

Donald Trump and the Second Sight

by Alastair McIntosh

31 COMMENTS

6TH NOVEMBER 2016



(<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/nostradumpus-1.jpg>) Alastair McIntosh on the psychopathology that the American election has set loose upon the world.

I was driving through Tong on the Isle of Lewis. I was with an old school friend from Leurbost village of my childhood on the island.

“Wonder which is Trump’s house?” I said, though not intending to veer off and go a-gawking. It was just a passing point of conversation, the way you do when driving round the island with folks who know it intimately, exchanging stories, retelling history, and whatever else comes from the free association that springs up along the route.

“I know which one,” he said. Then pre-emptively, just in case I was going to make a detour, “But I’m not showing anybody.”

In a nutshell, that sums up the island view of Trump. Partly because he so much doesn’t represent the island’s values that they’re at a loss to explain it. And equally, partly out of the respect for the privacy of the family. Trump is dirty washing that the island would rather not hang out, and not just on Sundays.

“Trump is dirty washing that the island would rather not hang out, and not just on Sundays.”

Donald John, or Dòmhnall Iain, is one of the most common island names. It translates, from the Latin and Norse roots, dom and val, as The Ruler of the World.



(http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/88639809_uklewistong6240316.png) Far be it for me to apply the Second Sight as to the American election outcome. Ironically, however, the island's traditions of the Second Sight – *an dà shealladh* or “the two sights” – might shed a little light on just how The Donald should have turned out so very wayward, or “prodigal”.

In his acclaimed biography of a way of life, *Isolation Shepherd*, Iain Thomson of Loch Monar remarks: “No Highlander has any doubt about the existence of the second sight or indeed simple prognostication.”

Such a statement still holds true of most indigenous Hebrideans to this day. It is based on ongoing experience. Experience that characterises tight knit communities where empathy remains profound. Where it does so because the deeper levels of the psyches of individuals are not as disconnected from one another as they become in highly competitive metropolitan settings.

I found myself reflecting on this after hitting on some correspondence about the Second Sight that took place in the late 1600s. It was between Lord Tarbett and Sir Robert Boyle.

“Donald John, or Dòmhnall Iain, is one of the most common island names. It translates, from the Latin and Norse roots, dom and val, as The Ruler of the World.”

Tarbett was one of the Mackenzies of Kintail and Seaforth, the Anglicised clan that had connived to own the Isle of Lewis from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Sir Robert Boyle was the Anglo-Irish physicist who gave us Boyle's Law – the one stating that the volume of a gas varies directly according to its temperature.

