

The Stupidest generation

"... Americans today are the dumbest human beings since our ancestors crawled down from the trees to have a look around to see what they could steal."

– Thomas Fleming, "The Best Schooling Money Can Buy," *Chronicles*, Sep. 2013

There has been some little comment lately on our increasing stupidity. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released a Survey of Adult Skills – not very flattering to us. New York *Post* headline about the OECD report: "U.S. adults are dumber than the average human."

Potatoes are cheaper
Tomatoes are cheaper
Now's the time
To fall in love

Our country is beset with problems more numerous, and greater in magnitude, than we have seen in many a year. And the possibility has to be entertained that one major cause of our national travails is sheer stupidity. To anyone of sufficient age to have a perspective (say 50 years or so), it is becoming obvious that the current generation of Americans is the stupidest in living memory, and thus the stupidest generation ever. (By the "current generation" I mean the whole population at this time, not any particular age group)

I have observed us for a long time, and I have to admit: we say stupider things, in stupider English; we watch stupider movies and TV shows, and listen to stupider music. We elect stupider politicians, for stupider reasons, by stupider methods. We wear stupider clothes, fight stupider wars, and idolize stupider heroes. We have stupider laws and far, far stupider bureaucrats. Every day, in every way, we are getting stupider and stupider.

Of course, there has always been a noticeable streak of stupidity in American life. But our stupidity was formerly of more or less a normal type, with a more or less normal distribution of smartness and stupidity. Now we are stupid in more basic ways – on a more fundamental level – and in a disproportionate manner.

Our bell curve of intelligence has flattened out, to the point that it's more of a dumbbell curve. The percentage of stupid people seems to be growing, and since (as the dialecticians say) "quantitative change

becomes qualitative change," that too is a whole new kind of stupidity.

Stupider English



<http://failblog.cheezburger.com/>

One alarming indication of our increasing stupidity is our stupider use of our native tongue. In our command of our language – always a key gauge of intelligence – we are regressing. Some Americans use such a rudimentary or shrunken version of English as to be incomprehensible, to me at least. One recent example I heard was a series of radio ads about a contest to find "the world's greatest stand-up." The term meant nothing to me: is a stand-up one of those life-size cardboard cutouts of a person that stand up? Is a "stand-up" a stand-up guy? It soon became clear that what they were talking about was the world's greatest stand-up *comedian*. The modifying adjective was apparently considered sufficient to identify the object in question, without the noun.

And that now is apparently the usage of choice; one contributor to Stage Time Magazine (<http://www.stage timemagazine.com/>) is described as "a 22 year-old lover of standup, literature and spoken word." I'm a lover of standup, too. Also sit-down, lie-down and crouch. But they mean he's a lover of stand-up *comedy* – one phrase in the new pidgin English I have learned.

Somehow, many people don't understand the connection between an adjective and the noun it modifies, or consider the noun necessary. One comedian – actually, a very funny one – does a bit where he says, "I've got a pet Lock Ness." It takes a second or two to realize he means a "Lock Ness monster."



In addition, many people say "a porno" when they mean "a porno movie." For example, in the *Wall Street Journal*, ("An Improviser Sticks to the Script," by Rachel Dodes, , Jan 18, 2013) we see,

Indie director Lynn Shelton is known for . . . "Humpday," about two heterosexual buddies who are pressured into making a gay porno . . .

That use of the adjective alone, without the noun or the actual thing it refers to, sounds off-kilter to traditional (or "normal"?) speakers of English, and it is a fairly new thing. It may seem like a small issue, but it is significant in that it concerns an elementary concept in the English language. Some people seem to lack understanding of a very basic concept of how words relate to one another and how they connect to make thoughts. Their use of English is descending almost to a parrot-like repetition or assembling of stock phrases.

