

Research Article

The Giant Triplets of Racism, Materialism and Militarism *Versus* the Triple Goods in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Thinking

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Abstract

This paper highlights that the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism were born out of the womb of evil. A strong umbilical cord connects these three evils to other related social evils such as economic exploitation, caste systems, poverty, capitalism, individualism, atheism, violence and war, to name a few. With its monozygotic appearance, this entity nourishes with hatred, individualistic concerns and violence, corroding human souls. As long as human beings cherish and adore the false divinities of race superiority, unequal distribution of wealth, and a frenetic rush for weapons of mass destruction and violence, paying lip service to humaneness and social cohesion, the giant triplets will never cease growing stronger and stronger. To follow in King's wake of a great communicator, I have coined the term "triple goods". I have derived such an inspiration from the sermon "The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life" preached by King several times as a trio powerful enough to vanquish the giant triplets. Each person has a humanistic responsibility to educate themselves, and to practice a three-dimensional love centered on the improvement of human life immunized against racism, materialism and militarism.

Keywords: Materialism, Militarism, Nonviolence, Racism, Triple Goods, USA, Voyeuristic Tourism.

Introduction

The Merriam-Webster dictionary gives several definitions of each evil of the giant triplets. But I will be evoking the most relevant definitions according to the context of the paper. Racism is the systemic oppression of a racial group to the social, economic, and political advantage of another. Materialism is a preoccupation with or stress upon material rather than intellectual or spiritual things. Militarism is the exaltation of military virtues and ideals (Merriam-Webster, 2024). Even though the dictionary clearly explains each evil, these explanations are not exhaustive. Racism is morally wrong and sinful. It is established on pride, hatred and falsehood. It is unbrotherly and impersonal. It denies sacredness of human personality. It is a man-made social and psychological jungle (King, 1968, p. 116). Racism is a doctrine of the myth of a congenital inferiority and worthlessness of a people. Materialism is the bad side of the "length of life," the inward concern for one's own welfare (King, 2018). Martin Luther King, Jr., uses several terms to name materialism: "individualism," "individual concerns," "self-interest," "tragic lust" and "inordinate selfishness" (King, 1991). Militarism is the inseparable Siamese twin of racism and materialism. It is the hallmark of their dramatic grandeur and misery (King, 1968). This trio has been ruling this world for millenaries.

When King was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia, this three-headed entity was there. When a sniper assassinated him on April 4, 1968, at Lorraine Motel, in Memphis, Tennessee, these giant triplets were also reigning supreme. Today, in 2024, the giant triplets are still stretching their prehensile tentacles into society. King's both maternal and paternal grand-parents were born in slavery, a violent institution fundamentally based on racialism, and underpinned by pecuniary motives, that considered African Americans as properties or chattels. In 1929, the year when King was born, the world experienced an unprecedented economic crisis, the great depression, until 1939. This was a severe global economic downturn that affected many countries across the world. Fifteen years before King's birth, World War I broke out killing sixteen millions of people, soldiers and civilians alike (History.com Editors, 2023). As if these scourges never happened, the world keeps repeating its same past mistakes. Today, in 2024, the world is facing ongoing wars in Syria, Ukraine, Gaza, Congo, etc. Television channels mostly cover, every day,

scenes of bombings, refugee camps, mass carnage, children starving to death, women traumatized by repeated rapes, and other social evils. Epidemics such as Ebola and the Coronavirus are rampant. Drug addiction zombifies thousands of people, like in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, increasing crime and idleness every year (see Empson, 2023). The social media and artificial intelligence (AI) abuse make people increasingly impervious to pain and suffering.

In India and many African countries, people deeply believe in the caste system, thinking one caste is better than the others. Economic depressions are still rampant. Other dramatic wars are breaking out across the world. In the maturity of his social and political thinking, King realized that racism, materialism and militarism are inseparable. Talk of the devil, and a three-horned head appears. You really cannot name one of these evils without hinting at the other two, consciously or not. There is no need delving into the pseudoreligious, pseudoscientific or any other forms of erroneous justifications of racism, materialism or militarism. The justification of this paper lies in demonstrating that these giant triplets are intrinsically related as one of them cannot survive without the others. Such demonstration will be done through examples from King's works. But most importantly, my goal is to evidence that it is possible to fight these giant triplets and build a human-centered community undergirded by love, the most beautiful form of expression of humanity.

This study raises interest because it explores topical issues. In this paper, I will describe how the world is downplaying its brilliant minds such as King, paying lip service to his warning of the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism. Then, I will explore, but not exhaustively, the evils related to the giant triplets, the existing correlations between one underestimated evil and another among the giant triplets. In a final step, I will also expand on the triple goods, three great humanistic virtues that constitute a powerful trio the world can use to confront the giant triplets. King used different terms to refer to ugly racism, extreme materialism and mad militarism, for example, "evil triplets," "triple evils" and "giant triplets". In terms of style and organization, I will be using "giant triplets".

