

NIGGERIZED

Michael Bettencourt

347-564-9998 • michaelbettencourt@outlook.com • m-bettencourt.com

Cornel West has the used this term, though I am sure he isn't the only one, to describe a state in which American non-black people are now being treated like American black people, which he described as being "unsafe and unprotected, subjected to unjustified violence, and hated."

Non-black people do not like being niggerized, but that has been what's happening since about the mid-1970s, when economic/political decisions kicked off the hollowing-out of the middle class and the misery-making social and income inequalities we have today.

What do these niggerized people do? They elect Donald Trump to un-niggerize them because Trump promised to return to them the right to feel superior and entitled. This rhetoric, of course, comes across in code, voiced strongly in works like Arlie Russel Hochschild's *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*: *they* have cut in line, *they* have gotten unearned benefits from the government, *they* haven't followed the rules, *they* don't hold themselves accountable like I do for myself. They feel that *these people* have stolen something from them, and they want it back: "Make America Great Again," "take back our country."

The condescension, hypocrisy, whinging and fact-ignorance displayed by the newly niggerized has now been valorized by our government and our media, who are collaborating to honor their pain and do what can be done to restore their pride and make manifest their nostalgia. After all, there is money to be made in this and power to be gained.

In the meantime, those for whom being niggerized has always been their way of life continue to be "unsafe and unprotected, subjected to unjustified violence, and hated." See Castile, Philando.

America does not seem to have a way out of this polarity. The original sin of slavery cannot be erased, nor can the requirement that every niggerized group that wants to un-

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niggerize itself must offer a blood sacrifice to get the blessings of freedom and democracy. Sometime more than one sacrifice – many more. With no guarantees.

America is at a dead-end. Its politics, at least those practiced by the professional Washington politicians, is a politics of niggerization: how much can we impoverish and demean some groups so that our favored groups get more favors: how poor can we make the poor so that the rich can become richer? That is conservative politics today. And the more liberal politicians mirror their conservative peers, the less able they are to make a convincing case that they can protect those who are “unsafe and unprotected, subjected to unjustified violence, and hated.”

America has always been a collision sport with a long and deep trail of casualties. (There is a reason why football is a nationally hallowed sport that will never be derailed because of its concussive damage – it mirrors perfectly the national id.) It is time for other solutions. Here is mine.

I have always thought that the civil war of the 1860s never ended but has simply continued in ultra-slow motion and that this current iteration of America is just another phase of the warfare. This simmering civil instability is America’s most stable heritage – and perhaps it should provide the guideposts for moving forward.

Let us authorize the continuation of the secessionist impulse of the 1860s and divide the land into Swiss-style cantons organized by a new Articles of Confederation. No longer would we be harassed by our guilt or embarrassment over not fulfilling the lofty ideal of “E pluribus unum” – instead, we simply create institutions that reflect the reality of “from many come many, not one, people” (my Latin is not up to the translation) and divvy up the common wealth so that all can get a fresh start.

In this way, the niggerized, either newly minted or always-have-been, might have a better chance at life, liberty and the pursuit of their happinesses with less concussive injury than under the current management. There would also be the ancillary benefit of diluting the American imperial project, which has niggerized countless people across the globe.

Have your own solution? I’d love to hear it. And while you’re mulling it over, hear the [fiery tones of Cornel West](#).