It may seem incredible to think that a grown person could fail to grasp the concept of an adjective modifying a noun. One would think that it is an innate, pre-programmed aspect of human cognition, which everyone grasps as he grows up and learns to speak. But consider this researcher's findings (from "Many English Speakers Cannot Understand Basic Grammar," *Science Daily*, July 6, 2010, <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/07/100706082156.htm>). This study originated in a British university, but it illustrates how basic a person's misunderstanding of his native language can be; one of its startling conclusions is that some

speakers were not able to understand passive voice:

Research into grammar by academics at Northumbria University suggests that a significant proportion of native English speakers are unable to understand some basic sentences. . . .

[B]asic elements of core English grammar had not been mastered by some native speakers.

The project assumed that every adult native speaker of English would be able to understand the meaning of the sentence: "The soldier was hit by the sailor." She adds: "Our results show that a proportion of people with low educational attainment make errors with understanding the passive, and it appears that this and other important areas of core grammar may not be fully mastered by some speakers, even by adulthood.

It seems that fundamental linguistic stupidity is indeed possible; if some people don't understand passive voice, probably some don't understand the use of an adjective with a noun. Some of us seem to verge on speaking English by cutting and pasting together set catch-phrases, as if from a foreign-language phrasebook, rather than actually understanding the inner structure of our own native tongue.

Past-perfect is passé

Another element of English that is apparently too difficult for us today is past-perfect tense. This is not something that should be too hard to grasp, but it is absolutely disappearing from our spoken English.

I can still remember when our teacher first introduced past-perfect tense, in about the 6th or 7th grade. (It may sound implausible that I would remember that, but it's true.) The term "past-perfect tense" sounded so complicated and esoteric, that I sat there in class afraid I would never be able to grasp it. But then, as our teacher explained it, it wasn't really that difficult at all; the name was more abstruse and complicated-sounding than the actual thing.

To refresh our memory: past-perfect tense is a way of saying that some *second* event took place prior to the *first* event we are speaking of. "He had already done one thing, before he did the other thing." It's not that difficult, and I would venture to say, only a few kids in our class were unable or unwilling to grasp it.

But I can't say when the last time was that I heard a TV news announcer use past-perfect tense. Here are just a few examples of the new, modern parlance:

- In 2010, after Rush Limbaugh moved out of the state because of high taxes, New York Governor David Paterson reacted by saying, "If I knew that would be the result, I would've thought about the taxes earlier."
- Sean Collins, a writer based in New York, he wrote for www.spiked-online.com, "The protesters would have remained obscure nobodies if the media did not promote them"

- National busybodies The Ad Council issued this pronouncement: "If I knew there was a way to escape last night, I definitely would have taken it. . . ."
- In 2007, Hillary Clinton said of her vote on the Iraq War, "If I knew then what I now know, I would not have voted that way."

Almost nobody uses past-perfect tense nowadays, at least in the media. We are, all of us, becoming the slow kids in the back of the class, who couldn't or wouldn't grasp past-perfect tense. Increasingly, we speak a kind of simplified or dumbed-down English, with the more complicated elements removed – a simplified subset of English, like a child's dictionary.

Or maybe our English is more like the Newspeak of Orwell's *1984*, where vocabulary dwindles down to generic constructions like "doubleplusgood." Our little minds can't seem to handle too much complexity, and so our language is shrinking and shriveling. We are losing linguistic complexity, like a polar bear on a shrinking ice floe.

Subjunctive Mood is gone

Another chunk off the shrinking ice floe of our language is the subjunctive mood. Hardly anyone says "If I were" anymore. The standard usage is "If I am." We hear things like a radio sports announcer saying, "That's how I'd do it, if I'm the Commissioner of Baseball" (Nick DiPaolo, radio podcast, Sep. 6 2012). Fox newscaster Bill O'Reilly of "The O'Reilly Factor" always says "If I'm" rather than "If I were."

Today Tevye would have to sing, "If I am a rich man," and the Cowardly Lion would sing, "If I am king of the forest," to be understood by all Americans. Yet subjunctive mood shouldn't be that hard to grasp, given normal levels of intelligence.

