i love you, too



I'll start out by confessing that Dr. Cornel West largely fell off my radar over the past few years. Mea culpa. Mea culpa *albus*.

I've also been mostly lukewarm on Anderson Cooper for no real reason other than CNN has the worst panel discussions imaginable. But CNN still rocks when there is something big enough to warrant on the ground coverage. Their Black Lives Matter protest coverage from multiple cities has been solid, so we've been dialing in for those few minutes we can stand watching the world burn.

A few weeks ago (May 29), I chanced upon Dr West on Cooper's CNN program. I was knocked sideways by the naked passion and truth of his discourse. It was so raw, so sharp to the bone, that I kept expecting the camera to cut away in mid-sentence.



I've gone on at length about how Your Electric Picture Radio Box Matters, but that has mostly been in reference to fictional affairs and frivolities. The dilution and conformity of televised news coverage, on the other hand, makes it matter barely at all. A bunch of talking heads nattering conventional

wisdom over a ten second b-roll loop of visual popcorn, largely devoid of all but the cheapest mental nourishment.

But this was pure fire coming from the tube. No punches pulled. Cooper looks a bit stunned, but to his great credit he lets West roll. Worth a watch when you have time.

Stanwyck and I were agog. The notoriously cool medium reached flaming hot for a brief moment. And then, naturally, everything settled back down to the standard dozy drone, as along came Cuomo to explain in tedious detail what we were seeing with our own eyes.And often getting it wrong. We soon drifted off to watch something more soothing, like the *Great British Bake Off and Clock Making Show* or the *Teletubbies*.

Last night, we happened upon another encounter between Cooper and West. This teleskypezoom affair, despite the social distancing, was probably the most purely humane and touching exchange I've ever seen on the teevee.

> *I've been at this for over 50 years. And yet, I've got to bounce back. And I will bounce back. The world, white supremacy may make being black a crime. But we refuse to get in the gutter. We will go down swinging like Ella Fitzgerald, Muhammad Ali, in the name of justice.*
>
> *And we do it for brother WyattWyatt is Cooper's newborn son., and we do it for my daughter, we're doing it for the Asians, we're doing it for the whole world. Because that is the only hope of the world and that kind of love is always tragic, comic and cruciform. You gotta get ready to be crucified with that kind of love.*

Cooper was at a loss and fumbled for the right words. A few moments later he choked up and had to pull himself together. West continued:

> *No, we're in it together, Brother and the beautiful thing*

about tears, Socrates never cries, but Jeremiah does and so does Jesus.

We cry because we care. We're concerned. It is not about political correctness or self-righteousness. We cry because we are not numb on the inside. We don't have a chilliness of soul and a coldness of mind and heart.

We cry because we connect, but then we must have a vision that includes all of us and have an analysis of power that is honest in terms of the greed, especially at the top. In terms of the hatred, running amok. In terms of corruption, not just the White House and Congress.

Too much churches, too many mosques, too many synagogues and too many universities, too many civic organizations.

And then the greed in us.

You and I would talk about this all of the time, right? The gangster in us. Because we're wrestling with this day by day and that's why we need each other, my Brother.

Note to self: Get Dr West back on your radar screen.

I was as staggered as Cooper at this point. Lucky for me I did not have several million eyeballs on me. But Cooper is a pro, no question, and he steered toward the customary segment conclusion.

Only to have West say this:

I love you, my Brother.

Have you ever seen a professional talker rendered speechless? Cooper's expression was an exquisite blend of joy, pain, and confusion. What the hell can you say to something like that?

After what seemed like forever, Cooper whispered the only

possible reply.

> *I love you, too.*

Watching the struggle between professional journalist Cooper – who knew damn well that saying such a thing to a polarizing figure like West was surely testing the bounds of corporate tolerance – and the human Cooper was something to behold. Seeing the human side win out was a moment of pure ecstasy.

Despite the loudly proclaimed motto of the blog (see up top), I do not say this as often as I should.Other than to Stanwyck, who must surely be tired of hearing it by now. Three little words. But there are universes within its eight letters. It is disarming. It is generous. It is enveloping. It is hopeful. It is a clear recognition that I am he as you are he as you are me. Coo coo ka choo.

It's love, dammit, the kind that we need more of, the kind that we see in every person out marching peacefully for change right now. The kind we see on every face that is covered by a mask. Not love of self, but love for our Sisters and Brothers. Hope. Decency.

I love you, too. Thanks for reading. It means the world to me.

PS – Here's the clip from last night. It is worth watching. It is also worth noting that CNN edited out the closing moments when Cooper said, "I love you, too," though it does appear in the CNN transcript.

> *In the funeral for George Floyd, there was "not one reference to hatred or revenge. It was all about love and justice," says Dr. @CornelWest.*
>
> *"The Floyd family lifted up that spiritual moral banner in the midst of a moment in which we got all of the lies and crimes." pic.twitter.com/vqKHuHwZyp*

— CNN (@CNN) June 10, 2020