

CULTURAL CAVIAR

Referendum Follies

by Theodore Dalrymple 

July 02, 2016



Laurel and Hardy

Whenever I gave expert evidence in murder trials, I looked at the jury and thought, “What a rabble! How on earth can you expect them to come to any proper conclusion?”

None of them ever dressed for the occasion. As they trooped in and out of the jury box, I thought how unattractive and undignified modern clothes are, and how practically no one these days has any self-respect (by comparison with self-esteem). They all looked as if they had come to court after a hard night's dissipation, and had just popped round to the corner shop for a pint of milk to calm their gastritis.

As the lawyers argued about the more abstruse point of mens rea, one of them would suddenly find a transcendent interest in his fingernails, while another would search in her plastic bag to check whether her chocolate bar was still in it. A third would count the flies on the ceiling. But at the end of the trial, something funny happened: The jury got it right! They arrived at a sensible verdict, and on the one occasion on which I thought they got it wrong, their verdict was not completely without reason. My faith in humanity and its ability to take serious things seriously was marginally restored. Juries are not easily deceived—unlike, one is tempted to add, electorates.

And, of course, as soon as the results of the Brexit referendum were known, it was alleged that those who had voted to leave the European Union had either been duped or were a lot of uninformed and prejudiced ignoramuses, bigots, and racists to boot, and that therefore their votes did not really count at all. Only the votes of the pure in spirit *really* counted.

Now, as it happens, I am not altogether enthusiastic about

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my doubts about the wisdom of deciding such a matter as Brexit on the basis of 50 percent plus 1 of the votes cast in a single referendum, irrespective of the proportion of the eligible electorate who actually voted in it. But to object to the procedure only *after* the results, and not before, displays a disturbingly dictatorial frame of mind, to say nothing of a singular lack of honor: You can have any result you like, so long as it is the one we want.

error of logic to say that because bigots voted for Brexit, people who voted for Brexit were bigots.”

There is now a tradition in Europe of holding referenda and ignoring the results. This is to get the worst of all possible worlds; and while this manner of proceeding makes clear to large parts of the population that its opinion counts for nothing, the political class wonders why it is so mistrusted and even despised.

When the death penalty was abolished in Britain, it was against the wishes of at least 90 percent of the population of the time. However, it was accepted without demur because Parliament had voted it, and members of Parliament were understood to be not simply mouthpieces for their constituents on every question. They were elected leaders who would sometimes find it necessary and have the courage to take unpopular decisions. Constitutional propriety made an unpopular decision legitimate and therefore not a matter for open conflict.

Had Parliament held a referendum on the subject of capital punishment and then disregarded the result, there would have been discontent or worse. Opponents of Brexit are looking for ways of overturning the referendum result, for it is certainly true that, constitutionally, Parliament is not bound by its results. But if the result *is* disregarded, it will send a clear message to the 52 percent who voted for Brexit that their opinion, even when solicited, counted for nothing, and that they could be brushed aside as if they were mildly irritating insects. Without a referendum, none of this would have happened. Mr. Cameron has proved himself to be what I always thought he was: a ruthless incompetent.

In a larger sense, the 52 percent feel the disdain of their opponents in a way that they do not generally reciprocate, irrespective of whether or not the result of the referendum is respected in the end. For the noisier members of the 48 percent, at least, supporters of Brexit are not merely persons of a different opinion, but bad persons, *ex officio* insular, small-minded, bigoted, xenophobic, and racist.

It would be useless to deny that some of them are as depicted. Such people exist, unfortunately, and they were obviously likely to vote for Brexit. But it is an elementary error of logic to say that because bigots voted for Brexit,

logic was one that many persons of superior education, or at any of a more prolonged period of formal instruction, made.

Again, as a statistical generalization it is true that the more educated were inclined to vote to remain than to vote to leave. It is only a statistical generalization, however; there were many highly

educated people (my friend Professor Norman Stone, for example, who can hardly be described as a xenophobe) who voted to leave. Education and wisdom, let alone foresight, are in any case not the same thing: I will not rehearse the proofs of this, but merely point out that the Russian intelligentsia were not notable for their political prudence, the German professoriate for its resistance to Nazi ideas, or the educated leaders of the Khmer Rouge for their humanity. I could go on: Suffice it to say that educated people are not ipso facto always wiser than the uneducated, but they are usually surer of themselves.