Mass Nouns (things that are measured rather than counted)

This is another area involving such a basic aspect of English that it's hard to see how any native speaker of English could fail to grasp it; yet apparently we do. This area is mass nouns. These are nouns that don't have plural forms (at least in their ordinary usages), but refer to things that are measured rather than counted – nouns like *milk*, *compassion*, *importance*. That is, we don't speak of "a behavior" or "a luggage," or indeed

"luggages."

However, it is now accepted practice to refer to "behaviors." Academics love that usage. It sounds so abstruse and elevated, and thus it sets the academics above the common non-academic herd. (The great unwashed, ironically, tend to use "behavior" properly, as a mass noun; they say good or bad "behavior," not "a behavior" or "behaviors.")

The misusage is taking over, as in these cases:

- Lunesta commercial: "Abnormal *behaviors* may include restlessness ..."
- "They were imitating perfectly the *behaviors* of the soldiers that made the planes land." – "How Self-Expression Damaged My Students," by Robert Pondiscio, *The ATLANTIC*, Sep. 25, 2012.

Here are some other mismanaged mass nouns:

Parts of downtown Hillsborough were temporarily shut down Sunday evening after an Orange County resident drove *an ordnance* to the Hillsborough Police Department on Churton Street...
– the *Raleigh Times*, "Person Takes Ordnance To Police Station," July 6, 2008.

The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality stated that the Keystone Pipeline will have "minimal environmental *impacts*" if properly managed.
– "The Keystone XL Objections Wither Away," *Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 25, 2013, by Paul C. Knappenberger.

Times have changed, as has our basic grasp of English. In the Edward G. Robinson movie "Larceny, Inc.," (Warner Brothers, 1942), the character Jug Martin says, "I could have sold him a luggage." Jug is a lug, and his English usage brands him as such, class-wise and intellect-wise, for the viewers. But the point of such facetiae might be lost on an American audience today; if they'll accept "behaviors" as completely normal English, they'll probably accept "luggages."

The dreaded apostrophe.

Here is a simple distinction that totally eludes our collective tiny intellects today: the difference between "its" and "it's," "your" vs. "you're," and so on. It's something that we learned in 6th or 7th grade (11 or 12 years old), and it's not that difficult a distinction. But today it's a toss-up, whether a writer will make the right call. For example:



Here are some other instances where the dreaded apostrophe gets the better of us:

- "There are two \$30 baseball hats on the MittRomney.com store — one of them *add's* Ryan above the bill — and both of them boast being American made."
 - from www.theblaze.com, "Debunked: Here's the Explanation for the 'Made in China' Romney Hat You're Seeing on Facebook," Oct. 30, 2012, by Liz Klimas.
 - "While Feinstein's bill lists all kinds of firearms she *want's* to ban the real purpose is to ask for more than what she really wants. . . ."
 - from Breitbart.com, at <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2013/01/24/How-Did-Shotguns-And-Handguns-Become-Assault-Rifles#comments>.
 - "*Who's* mouth is cleaner a dog or a *humans*?" . . . "A dog's mouth because it holds less bacteria in *it's* mouth and because the saliva in a dog's mouth is more acidic so it breaks down the bacteria in *there* mouths."
 - from http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Who%27s_mouth_is_cleaner_a_dog_or_a_humans
- "Then there is the Federal Social Security and Medicare payroll tax of 13.3%. You pick up 5.65% while *you're* employer pays 7.65%."
- Financial adviser Gerri Willis, in "Half Your Paycheck To The Government In 2013," Nov 15, 2012, www.foxbusiness.com
- "Despite *it's* small size and affordable price, the IdeaPad S405 notebook offers a robust array of cutting-edge features."
- from www.newegg.com, a commercial computer-hardware business site

My estimate is, a good 50% of the public don't know how to use apostrophes. Half the population is now the dumb kid in the back of the class in 5th grade. That's a new level of stupidity.

Mush-Mouthed Pronunciation

Today we can't handle too much complexity in word pronunciation. If a word has too many syllables or sounds, it overloads our primitive mental circuitry, and part of the word has to be left out.

