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Imperial Gothic *Colluding with the Thing*

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Because the word, “capitalism,” is polysyllabic and, furthermore, because the term invites all sorts of pedantic challenges that harass the progress of discussion, I shall refer to it with the monosyllabic “Thing.” I’ve been tempted by “Grendel,” “Dracula,” “Mr. Hyde,” “Jabberwocky,” “Nosferatu,” “Hannibal Lecter,” and all sorts of fictional monster-enemies of civilization. In the end, I stuck with the “Thing,” which seemed the most felicitously ominous choice. It goes without saying that the Thing today is an American creature, red, white, and blue in tooth and claw. It leads a string of lesser Things, the Thingies or Thinglets, which are its satrapies in what the Thing calls “the World Community.” Anything outside this “community” is “injun country”—the forest of evil and the hunting grounds for subversion, theft, and exploitation. The hunted, generally, is animal, mineral, and vegetable. The Thing is omnivorous.

Verily, the Thing has exploited nature to the point of extinction and human beings to the point of unsustainable inequality and misery—and, moreover, has vacuumed their brains clean of any memory of self-preserving resistance. The Thing runs a successful propaganda machine, which does the sucking out and the implanting in of trivial greyish matter that results in slavish obedience. The Thing’s pressing problem is accumulation of money and nothing much left at home to invest it in—other than people, but the rate of return on this investment would be negligible in the Thing’s selfish view. The Thing has accumulated this mountain of money with

“labor-saving” tricks, which have left worker/consumers too poor to contribute to the increase of the rate of profit, on which the Thing depends for replication, as the original fictional Thing, though a vegetable, depended on blood to survive.

Thus, since 1990, the Thing has gone on a brutally sustained rampage of plunder throughout the globe, seeking opportunities to invest the loot it had extracted from people and nature at home. The Thing has used its formidable military arsenal to lay waste considerable chunks of the planet. As a result the Thing has become dangerously unloved, but it has decided, like Frankenstein’s eight-foot, chemically produced, unlovely monster that “If I cannot inspire love, I can cause fear.” Thus, in the dank and moldy subterranean laboratories of its deep state, the Thing has come up with a doppelganger of itself: Terrorism. The Thing alleges to be protecting us from its double, but, in return, we must cough up our civil liberties and agree to let the Thing loose on the destruction of property and lives of people abroad—for our own protection

In a nutshell, the Thing has donned the mantle of the Gothic. As a genre in literature, the Gothic, a category of horror, proliferated in England in the 1880s. This was the time when the Empire, like the Thing today, had a problem with love. It was brutally putting down all sorts of uprisings in its dominions abroad, starting spectacularly with punishing the Indian Mutiny of 1857 (First War of Indian Independence), when the English public was made to be haunted by the elusive specter of Nana Sahib. The author of an infamous massacre of English women and children in India (England’s 9/11, or “the chickens come home to roost”), the elusive Nana Sahib was for many years the Osama bin Laden of British imperialism, conveniently never caught, and the justification for its wars against rebelling Jamaicans, Zulus, and Afghans, to select just a few of England’s wars for control of its large chunk of the globe. This period’s fiction, however, presented predatory England as under threat of invasion. In the fiction of the time, the aggressor was portrayed as the victim. Think of *Dracula*, as the preeminent fantasy of this inversion of reality: the blood-sucking vampire at home—the Empire— was projected unto a vampire invading from abroad.

Today, “Terrorism”—the American version of imperial Britain’s projecting unto a constructed enemy its own aggression—is Mr. Hyde to America’s Dr. Jekyll (Stevenson’s fiction is contemporary with Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*). Except that the Thing, itself a monster, cannot or does not bother to write fiction. Its infantilized audience is too pacified to read. The Thing breathes life into monsters of its own creation, which appear as reader-friendly but horrifying images on television screens, chopping off heads in slick videos, supposedly produced in desert studios, somewhere in the “Middle East,” equipped with the latest voodoo technology by generic “Arabs” in black balaclava, wielding not-quite scimitars but knives—in between epic sand-churning Toyota rides, worthy of Antony Quinn’s galloping, madly-laughing rabble in David Lean’s “Lawrence of Arabia.”

In the matter of Ukraine, the unfortunate victim of the Thing’s latest imperial foraging, the monster to set loose on that suffering land had not to be invented. It lay asleep, like Beowulf’s dragon, upon a heap of treasured—if vile—memories of the Nazi past. Wakened over two assiduous decades to the soothing noise of five billion dollars pouring steadily out of Uncle Sam’s secret coffers for dirty tricks and fed cookies by Assistant Secretary of State, neo-con fanatic, Victoria Nuland, Ukrainian Neo-Nazism harkened to the Thing’s rally for a neo-

Hitlerian crusade against all things Russian. Up rise the swastika-ed ranks of Svoboda and the Right Sector, chanting, “Glory to Ukraine,” lifting up high into the sky portraits of their beloved dead leader, Stepan Bandera, the execrable butcher of Poles and Ukrainians in the service of Hitler, and carrying out psychedelic torchlight parades (one just recently in Kiev, honoring some anniversary connected to Bandera). The decision of the Nuremberg Tribunal, declaring the Nazi party a criminal organization, is judiciously and tacitly ignored by the humanitarian West, while the Neo-Nazis take chisels to Lenin’s statues all over Ukraine and overturn the largest in Europe from atop its lofty pedestal in Kharkov. Well, you can’t blame the Thing for ignoring vandalism to Lenin’s simulacra, as the Thing has a thing about socialism—its historic enemy. In this animus, it shares a distinct feature with fascism, in fact.