If the 52 percent voted for Brexit because they feared that the “European project,” so-called, is the creation of a vast sovereign state to slake the thirst for power of megalomaniacs of the political class, impossible of even minimal democratic oversight, a kind of giant Yugoslavia, then they were, in my opinion, wiser than those who voted the other way. (I am not saying that this actually was the reason in the majority of cases they voted for Brexit.)

The leaders of France, Germany, and Italy have said that they want to push forward to closer political union. The folly of this is unspeakable. Consider, if you will, just the following: The French government, whose legitimacy no one will deny even if he denies its competence, is currently attempting some weak reforms of the rigid French labor market. This has resulted in months of conflict and continued violence. But at least the reform is the work, or attempted work, of a *French* government. Imagine if the reform were imposed by fiat of a European government despite the opposition of the French government and members of the European parliament: As Shakespeare put it, hark, what discord follows!

The European project is not the solution to a problem, because there is no problem to be solved. Moreover, there is not a problem to which it *could* be the solution. It is the work of men as ruthlessly incompetent in their own way as David Cameron. I therefore suggest a law is passed—a Europe-wide law—making obligatory an epitaph on the graves of all members of the European political class (including British). It would not be from the Bible, but from

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Ceara Adler · a day ago

Bravo, Doc!

The "European project," as it were, is an utter failure. Assuming it was formed under the best of intentions, by a group of the political elite with the recent past still fresh in their minds, it's been hijacked and run into the ground. Precisely by the very "well-educated" individuals he's mentioned, no less. I agree: money could buy the best education possible, but it by no means guarantees (indeed over-education even leads to a certain lack of) intelligence, wisdom, or even a sense of foresight. For many it's a sheen of false confidence that can (and has) lead us into a rather glorious mess.

On that note, I second the motion for the epitaph.

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Dr. Dalrymple needs to get Massie on his psychiatrist's couch and help him resolve his issues.

Buchanan's latest piece is a great refutation of the Globalists' version of free trade:
<http://buchanan.org/blog/trump...>

14 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Ceara Adler → George Gobal Warming · a day ago

Agreed on therapy for Massie. If that fails, just smack him upside the head and show him Buchanan's article, repeat as necessary.

10 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



George Gobal Warming → Ceara Adler · a day ago

Particularly the line:

"Or is what is best for the world now more important than what is best for America?"

But then he would probably agree with that.

8 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Ceara Adler → George Gobal Warming · a day ago

Not 'would'; he *does*. He's already as good as thrown UK to the wolves.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



atilla41 → Ceara Adler · 20 hours ago

That action would be akin to teaching a pig to dance.....

It wastes your time and annoys the pig.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Ceara Adler → atilla41 · 20 hours ago

Not quite. He's stubbornly holding on to the E.U. train. At this point he's simply unwilling.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



thefilthybeast → atilla41 · 19 hours ago

"and annoys the pig."

Mostly the pig just squeals louder until the dance instructor recognizes the futility of pig instruction.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



JOAN LEE PETTIMORE → George Gobal Warming · a day ago

God, how I love Patrick J Buchanan - - -

12 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Truthsayer → George Gobal Warming · a day ago

I wouldn't count on (((Daniels))) to set anyone straight. He has been an open borders advocate for some time.

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George Gobal Warming → Truthsayer · a day ago

After reading Taki's latest I wonder how long he will tolerate Messie

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inverse George will type - the liberals' favorite conservative. They kept him around to make fun of him.

7 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Truthsayer → George Gopal Warming · a day ago

Taki's latest is one of his best. What is more appropriate than a Greek pontificating on the bravery of the 300, especially within the context of England poking its finger in the eye of the EU?

14 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Unreconstructed Raccoon → Truthsayer · 20 hours ago

Every time I see a picture of that cuck, I immediately think "gelding".