Of course, some inexactitude of pronunciation is normal in spoken language; nobody gives a dictionary pronunciation of words in everyday speech. But there is a continuum of pronunciation, and when we get too far toward the sloppy end of the continuum, when we drop *too* many sounds from the word, we cross into the realm of sounding stupid.

For instance, a hospital in my home town runs radio ads that brag about their fine department of "respiratory" therapy. If a hospital spokesman can't pronounce "respiratory," who can?

Another example is "temperature"; with us, it's most often rendered "tempachur." Radio ads for the Exergen Temporal Scanner Thermometer say, "I just snuck into my kids' room and took their tempachures." That is: an ad for *thermometers* can't pronounce "temperature." ("Snuck" is a well-entrenched usage, by the way. "Sneaked" is too la-de-da and toffee-nosed, apparently. We can only be grateful that "drug" for "dragged," or "clumb" for "climbed," hasn't taken over.)

Again, nobody expects a dictionary pronunciation all the time; we don't say "tem-per-a-ture" in everyday speech. But most of us manage to include the first "r" somewhere, saying something like "tem-pra-chur." As more and more sounds are omitted, the speaker drifts toward the mush-mouthed and oatmeal-brained end of the spectrum.

Someone has apparently put the dumb-bells in charge of the English language, at least here in the U.S. I hear supposedly educated people say "pitcher" for "picture" – a distinction only the very dumbest kinds in the class couldn't learn back in 6th grade.

That is one sign that our stupidity is of a different order today: it is now presumably educated, responsible people who use stupid pronunciations. Well-paid radio and TV announcers sound like the slow guy in the back of the 6-th grade class. There's no grown-up in the room.

Another sign of advancing stupidity is that what used to be done facetiously, and understood as facetious, is now done seriously and no one gets the joke. Cartoon characters used to say "hunnerd," indicating they

weren't too bright; the audience heard and understood that signal. Now the audience mostly says "hunnerd" itself, and the joke's on us.

To give one of many examples: radio ads for a company called Regal Investment use the pronunciation "hunnerd." That's a financial firm, and they can't get an announcer who can intelligently pronounce "hundred"? There's no grown-up in the room.

Again, a proviso: few people would slow down and carefully pronounce the word "hun-dred." Most people say something like "hunderd" and always have. It isn't an exact dictionary pronunciation, but it retains most of the sounds (phonemes) of the word. If someone gets still sloppier and says "hunnerd" (or God forbid, "hunnert"), they're probably on the dumb-sounding end of the spectrum; and that's where a large percentage of our population resides.

Some other words we seem unable to process:

- *Entrepreneur*: too many sounds, too close together. The pronunciation "entre-PA-neur" is prevalent now. A typical example: Dennis Miller, on his radio show ("The Dennis Miller Show," Salem Radio Network), introduced the author of the book *The Entrepreneur: The Way Back for the U.S. Economy*, with the pronunciation "entre-PA-neur", and continually used it during his interview – as did the author himself.
- *Deputy*: At least half the time, it's pronounced "deppity." Even John Bunnell, a former sheriff and announcer on the TV show "World's Wildest Police Videos," always says "deppity."

As recently as the 60's, "deppity" was a comic pronunciation, used for humor and to indicate that the speaker was sort of a dim-bulb. There was a cartoon show "Deputy Dawg," with the word always pronounced "Deppity." Everybody got the joke, because we knew the difference. Today, the pronunciation "deppity" is normal; it has no comic effect.

- *Corroborate*: forget it! The voiceover announcer on the TV show, "Video Justice," says, "You want to cowoborate or refute...." It seems "cowoborate," or "cooborate," is the closest the vast majority of Americans can come to pronouncing that word.

- *Prescription*: a radio ad for Williams Brothers Health Care Pharmacy says, if you have a "perscription," do such and such. Prescriptions are their *business*, and they can't say "prescription"? (That leaves aside the mush-mouthed formulation, "Health Care Pharmacy" -- a stupid name in itself. Replacing the adjective "medical" with a noun phrase, "health-care," is atrocious.)

