

Avec les Nuls, tout devient facile ! 



CULTURAL CAVIAR

Pity the Poor Politicians

by Theodore Dalrymple 

April 01, 2017

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photo credit: Bigstock

The contempt in which we hold most of our politicians, while largely justified, is also dangerous. Politics seems increasingly to be the means by which people who would

not otherwise succeed in business or any other sphere subsequently make fortunes and remain important for the rest of their lives. Mr. Trump is in this respect the exception, not the rule, and not altogether a happy exception. But contempt for politicians as a class tempts us to withdraw entirely into our private worlds, which has the effect of conferring upon them an even greater sense of power and impunity than they already have. It also tempts us to long for a political savior who will abolish day-to-day politics and administer our country in the name of efficiency and the supposed general interest.

This, then, is not a propitious moment to ask people to pity the poor politicians. The first reason to pity them, however, is that *someone*, or rather some group of people, has to do politics, just as people have to do other unpleasant jobs, such as cleaning lavatories. If it were not for the politicians whom we actually have, there would only be others, not necessarily better. Politicians are like the poor: You have them with you always—except in Switzerland, that happy land where people do not even know who their president is, he being so profoundly unimportant.

But the second and more compelling reason to pity the poor politicians is that theirs is a dreadful life judged by normal standards. If it has its compensations, such as power, money, and bodyguards, they are

“Someone has to do politics, just as people have to do other unpleasant

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other day I caught a glimpse of what that life must be like.

cleaning
lavatories. ”

A television crew came to make a documentary about me. It will last about 45 minutes, will be watched (thank goodness) by only a small audience, and took two and a half days' filming to make. The television crew was very nice, which is not my universal experience of television people, to put it mildly; but even so, two and a half days being followed by a camera is more than enough to last me the rest of my life.

I found the strain of it considerable, even though, really, nothing was at stake. It did not matter in the slightest, not even to me, if I made a fool of myself by what I said. There would be no consequences for my career, such as it is (it is almost over); there would be no humiliating exposures of my fatuity in the press, no nasty political cartoons as a consequence, and no insulting messages over the antisocial media. The television team was clearly not out to trip me up or perform a hatchet job on me. It was friendly and I could trust it not to distort what I said by crafty editing. But all the same, the attempt to act naturally while in the constant presence of a camera and a microphone with a furry cover was tiring. The order to be natural is a contradiction in terms. You might as well order someone to be happy.

Of course, one grows accustomed to anything in time. Just as a bad smell disappears from one's awareness if one remains for long enough in its presence, so eventually one forgets about the presence of a camera and a microphone. No doubt politicians who live half their waking time within the field of these instruments learn to ignore their physical intrusiveness; but, of course, much more is at stake for them than it ever was for me. They are under constant surveillance; and just as the pedant reading a book pounces upon an error, even if it be only typographical, and marks it with his pen, so journalists and political enemies pounce upon a gaffe uttered by a politician and try to ruin him with it. And the more subjects come under the purview of political correctness, the easier it becomes to make a gaffe that will offend some considerable part of the eggshell population. In fact, much of that population actually *wants* to be offended; being offended is the new *cogito* that guarantees the *sum*. I am offended, therefore I am.



Most people who speak for more than a few minutes will say something stupid or offensive to someone; and thanks to cameras and microphones, all that a politician says is recordable. In

effect, modern politicians live under a totalitarian regime.

This means that, with few exceptions, only a certain kind of person, with very little attachment to his own personal liberty, will go in for a political career. This might be indicative of self-sacrifice, but more likely of vaulting ambition. And a person who attaches little value to his own liberty is unlikely to attach much value to the liberty of others. After all, if we can do without something, we assume that others can do likewise. As the politician prefers power to liberty, so he will assume that his electorate will prefer security, or some other advantage, to liberty.

But however careful a politician is, it is unlikely that he will altogether escape insult and demeaning commentary, all the more so in this age of easy communication, so much of which consists of insult and little else. He must therefore be a person with a rhinoceros hide; but people with rhinoceros hides are not necessarily attractive in character. Mr. Trump again seems different, in that he combines a rhinoceros hide with a thin skin. The insult *du jour* seems to sting him, but the pachydermatous integument remains fundamentally intact.