1. The Collection of Amnesia

In "Nonviolence: The Only Road to Freedom" appeared in *Ebony* in 1966, and in "Black Power Defined" published in *New York Times Magazine* in 1967, King takes a firm position against racism, materialism and militarism. When you read these papers, you feel like reading ordinary contributions on topical issues. You do not really have the impression that the person who wrote them had the intention to seduce his readers. He writes about his program as a leader. This is reminiscent of a citizen running for the position of a Mayor, Congressman or Senator. Had he lived longer, King might have run for office.

While he was aware of the giant triplets, King was not at wits' end. Constructiveness was part of his leadership qualities because he dramatized an evil situation, traced back its origin, criticized it, and proposed solutions. Nonviolence was his favorite solution. It was for him a question of choice. In an interview with *Redbook Magazine* of November 5, 1964, he declared that he was committed to nonviolence absolutely, not merely as a technique or a passing strategy but as a way of life (King, 2012). The world should either opt for nonviolent coexistence or sink into the violent spiral of coannihilation. In other words, King thought this choice between chaos and community was the world's last chance because "A civilization can flounder as readily in the face of moral and spiritual bankruptcy as it can through financial bankruptcy" (King, 1991).

How should we fight against the forces of injustice? (King, 1991). For King, only two rigidly opposed answers are possible. The first one is replying to violence with violence. This ends in drama, hate, bitterness and chaos. In the framework of our study, though illustrations will be given for the first answer, I will be concentrating on the second answer. For King, nonviolence, through unconditional love, truth and all other positive human characteristics that might combat evil, unsheathed from its scabbard, is the only efficient answer to face the forces of injustice. Nonviolent methods through unconditional love end in faith and hope of a community where people would live in peace whatever their origins, races or religious creeds.

The world is indeed more than ever before plunged in deep physical and psychological violence of corroding hatred, extreme poverty and endless wars. Its amnesia has no limits because King's message has faded from our collective consciousness (Yanco, 2014, 2). It has come to a point of incurableness. World War I and World War II, among other reciprocal types of annihilation, have given to the world numerous lessons from which to learn, and build on to establish a new social contract, but the world keeps turning its deaf ear to the human-centered lessons of the past. The world has become a major collector of amnesia. King evoked this in pertinent examples such as these:

The Bible and the annals of history are replete with tragic stories of one brother robbing another of his birthright and thereby insuring generations of strife and enmity.

(King, 1968, 185)

The stages of history are replete with the chants and choruses of the conquerors of old who came killing in pursuit of peace. Alexander, Genghis Khan, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne and Napoleon were akin in seeking a peaceful world order, a world fashioned after their selfish conceptions of an ideal existence. Each sought a world at peace which would personify his egotistic dreams. Even within the life span of most of us, another megalomaniac strode across the world stage. He sent his blitzkrieg-bent legions blazing across Europe, bringing havoc and holocaust in his wake. There is grave irony in the fact that Hitler could come forth, following nakedly aggressive expansionist theories, and do it all in the name of peace.

(King, 1968, 192)

A crying characteristic of the world's dramatic collection of amnesia is regret. Regret always comes after the irreversible deed has occurred. In the following passage, King describes it beautifully:

We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. Life often leaves us standing bare, naked, and dejected with a lost opportunity. The "tide in the affairs of men" does not remain at flood: it ebbs. We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is adamant to every plea and rushes on.

(King, 2012)

Through the vistas of time a voice still cries to every potential Peter, "Put up your sword!" The shores of history are white with the bleached bones of nations and communities that failed to follow this command. [...]

Over the bleached bones and jumbled residue of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words: "Too late." There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. "The moving finger writes, and having writ moves on...."

(King, 1991)

Jennifer Yanco (2014) responded to the collective amnesia of King's life lessons on the sophisticated social evils of racism, materialism and militarism through a book with a suggestive title, "Misremembering Dr. King: Revisiting the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.". Drawing inspiration from adult education programs she involved in, and from her own experience of the 1960s' racism against African Americans through footages, she has decided, like so many white Americans of good will, to stand to learn something about herself and how to do a better job of being human. This kind of social reevaluation must serve as examples worldwide to break the evil nexus that exists between racism, materialism and militarism.