The TV commercial for Crestor, a cholesterol-lowering drug, says "That's why my doctor *per*-scribed Crestor...."

Miscellaneous manglings:

- "[S]he receives regular vetinary care..."-- guest hostess on "Fox Report with Shepard Smith," July 4, 2008. The word "vet-er-in-ary" just has too many sounds for the average American mind and tongue.
- On the TV series "Solved," a sheriff says a victim was "afixiated" – meaning, "asphyxiated".
- In a radio ad for an eating establishment, the announcer extols "Fat Man's Barbecue, assetra." Shudder!

One columnist shows us how deep the rot has got. Gene Weingarten bemoans the pronunciations provided by Merriam-Webster's online dictionary in his article, "You talk funny!" (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>, November 28, 2010) :

[D]ictionaries have finally proved they no longer can be relied on to offer reasonable assessments of proper pronunciation. There's a vacuum of leadership in this area. . .

Dictionaries have not only begun recognizing even more wince-inducing formulations, but of late they have been uttering these unutterable pronunciations aloud, via online audio links. So it is now possible, with just two clicks of a mouse, to access Merriam-Webster.com, and to hear the crystal-clear voice of an intelligent-sounding woman. . . informing your impressionable children that it is just peachy to say ... "liberry."

Also, "ek-setera."

Also, "ath-a-lete." . . .

And finally, ironically, in what can only be seen as its ultimate abdication as a trusted authority, Merriam-Webster gives us, aloud, the following pronunciation:

"Pronunciation." In short, the dictionary is dead to me -- and, I hope, to you, too...




Spelling



We're good spellers, too
(image from <http://worldduh.com/>)






<http://joannecasey.blogspot.com/>

 **Donna Brazile** 
@donnabrazile 

Why are your health insurance premiums higher? Price gauging, not [#Obamacare](#). My provider told me it was because of my age. More to come.

8:36 PM - 27 Feb 13

94 RETWEETS 27 FAVORITES   

Donna Brazile, "author, academic, political analyst and current Vice-Chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee," attempts the word "gouging." Spelling is hard!

We're Stupider At Mathematics

"There's some dumb people up at the Arby's, ain't they?... You wanna have some fun up there at the Arby's? Do this. Get you three beef and cheddar sandwiches in there, right? Your order's going to come to \$4.81. Give that feller in there working the register ten dollars and a penny. Kick back and watch the fun begin at Arby's! "

-- Larry the Cable Guy, stand-up comedian, "Git'R Done"

Our schools are poorly qualified to teach mathematics, because math is a subject that requires study and hard work; there is no royal road to geometry, as Euclid famously said. The various fads and enthusiasms now in vogue in American schools— things like self-esteem exercises and politically-correct attacks on our society – may be fun for students and teachers, but they are poor replacements for actual instruction and practice in mathematics. And computers and calculators just *substitute* for mathematical ability, they don't teach it.

As a result, a great many Americans are illiterate in mathematics, as was reported in the story, "Americans Are Illiterate and Innumerate, But Unionized Teachers Are 'Criminally Low Paid' ," <http://politicalmavens.com> :

Numerous studies have shown that millions of Americans cannot read or do basic math well enough to conduct basic transactions of life, according to *The Washington Post*. . .

[A] recent study conducted by Vanderbilt University found that 4 out of 10 adults were unable to calculate the amount of carbohydrates in a half a bagel, based on [the carbohydrates in] a whole bagel. Get this: 68 percent of the study participants had at least some college education, yet they could not divide by two!

It is not hard to discover the mathlessness of the modern generation. Columnist Lori Borgman recounted this incident, in "Excitement about mathematics adds up," *Jewish World Review*, January 9, 2009:

I often find myself excited about mathematics and young people. I was at the grocery store and asked for two-thirds of a pound of deli meat. A young man behind the counter, who looked to be about 19, took the meat to the slicer, then asked, "Is two-thirds .75 or .66?"