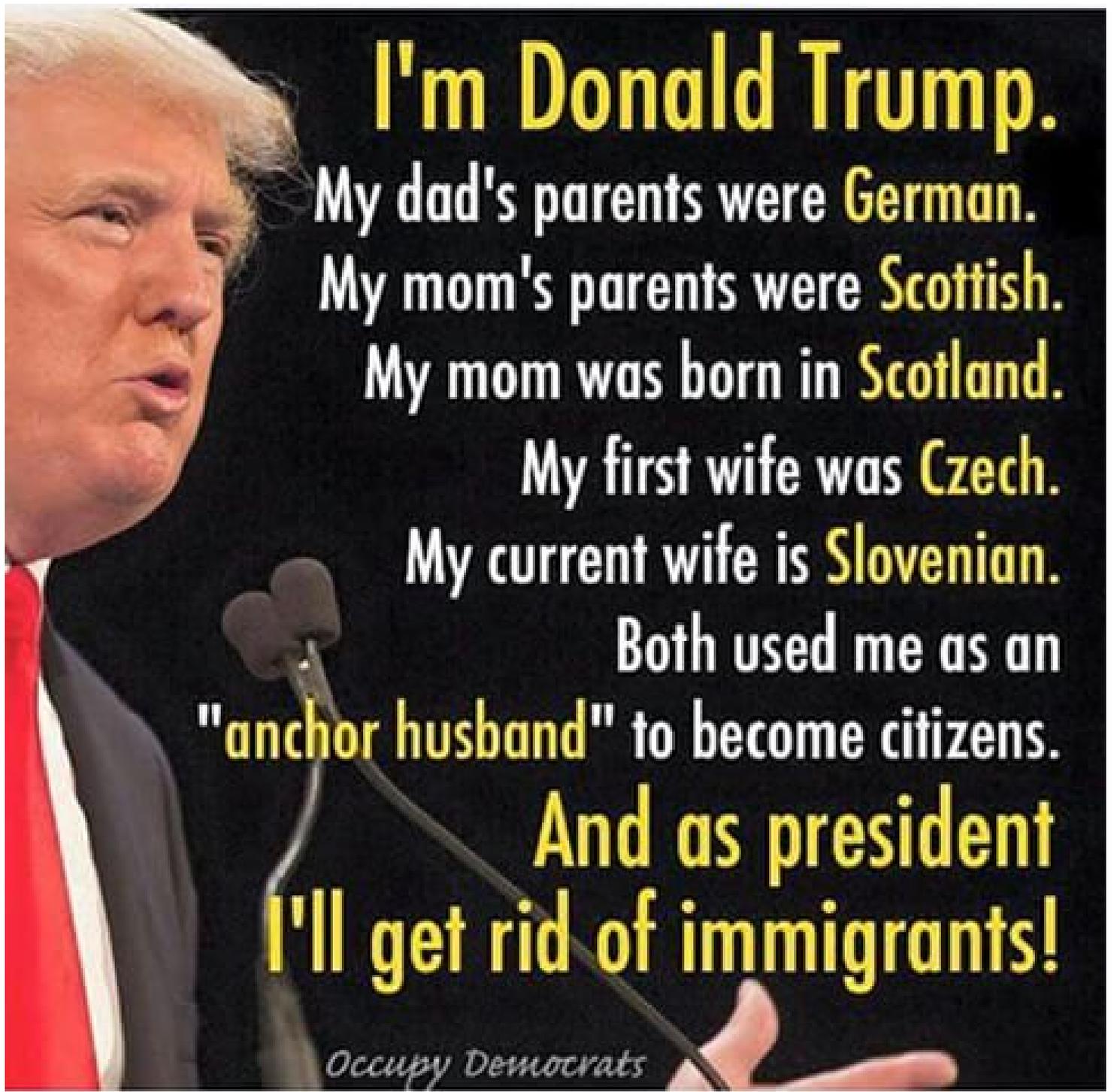
Their correspondence is quoted at some length by the Rev Robert Kirk of Aberfoyle, writing around 1690. His posthumously published book is called *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies*. Ethnographers consider it to be probably the most important early statement of Gaelic metaphysical beliefs.



(<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/FT5S-View-into-tong-village.jpg>) In response to Boyle's interest in the paranormal, Tarbett says: "There were more of these seers in the Isles of Lewis, Harris, and Uist than in any other place."

Tarbett took a business interest in "the African Trade," as he called black slavery. A later family owner of Lewis, Colonel Francis Humberston Mackenzie, governor of Barbados in the twilight years of British slavery. His daughter, Mary Elizabeth Frederica, inherited Lewis in 1815 and used her power of landed patronage to introduce the new breed of hardline evangelical clergy to the island.

Scroll below blank space in the PDF version taken off the web



(http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/928847_1677738595845858_1195214974_n.jpg) Tarbett tells Boyle about an observation made by a gentleman friend of his who been to the Barbados. Of islanders, who went abroad, “Several of those that did see with the Second Sight when in the Highlands or Isles, when transported to live in other countries, especially in America, they quite lost this quality.”

That fascinated me. It suggests that when the bonds of community are broken, the capacity for deepest intimacy goes too.

In recent articles, it has emerged that Donald Trump’s mother did not leave the island to go for a holiday in New York. As one island writer has it, the idea that anybody went from Lewis to New York for a holiday in the 1930s “is so unlikely it’s almost laughable.”

The Macleod family daughters who went to America were economic migrants who “made good”. There appears to have been a family difficulty involving Mary’s elder sister having a child out of wedlock, but in the backdrop, large numbers of the island’s youth were at that time emigrating to America.

Why? Because they lacked land, the prerequisite for livelihood.

Why did they lack land?

Because during the first half of the 19th century, the proto-capitalist speculative Mackenzie landlords evicted people from southern and western Lewis (Pairc and Uig). Their ancestral land was rented out for commercial sheep farming. These Hebridean expressions of the Highland Clearances started with the need Francis Humbertson to pay off his gambling debts run up in the Barbados. The first clearance orders were issued from that distant outpost of the Empire.

At the same time as Mary Elizabeth Frederica was evangelising the islanders with hellfire preaching, her second husband, James Alexander Stewart-Mackenzie was clearing them to maintain himself in the lifestyle to which he aspired. In Uig, land was even cleared of families specifically to make way for the minister's greed for grazings.

