

AMERICAN SONG BOOK IN JEOPARDY

HAVE SOME RESPECT: FOLLOW THE LEADER

August 18, 2018

LEMMINGGRAD-ON-THE-POTOMAC

~ *Armed Freedom*

The 3rd stanza of "America, the Beautiful" goes like this:

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife
Who more than self their
country loved
And mercy more than life

Chorus:

America, America
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine

Clearly, it's time to remove this verse and ban its singing in church and at ball games. It advances the outmoded notion that heroes love their country more than themselves. Poppycock! Adopt that definition and you'll lose your job as a GOP member of the House or Senate.



Better to listen to your lemming-like constituents who believe what the president says about immigrants destroying the country, the press being the enemy of the people, and how – in light of his revoking the security clearance of former CIA Director John Brennan - patriotism means not criticizing the president.

While we're at it, why not just do away with that 1st amendment bit guaranteeing the right of free speech? It only causes conflict and makes lawyers rich as they litigate claims the right has been denied. Besides, the bloated 1st amendment defines six - count 'em - six rights!

The rights to peaceably assemble and petition government for the redress of grievances are necessary *only* if the government is not already looking after the people's best interest. Clearly, it already is. Just ask the president and GOP members of congress. Since, by presidential definition, the press is the enemy of the people, there's no need for that pesky 1st amendment clause either.

That leaves us a 1st amendment with protections for religion and religious practice. Surely, that's enough for one amendment, and without it Christian bakers would have to make cakes for LGBTQ citizens. Doing *that*

would violate their consciences: their inner voices about right and wrong so conveniently untroubled by Jesus' defining "neighbor" as even the marginalized "other"; or St. Paul writing that "in Christ there is no Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ." This amendment is *sacred*, and it can stay so long as religious institutions observe their status as 501(c)3 organizations, *i.e.*, *non-prophet* entities.

WHY IS TRUMP SUCH A FAN OF ROBOTS?

August 18, 2018

WASHINGTON, DC ~ *Armed Freedom*



Looking much like *Mad Magazine's* Alfred E. Newman, Trump struck a "What, me worry?" pose as he stood next to a robot at his October, 2016 campaign in Manchester, NH. Believing that robots are no threat if only we'll "Buy American," President Trump is a fan of automation.

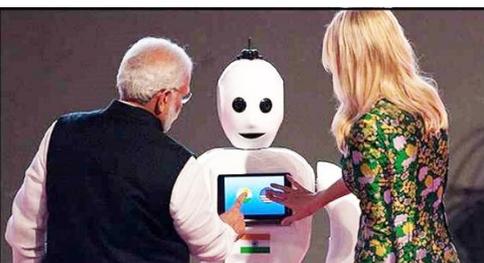
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This was later echoed by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in March, 2017 when he said that the threat of automation taking away jobs was "not even on our radar screen." Although most experts say that in 20 years automation will displace a significant portion of the workforce, Mnuchin said that was grossly exaggerated and wouldn't happen for 50 to 100 years.

You have to wonder what backstory reasons might help explain why a smart, well-informed person like Mnuchin would say that.

An event at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit held in New Delhi, India in late November, 2017 may reveal a clue. Mitra, an India-manufactured robot, rolled across the stage to where Ivanka Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi stood. In a gesture of welcome, it presented it's screen to them. One after another, they were to press a button with the flag of their own nation on it. Mitra would then turn to the appropriate person and invite him or her to take a seat. But each pressed their buttons simultaneously. Undaunted, Mitra invited Ivanka to take her seat, then motioned for Modi to take his.

If a robot can spare a member of the Trump family some embarrassment, then there *clearly* may be a use for robots in the Oval Office!



Vladimir Putin no doubt agrees. Just think of how he could further his agenda of bringing the United States under his power if only he could apply robotic, artificial intelligence to the task.¹



As Trump might have asked rhetorically in support of his Obama era "Birther" allegations, "Coincidence?"

Perhaps a "useful idiot" from Putin's point of view, Trump would be *even more useful* if he could be "programmed" like a robot to do the Kremlin's bidding. But how, oh how, do you program a person like Trump?