"It's .66," I told him. I go in a week later, and the same young man is working, so I ask for two-thirds of a pound again, just to see if he's tracking. He walks to the slicer and again says, "Is that .75 or .66?"

Students aren't taught much real mathematics today, not even how to make change – and that's not even arithmetic, it's counting. Victor Davis Hanson relates his educational experiences (in "Back to school blues," Jewish World Review August 23, 2007) :

[M]y family has attended the same public schools since 1896. Without exception, all six generations of us . . . were given a good, competitive K-12 education.

But after a haircut, I noticed that the 20-something cashier could not count out change. The next day, at the electronic outlet store, another young clerk could not read — much less explain — the basic English of the buyer's warranty. At the food market, I listened as a young couple argued over the price of a cut of tri-tip — unable to calculate the meat's real value [*i.e., total price*] from its price per pound.

It is not unfair to make the blanket statement (using a line from a Pet Clark song), "to reason is not what we care for." So it's no wonder that our modern jobs and youths can't calculate.

Movies are stupider

"Movies are dreck." That blunt assessment was made by author and columnist Joe Queenan; and it would be hard to deny it. But movies are dreck from so many different standpoints and perspectives, it's hard to articulate one main reason for just why they are so awful.

One reason is, they are childish and repetitive, according to blogger "Ace of Spades HQ" ("Why Movies Are Awful: An Insider Report," <http://ace.mu.nu/archives/335421.php>, Dec. 04, 2012):

Movies really have become awful, haven't they . . . It's very hard to name movies made in the last 20 years which are made for adults. . . .

Almost every studio movie is just an assemblage of things that have worked in other movies for the last 20 years. And as Hollywood's hits are fewer and further between, every movie seems to be rehashing the same Moments That Worked from previous movies. Even in the very small creative space they're working in (movies for 17 year old boys . . .), they're not offering much variation or novelty.

Movie-makers seem to have run out of ideas, or at least, *intelligent* ideas. They're raking through the ashes of past movie vitality, looking for an ember they can fan back into life – some movie, TV show, comic book or amusement-park ride they can repackage.

Running short of wit, interesting stories, and good writing, Hollywood big cheeses seek to hold audiences by trading on people's baser instincts, with increasingly graphic smut. And since movie-makers also feel qualified to manage and manipulate society, they propagandize for the dominant liberal political pieties (unlike the old Hollywood moguls, who disdained "message" films). "Wars and lechery," Shakespeare wrote, "nothing else holds fashion." And in slightly transmuted form, those are the two obsessions of modern movies: filth and propaganda. Both those themes are symptoms of the bankruptcy of the movie industry.

And the role of just plain stupidity cannot be discounted, according to Bill Bryson ("Lost At The Movies," from *I'm a Stranger Here Myself*):

[T]he thing is, summer movies have become so dumb – so very, very dumb – that it is hard to abide them. . . .

Lost World is slack and obvious and, for all its \$100 million plus budget, contains about \$2.35 worth of actual thought, and so of course it is on its way to setting all kinds of records at the box office. In its first weekend alone, it took in \$92.7 million.

Stupidity in a movie is no impediment to its becoming a block-buster hit. The highest-grossing movie of all time was a piece of juvenile agitprop, "Avatar" – a "Smurf-murdering movie," in Glenn Beck's choice characterization.

Beck's comparison of the movie to a children's cartoon was appropriate, because the political morality play in "Avatar" is childishly simplistic. And so was the name given to the movie's main MacGuffin, in the form of a precious, hard-to-get mineral called "unobtainium." That name is reminiscent of the old "Rocky and Bullwinkle" cartoon, where a floating, anti-gravity rock was called "upsidasium."

As for "Avatar's" morality play, John Hawkins (in "The 7 Most Overrated Blockbuster Movies of the Last 20 Years," <http://pjmedia.com/>, September 5, 2012) summed it up this way:

Avatar was a . . . gorgeous, illogical movie with a trite, recycled plot that could be fully summed up with "Trees good! Natives good! Military bad!"