CNN Politics put it all in perspective this past week. It reported, from local genealogical evidence: "Two branches of Trump's family were forced from their homes in this way, becoming refugees in their own country – the Macauleys forced from their homes in the west of the isle, the Smiths further south."

When I look at Donald Trump – his colossal egotism, his grandiosity, his disconnect from empathy – I see a man who nurses a narcissistic wound, a wound to his primal integrity from places that he probably doesn't even know about. And that's just on his mother's side. Like those plantation managers in the African trade of whom Lord Tarbett spoke, his capacity to be and inwardly see – his capacity even to have an inner life as distinct from it all being on the outside – has been cut off by his deracination, his uprooting, from holding in his community.

“When I look at Donald Trump – his colossal egotism, his grandiosity, his disconnect from empathy – I see a man who nurses a narcissistic wound, a wound to his primal integrity from places that he probably doesn't even know about.”

Such is the tragic dynamic by which – not inevitably, but very often – the oppressed turn oppressor. It is why Paulo Freire said that the great task of the oppressed is to liberate their oppressor as well, otherwise there can be no lasting freedom.

Such a background also speaks to The Donald's appeal to poor white American voters, many of whom share a similar psychohistory. Their ancestral hearts, similarly, had metaphorically been buried at Wounded Knee, long before they and their kind perpetrated such massacres as Wounded Knee.

Such is the psychopathology that the American election has set loose upon the world. It is in part fuelled by a binary division in fundamentalist religion between the Damned and the Elect; a division by which the oppressed, held in a kind of Stockholm syndrome, take solace in the notion that at least there'll be comeuppance for those who have humiliated them in the afterlife. Tragically, this too easily plays out into the world as the binary politics of good state / bad state, with us / against us, and the black / white racism not just of America, but previously of Apartheid South Africa that drew explicitly on such sorry theology.

Irrespective of whether Trump wins or loses, roughly half of America will have voted for him. It's time to understand such psychohistory. Time to call our prodigals home. Even a Donald Trump is still the island's son.

Alastair McIntosh has based and sourced much of this piece from his recent book, [Poacher's Pilgrimage: an Island Journey](#) (Birlinn, 2016, hardback). Also, for the theology, his earlier [Island Spirituality: Spiritual Values of Lewis and Harris](#) (Islands Book Trust, 2013), now free online. His theme of calling [Donald Trump home](#) was first explored on [Bella Caledonia in poetry in 2011](#) (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2011/02/15/o-donald-trump-woe-donald-trump/>). (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2011/02/15/o-donald-trump-woe-donald-trump/>)

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31 Comments

Josef O Luain

6 months ago

Not a whisper about Israel ...

[Reply \(http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224293#respond\)](http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224293#respond)

Ex Pat

6 months ago

Congratulations for broaching a subject that the great majority of people don't just walk away from. They run! You are on to something, in looking at the USans.

Two points –

1. The revered father of peace studies, Norwegian Johan Galtung wrote a great essay on USans. They are very far from being normal by European standards, both in the way that you describe Trump and the millions of his supporters, but also the entire society. The sour-faced European lives with and expects dissent, says Galtung. But the smiling USans c

BELLA CALEDONIA

n is conflict, that rises easily to murderous violence. He makes a very persuasive argument.

Extremely interesting. –

– ‘On the Phenomenology of the American Smile- Some Implications for U.S. Agressiveness’, by Johan Galtung, May 1974 – Transcend Peace Institute –

– <http://tinyurl.com/hnhh3sz> (<http://tinyurl.com/hnhh3sz>)

Or search for the title in Galtung’s papers at Transcend’s website – See #10, 1987 –

– <https://www.transcend.org/galtung/papers.php> (<https://www.transcend.org/galtung/papers.php>)

2. Carl Jung

In the case of the US, one can go much further than looking at individuals. To what Jung said about the mass psychosis of the Germans after World War 2.

> “When I look at Donald Trump – his colossal egotism, his grandiosity, his disconnect from empathy – I see a man who nurses a narcissistic wound, a wound to his primal integrity from places that he probably doesn’t even know about.”

Well yes maybe. But Jung and ‘mass psychosis’ – going the way of the Germans in WW2 – better fit the situation, imo.

