

The Zombie Apocalypse and Pope's Dunciad

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*Yeah, I know I'm ugly... I said to a bartender,
'Make me a zombie.' He said 'God beat me to it.'*

--Rodney Dangerfield

According to a Russian source, more than a year ago, President Vladimir Putin ordered his intelligence staff to determine whether Senator Bernie Sanders could win the White House in 2020. After examining polling data, the Russian analysts determined that Trump would beat Sanders in an electoral landslide. When this conclusion was presented to Putin, he imitated Stalin's Georgian accent and said, "It depends on who is counting the votes."

It was a joke, of course. Putin accepted that Bernie would never be president. After all, a Bernie Sanders presidency would quickly devolve into a whole series of jokes. Imagine, if you will, America's

Sunday morning political programming devolving into a “Weekend at Bernie’s.” If people thought communism died in 1991, imagine the living death of a Sanders administration. By the end of Bernie’s first year in office America would smell like a rotting corpse. Of course, Biden’s presidency may amount to the same thing. After all, the country is drinking socialist Kool-aid similar to that recommended by Bernie. Does the exact brand of poison matter? What matters is that the country is being poisoned. Of course, for someone like Putin, that’s when the fun begins; so why would Putin care which clown, or which Marxist shill, passes out the Kool-aid? “Go with Joe” is only marginally preferable to “on the gurney with Bernie.” And besides, Joe and Bernie are completely interchangeable in terms of political ideology and rigor mortis.

There is a sense in which America’s political leaders are like the walking dead. Seriously. If today’s America were a movie, it would be a zombie apocalypse. Only it would be a zombie apocalypse with a difference. Think of it this way: A rotting zombie comes hobbling toward you in a dark alley, drooling for your brains. (Please remember that

zombies eat brains.) But the zombie realizes he's in America, and that is meager fare indeed. Worse yet, where is a zombie in this country going to get some respect? America is not exactly into respecting the dead, walking or not. If Rodney Dangerfield didn't get respect when he was alive, can you imagine what he'd say as a Zombie?



Dangerfield: I tell ya, I tell ya, I'm all right now but last week I was in bad shape, bad shape. Last week I ate a politician's brains and burped hot air for three days....Oh man, last week nothin went right. I got a bobby pin to re-attach my arm and my head fell down a storm drain. I crawled down into the storm

drain to get my head and there was Gavin Newsom trying it on. I say to Newsom, "Gimme my head back." He says, "Waddy need a head for? You're spoiled." I told him a lot of zombies smell that way. Then Newsom tells me I'm ugly. Are you kiddin? I know I'm ugly. My dog found out he looks like me and ate his own brains. At Holloween, when I answer the door, the kids give me candy and run like Pete Butigieg is chasing them. I tell ya, when I was a kid my dad took me to the zoo and the zoo keeper thanked him for bringing me back, then sold me to the same freak show that ran Adam Schiff for Congress. That's the story of my life. I don't get no respect, no respect at all....

American politics is not for zombies. It is brainless. One ought to ask how it got that way. Perhaps the real threat to America is not the undead but the brain-dead. Perhaps that is the root of all evil in our time. This brings to mind one of the more famous poems in the English language: – Alexander Pope's "Dunciad." Assailing one of his critics as the favorite son of the Goddess of Dullness, Pope wrote a mock-heroic ode to pedantry. In fact, as this odious ode grew in length, Pope added elaborate and silly footnotes, ridiculous errata, prefaces in parody. The

poem became, in the end, an Apocalypse for dunces; only the Four Horsemen of Pope's Apocalypse are not Conquest, War, Famine and Death; but Misunderstanding, Irrelevance, Lunacy and Conceit. Pope shows how a blundering and self-conceited stupidity necessarily puts man in God's place. Thus, Pope gives us a prophecy for the twenty-first century. In a curious twist of profundity, the poet infers that universal dullness is evil's true goal and destiny; for intelligence is related to Order, Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Disorder, Lies, Wickedness and Ugliness relies upon a moronic To undermine Order, Truth and Beauty, a moronic inversion must occur. In the following passage, Pope depicts the inner-workings of evil through the mind of a mentally deficient clerk:

