), Birmingham, 1 December 2016



'We're out!', they crowed, we're out and proud,
self-styled 'real people', triumphant and loud.
They'd got their country back, their turf and their ways,
the ones known by their forebears in good old days,
when foreigners everywhere, whatever their race,
were neither here nor uppity, knowing their place.



And there's another country, yearning likewise to be back
to carefree greatness, and to address the lack
of safety and security, and be a beacon once again
for the wretched of the earth, a Tarzan for a Jane.



Action on climate change, the man said, is not required, and Mexicans, Muslims, all other Others, you're fired.



From Brexit and Trump, much fear and dread
for multicultural, global, development ed –
a post-truth future of torment and woe,
as dragged forwards to nostalgia we now sadly go.

'Fundamental British values' – FBV,
Fanatical, vicious bullshit, deveders all agree.



But what do we do? How survive?

How on earth keep hope alive?

That's the question asked in this verse,
for things won't get better before they get worse.

In the clash of civilisations plans now are laid
for an endless, relentless crass crusade.



A crusade, as in 1095, against a race
that's supposedly satanic, degenerate, base.



Wherever they are, it's said, they're all just the same,
essentially Other and convinced in their claim,

as they hurt and hate and cruelly kill,
that what they are doing is Allah's will.

They hate our freedoms, our goodness, our calm -
without reason or cause they wish us harm,
refusing to cooperate or go our way:
violence and unreason in their DNA.



Their simple intention, like that of a vulture,
is to feed on our life-blood, wipe out our culture.



An effect of these views, and the pre-crime intent,
is to explain the approach of nasty Prevent.

Trump and Brexit say they'll sort Others out,

also us here today, it'll be a rout -
yep, we're almost defunct, we're walking dead,
we who work in development ed.

Really, dear friends, they'll sort us out too,
they'll expel and fire us, send off me and you.



We've lost a paradise, a promised land,
a species of Eden, peaceful and planned,
a place where another, we blissfully discover,
is not your enemy but your lover.



Equality and justice we believed were growing,
and we ourselves were really going
to convince, prevail, flourish, guide
steady and sure progress, history on our side.
From that paradise now we wend our way:
What as we journey do we want to say?

Well, here are ten topics in this world of doubt
we need to urgently think and talk about.

1) Facts and figures

We're post-truth people, yes, but that doesn't mean facts and figures don't matter – we must be seen to respect democracy but to insist the Trump and Brexit votes weren't clearcut.

2) Honesty about the past

The Eden we have lost (see above) was nice but also, frankly, a fools' paradise: we were not always coming in on the tide with the march of history on our side.

3) Respect

Some politicians are by no means adorable but the people they dupe are not all deplorable, they are not (*pace* Hillary} mere basket cases, but human like us with voices and faces. (Good/bad does not equal us/them, for see the good/bad distinction is inside everyone, including me.)



4) Empathy

Another person isn't you, OK, but isn't essentially foe – an 'enemy' is simply someone whose story you don't know. Concerning Brexiteers and Leavers, Trump fans and some Tories - deved people should attend to their stories.

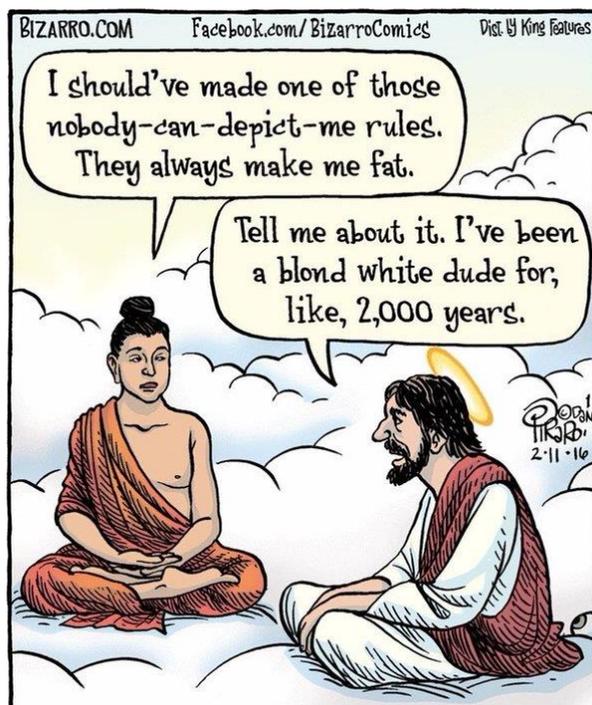
5) Things in common

We're all in this together, victims of the tosses of life's dice, and all of us mourning multiple losses. All just about managing, left behind, turbulence the norm, amidst economic, social, cultural change – a perfect storm.



6) Racisms literacy

Both race and faith can be marks of the Other -- someone who's neither sister nor brother. In every racism we must face the brute fact: culture and colour interact.





Patience and passion

Seek patience and passion

in equal amounts.

Patience alone

will not build the temple.

Passion alone will

destroy its walls.

Maya Angelou

Background: further information

For further information about the background to this meditation, please see:

Making our states fair again - [post-election reflections, November 2016](#)

Grief, anger and re-engagement - [post-referendum thoughts and action](#)

A multi-storied nation - [religion and belief in modern Britain](#)

Islamophobia, still a challenge for us all - ['what Muslims really think'](#)