But, but, but. Why is this Neo-Nazi monster not haunting our television screens? Because it is not meant to terrorize us psychologically but quite literally those pesky Donbas Ukrainians, who are unwilling to comply with the Thing’s charade of a “democratic” Ukraine, intended to loot the land, while giving carte blanche to Kiev’s obscurantist racism against citizens of Russian extraction. It should be noted, in passing, that Latvia, one of the Thing’s loyal Thinglets in the Baltic, denies Latvians of Russian extraction citizenship and, of course, the right to vote. The return of the Nazi repressed, therefore, must, in turn be repressed, for how would Americans feel if they knew that their government is betraying the Greatest Generation—those Americans who died so heroically in “Saving Private Ryan,” to defeat Nazism? A propaganda quandary, this—which is resolved by a conspiracy of silence or disinformation by the media, the governists, and human rights professionals.

People are dying, however, in Ukraine. For real. Unreported, denied, or insulted by lies or distortions in the Thing’s vast and smelly swamp of increasingly un-coordinated propaganda. On 10 July, a BBC headline screamed: “[Amnesty International] Report exposes stomach-turning violence”—violence blamed on “pro-Russian separatist groups” in Donbas (Novorossya).

However, CounterPunch, for example, published an article by Vladislav Gulevich shortly after the Amnesty report, pointing out the more logical truth. Gulevich writes: “It’s well known that EuroMaidan was supported by Ukrainian neo-Nazi organizations. After the success of EuroMaidan its leaders enrolled their neo-Nazi supporters into newly formed police and National Guard battalions (“Azov”, “Donbas” and so on). From time to time foreign media speak of the neo-Nazi background of such Ukrainian military units, but most of the time this fact is hidden. It’s hard to expect any respect for human rights or any other kind of law observance from these soldiers.”

Amnesty’s partiality and collusion with the Thing’s nefarious agit-prop machine is further exemplified by the report it issued on 5 September, when it stated rather categorically: “Our evidence shows that Russia is fuelling the conflict, both through direct interference and by supporting the separatists in the East. Russia must stop the steady flow of weapons and other support to an insurgent force heavily implicated in gross human rights violations.”

Yet on 07 September, Amnesty contradicted its two-day-old report by pointing the finger at Kiev's volunteer Aidar Battalion as the major culprit in human rights abuses in Novorossya's Luhansk region. As Global Research reports,

Amnesty published a briefing on "Abuses and war crimes by the Aidar Volunteer Battalion in the north Luhansk region." The briefing contained carefully worded language that depicts the Ukrainian government forces as lawful actors, the 'good guys' in the conflict.

This white-washing of "Ukrainian government forces," however, was rapidly splattered with news on 25 September in the Russian media that three mass graves were uncovered on 23 September near Donetsk, as TV-Novosti reported from one of the burial sites.

This discovery was confirmed by the Office for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE):

The OSCE has confirmed that three mass graves, allegedly with many bodies, have been found near Donetsk in eastern Ukraine. Two of the bodies have already been identified.

Naturally, for this is also a propaganda war, Russia lost no time in putting together an Investigative Committee. The committee's head, Vladimir Markin, in a statement on 1 October, said:

For those who have doubts regarding who's responsible for these murders, the Investigative Committee has irrefutable evidence – witness accounts and appropriate examinations – that directly indicates that this crime was committed by fighters from the National Guard and Right Sector. . . . All victims were tortured before their murder.

Equally "naturally," Radio Free Europe (a CIA creature), and its subsidiary, Radio Liberty, went into full, radio-wave spin:

Russian state media are abuzz with accusations of murder and gang rape levelled against government forces in eastern Ukraine by a purported Western monitor.

On 8 October, the Office of the High Commissioner of the United Nations for Human Rights issued a report, the sixth on human rights violations in Ukraine, making no mention of mass graves, despite having promised to do so.

Here, in the belly of the Thing, we are agog with ISIS but know nothing of the plausible claims of atrocities by our Nazis in Ukraine, and that is because there are useful monsters and not-so-useful monsters in the Thing's factory of fear. While human rights folks refuse to look into the claims by reports in what the western corporate media likes to call dismissively "the Russian state-run media"—as though there is something sacrosanct about being "corporate-run"—a fourth mass grave was reported found in the Luhansk area.

How long will the Thing rampage? An interesting article on the Thing's improbable longevity in a recent issue of *New Left Review* offers a cheerful prospect: "For capitalism to end . . . it must provide for its own destruction—which, I would argue, is exactly what we are witnessing today."