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Rurik → Truthsayer · 19 hours ago

Agree, One of Taki's best. Less elegant but just as clear, the words (allegedly by Forrest at Fort Donelson) "Fuk you, fuk the horse you rode up on, and fuk the colonel who sent you".

10 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Caprizchka → George Gopal Warming · 21 hours ago

I suspect that Taki covertly addresses Massie in that very article.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



AngloBilly → George Gopal Warming · 18 hours ago

I don't know. Taki has always loved hanging around the wealthy and the high and mighty, and Massie can be considered part of that crowd. Taki also has recently described Harvey Weinstein as his "BFF" or some such thing, and he sings the praises of Norman Mailer and son.

Despite all of that, Taki has consistently written good and great things, but I worry that he's giving his corrupt friends way too much credit. I include Dalrymple in that category, since he favors mass immigration, virtue-signals frequently about those nasty "xenophobes," and lives a very insulated life.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



Caprizchka → AngloBilly · 14 hours ago

<https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/...>

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



9eyedeel → AngloBilly · 10 hours ago

I can have corrupt friends, transactionally, as long as they do what I ask in our area of overlap...there are rules for everything, and the whole point of rules is that you can use them as a

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incorrect people servicable for this transaction...but it's a matter of taste, the more incorrect they are, the further away they are standing from you anyways, why walk all the way over there to get something

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Antiphon → George Gobar Warming · 18 hours ago

Buchanan...Buchanan...

That name sounds familiar. I think his columns used to appear here at Taki's in the bad old days before Massie and Cole.

Glad to know Pat is still alive and kicking.

5 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



JJ Boccabella → Antiphon · 6 hours ago

With both PJB and Derbyshire accessible through unz.com and vdare, it tempts a reader to venture there and not return.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Antiphon → JJ Boccabella · 6 hours ago

Right-o, Guv'nor. But is there a combox? Reading the column is about 10% of the experience for me. The "com"versation is the other 90%. For PJB, though, I must say it is more 50/50, even when I do get mad at him occasionally.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



atilla41 → Ceara Adler · 20 hours ago

I have to take issue regarding the epitaph....

The corpses of these treasonous filth should be incinerated immediately after execution.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Ceara Adler → atilla41 · 20 hours ago

Some of them still need to be turned into fodder....

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Brigadon → Ceara Adler · 20 hours ago

The only 100% infallible way of changing a liberal's mind is by changing the shape of his brain. generally with a small, high-velocity lead surgical instrument.

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



atilla41 → Brigadon · 18 hours ago

We have a winner !!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Race Dissident → Brigadon · 16 hours ago

To quote an old Russian proverb: Only the grave straightens the hunchback...

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George Boreas · a day ago

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Sometimes a good night of reset is the best way to wash away the bs and achieve clarity. I've seen executives profit from it. And the Brits, seeing the vote and knowing their drinking habits, appear to be very adept.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



jim jones · a day ago

I have done Jury Service here in the UK and everyone wore suits. Some people could not seem to understand that the defendant is presumed INNOCENT and does not have to prove anything but we reached the right verdict in the end.

5 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



WhereAreTheVikings → jim jones · a day ago

Yes, it does seem to work out most times. However, that "did the state prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt" is the one and only question to ask in the jury room is a revelation to many jurors during voir dire.

I think many step into the jury box thinking in terms of "do I believe the state's witnesses", which does not quite get them where they need to go, because the state can usher in 20 witnesses and still not have proven its case beyond a reasonable doubt. And in criminal trials, when the defendant actually takes the stand, sometimes it seems to be "which one do I believe," which does not always hold the state to the more stringent beyond a reasonable doubt standard.

14 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



stranger_in_strange_land → WhereAreTheVikings · a day ago

It appears you have formal legal education and some up close & personal experience. :-)

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



WhereAreTheVikings → stranger_in_strange_land · a day ago

What gave me away?