The situation of rendition-for-extermination (“None of those rendered to Uzbekistan have ever been seen again” – Craig Murray).

The situation of 20,000 ‘disappeared’ muslims (Robert Fisk). 27,000 says Clive Stafford Smith, Reprieve.

The situation of these in addition to the millions killed in Gulf War 1 (400,000), USUK Sanctions (2m upper estimate, including up to 1m children under 5, not 500,000 (Madeleine Albright’s ‘We think it was worth it’). And 1.6m plus, Gulf War 2 (upper limit, ORB study ten years ago, plus those since).

When you put this to USans and UKans, most pretend that they don’t know what you are talking about. But one often sees the sick, shifty look of those who at some level know exactly what they have been a party to. Those who did not say ‘Not in my name’. ‘Why did I allow this to happen?’ ‘Why did I allow illegal war, murder, torture-to-death and genocide?’ Just. Like. The. Germans. In WW2.

As Jung said of the Germans after WW2.

Do they know because they are connected in the way that Jung suggested – that deep connection between individuals, at the level of the collective unconscious? Is that what is ‘second sight’?

See comment, and Replies, to ”MASS PSYCHOSIS’ – ON NOT GOING THE WAY OF THE GERMANS IN 1933’ parts 1 – 4 (long), and ‘FACING EVIL’ by ‘Ex Pat’ to ‘A Worse Record Than Saddam’s’, by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, 26th October 2010 – ICH –

– <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article26687.htm> (<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article26687.htm>)

Some of the links may now be gone, but searching may help.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replyto=224301#respond>)

Yan

6 months ago

Maybe a case for culturally homogeneous nations, as immigrant and future offspring appear to be at least personally damaged by the wounds of displacement and at worst become destabilising forces within and even beyond the location of their ancestral suspension.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replyto=224305#respond>)

Paul Codd

6 months ago

A naïve analysis if I may say so Yan. Particular individuals do become destructive forces, but the author explicitly states that this is by no means a foregone conclusion, simply the way some people react. Also the cause is certainly not displacement. As someone who has chosen to live abroad for the past 10 years or so, I understand something about displacement and while it can lead to difficulties, isolation and frustration, in my view the rewards of personal growth can far outway the disadvantages. According to the author, the cause of these destructive individuals is a psychohistorical wound coupled with a lack of empathy. There are many indigenous people, in Scotland and in every other country that suffer from these pre-conditions without ever having left to go elsewhere. The author postulates that perhaps Trump supporters’ own lack of empathy for immigrants may trace its routes to similar psychohistorical traumas in their own family background. If we want a better world perhaps should be trying to reduce the incidence and impacts of events that could cause such traumas, and when they do occur to try to help their victims to make a full and quick recovery. While this may seem difficult or expensive to those who lack empathy, the only alternative is to perpetuate the problem which is far more difficult and far more expensive in the long run.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replyto=224322#respond>)

Yan

6 months ago

The article clearly points to deracination (to displace from one’s native or accustomed environment) or emigration as a major aggravating factor.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replyto=224368#respond>)

Alastair McIntosh

6 months ago

Yes, you’re right, Yan. But in a world with such fluid transportation cultural homogeneity cannot be the answer, and hasn’t been since at least the horse. The challenge for today is to understand how psychohistory has shaped us, both in terms of nurture and epigenetics. Then see more deeply how to humanise the human c

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replyto=224375#respond>)

Yan

6 months ago

Presumably the from trauma to brutality model would apply to a post indy Scotland, a gauge of that model maybe the dearth of second sighters (wise men) in Scottish communities.

IMHO there are already indicators in Scottish society of the high risk of a brutal post indy Scotland.

Trump to an extent is playing the role of salt of the earth second sighter against Hillary Clinton's goody two shoes progressive veil which conceals her own "just off the boat" brutality and corruption.

John O'Dowd

6 months ago

Deeply insightful piece. I'm reading Poacher's Pilgrimage just now – highly rewarding.

I'm sure that displacement has played a part in the making of Trump – but other psychological traumas and family dysfunction can (presumably) lead to this type of personality, since it is a recognisable psycho-type: Narcissistic Personality Disorder/Borderline Psychopathy.

Indeed, I have come across the type on several occasions in my working life – highly disruptive power-seekers, always promoted way beyond their competences. Destroyers of lives and wreckers of Institutions.