2. The Giant Triplets Nexus

King referred to the giant triplets as a fearsome three-headed dragon that spits fire, wreaks havoc and spills blood in its wake. For him, racism, materialism and militarism, along with their corollaries remain inseparable. A racist is a person who resorts to all violent physical means to preserve his egoistic and individualistic life from other persons of different races considered as threats. A materialist behaves as a sociopath who thinks life begins and starts at the things he cheers most. Physical violence is part of the solutions he might opt for to attain his goals. A militaristic person believes in using destructive power to solve his problems whatever the costs. The figure below gives an elaborate illustration of the giant triplets and some of their closely related social evils.

In the thinking of King, the problem of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and the Jim Crow laws of discrimination and segregation will never cease existing as long as the giant triplets rule the world. He evokes the giant triplets several times and in different terms as these:

When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

(King, 1991, 240)

Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal hostility to poverty, racism, and militarism.

(King, 1991, 242)

It [the black revolution] is forcing America to face all its interrelated flaws: racism, poverty, militarism and materialism.

(King, 1991, 315)

Now, when I say question the whole society, it means ultimately coming to see that the problem of racism, the problem of economic exploitation, and the problem of war are all tied together. These are the triple evils that are interrelated.

(King, 1991, 250)

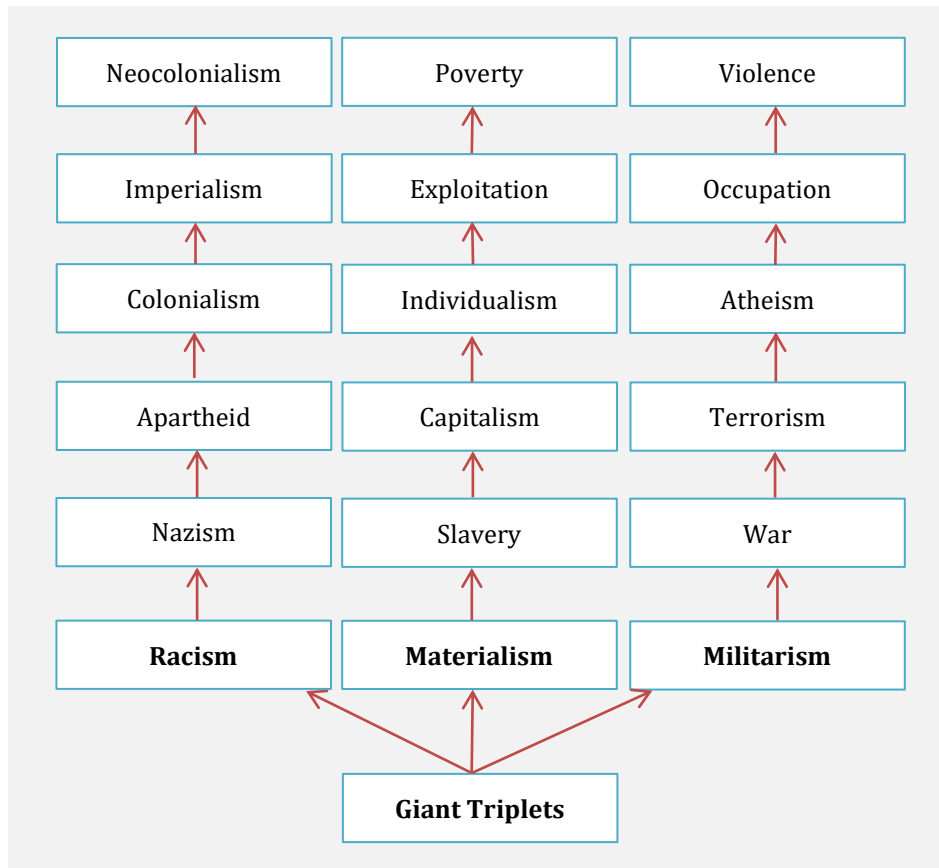


Figure 1. A graphic representation of the giant triplets.

In King's thinking, there is a clear interconnectedness between these giant triplets. He saw them as the hotbed of vice, "preponderant evils of the society" or "demonical destructive suction tubes". This three-headed monster sucks the sweet juice of human virtues from persons and lets the syringe of evil inject its diabolic venom into their veins. The following passages show this horrendous interconnectedness:

In fact, racism and its perennial ally, economic exploitation, provide the key to understanding most of the international complications of this generation.

(King, 1968, p. 183)

There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I and others have been waging in America.

(King, 2012, p. 22)

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality. I refuse to accept the cynical notion that nation after nation must spiral down a militaristic stairway into a hell of thermonuclear destruction.

(King, 1986, p. 110)

When you go beyond a relatively simple though serious problem such as police racism, however, you begin to get into all the complexities of the modern American economy.