*'Be that my task' (replies a gloomy clerk,
Sworn foe to Myst'ry, yet divinely dark;
Whose pious hope aspires to see the day
When Moral Evidence shall quite decay
And damns implicit faith, and wholly lies,
Prompt to impose, and fond to dogmatize:)
'Let others creep by timid steps, and slow,
On plain Experience lay foundations low,
By common sense to common knowledge bred,*

*And last, to Nature's Cause thro' Nature led.
All-seeing in thy mists, we want no guide,
Mother of Arrogance, and Source of Pride!
We nobly take the high Priori Road,
And reason downward, till we doubt of God;
Make Nature still encroach upon his plan;
And shove him off as far as e'er we can:
Thrust some Mechanic Cause into His place;
Or bind in Matter, or diffuse in Space.
Or, at one bound o'er-leaping all His laws,
Make God Man's Image, Man the final Cause,
Find Virtue local, all Relation scorn,
See all in Self, and but for self be born:
Of naught so certain as our Reason still,
Of naught so doubtful as of Soul and Will,
Oh hide the God still more! and make us see
Such as Lucretius drew, a God like Thee:
Wrapped up in Self, a God without a Thought,
Regardless of our merit or default.
Or that bright Image to our fancy draw,
Which Theocles in raptur'd vision saw,
While thro' Poetic scenes the Genius roves,
Or wanders wild in Academic Groves;
That Nature our Society adores,
Where Tindal dictates, and Silenus snores.'*

Here the world is turned upside down by the artless, the blunt and the cretinous. These have no excellence, but enter into beastliness. In this horror show, men lose their humanity while retaining their human form. It cannot end well....

*The vulgar herd turn off to roll with Hogs,
To run with Horses, or to hunt with Dogs;
But, sad example! Never to escape
Their Infamy, still keep the human shape.*

Toward the end of the poem, the Goddess of Dullness, having conquered the world, having degraded humanity, having leveled Truth, Beauty and Goodness, “confers Titles and Degrees” on her demented subjects. She gives her final command thus:

*Then, blessing all, ‘Go Children of my care!
To Practice now from Theory [please] repair.
All my commands are easy, short and full:
My sons! be proud, be selfish, and be dull.
Guard my Prerogative, assert my Throne:
This Nod confirms each Privilege your own.’*

Yet as the Goddess of Dullness speaks, she yawns.
And all Nature nods. The result of her doctrine is
unimagined devastation. Stupidity is boredom and
boredom is death; for what interest is there in
falsehood? And how can life survive where nothing
is interesting?

*Lost was the Nation's Sense, nor could be found,
While the long solemn Unison went round;
Wide, and more wide, it spread o'er all the realm;
Ev'n Palinurus nodded at the Helm:
The Vapour mild o'er each Committee crept;
Unfinish'd Treaties in each Office slept;
And Chiefless Armies doz'd out the Campaign;
And Navies yawn'd for Orders on the Main.*

A venal quiet overtakes the wide world as dullness
leads to a universal coma. The Goddess of Dullness,
that great murderess, comes to lay waste and open
the gates of CHOAS.

*'Till drown'd was Sense, and Shame, and Right,
and Wrong —
O sing, and hush the Nations with thy song!
In vain, in vain — the all-composing Hour
Resistless falls: the Muse obeys the Pow'r.*

*She comes! she comes! the sable Throne behold
Of Night primeaval and of Chaos old!
Before her, Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
And all its varying Rainbows die away.
Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
The sick'ning stars fade off th' ethereal plain;
As Argus' eyes by Hermes' wand apprest,
Clos'd one by one to everlasting rest;
Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
Art after Art goes out, and all is Night.
See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of Casuistry heap'd o'er her head!
Philosophy, that lean'd on Heav'n before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
And Metaphysic calls for aid on Sense!
See Mystery to Mathematics fly!
In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
And unawares Morality expires.
For public Flame, nor private, dares to shine;
Nor human Spark is left, nor Glimpse divine!
Lo! thy dread Empire, CHAOS! is restor'd;
Light dies before thy uncreating word;*

*Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall
And universal darkness buries All.*

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