The Donald is one such writ enormous. God help us all if he is elected.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224333#respond>)

Alf Baird

6 months ago

I really don't see any value in insulting the person who may be USA President very soon. Surely many folk in the Western Isles would be proud to welcome a President Trump back as one of their own? Surely Robert Gordon University principal Professor Von Prondzynski and his court must now be feeling like a bunch of intellectual chumps for revoking Trump's honorary degree? And surely FM Sturgeon and ex FM Salmond and most other Scottish MP's and MSP's must be wishing they had not constantly been making such insulting remarks about Trump? I don't believe the majority of Scots folk are nearly as politically correct (i.e. excessively touchy) as our political leaders and supposed 'intellectuals' appear to think. Maist ordinar Scots fowk hae guid mainers – its aw thon heid bummers an mollopy 'bricht mynds' thae aye lat hus doon.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224349#respond>)

J Galt

6 months ago

Yes it's just wall to wall Donald bashing just now!

I don't know whether Trump has all the dreadful traits described above and I suspect the author in reality knows as little as I do.

What I do know is Clinton is a proven psychopath who represents a warmongering grouping of the elite who wish to unleash Hell in this World.

If there's even a 0.0000001% chance that Donald isn't controlled by the same people, then lets hope for all our sakes (including eejit intellectuals) he is elected.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224359#respond>)

Alastair McIntosh

6 months ago

Thank you for the various comments. My apologies for the odd typos and clumsy wordings – the piece was sparked by a phone call from Maxwell Macleod yesterday, in relation to his Catfish piece (the previous item on Bella). I thought that while the iron was hot I'd quickly bash out a few thoughts.

To pick up on some of the comments above: Josef about Jews, I'm afraid I don't get the relevance, unless he's suggesting that I should have mentioned the debate around Trump and anti-Semitism. But I don't quite get the relevance to this article.

Yan on culturally homogeneous nations – well, I'm sure the Native Americans would have something to say about that one – though I'm sure if that's how Yan was seeing it.

Alf's comment above, I would hope that if the article is read to its end it will be very clear that I am seeking to understand Trump, not to insult. Thanks to Paul (and John) for clarifying some issues.

One further point, is that my friend the Gaelic scholar Michael Newton alerted me that the name Dòmhnall has instances that are pre-Norse, and is thought to be a purely Celtic name. Also, that I should correctly have referred to etymological "cognates" rather than "roots" in this instance.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224363#respond>)

Justin Kenrick

6 months ago

Belonging comes from caring for place and people; nothing more, nothing less.

Care has its magic, its miracles, alongside mundane persistence in the face of all that insists we look the other way.

This is a fascinating way to read Donald Trump's history. Meanwhile, those voting for him feel completely left behind by a system that doesn't care, or don't care about anyone but how much he will let them use the system to screw even more out of others.

The uncared for further taken for a ride by the uncaring, like Brexit.

And in both cases, Trump and Brexit, are the consequence of the status quo refusing to keep to its half of the bargain. Welfare state? "No thanks" they say. American dream? "American delusion"

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224389#respond>)

Alastair McIntosh

6 months ago

I almost worked in a reference to Brexit/UKIP, Justin, but wanted to keep it short and not over-reach. What was in my mind was EP Thompson's "The Making of the English Working Class", and his observation that the working class in the sense that he used the term did not come from nowhere. Neither was it originally self-made (as distinct from the working class pride that subsequently and rightly emerged). But it was "made", and made so by an unworking class, the landed class, during the Enclosures and onwards; and later, by the industrial capital-controlling classes partly in tandem with the emergent middle class.

When I look at the odious newspapers run by plutocrats that stirred up Brexit: the hatred directed against the Germans, French, and all manner of immigrants, I see the poor being set against the poor. Such is the ongoing "making" of a class manipulated against its own and its kindred's interests. I would despair were I not of Scotland, where so many are actively rising to consciousness of social justice, land reform, and fundamental human dignity.