(King, 1991, p. 325)

King devotes the third chapter of his book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community*, to racism entitling it "Racism and the White Backlash". He demonstrates with examples from literature that racism is fundamentally based on pseudoscientific and pseudoreligious beliefs. King believed that white America has a schizophrenic personality because she proudly professes the great principles of democracy and sadly practices the antithesis of democracy. White America's antidemocratic practices are backlash to the African American community through hostilities and ambivalences (King, 1968, p. 72).

This schizophrenic personality did not spare Native Americans. Among the numerous hateful slurs and racial stereotypes, King quotes one example on Native Americans: "The only good Indian is a dead Indian". This has been in use in the USA since the 1860s, and General Philip Sheridan has repeatedly been named as its originator (Mieder, 1993). Beyond interpretations, the fact of linking this proverb to an army general shows that racism and militarism are linked. Besides, considering that the only good in Native Americans is to see them dead reinforces all evidence that racists use violence to maintain the status quo of the people they consider inferior.

This schizophrenic personality also appears in the solemn lexicon of the Declaration of Independence signed in Congress on July 4, 1776. In the Declaration of Independence, the monarch of Great Britain, King George III, is accused of imposing "despotism" and "tyranny," and ruling with "repeated injuries" and "usurpations". When John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman and Robert Livingston drafted the Declaration of Independence, they used a discriminatory style. When you read this founding document, one can notice that all keywords related to the welfare of the former colonies and the king's unfair behaviors are written with a capital letter; the king's former subjects are referred to as "human," "people," "mankind" and "men" (*National Archives, 2023*); however, the tone changes further in the founding document.

The drafters label Native Americans as "the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions." Then, one can rightfully conclude that the Declaration of Independence was drafted for the people of white skin color who used to be King George III's subjects. Had they not been materialistic and motivated by illicit gains, the Founding Fathers of American democracy would not have stultified the lives of millions of Navajos; they would not have minimized the lifestyle and cultures of millions of Sioux people; they would not have reduced to slavery millions of African people and compel them to toil on plantations. Slavery is the worst form of dehumanization in the history of humankind. It not only erased dignity but it also created materialistic dependency of slaves on those very persons who reduced them to things. Slavery materializes a relevant nexus of the giant triplets. As a race-based institution, slavery was believed by some historians to be the primary cause of the American Civil War (1861-1865), along with economic differences that led to bitter sectional rivalry on the protective tariff and the National Bank (Gordon, 1979).

In 1956, Kenneth M. Stampp published a non-fiction book on slavery in the antebellum South, *The Peculiar Institution*. This book has a fascinating section on the psychological indoctrination that was necessary from slave masters' viewpoints to make good slaves. Stampp garnered his materials from documents produced by slave owners on how to train slaves. Five recurring aspects come up: imposing strict discipline based on the master's authority; implanting in the slaves a consciousness of personal inferiority; awing the slaves with the sense of the master's enormous power; making the slaves love both their oppressors and their conditions as oppressed people; creating in the slaves a perfect dependence on their masters (King, 1968).

When slavery was eventually abolished in the USA, African Americans kept living on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity because of economic exploitation. At the end of slavery, the economic highway to power had few entry lanes for African Americans in the Jim Crow era. Both political doctrines of capitalism and communism could not save African Americans from poverty. Capitalism has left a gulf between superfluous wealth and abject poverty. It has created conditions permitting necessities to be taken from the many to give luxuries to the few, and has encouraged small-hearted persons to become cold and conscienceless so that they are unmoved by suffering and poverty-stricken humanity.

The profit motive, when it is the sole basis of an economic system, encourages a cutthroat competition and selfish ambition that inspire men to be more I-centered than thou-centered. King thought that the tragedy of

economic exploitation is that it treats men as means rather than ends, and thereby reduces them to things rather than persons. To use the words of Martin Buber, segregation substitutes an "I-it" relationship for the "I-thou" relationship. "It" serves a purpose or gets a job done. The only concern is performance, not well-being. Human beings are not things. They must be dealt with, not as "animated tools," but as persons sacred in themselves. To do otherwise is to depersonalize the potential persons and desecrate what they are.

So long as human beings are treated as a means to an end, so long as they are seen as anything less than persons of sacred worth, the image of God is abused in them and consequently and proportionately lost by those who inflict the abuse. Only by establishing a truly integrated society can we return to the economically oppressed the quality of "thouness" which is their due because of the nature of their being (King, 1991). Malcolm X eloquently expands on this relationship between racism, materialism, economic exploitation and poverty calling it the "vicious cycle" as in this quotation:

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that our people are scientifically maneuvered by the white man into a life of poverty. Because we are forced to live in the poorest sections of the city, we attend inferior schools. We have inferior teachers and we get an inferior education. The white power structure downtown makes certain that by the time our people do graduate, we won't be equipped or qualified for anything but the dirtiest, heaviest, poorest-paying jobs. Jobs that no one else wants.