“A policeman’s lot is not a happy one,” sings the police sergeant in *The Pirates of Penzance*; but neither is a politician’s, unless he is a psychopath. And if he is not a psychopath or a megalomaniac, he is the most self-sacrificial person imaginable, far more devoted to the public good than any carping critic. I have met a few of these types; the trouble is that they rarely seem to rise to the top. If they achieve any kind of office, they soon resign on principle, leaving the field to the pachyderms and the personality disorders.



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Grea Deane 3 days ago

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curical businessman who knows how to make deals without deferring to factions, so that he could say "I've been dealing with politicians all my life. All my life. And I've always gotten them to do what I need them to do." Donald Trump. Anyway, I pity politicians now and hope they can find jobs cleaning lavatories, and lead happier lives. They might have to slip in and out of genders for the sake of job mobility and movements into different types of lavatories. But most politicians who are exposed for fatuity on television are actually fatuous. For example, 45 seconds is enough for Congresswoman Maxine Waters to demonstrate she is super fatuous, and unlikely to get one of those public convenience jobs:

<https://www.youtube.com/wat...>

Trump can also make political decisions without lavatory cleaners and without bring creeds into government, like Islam or feminazism, following the advice of an Irish playwright: "There's no reason to bring religion into it. I think we ought to have as great a regard for religion as we can, so as to keep it out of as many things as possible." Sean O'Casey

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milk bone → Greg_Deane ✓Trump supporter · 3 days ago

There are no more entertaining figures in the hallowed halls of Congress than Marxine Waters and Sheila Jackass Lee. And, of course, I will forever be indebted to John Conyers for revealing this enlightening tidbit:

<https://youtu.be/6wfaIUeDNMk>

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Dr. Rieux, aka Deplorable Duck → milk bone · 3 days ago

That Daniels thinks people become politicians because of vaulting ambition suggests to me he should brush up on his psychiatry. Politics is Hollywood for the abysmally ugly, the narcissistically mad and the almost completely amoral. Not even Obi Wan found sych a scummy lot at the Mos Eisley cantina.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Burgess Shale → Dr. Rieux, aka Deplorable Duck · 3 days ago

<https://noilyrics.com/song/...>

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Gleimhart Gugenheimer → Dr. Rieux, aka Deplorable Duck · 3 days ago

See also: upChuck Jewmer.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Atilla 41 ✓Deplorable → milk bone · 3 days ago

Two examples of why there should be a requirement of a minimum IQ of 110 for ALL elected representatives, as they are so clever, blacks should be held to a minimum IQ of 150.....Many problems immediately solved.

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Burgess Shale → Atilla 41 ✓Deplorable · 3 days ago

Could you find a hundred and fifty ?

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 • 2 days ago
 Maybe if you added up the Black Caucus.
 1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **Sydney Greenstreet** → milk bone
 • 3 days ago
 Conyers seems to be either drunk or senile when he is speaking in that clip.
 1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **Ignatius J Reilly** → Sydney Greenstreet • 2 days ago
 He seemed either drunk or senile during the '67 riot, when his fellow blacks nearly hung him from a lamppost.
 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **amphibious** → Greg Deane ✓ Trump supporter
 • 2 days ago
 Trump "an ethical businessman"! You jest, surely?
 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **mandrake the magician** • 3 days ago
 Switzerland is the *nonpareil* of democracies; democracies of Anglo-Saxon origin seem to be the worst; if the US didn't have its Bill of Rights: specifically its First and Second Amendments, then the mind boggles at what sort of a hideous schamozzle it would now be.... in Westminster-style "democracies", it is, usually, only the Cabinet-level politicians who are the real cunts.....the ones implementing the soul-destroying policies apropos (((Their Masters' Voice)))
 i, personally, have been helped by back-bench politicians....in Westminster-style "politic-speak" *local members*;
 usually, they *will* help and do what they can for ordinary folk.....
 (silver!)
 7 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **mandrake the magician** → mandrake the magician
 • 3 days ago
 (in the US...i think....they're called "your local Congressman [?])
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 **LifeTraveller** → mandrake the magician
 • 3 days ago
 Perhaps where you live, but even the locals here serve a different master... The only time they pretend not to have contempt for you is when they want a vote...
 3 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **melamine** → LifeTraveller
 • 3 days ago
 Depends on your locale. My impression is it generally works pretty well where I am.
 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **John O'Neill** → mandrake the magician • 3 days ago
 Switzerland is a de facto confederacy where the central power is reined in by the cantons and can do nothing without their affirmation. The original American republic believed that the confederation