My take on Trump is, of course, circumstantial; and the syndrome of oppressed turning oppressor including Stockholm interplays will – if valid – be only one of multiple factors. But I'm coming at this analysis from a cultural vantage point: one of communities that have long been subjected to landlordism's and empire's "can't beat them so join them" Batesonian double bind. These things were part of what we were often up against in the early days (1990s) of modern Scottish land reform, still so in some areas, and it is very clearly threaded through post-Culloden Highland history. It includes the use of evangelicalism to control minds, though in Scotland's case, we must not forget that it was the Free Church (so strong in Trump's mother's native community) that, in 1843, repudiated landed patronage with the Disruption, giving people back their dignity and sense of spiritual control. Such is why Prof Donald Meek (of Tiree) has written of 19th and early 20th century crofter land agitation as having been a prototypical liberation theology. It is why, though many will think me odd for it, I put such emphasis in my own work on the recovery of spirituality, as distinct from religiosity.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224421#respond>)

MBC

6 months ago

It's an interesting piece Alastair, particularly your comment about how the second sight was lost when the people moved to a different continent. That seems to suggest that much of what the second sight depended on was a keen attunement to the society and environment of the Hebrideans, developed over generations of collective observation. So that when transported to a new context that was fluid and rapidly changing, the ability to fine tune into consciously imperceptible social or environmental influences was lost.

And on that note, I have to wonder about Trump's mother and how rapidly she was deculturalised after she left Scotland as a young woman. It's a well-known pattern that Scots rapidly lose their Scottishness on moving away from Scotland and very quickly assimilate into new cultures. I can spend three weeks in the states and I am starting to get an American drawl.

I can't claim any knowledge of it beyond a programme I watched about Trump and his family background in which his mother didn't figure at all, but his German father did strongly, telling Trump jnr that he was a 'king' from a young age, and basically encouraging him in the will to dominate and to think of himself as a superior being to everyone else. I found that chilling. Trump as we know, claims to have a special feeling for Scotland because of his mother, yet I can find not one shred of Scottishness in him.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224423#respond>)

Alf Baird

6 months ago

"I can find not one shred of Scottishness in him"

Get real, the man has said he loves Scotland, and he has several large investments in our country, probably far more than anyone writing here. What is "Scottishness" anyway, maist o youse/us aw are ower faur culturally Anglicised, maist Scots fowk canna e'en read or write in Scots langage an oor high heid yins refuse tae e'en lairn oor bairns the Scots langage. Scots 'cultur' is gey tak down an haud doon due tae thon lack o a Scots Language Act, no that Gaels are bothered – thay've got thair Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, an £60m public money a year, Gaelic school teachers, Gaelic Language Degrees, Gaelic TV, and thair pullin the ledder up ahint thaim swith-like anaw. Scottishness? Aye, thon's a guid quaisten.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224492#respond>)

John O'Dowd

6 months ago

Trump is a rentier – not an investor. Investors create value – rentiers extract value.

He inherited his wealth from a crooked racketeering father – and has destroyed value, wrecked businesses and failed to contribute to society through paying taxes. If elected he will continue his plundering ways – only on a grander scale.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224538#respond>)

Alf Baird

6 months ago

“rentiers extract value.”

On the contrary Trump has actually created new business in Scotland:

<http://www.trumpgolfscotland.com/> (<http://www.trumpgolfscotland.com/>)

You perhaps really mean like the offshore bankers and actors who are permitted to own much of Scotland's essential utilities (incl. outdated infrastructure) and land and exploit what remains of our moribund economy? e.g.

<http://reidfoundation.org/2016/01/sort-out-our-ports/> (<http://reidfoundation.org/2016/01/sort-out-our-ports/>)

And for which Holyrood could do something about, but chooses not to? We surely need tae mend oor ane bakcoort.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224554#respond>)

John O'Dowd

6 months ago

Trump Golf Scotland is a rentier business – its based on assets – land and property – access to which is charged and which accrues rents for Trump.

“You perhaps really mean like the offshore bankers and actors who are permitted to own much of Scotland's essential utilities (incl. outdated infrastructure) and land and exploit what remains of our moribund economy? e.g.

<http://reidfoundation.org/2016/01/sort-out-our-ports/> (<http://reidfoundation.org/2016/01/sort-out-our-ports/>)”

Yes them too. You might like to read Prof Guy Standing's

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy_Standing_\(economist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy_Standing_(economist)) ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy_Standing_\(economist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guy_Standing_(economist))) New Book: The Corruption of Capitalism: Why Rentiers Thrive and Work Doesn't Pay.

Banking too is a rentier activity – although in this case the assets are even more dubious – fictitious capital (land at least is real).

(Prof) Michael Hudson's most recent book Killing the Host provides details of the rentier nature of these extractive activities. You might also profitably read his book: The Bubble and Beyond.