We are trapped in a vicious cycle of economic, intellectual, social, and political death. Inferior jobs, inferior housing, inferior education which in turn again leads to inferior jobs. We spend a lifetime in this vicious circle. Or in this vicious cycle going in circles. Giving birth to children who see no hope or future but to follow in our miserable footsteps.

(Malcolm, 1963)

Just as he fulminated against capitalism, King had two reasons to oppose his veto to communism. He had social and religious motives to drastically fight communism. On the social plane, King believed communism reduces persons to cogs in the wheel of the state. Communists consider that persons are means to an end, that they have no inalienable rights, and that their only rights are derived from and conferred by the state. Under the system of communism, the fountain of freedom runs dry, persons' liberties of the press and assembly, their freedom to vote, and their freedom to listen and to read are restricted.

King believed that communism is a great system of thought in our world. But its weakness and tragedies is that it goes under the philosophy that the end justifies the means. The fact of saying that vices such as lying, deceit or violence justify the ends of the classless society is wrong (King, 1991). Because of its anticlerical, materialistic and atheistic side, King assumed that communism and Christianity are fundamentally incompatible. A true Christian cannot be a true communist, for the two philosophies are antithetical and all the dialectics of the logicians cannot reconcile them (King, 1963).

The best society is not a society prone to individualism nor a society with leanings toward collectivism. The best society is a socially conscious democracy which reconciles the truths of both. Although racism and materialism are roots of all social and moral evils, for King, war was the "most colossal of all evils". War is "men's inhumanity to man" (King, 1968, p. 53). When war was really a necessary evil that brought peace, military men had not yet developed the terrifying weapons of warfare that we know today, not the bomber, that air force fortress that rains down death; nor napalm, that burner of all things and flesh in its path. To exemplify the absurdity of the military-industrial complex, the US and Senegalese governments serve examples. The USA is one of the most developed countries in the world. Senegal is part of the thirty-three least developed countries in the world (Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia, 2024).

The behavior of the US government in terms of foreign policy is the behavior of a merchant of militarism peddling violence and hate under the disguise of states' rights. The ongoing war between Israel and Gaza, and Russia and Ukraine is a relevant example. Instead of wiping out the last vestiges of diseases in the world, the US government keeps helping their allies with military means plunging the world into a starless midnight of fear and destruction.

As of February 28, 2016, there were 28,639 suspected, probable, and confirmed cases of Ebola, and 11,316 deaths from Ebola during the 2014 epidemic in West Africa. In comparison, there were 2,427 reported cases and 1,597 deaths in all other known cases and outbreaks of Ebola combined. The U.S. government allocated approximately \$2.369 billion for Ebola response activities that included technical expertise, resources to the

response and new emergency operations center in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). As I am writing this paper, today on Wednesday 6, 2024, at 9:10 PM, there are 7,003,999 deaths of the Covid-19 pandemic (Worldometer, 2024).

The federal US government made \$2.6 trillion in funds available to respond to Covid-19 and spent \$1.6 trillion of that in fiscal year 2020 (USAfacts, 2021). They allocated this huge budget to fight the epidemic because of the particularity of the context that imposed social distancing, reduced transportations, among other negative things on the country's economy. In 2024, the US Senate has passed a \$95 billion bill with aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan. As well as the \$61 billion for Ukraine, the bill includes \$14 billion for Israel's war in Gaza and \$4.83 billion to support partners in the Indo-Pacific, including Taiwan, to deter potential aggression by China. The legislation would also provide \$9.15 billion in humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza, the occupied West Bank, Ukraine and other conflict zones around the globe (Aljazeera, 2024). Even though the USA wastes money in its military-industrial complex, it has a buoyant economy and is still the land of the American dream that attracts millions of both legal and undocumented immigrants. But a wise person will give a different piece of advice to Senegalese political authorities after admonishing them and talking them out of investing into the military-industrial complex that includes importing tear gases to quell nonviolent demonstrations and even assault rifles for no relevant reason.