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



stranger_in_strange_land → WhereAreTheVikings · a day ago

hmmmm...I wonder.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Truthsayer → WhereAreTheVikings · a day ago

:)

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



disqus_cJ8TjIIEM → WhereAreTheVikings · 16 hours ago

...perchance, ye let ur slip, slip, m'lady!.. :-\

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



WhereAreTheVikings → disqus_cJ8TjIIEM · 13 hours ago

Got to watch that slip slipping. A glimpse of lace can lead to a court case.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Brigadon → WhereAreTheVikings · 20 hours ago

The greatest sin against Justice in existence

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both the crime AND the law horrendously, and was the ultimate coup against the Judicial system.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



WhereAreTheVikings → Brigadon · 13 hours ago

I think you are right when it comes to there needing to be jury nullification. There are times when a jury wants to find a defendant guilty but not sentence him to any time for whatever reason. In that way, it interferes with jury nullification, if there is a minimum sentence of, say, four years. Then the jury is faced with entering a not guilty verdict to avoid prison time, which maybe it cannot bring itself to do.

Law and order adherents would strongly disagree, and argue that mandatory minimums discourage crime and are thus necessary. I'm not sure that anyone stops and thinks, you know, I'm going to do at least ten years for this if I go ahead and do it.

^ | v · Reply · Share >



Brigadon → WhereAreTheVikings · 12 hours ago

Well, a good example would be manslaughter. There are some cases where a Jury verdict of Manslaughter is totally warranted, and yet jail time is a terrible idea, or a better punishment is available.

Between mandatory minimum sentencing and a truly heinous flexing of the concept of 'cruel and unusual punishment', justice is nearly impossible today.

the founding fathers did not consider hanging, whipping, beheading, shooting, branding, or even selling a felon as a slave to be particularly 'cruel and unusual', that label was

[see more](#)

^ | v · Reply · Share >



tougheri → WhereAreTheVikings · 16 hours ago

O.J.'s verdict excepting.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share >



WhereAreTheVikings → tougheri · 13 hours ago

Oh, Lord. Speaking of . . . where did I hear the other day that he's about to confess because he is quite ill. Probably some tabloid came up with that but nothing would surprise me at this point. He would probably do it out of the arrogance of getting away with it.

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Ethelred → jim jones · 19 hours ago

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forward articulately and forcefully.

In the MSM, on the other hand....

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



9eyedeel · a day ago

"Such people [bad persons, ex officio insular, small-minded, bigoted, xenophobic, and racist] exist, unfortunately" is Dalrymple expressing a bland and thoughtless cliché or conventional piety.

Conventional pieties naturally trend toward being unnecessary and/or unattractive.

Stay in school, kids !

15 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



AlexanderGoodenov → 9eyedeel · a day ago

"bad persons, ex officio insular, small-minded, bigoted, xenophobic, and racist."

Only small-minded "bad." Maybe. Negro brain smaller than white brain - proven fact.
<https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu...>

Bigoted - Has experience
Xenophobic - Victim of criminal rapefugee
Racist - White who likes other whites.

26 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



George Gopal Warming → AlexanderGoodenov · a day ago

Ah, the good old days of science! I liked that first table in the linked document. The first two specimens were listed as "Negroes", Cause of Death - "hanging"

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Caprizchka → 9eyedeel · a day ago

Neo-Puritanism.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



OneBadStud → 9eyedeel · 20 hours ago

That is exactly how media has portrayed Leave voters. Was it necessary to remind us of how an exasperated media patiently remind us of how awful we are? For Dalrymple's article, yes.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



UnrepentantConservative · a day ago

The European Project is the result of busybodies unable and unwilling to leave well enough alone. It's the equivalent of issuing hammers to a dozen 5 year-olds and telling them to go about the house and hit things while expecting good results.

19 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



stranger_in_strange_land → UnrepentantConservative · a day ago

Could be described as... 28 hyperactive 5 yr. olds...

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



UnrepentantConservative → stranger_in_strange_land · a day ago

Or jacked-up on Benzedrine.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



atilla41 → UnrepentantConservative · 18 hours ago

Looking at their results, bad acid could be a possibility.

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