

The Trouble With Today\222s "Cassandras."
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Cassandra dates back to ancient Greek mythology. Cassandra was a princess of Troy who was cursed with the ability to see future disasters but also cursed with never being believed (until too late). This is different from the boy who cried wolf (making up the warning) and then not being believed when the wolf actually appeared.

Two Cassandras have received much critical press in the past few weeks: Iowa Representative Steve King, who tweeted in defense of another Cassandra, Geert Wilders, who just lost a bid to become Prime Minister of the Netherlands. Both men are implacably hostile to Muslim immigration: Steve King with little evidence that Muslim immigration to the United States poses an impending disaster, but Geert Wilders has valid concerns about Dutch Muslims rejecting Western values.

In 2004, a Dutch filmmaker, Theo Van Gogh (a descendant of the famous artist\222s brother), was assassinated in the street for "insulting Islam" by a Dutch college student whose family came from Morocco. The shock to the Dutch was that a young man could be born and grow up in a tolerant, liberal European country yet harbor religious views so noxious that he believed himself obliged to execute an "enemy of Allah."

Mohammad Bouyeri, the murderer now sentenced to life in prison without parole, shocked the Dutch. He was born in Amsterdam of parents of Berber-Moroccan origin. From childhood, he was in trouble as a delinquent, but was admitted to the university and left after five years without obtaining a degree. He joined a Muslim-Dutch terror group, Hofstad Network, whose members were subsequently rounded up and jailed. Bouyeri has not been unique among migrants to Europe (and a few to the United States too). His life trajectory ran from simple delinquency and thuggery to conversion to a fundamentalist cult of radical Islam.

Geert Wilders, a Member of Parliament, rose to fame (and notoriety) when he denounced Holland\222s generous and tolerant policy of immigration; it must be changed because it threatens Holland\222s very identity, he said. He was horrified, not only by the murder of Van Gogh for his ideas, and that the killer\222s biography was not an exception. European prisons are full of others like him who, although born in Europe, have rejected European culture in favor of a modern Muslim cult. One fanatic just left a British death toll of 4 and injury of 80 in the name of ISIS.

In his election campaign, Wilders proposed shutting down all mosques, banning the headscarf, and banning the Koran, clearly ideas over the top and deserving of criticism. However, when asked if he "hates Muslims," he said that he has nothing against Muslims, but has something against the Islamic Religion and its religious documents (Koran, Hadith, Sharia Law). Again, over the top. Even Islam is not "one size fits all."

If Wilders has said that his concern was Muslims with a literal interpretation of their holy book, he would be right. Most Muslims around the world do not consider it their duty to follow the example of the Prophet Mohammad, who as a warlord killed, tortured, looted, forced conversion, and took a child as his last wife. Those Muslims who believe that their religious duty is to model themselves this way cannot be absorbed into Western liberal society. Wilders\222 problem with Islam should be the marriage of an old religion with a modern fascist ideology.

In the Old Testament, we find texts requiring stoning of brides found not to be virgins (Deuteronomy 22:21) or "Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death" (Exodus 21:17). I know of no Jews or Christians today, no matter how pious, carrying out such acts. Yet there are some Muslims worldwide (a small but deadly percentage) who consider such punishments as a mandate from God, more important than secular law. Spain, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, the United States, Israel, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkey, have all been victims of Muslim literalists, believing that terror is their Muslim duty.

These attacks are a serious threat to the stability of some of these countries, and are indeed major culture clashes. King and Wilders are obnoxious, but not altogether wrong.

677 words

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