At the beginning of the year 2022, the Senegalese Environment Ministry, signed a deal to purchase \$77 million worth of assault rifles, semi-automatic pistols, ammunition and other weapons from a little-known local firm that had only been set up a couple of months earlier. The worst thing of all is this contract was signed with Aboubakar Hima, a notorious man who allegedly skimmed millions from \$240 million in corrupt arms deals in his native Niger (Omeje and Barkallah, 2022). One year later, in the midst of political unrest, Amnesty International reported that at least 23 people had been killed during the violent protests that had broken out in Dakar and Ziguinchor since June 1, and a further 390 had been injured, according to the Senegalese Red Cross. The demonstrations had been marred by a number of human rights violations, including excessive use of force and attacks on freedom of expression and information, with access to social media and mobile Internet being suspended (Amnesty International, 2023). Instead of tackling poverty, the Senegalese government invests considerably in weapons and repressive means to reduce all political opponents to their simplest expression. Senegal faces abject poverty characterized by poor education, poor health facilities, weak human resources, economic vulnerability and natural disasters such as floods that evict thousands of people in Dakar, Touba and around, each year. This social curse compels unemployed and ill-paid youngsters who are the majority of the Senegalese population to emigrate to Europe on a sea route sadly called "Barça or Barsaq," which means "we either enter Barcelona, Spain, or we will die trying".

In 2022, a new publication of the West and Central Africa Nutrition estimated that 6.3 million children aged 6-59 months were probably to suffer from food wasting in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. This imminent famine threat was putting the lives of at least 900,000 children at risk. The group was calling on donors and partners to urgently increase their support to respond to the immediate nutrition needs of the affected children while intensifying preventive interventions to address the root causes of child malnutrition in the region (UNICEF, 2024).

Africa is heavily dependent on grain supplies from Russia and Ukraine that have been badly disrupted by the war. Senegalese President Macky Sall could inject the same amount of money he used to buy assault rifles from a Nigerian corrupt dealer into taming arable lands to make food self-sufficiency a reality. Instead, Sall shamelessly made thousands of miles to meet Russian leader Vladimir Putin and to complain to him in these words: "I have come to see you, to ask you to be aware that our countries, even far from the theatre (of war), are the victims of this economic crisis" (Trevelyan, 2022).

The giant triplets get stronger with the dearth of positive leadership. From the African Independence Years of the 1960s to the present, West African leadership has been confined to particular political parties that lounge into the armchair of the former French colonists' paternalism. These parties have betrayed the cause of independence and economic justice. The African leaders have betrayed it by capitulating to the prejudices and undemocratic practices of the French paternalists. The French government has betrayed it by enslaving their former colonies through the means of the old world order of colonialism and through corruption. These African manufactured leaders so often have a high blood pressure of words and an anemia of deeds. Egyptologist Cheikh Anta Diop warned about the danger of negative leadership. He believed that a short-sighted political leader might today drive his country toward catastrophe (Diop, 1974, p. 30). Visionary as he was, Diop (1974) predicted the grain crisis in the Sahel countries. He rightfully thought that in a near future,

in three vital areas: food (rice), clothing (cotton goods) and housing (cement and concrete), Africa would be able to forego its dependence on the outside by ceasing imports from either Asia or Europe (Diop, 1974, p. 67).

With positive leadership that challenges the giant triplets, in times of war, Russia and Ukraine, though powerful they might be, would come and beg for food in Africa and not the contrary. The Sahel zone is ideal for reforestation. The methods used in the Voronezh region, Russia, to recreate moisture in the region would be greatly useful to us. The Sahel countries ought to draw maximum lessons from them before today undertaking reforestation of the Sahel on a continent-wide scale. Man can recreate humus of his own arid sand (Diop, 1974, p. 82).

In terms of reforestation, efforts are being made through the Great Green Wall project. This initiative was launched in 2007 with the pledge that by 2030 an 8,000-kilometer (5,000-mile) band of vegetation will stretch from Senegal on the West coast to Djibouti in the east (Newell, 2024). Significant gains are actually taking shape in Ethiopia, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali and Cameroon. But the Sahel countries governments need to tackle the environment issue more seriously. A good African leader, being aware of crises such as drought, famine, malnutrition, food import dependency, deforestation from poaching and other related ecological dramas, will integrate in his social program mass reforestation and modern agriculture with follow-up measures.

This leadership folly of buying weapons neglecting the wellbeing of millions of people is reminiscent of King's understanding of the strange dichotomy of disturbing dualism within human nature. Unlike animals who behave by pure instinct, humankind is the sole creature that acts on its own free will. Therefore, a human being enjoying his mental faculty to the full, being able to distinguish good from evil, can do good and avoid evil.

Other social evils to eradicate also are zombification and voyeuristic tourism stemming respectively from drug addiction and social media abuse. In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a sedative drug known as "xylazine" is wreaking havoc. Also referred to as "tranq" because of its tranquilizing side-effect that causes its users to struggle to stand upright, "xylazine" mixed with fentanyl, causes its users to develop severe flesh-eating wounds that end in amputation (Empson, 2023). The use of "xylazine" is turning people into zombies and evidence of this is available on social media.