chief of the armed forces set up its collapse. Since the time of George Washington whose first act as CofC was to attack farmers in Pennsylvania through Abe Lincoln who ordered the military invasion and occupation of the South up until the twentieth century war mongers:teddy Roosevelt, woody Wilson , FDR, Truman, LBJ, Reagan, Clinton, Bush, and Obama it has been one perpetual war after another. In Switzerland the army is confined to Switzerland with a few exceptions when Swiss guards were rented out to the kings and popes of Europe. Today Switzerland has the highest standard of living and no military adventures in the world while the US taxpayer is forced to come up with nearly a trillion a year for the many wars its Pentagon can contrive while its domestic economy and infra structure rot.

10 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



ShermanLogan → John O'Neill
· 3 days ago

You don't see any difference between a small mountain country and a continental power?

Who do you think should have been put in command of the US military? The governors of the states? A committee of Congress? The Supreme Court?

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Frederick John → ShermanLogan
· 3 days ago

No. What keeps America safe are two big oceans and two friendly countries at its North-South borders. No war since the civil war has been a necessity that required participation by the U.S. Why can't we be a big continental power with a mountain country mentality??

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



ShermanLogan → Frederick John
· 3 days ago

Because if the rest of the world gets taken over by enemies those oceans won't keep us safe anymore?

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Frederick John → ShermanLogan
· 3 days ago

How likely is that? And about what enemies with such capabilities are you describing?

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



ShermanLogan → Frederick John
· 3 days ago

Look, for at least the last 50 years the oceans have been no defense against a sufficiently advanced enemy.

Which doesn't mean having bases and getting into wars all over the world is necessarily a better strategy.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Frederick John → ShermanLogan
· 3 days ago

Here's some news: the U.S. has never been attacked by any enemy of

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sufficiently advanced to carry out a successful attack? And I am of the opinion that the U.S. should get completely out of the Middle East and let those countries decide their own destinies. Cui bono? The pentagon, intelligence agencies, Wall Street, defense contractors, and our politicians (via lobbyist funding of election campaigns). Small, insignificant groups like ISIS would be but curiosities to America.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Ignatius J Reilly → Frederick John · 2 days ago

Japan was somewhat significant. Matis seems to think NKorea is sufficiently advanced. 9/11 did happen. The Cold War was real.

Maybe we've never been attacked because we took it to them. 'Don't tread on me' and the Big Stick are clear messages. Might makes right. Thinking otherwise is dumb.

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Frederick John → Ignatius J Reilly · 2 days ago

Well, you can continue to prattle this nonsense as a faithful soldier in the indoctrination campaign by the neoconservatives and deep state players in our government. If all we should fear is nuclear attack, then why the huge spending on military weapons and military personnel? Trump's increase in "defense" spending alone is more than the entire defense budget of Russia. And I don't see that we've taken the war to those nation-states that have nuclear weapons. DSo that is a specious argument. Nuclear armed nations are a deterrent to being attacked. Nobody messes with countries that have nuclear weapons.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



ShermanLogan → Frederick John · 2 days ago

Two separate issues.

The US is of course utterly invulnerable to invasion and conquest, for reasons of both our armed force and of logistics.

However, the combination of ICBMs and nuclear warheads has since the 50s meant that America is utterly vulnerable to anything from losing one or a few cities to more or less complete destruction, depending on who attacks us.

Britain or France could launch a devastating attack, but won't, of course. Israel has the nukes but no missile delivery system, and of

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Frederick John → ShermanLogan
• 2 days ago

I thought we were discussing conventional warfare, not nuclear wars. And "nut-jobs" wouldn't have the wherewithal to handle and protect a nuclear weapon. Do you have any idea of the complexity involved, the likelihood of radiation contamination that is associated with developing and handling nuclear devices? That's what make nuclear suitcase bombs as components of an Islamic terrorist arsenal so ludicrous.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



ShermanLogan → Frederick John
• a day ago

Couple points.

