

OPINION: Strength and the "Divine Madness" of Reason

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It is difficult not to repeat oneself. Each day unfolds like the last. Everything has already been said, yet words bounce back, powerless against the march of death. Words against bombs, gunfire, arrests, deportations, blockades. Reason is ignored, while brute force prevails. We already know this. And yet, it is not enough.

As this is written, children, women, and the elderly are being gunned down or burned alive in Gaza. They are not the same as yesterday's victims, though their faces look alike. Their Arabic names are quickly forgotten. Israel strikes Tehran, and Europe remains silent. Not the ordinary European, not the white Anglo-Saxon American whose standard of living has declined and who clings to the hope of recovery—they do not know; they have been systematically lied to. It is those who *do* know who remain silent.

Does Trump truly represent the impoverished workers of North America against the greed and arrogance of Hollywood and New York's intellectual and financial elite, as some claim? Is Trump not part of that very elite? Would he govern against his own interests?

In reality, this is a battle between elites—elite versus elite. The people are merely a pedestal; the justifiably discontent workers are manipulated and, in the long run, expendable. Perhaps what we see are desperate attempts to reclaim a crumbling hegemony—an exploitative system with medieval levels of cruelty. But systematic lies and desperation can lead to fascism.

Will we ever be able to forgive the Jews living in occupied Palestine for wanting to expel Palestinians from their land? Can we pardon the nearly 50 percent of Israeli Jews who support extermination and cheer at the suffering of their millennia-old neighbors?

While imperialism suffocates the Cuban people, hoping to incite rebellion against the revolutionary government and reclaim its former neocolony; while Latin American immigrants are shot and beaten in the streets of Los Angeles; while Ukrainians die defending foreign and incomprehensible interests, far removed from patriotism; while Israeli genocide and expansion continue, with Europe looking the other way; while the biggest thieves go unpunished,

jailing their opponents in sham trials (like Cristina's in Argentina); while the environment collapses, with atmospheric phenomena threatening to render the planet uninhabitable—there exists an international elite living in a bubble of comfort, deaf, blind, and numb.

This elite excels at producing distractions—news of weddings, divorces, infidelities, births, or the peaceful passing of an octogenarian grandfather—mundane events that matter only to those directly involved. Yet this very elite, deaf, mute, and blind, is sold to us as the model of success.

We should not take the verbal spats among these elites (the new royalty) too seriously. There will always be backroom deals to protect their mutual interests. If Musk steps back (and he will, without losing), Bezos steps in.

Speaking of Jeff Bezos—he is getting married in late June in Venice, the floating city of Romeo and Juliet. He has booked five luxury hotels, an impressive fleet of gondolas, and a port for his \$500 million megayacht, where the ceremony will likely take place. Though it is a lucrative deal for the city, locals protest: *"Venice is a living city, not a venue for rent to the highest bidder."* But that is only one side of the issue. The bigger question is ethical.

On the wedding day, as the red carpet rolls out and the global jet set parades obscenely expensive outfits and jewels for the cameras, will the world's massacres pause? Rumors swirl that Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner may attend. Power reunites, indulges itself. This is not a mad world—it is an obscene one.

The true "madmen" in this "rational," fiercely individualistic world are the Quixotes fighting for others. One often thinks of Miguel D'Escoto, the Nicaraguan priest and guerrilla, who said at the turn of the century:

"Right now, Cuba, despite its own struggles, is thinking about helping others—and doing so on an incredible scale. (...) I remember a student once asked me, 'Tell me, what is the most important thing missing in the world?' We need, I told him, an injection of divine madness. The divine madness of the cross. That is what is needed: a crazier world, more people doing things so 'mad' that others say, 'You are insane—why worry about the world? Worry about yourself! You could be filthy rich!' I hope they call us all mad for trying to make a better world."

Bezos' megayacht has no room for the world. But if the world becomes uninhabitable, it will not do him much good.

Strength may prevail in the short term, but unless the "mad ones" win—those who love peace and justice, who defend peoples' right to self-determination—everyone loses. Humanity, distracted, marches toward self-destruction.

Translated by Amilkal Labañino / CubaSi Translation Staff