The abuse of AI and social media is leading our world into a voyeuristic tourism journey. Numerous video content creators called TikTokers, Facebookers or YouTubers are unrelentingly down for a sensational video spree that can potentially attract thousands or millions of followers. The social media industry is becoming so prevalent that it needs to be one of the most preoccupying subject of scientific studies on neurology. Social networks not only cause people to dissocialize spending hours glued to their smartphones, but they also make their immoderate users aloof and morally insensitive. In July 2017, in Florida, a group of teens, aged 14-16, filmed the dying moments of a 32-year-old disabled man. Instead of jumping into the water right away to help the man, the teens were just filming while mocking, cursing and laughing at the man drowning in a fenced-off pond (Gallop, 2018).

Had he been still alive, King would have condemned this digitalized material accumulation and proposed alternatives. We can shrug off this AI opportunity or use it for a new vitality to deepen and enrich our family and community life. How shall we turn the drug-affected ghettos into a vast school? How shall we make every street corner a forum, not a lounging place for drug dealing, trivial gossip, drug use, prostitution and petty gambling, where life is wasted and human experience withers to trivial sensations? How shall we make every house worker and every laborer a demonstrator, a whistleblower, a voter, a canvasser and a student? The dignity their jobs may deny them is waiting for them in political and social action (King, 1968).

Civilization must not outdistance culture. The external needs of life for material ends (cars, houses, clothes, smartphones, etc.) must not absorb the internal needs for spiritual ends (religions, cultures, traditions, cardinal values, etc.). We must never allow the successes of our professions be measured by the number of our income figures. We must measure the successes of our professions by the quality of our service to humankind. There must always be a line of distinction between our lives as persons and our living as human beings caught in a pincer movement of our "sensate civilization" (King, 1961). In response to the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism, King preached "The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life" to teach how people can overcome their egoistic desires and build a world of brotherhood.

3. The Triple Goods Response

The disease of the giant triplets permeates and poisons the whole body politic of the world. Its chief destructive cutting edge creates unequal societies. The words of the Psalmist “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” are still a judgement upon our use and abuse of the wealth and resources with which we have been endowed (King, 1991, p. 630). If the resources were used equally and ethically, there would be enough and to spare. King believed in the capacity of human beings to be real persons. Everyone can be a complete person by striving to do good for themselves, for others and for God by practicing the response of the triple goods. The triple goods draw inspiration from King’s sermon “The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life”. The figure below details this Kingian concept elaborately.

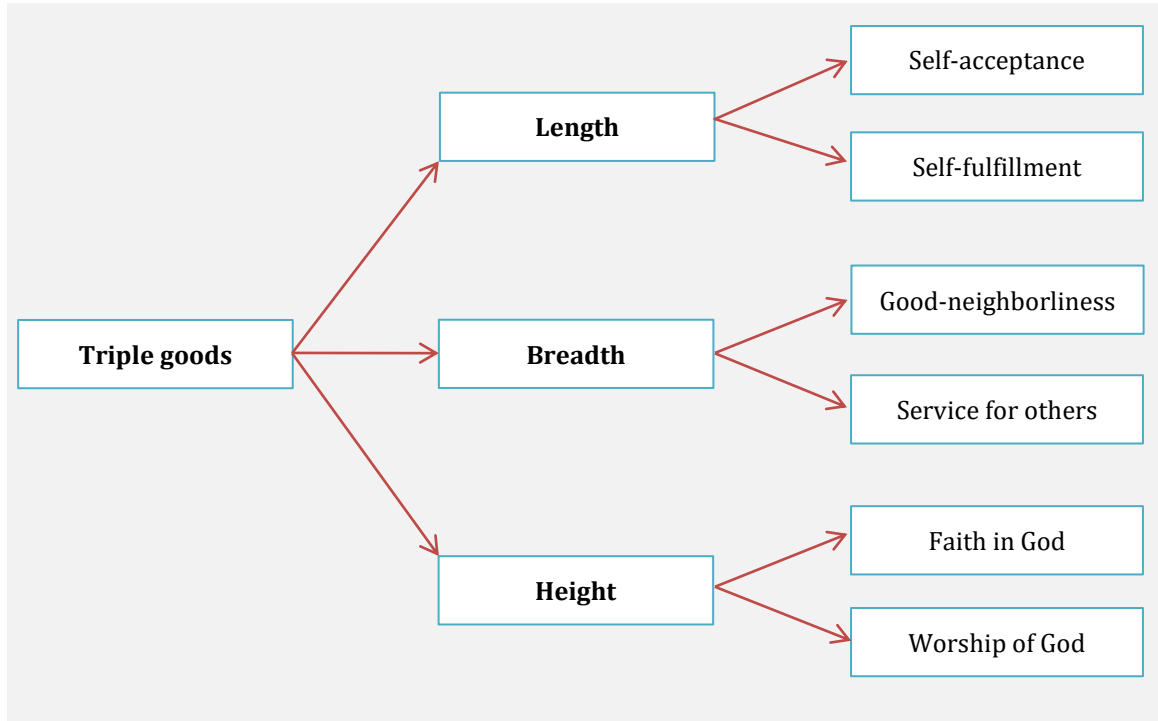


Figure 2. The triple goods as preached by Martin Luther King, Jr., and named in a sermon as “the three dimensions of a complete life”.