I though we were discussing risks to the USA. Which hasn't been vulnerable to an invasion and conquest, realistically, since the middle 1800s. Not unless some other power pretty much conquered the rest of the world and then turned on us.

Keeping involved in world politics to prevent that from happening is at least arguably a matter of self-defense. Let us assume no nukes. If either the commies or Nazis had taken over the rest of the world, it seems pretty obvious they'd have

[see more](#)

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Frederick John → ShermanLogan
• a day ago

So many Americans have been afflicted by the very effective government/media indoctrination program of the desperate need for U.S. security, even if we have to intervene in and occupy the majority of world countries. For the U.S. rulers, perpetual war is an economic policy, not a safety or protectionist policy. It is the economics of Wall Street (bonds), the Pentagon, the defense contractors, the 17 spying agencies (do we really need 17 spy agencies?), the political think-tanks, the lobbyists and most of all, our elected "representatives." You should ask, Cui Bono? Who benefits from these pernetual wars. from having

[see more](#)

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



ShermanLogan → Frederick John
• 21 hours ago

From 1959 to 1989 the US was under constant threat of total destruction. And to some extent since then.

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because nobody has launched a nuclear attack, or EMP, biological, etc. that there IS no danger of it happening.

Look, there are a great many people in the world who sincerely intend to hurt or destroy the USA. Some of them have good reason for feeling this way.

There is another large group that has the ability to do so.

So far, these groups have not aligned, at least not willing to ignore the consequences of doing so.

But as time goes by and technology advances, it seems entirely likely to me that the three groups will align and we'll get nailed.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



The Chigger → Frederick John · 2 days ago

The Japanese Empire's military power was insignificant?

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Frederick John → The Chigger · 2 days ago

Hawaii was not the United States. It didn't become a State until 1959. Once FDR cut-off Japan's access to oil and fuel for their military, Japan would have lost its war without the U.S. intervening.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Ian Ruff · 3 days ago

Seems our doctor has found the final solution to the insomnia problem. Read his column and you're in Morpheus land within minutes. Congratulations!

Really, what?

What the fcuk was this?

Amazon has cleared out books that criticize a certain entity. Something like book burning, but done digitally. I think they can even remove books on your own device, even if you've paid for them.

Google and Youtube (owned by Google) are censoring people based on their political views. For instance, you're not allowed to be too much against feminists or you're out.

The monopolistic companies are also aiding dictatorial regimes to punish their citizens for posts on for instance

[see more](#)

24 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Greg Deane ✓ *Trump supporter* → Ian Ruff · 3 days ago

There is no need to punish thought crime: "Thoughtcrime does not entail death: thoughtcrime IS death." – George Orwell, 1984.

OR

"If you want to keep a secret, you must also hide it

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He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past."

"If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever."

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mandrake the magician → Greg_Deane
✓Trump supporter · 3 days ago

☞"If you want to keep a secret, you must also hide it from yourself."☞

three men can keep a secret if two of them are dead

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This comment is awaiting moderation. [Show comment.](#)



Burgess Shale → RachelPowell1111 · 3 days ago

Porn Star, eh ?

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Ian Ruff → Burgess Shale · 3 days ago

Not star, actress.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Burgess Shale → Ian Ruff · 3 days ago

"Fake, fake, fake, fake."

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Rhialto → RachelPowell1111 · 3 days ago

\$62 for 15 minutes! Post your contact number, location and pix.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Otsuka Duojinshi → Ian Ruff · 3 days ago

Let it flow through you;

<https://www.youtube.com/wat...>

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Felix Krull → Otsuka Duojinshi · 3 days ago

Hate is good for you:

<https://www.youtube.com/wat...>

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Atilla 41 ✓Deplorable → Ian Ruff · 3 days ago

" We don't need to KILL anyone. We can achieve all our goals in normal political processes. Why making a nuisance of ourselves? "

Your reply to me yesterday. With your comment above, I think you made my point that it will not be able to achieve our aims with political process.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Ian Ruff → Atilla 41 ✓Deplorable · 3 days ago

I still stand by my non-killing policy.

Differentiate between FEELINGS that need a release valve, and PRACTICAL actions that will have consequences.

Your FEELINGS are always justified and

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