

# DOPE

Amiri Baraka

Uuuuuuuuuu  
Uuuuuuuuuu  
Uuuuuuuuuu uuu  
Ray light morning fire lynch yet  
Uuuuuuuuuu  
Yester-pain in dreams  
Comes again, race-pain,  
People our people our people  
Everywhere...yeh... uuuuu.yeh uuuuu, yeh  
Our people, yes people, every people, most people  
Uuuuuu, yeh uuuuuu, most people in pain  
Yester-pain, and pain today  
OOOWOW! OOOWOW!  
It must be the devil  
OOOO WOW! OOOOWOW!  
It must be the devil  
It must be the devil  
It must be the devil  
OOOWOW! OOOOWOW!  
Yeh, devil, yeh, devil. OOOWOW!  
Must be the devil, must be the devil  
Mus is mus is mus is  
Mus is be the devil, can't be Rockefeller  
Can't be him, no Lawd  
Can't be du Pont, no Lawd, can't be, no Lawd, no way  
No way, naw suh, no way Jose – can't be them rich folks!  
They's good to us, they's good to us, they's good to us  
They's good to us, they's good to us,  
I know, the massa tolt me so,  
I seed it on channel 7, i seed it on channel 9  
I seed it on channel 4 and 2 and 5.  
Rich folks good to us; poor folks ain't shit.  
Hallelujah, hallelujah! OOOWOW! OOOWOW!  
Everything gonna be different, after we die,  
We ain't gon be hungry, ain't gon be pain, ain't gon be sufferin;  
Won't go thru this again, after we die, after we die. OWOOO! OWOWOOOOW!  
After we die it's all gonna be good, have all the money we need after we die;  
Have all the food we need after we die;  
Have a nice house like the rich folks, after we die, after we die, after we die;  
We can live like Rev Ike, after we die.  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Must be the devil!  
It ain't capitalism, it ain't capitalism, it ain't capitalism,  
Naw it ain't that – Jimmy Carter wouldn't lie.  
Life's unfair, but it ain't capitalism!  
Must be the devil, OWOW!  
It ain't the police. Jimmy Carter wouldn't lie.  
You know Rosalynn wouldn't, nor Lillian.  
His drunken racist brother ain't no reflection on Jimmy;  
Must be the devil got in him, I tell you.

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The devil killed Malcolm and Dr King too,  
Even killed both Kennedies, and Pablo Neruda  
Overthrew Allende's government, killed Lumumba,  
And is negotiating with Stepin Fetchit and Sleep 'n Eat in Birmingham;  
Over there in "Salisbury," going under the name of Ian Smith.  
Must be the devil!  
Can't be Vorster, can't be apartheid, can't be imperialism – Jimmy carter wouldn't lie.  
Didn't you hear him say in his State of the Union message,  
"I swear on Rosalynn's face-lifted catatonia, I wouldn't lie."  
Nixon lied, Haldeman lied, Dean lied, Hoover lied, Hoover sucked too,  
But Jimmy don't! Jimmy wouldn't! Jimmy ain't lying!  
Must be the devil, must be the devil!  
Put your money on the plate – must be the devil! In heaven we'll all be straight.  
Can't t be Rockefeller: He gave Amos Pootbootie a scholarship to Behavior Modification University,  
And Genevieve Almoswhite works for his foundation.  
Must be niggers!  
Can't be Mellon: He gave Winky Suckass a fellowship in his bank,  
Put him in charge of closing out mortgages in the lowlife Pittsburgh Hill nigger section; can't be him.  
Yessuh, yessuh, yessuh, yessuh, yessuh, yessuh, yessuh, yessuh,  
Put your money in the plate, don't be late, don't have to wait,  
You gonna be in heaven after you die, you gon' get all you need once you gone, yessuh!  
I heard it on *The Jeffersons*, I heard it on *The Rookies*, I swallowed it whole on *Roots*.  
Wasn't it nice, wasn't it nice, slavery was so cool!  
And all you had to do was wear derbies and vests and train chickens and buy your way free  
If you had a mind to!  
Must be the devil! Wasn't no white folks –  
Lazy niggers chained theyselves and threw they own black asses in the bottom of the boats!  
(Well now that you mention it there was a certain King Assblackuwasi helped throw your ass in  
The bottom of the boat, your mamma, wife, and you never seed 'em no more.)  
Must've been the devil! Gimme your money! Put your money in this plate!  
Heaven be here soon, just got to die, just got to stop living!  
Close your eyes, stop breathing, and BAM-O – Heaven be here!  
You'll have all of what you need, BAM-O!  
All of a sudden, heaven be here, you'll have all you need!  
That assembly line you work on will dissolve in thin air.  
OWOWOOW! OWOWOOW! Just gotta die  
Just gotta die, this old world ain't nuthin.  
Must be the devil got you thinking so.  
It can't be Rockefeller, it can't be Morgan, it can't be capitalism, it can't be national oppression.  
OWOW! No Way!  
Now go back to work and cool it. Go back to work and lay back just a little while longer till you pass.  
It's all gon' be alright once you gone.  
Gimme that last bit of silver you got stashed there, sister.  
Gimme that dust now, brother man.  
It'll be ok on the other side; your soul be clean, be washed pure white!  
YES! YES! YES! OWOW!  
Now go back to work. Go to sleep. YES! Go to sleep, go back to work. YES!  
OWOW. OWOW.  
Uuuuuuuuuu. Uuuuuuuuuu.  
Uuuuuuuuuu. YES,  
Uuuuuuuu. YES. Uuuuuuuuuu.  
Amen.