Just because something is a 'new business' doesn't mean it's useful and productive. Rentiers derive income from ownership, possession or control of assets that are scarce or artificially made scarce. Most familiar is rental income from land, property, mineral rights and financial investments, which accrue to 'owners' without their work to make or create them.

Alf Baird

6 months ago

Thanks for the links John. However, there is a world of difference between a passive offshore private equity fund's leveraged acquisition of essential infrastructure/utilities exploiting monopolies guaranteed by the state, and specialised entrepreneurial businesses functioning in competitive markets, as any savvy business professor might tell you.

John O'Dowd

6 months ago

Well Alf, I've been told lots of things by lots of 'savvy business professors' – both as the holder of an MBA and as an academic colleague of many said professors. But as anyone not in thrall to mainstream bogus economics (Read Steve Keen's Debunking Economics) will tell you being a rentier is most certainly not the same as being an entrepreneur. Nor are most markets competitive – most are rigged, one way or another.

Hudson and Keen are non-standard economists – and both have the distinction of having accurately predicted the 2008 crash with considerable accuracy. Both take an empirical view of real world economics (See:

<http://www.paecon.net/PAERreview/> (<http://www.paecon.net/PAERreview/>)) – as does Guy Standing.

Unfortunately Business Schools are largely populated by those schooled in mainstream neoclassical economics (and their derivative disciplines) which are completely incapable of describing the real economy – and are largely apologists and propagandists for mainstream exploitative capitalism – so not really scientific (or academic) in the true meaning of these terms. Business 'education' is really business indoctrination – and ought not really to be included in universities.

As for 'savvy business professors' – well they would say that – wouldn't they?

Alf Baird

6 months ago

I'm sorry John, I just don't see how you can apply rentier capitalism theory (monopoly access etc) to Trump's Scottish business operations, or compare that with the offshore private equity funds which today own (and regulate!) Scotland's major seaports and airports etc. Anyone can create a luxury golf resort (which has a limited/specific customer base, or in other words a niche market), but try creating a large national public utility such as a major seaport or airport or energy or water system upon which an entire national economy depends?

John O'Dowd

6 months ago

Alf,

I don't think we are in disagreement about the iniquity of offshore private equity funds which today own (and regulate!) Scotland's major seaports and airports (clearly a rentier situation)

But remember, it was a failure of planning regulation, including ignoring the prior claim of a site of special scientific interest – and the destruction of unique habitats – not to mention over-riding the claims and interests of local, indigenous occupants – that resulted in Trump's being given control of large and sensitive areas of Scotland's shoreline for the 'right' of well-heeled golfers to pamper themselves – and Trump to take their rental fees!

That is NOT the operation of a free market.

Standing's work clearly demonstrates the common rentier elements in each of these cases – and many more examples.

MBC

6 months ago

Trump is a narcissistic megalomaniac who has no real interest in government, in the detail of policy, in its workings, in its effect. He's only doing this for vainglory not results. That's the sense in which he would be reckless, and dangerous, because fundamentally uncaring about the business of government and easily bored. Worse, he encourages sycophants. If elected he is likely to delegate the business of government to whoever sooks up to him the most and appears to be carrying out his whims. Which means government by creeps. Pursuing their own funny wee agendas. So incoherent, and unstable. Clinton has at least competence in the business of government, understands policy, has clear policy objectives, but is corrupt.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224431#respond>)

John Page

6 months ago

Thanks, Bella, for making these last two stimulating pieces available.

Much to ponder and new reading to pursue.

Thank you

John

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224463#respond>)

John Page

6 months ago

Just obtained and read the preface ("Beginnings") of Poacher's Pilgrimage. Thank you so much Bella for opening this door.....

John

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=224760#respond>)

Alf Baird

6 months ago

Nicola hid better get thon rid cairpet oot fir President Trump, now the most famous Scots-American ever. I think a large quantity of humble pie is called for. Maybe we should ask for President Trump's help to secure our independence?

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=225038#respond>)

Alastair McIntosh

6 months ago

Red carpet and humble pie?

For a man who mocks the disabled? Who whips up racism? Who screws the vulnerable? Who denies climate change? Who boasts of sexual abuse? Who revels even in the thought of torture....?

I don't think so, Mr Baird. Those values might be yours. They're not the accent o the Scottish mind.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=225181#respond>)

wul

6 months ago

There's potential for a Trump-like character to do well in Scotland. (perhaps even more likely post-indy?)

