

THE WINGNUT AND THE COMEDIAN

In this post I suggested that Fox News has found a way to exercise corporate bio-power directly against a large number of white men aged 55 to death. The formula calls for stoking the viewer's rage with a smug libtard and then relaxing him with a paid hitman who verbally crushes the libtard in a scripted debate, a formula worked out by professional wrestling. This cycle is designed, according to Toby Smith, to take advantage of the brain chemistry of viewers. It works for these older viewers in part because dopamine levels drop with age, and can be influenced by a number of other factors. People with lowered dopamine levels react with more anger than those with more normal levels. Serotonin and dopamine released when the Conservative Hitman crushes the Libtard is a pleasure to these people. It's addicting, says Smith, and some of the materials I've read agree.

But lefties don't watch Fox; and they must not watch a lot of cable news shows because MSNBC, supposedly the liberal channel, is slowly drifting to the right. Speaking solely for myself, I don't watch cable news because TV takes forever to convey information. I like to read. But I do watch some late-night TV: Trevor Noah on The Daily Show, Stephen Colbert and Seth Meyer, occasionally John Oliver, and, of course, Sam Bee on Full Frontal. How is my response to their brand of humor different from the behavior I described for the Fox garbage?

Of course, the response I have is different in one respect, it makes me laugh, both at myself and at the problems. Apparently laughing and smiling release dopamine, serotonin and several kinds of endorphins, all of which make people feel good, and scientists currently think they help us deal with anger. Here's a nice description from a Harvard institute devoted to neuro-science. The main difference between the

laugh cycle and the rage cycle might be that jokes require the involvement of the thinking part of the brain, the prefrontal cortex. The rage cycle doesn't seem to involve that part of the brain, but something deeper. The rage was already there, and this Libtard/Hitman just pushes the buttons directly.

Or, I could be completely wrong. A few minutes of research on the internet isn't enough to give me any certainty about this or about the Fox attacks. So all this feels like rank speculation. But it's fun, and seems to be releasing some extra dopamines for me. So, onward.

What I do know is that I am enraged by the Republican assault on our institutions and norms of governance, and even more by their anti-intellectualism, their irrationalism, their rejection of Enlightenment values. And I am outraged by the fact that we are governed by a minority, and that lots of the people in that minority are racist, homophobic and hateful greedy people. Even worse, some of them are violent pigs, both towards those they hate and towards their own families. And I'm angry with the spineless Democrats who seem to have no idea of how to respond to these attacks.

But the people I genuinely feel rage against are the billionaires and centi-millionaires who actually run our political system. You can take your pick of the monsters who plow money into a system of liars and frauds who purposefully lie to the ignorant voters they stoke with Rushbo and his stinking ilk. They expect a huge return on their money. So, yes, I feel rage. It's probably not that different from the rage that the men 55 to death feel about libtards like me.

When Colbert shows clips of Trump and his flying monkeys lying or spewing bile, it sets me on edge, and the punch lines do the job of the conservative Hitman Toby Smith describes. The resulting laughter is also at least partly tribal. Laughter is a sign of group belonging, and I'm one of many feeling the rage and the

release.

One thing these jokes do is to open a space for me to think clearly, and to remember that I really don't hate the people who vote Republican. I don't feel sympathy either, more like pity and a kind of resignation that at least they asked for the kick in the face they get. I do despise the Republicans who figured Trump would be good for their wallets and ignored the damage he would do. But my real anger is directed at the rich people who manipulate all of us and who intend to benefit from it in cash and power.

But, all of us plebes, from the far left to the far right should give a big hand to dopamine, serotonin and endorphins. Let's keep those levels high, dampen the rage and open a mental space for thinking. Even our oligarchs, Russian and American, can join that round of applause, thanking heaven for natural Soma.