Two very simple ways. First, dangle some goody in front of him that he craves. Something like *respect*. If a "strong man" respects you, then that makes you strong as well!²

Second, remind him of all his business deals with Russian oligarchs that will be exposed and go south if he doesn't support Putin at every

¹ While we shudder at the thought of him doing so, it *would* be wonderful if intelligence of *some* form made an appearance there from time to time.

² We have it on good authority that Trump sings the chorus from Otis Redding's "Respect" each night after binge-watching *Fox & Friends*.

Respect is what I want from you
Respect is what I need
Respect is what I want
Respect is what I need
Got to, got to have it
Got to, got to have it

junction; and maybe jog his memory about the evidence you might have of his worse than p_ _ _ y grabbing misbehaviors in Moscow hotels.

Once thus appropriately programmed, your robot can make the United States a smaller player on the world stage without having to fire a shot. Your robot will simply set to work dismantling "the guardrails" – the informal and Constitutional restraints on the Executive Branch's exercise of power. Why, you could even have your robot revoke the security clearance of a former CIA Director to punish him for criticizing you . . . and threaten to do the same with nine more! That'll teach 'em to resist you!

Best of all, no one will ever suspect Trump's a robot, much less yours. No, for as is widely and accurately suspected, Trump does all these things because his easily damaged ego requires it. He *has to* take revenge, to even the score, to make himself seem strong.

However, *even if he's shown to be a robot*, never fear. Recent studies show that it's not only children who can suspend disbelief and trust in the superior intelligence of robots, *even when the robots are demonstrably doing the wrong thing!*³

Adults are prone to this lemming-like behavior as well. According to Alan Wagner, an aerospace engineer at Pennsylvania State University,

³ The Washington Post, "Study: Children can be swayed by robot peer pressure," Carolyn Y. Johnson, August 17, 2018, Page A3.

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"People tend to believe these machines know more than they do, have greater awareness than they actually do. They imbue them with all these amazing and fanciful properties. It's a little bit scary."

According to MIT professor Sherry Turkle, "We're deeply wired to believe these objects are not only conscious, but they care about us. (By making eye contact and talking with us,) they give the illusion of being sentient and caring."



This is a big advantage roboticists have when they want to create a robot that says it wants to be your friend. We're cheap dates — we're ready to go."

Cheap dates we are, indeed. So were the German people when, demoralized by the economically devastating, deeply flawed treaties ending World War I, they came under the spell of the authoritarian strong man, Adolf Hitler. While Trump is no Hitler, too many Americans continue to drink the Kool Aid of his incendiary rhetoric which panders to the lesser angels of their nature. Yet they remain oblivious to the fact that his policies ill-serve their own interests.

They're cheap dates — ready to go. *But they deserve so much better.*

None of this should surprise us. Trump has never respected his dates: cheap or otherwise. The question is whether and when his dates will regain their self-respect and *demand* that the leaders of Trump's party *finally* place country above politics.

Alas, those "leaders" are actually lemmings, following their leader ever closer to the edge . . . and the abyss.

For those inclined to more erudite metaphors, the current GOP leadership very much resembles the title character in T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Below are the poem's final verses.

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old ... I grow old ...
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

Like one of Prufrock's mermaids, Aretha Louise Franklin, The Queen of Soul, emerged from the depths of her own privately held pain to sing to us. Using songs both sacred and secular, she often sang about the depths of our human experience. Sometimes she did so at liminal moments for our nation.

At the funeral of Martin Luther King, Jr., she sang "Precious Lord, Take My Hand."

When my way grows drear
precious Lord linger near
When my light is almost gone
Hear my cry, hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall
Take my hand precious Lord,
lead me home

At the 2009 inauguration of Barak Obama, our 44th president, she sang "My Country 'Tis of Thee."

Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees
Sweet freedom's song.
Let mortal tongues awake;
Let all that breathe partake;
Let rocks their silence break,
The sound prolong.

We are at, or approaching, another such liminal moment. The "patriot dream" proclaimed in the 4th verse of "America the Beautiful" will be a dream permanently deferred until Trump and his toady GOP enablers are gone. Until then, it will do us no good to cry out for R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

R.I.P

Aretha L. Franklin
3/25/1942 – 8/16/2018

