

## So you think we are screwed?

Posted by [Martin Fairclough](#) On 10/26/2018

**Lexington Park, MD** - Upon reflection, as we seem to be in an era of significant change, our democracy threatened, horrific acts of violent terrorism which harken back to the middle ages, the confusion of facts, the divisiveness and total polarization of our politics and threats to our sacred institutions, things seem really bad, especially for our children and grandchildren.

I proffer below three quotes. Somewhat bleak, but strangely reassuring. People during many eras in the past suffered, with no real hope for a bright future. As a society we have survived many desperate challenges, but generations later are still here. Reading the lines below may resonate to the situation the entire world seems to face today, uncertainty and fear being high on the list.

Upon further reflection it seems that we must not only survive as a nation living on the same planet with 7 billion souls. Our job must be to inspire the future generations never to give up hope.

The first quote, one of the greatest opening paragraphs in literature was written by Charles Dickens in a Tale of Two Cities.

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.*

These antithetical statements perfectly capture the sentiment and condition of Europe before the French Revolution. History was going to take a new turn which will mark the era unlike any other. It was the best of times because it promised an end of tyranny of the nobility and rise of common people. It was the worst of times because a lot of sacrifice had to be made by the common people to achieve this end as many measures were taken to squash the uprising.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) born in Dublin Ireland was a towering figure in English literature at the turn of the 20th Century. His poem The Second Coming delivers a message that seems so relevant today

*"Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity."*

"Dover Beach" is a poem written by the English poet Matthew Arnold after World War 1 - a brutal war - The war to end all wars. Arnold captures the confusion and outlook that this devastating war caused. He wrote it for his wife on their honeymoon close to the end of the war.

*"Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another! for the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night"*

Here is to hope - get out and vote!

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