# DOPE

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## Critical Thinking: Literary and Historical Analysis

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1. In the first 12 lines of the poem the author gives some clues that reveal what his central claim will be *about*. In these lines he shares the **context** (background or circumstances) of his claim. What is the context that Baraka presents as fuel for his poem? [Cite evidence.]
2. What is Amiri Baraka's **point-of-view**:
  - a. What is his perspective (who is he; where is he coming from)?
  - b. What is his opinion about the context, or does he not appear to have one?
  - c. What appears to be his intent – to inform, persuade, or entertain? [Explain your reasoning.]
3. Identify 3 **rhetorical devices** used by Baraka. Discuss their impact on the poem.

Rhetorical Device	Evidence from text	Impact on the poem

4. Based upon your analysis, what is Baraka's **central claim**? [Hint: Let the title guide your thinking.]

**Critical Thinking: Historical Analysis**

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5. Baraka repeats over and over that “it can’t be capitalism.” Capitalism is one of the world’s two major economic systems, the other being socialism (with communism existing as an extreme form of socialism).
  - a. What are the major differences between capitalism and socialism?
  - b. Baraka alludes to specific people associated with American capitalism: John D. Rockefeller, Pierre du Pont, Andrew Mellon and J.P. Morgan. Who were these men, and why does Baraka include them in this poem?
  - c. Who are Amos Pootbootie, Genevieve Almoswhite, and Winky Suckass? What purpose do they serve in the poem?
  - d. What does Baraka mean when he says “it can’t be capitalism”?
6. At the top of page 2 Baraka alludes to Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, John and Robert Kennedy, Pablo Neruda, Salvadore Allende and Patrice Lumumba. Who were these men (particularly Neruda, Allende, Lumumba) and what do they have in common? [Hint: It’s *not* that they were all killed.]
7. Baraka says the devil is “negotiating with Stepin Fetchit and Sleep ’n Eat in Birmingham.” Who were these men, and what does this mean?

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8. Baraka says the devil is “over there in Salisbury, going under the name of Ian Smith.” He also mentions B.J. Vorster a couple of lines later. Who were Ian Smith and B.J. Vorster? Neither are American, so what do they have to do with anything – why are they in this poem?
  
9. Baraka makes a number of deliberate allusions to news and entertainment media. What does he have to say about the news and television media of the 1970s?
  
10. Who were Richard Nixon, H.R. Haldeman, John Dean, and J. Edgar Hoover? And why are they in the poem? [Hint: Nixon, Haldeman, and Dean are all connected to the same scandal. What was the scandal; why was it such a big deal; and why is Hoover mentioned in the same line as the other three?]
  
11. Who is/was Jimmy Carter... and why all of the references to him (and to his family members)?
  
12. There are a LOT of allusions in the poem to religious or *churchy* language.
  - a. Who is/was Reverend Ike? And why is he in the poem?
  
  - b. “Put your money in the plate!” Explain. (Who is talking, and what is he talking about? *SO??*)
  
  - c. Why does the poem end with so much talk about heaven and the soul?
  
  - d. Why do you think the poem ends with the word “Amen”?

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13. What's with all of the hyper-expressive OWOW!'s and YES!'s??? What is Baraka's purpose in putting them into (and repeating them throughout) the poem?
14. What is the dominant **tone** of the poem? Cite specific lines where this tone is powerfully evident, and explain how the tone is evident there.
15. Based on your analysis of the entire poem, you can infer that Baraka believes "the devil" is... ???
16. What is Amiri Baraka's **central claim**? [Hint: Let the title of the poem guide you.] Explain it in the space below.