To defeat the giant triplets collectively, the triple goods must vanquish individually. In his sermon entitled, “The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life” (King, 2018), King expands on the topic. He believes that for life to be complete, every soul needs to combine three good things: love themselves, love others and love God, their Creator (Diop, 2021). One cannot love himself, and be a racist. One cannot love others, and remain a materialist. One cannot love God, and resort to war, a violent destructive tool of human life, God’s own beloved creation. The figure below gives a graphic picture of the confrontation between the giant triplets and triple goods. The human being overcomes the giant triplets by doing an inward and outward work for himself and for other human beings, but also by doing an upward work toward God.

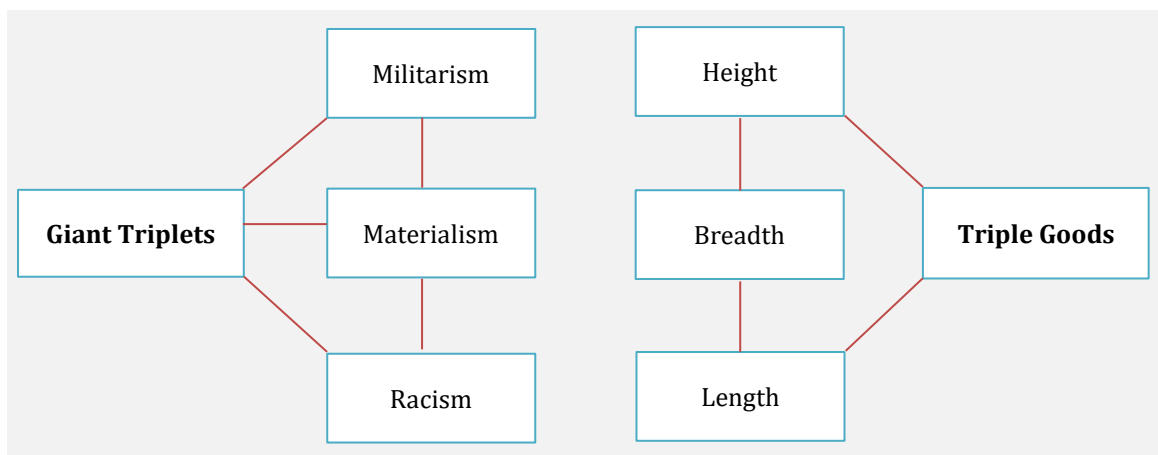


Figure 3. The confrontation between the giant triplets and the triple goods.

The confrontation between the giant triplets and the triple goods looks like two fists that knock together in a deadly boxing match in a ring. The giant triplets with its dark side might give the impression of being equal to the triple goods in terms of physical force. But this is a lure even though the clinch between these two opponents may make the bout last long. With its lighter color, the triple goods have a tougher fist that will eventually knock down the evil nexus giving it a hook or a bolo punch. The battle will be hard and long but moral and spiritual forces joined in a single garment are the supreme force of the universe.

The world has a great responsibility to work passionately and unrelentingly for the solution of the problem of the giant triplets, and if that means constantly reminding it of its obligation, that must be done. The world must engage for a broad war against poverty, epidemics and war. Such engagement must not be a skirmish, but it must be a climactic battle between light and darkness. The battle might be long and fierce; however, the good forces might end up winning if people arm themselves with the greatest moral and spiritual values of humankind.

Conclusion

The American society has treated the whole black race as flotsam and jetsam in the river of life. From the ordeals of slavery, Black codes, Jim Crow laws, and police exactions, to list a few, Martin Luther King, Jr., drew his inspiration. His comprehensive analysis of the relationship that has always existed between human bondage, economic exploitation and violence convinced him that the only way to rid the American society of the evil of racism was to not only eradicate its Siamese twins of materialism and militarism, but also to wipe away from the world all their intrinsically related corollaries.

This study has endeavored to prove the monozygotic link that exists between the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism through examples. It has also evoked the need to fight the giant triplets with the good triplets founded on loving oneself, loving one's neighbor, and loving God by doing what is morally right and avoiding what is wrong and sinful.

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