We have legions of very unhappy, hurt and angry men here. They are tired of always living a shit life no matter who is in power. Politicians and high heid yins of all stripes, talking pish they don't understand, which eventually translates as "...but not for the likes of you".

We also, strangely enough, have men living comfortable lives, with good pensions, sometimes owning two houses, shares in blue chip companies etc. etc. who are also very angry, alienated and fed up feeling silenced by "political correctness gone mad". They are not able to voice their anger (actually fear) about the number of "others" they imagine are "taking over".

Both these groups need & want a home, someone to tell them they are OK. At some point someone is going to fill that vacuum.

Its all very well liberal lefties (like me) getting outraged at "bigots" who don't understand that refugees, asylum seekers, the disabled on benefits, (insert name of minority oppressed group here) etc etc. are all just people like them. If people's fears & needs and sense of alienation are not addressed in the public sphere they will go underground.

I'm the first to inwardly roll my eyes when someone starts a sentence with " I'm not a racist but...", but we need to find a better way of allowing these concerns to be talked about, talked out and understood.  They will just shut up and go somewhere else.

If we had an actual society where it was clear that ALL people do actually matter, with actual policies & laws and strategies which made this obvious, that would be a big help. (More and more I'm thinking that our broken connection to land is somehow at the heart of this stuff)

As humans we have an irresistible drive to belong, to be cherished, to seek out like-minded people who will validate our world view. That's a very, very powerful drive and it can be harnessed for good or for the other thing.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=225202#respond>)

Wullie

6 months ago

Enjoyed this article, "The Great Dunes of Scotland!" speaks for itself. Read Thomson's "Isolation Shepherd" many years ago then walked the walk from coast to coast to see the places in the book. Halcyon days! Thanks Alastair.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=225701#respond>)

Cade Bois

5 months ago

I am a poor, white American of Gael and French ancestry and I feel a similar wound, hence why I spend a good part of my adult life learning Gaelic and French. But gods, I did not vote for Trump and like many other poor people in America, am terrified by him.

There are a segment of poor people, almost all white, who do support Trump, and the reasons are both complex and simple. But let's make a few things clear, post-election:

-around 46% of registered voters did not vote in this election. This is a dramatic decrease since 2008, which saw an historical ~80% turnout, especially for those voting for Obama

-Regarding voter turn-out, it was registered Democrat voters who were most MIA, in particular among black and Latino voters, and even still, HRC won the popular vote.

-When you do the math, only maybe, barely 1/4 of registered voters actually voted for Trump. He didn't win because the larger portion of American people, or even white American people, were swayed by him. He won due to a confluence of how the electoral college allows elections to be gamed against the popular vote (something Trump himself has criticized, back in 2012!), and how his main opposition, the Democrats, spent more energy crushing a populist candidate, Sanders, in favor of a political elite, HRC, and then refusing to spend time and energy working to gain the confidence and votes of Sanders supporters as well as disengaged votes and independent voters. In short, the Democrats spent 18 months saying they were a "big tent" party while they were in fact antagonizing and alienating anyone on the left who didn't immediately support HRC. Yes, our system is broken—this is not news. But it is time to pay for it.

So please temper any thoughts on Trump's rise to frightful power with these facts. In my very Gael-French eyes, he is not a democratically elected president. He's not even fit to be called President (and I say this as someone who thoroughly despised Bush but could still afford him that title). And among the American people, I am not alone.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=226402#respond>)

Alastair McIntosh

5 months ago

Thanks for this comment, Cade. The exit polls suggest it was not the poorest who voted for Trump, but those on the next couple of rungs up. Poverty is not the only factor. Evangelical religion is probably a bigger one, and I've been sweating with how to write about this with sensitivity but finding it very hard to do in article format. I have done so, 3 years ago, in book format, and this (Island Spirituality) is now available as a free download at <https://goo.gl/1EXLRM> (<https://goo.gl/1EXLRM>).

Can I draw your attention to the fine review just published on Bella of my friend Michael Newton's latest book? I think there's much there that might make sense to you. It's the piece headed "Canadian Gaeldom....". You may want to repost part of what you've said here there, since not many people will be following this thread of comments now, and I'm sure that Michael and his reviewer would love to have feedback from somebody with your background, as I am too. All the very best, Alastair.

Reply (<http://bellacaledonia.org.uk/2016/11/06/donald-trump-and-the-second-sight/?replytocom=226419#respond>)

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Comment

Name *

Alastair McIntosh



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