But then again, most movies are rather simple-minded today. Some of them are "like watching the tantrum of a neglected psychotic child," said Richard Brookhiser – and he wasn't even discussing Quentin Tarantino! In his review of "Lincoln" (on the nationalreview.com blog spot, "the corner," Nov. 27, 2012) he said:

So I finally saw . . . the movie *Lincoln*.

. . . The trailers were the usual – a barrage of crap bombs. There was some awful riff on The Wizard of Oz . . . some race-war fantasy with Leonardo De Caprio. . . . The only [emotional] affects were glowering, and explosions. The only craftsmanship was special effects. It was like watching the tantrum of a neglected psychotic child.

Such unintelligent movies play synergistically into the declining intelligence of the audience, as Ed Driscoll notes ("How Western Civilization Lost It at the Movies," by Ed Driscoll, pjmedia.com, <http://pjmedia.com/>, Dec. 4, 2012) :

[I]s the real problem the declining intelligence and taste of the average 17-year-old male, or is it the declining intelligence and taste of Hollywood, or do the . . . combine to form the complete Red Queen's Race to the bottom? I'd blame the latter scenario . . .

It seems modern moviemakers look down on their audience, as sheep to be exploited or manipulated. John Nolte pointed out something along those lines, in his review of "The Campaign" on breitbart.com, Nov. 10, 2012:

The real problem is the non-stop crudeness, a total lack of warmth, and this utterly bizarre trend where so much of comedy today now comes from its creators' smug sense of superiority over the rest of us. . . .

[T]he contempt this new era of comedy has for everyday people borders on rage "The Campaign" actually portrays the multitudes in the background as bigger freaks than the main characters.

This of course is a byproduct of Hollywood's increasing cultural distance from the rest of America, which has bred a disdain and sense of superiority that's started to bleed into everything comedic . . .

To repeat: stupidity is not an impediment to box-office success. "Titanic" was the second-highest-grossing movie of all time, and it is a piece of childish agitprop and soft-core smut. Here are some apt comments about that schlock-house film (from "Schlock poetry," by Peter Rainer, *Dallas Observer*, Dec 18, 1997, <http://www.dallasobserver.com/>) :

[T]he James Cameron film 'Titanic. . . could best be described as Romeo and Juliet Get Dunked. . . . As a piece of storytelling, it's almost as easy to read as a grade-school primer; even toddlers shouldn't have trouble following the action. . . . The people aboard the Titanic are instantly pegged for us, and they stay that way: They're greedy or good-natured or craven or valiant. Ambiguity and subtlety are strangers to this film. They're about as welcome as icebergs.

For a parting shot on the movies, we can do no better than to go to a review from the online magazine *Tiger Beatdown* ("Titanic: Girl Power Sleeps With the Fishes," by Sady Doyle, <http://tigerbeatdown.com/>, Nov. 30, 2009). Written in a teenaged-fanzine style very apt for reviewing the juvenile "Titanic," it goes like this:

Titanic is two movies. One of them is about a boat that sinks. The other movie... is about a girl named Rose (Kate Winslet! YAYYYY), and her various thinky thoughts, deep feelings, and meaningful once-in-a-lifetime discovery and embrace of Girl Power. . . . Rose is so sad about being rich that she decides to jump off the ship in her fancy dress. A boy named Jack (Leonardo DiCaprio! WHATEVERRRR) stops her from jumping. He is not rich. He is poor! Poor, and free! Now Rose wants to be poor, too! Jack... teaches her to spit and give the finger to people because that is what Girl Power is all about. Also they f***. Then the ship sinks and everyone dies, the end. . . .

Rose's mother and Cal [Caledon Hockley] . . . both just hate the ever-living f*** out of poor people, to the extent that they cannot stop talking about it. This is part of Titanic's Very Important Commentary on Class (short version: poor = fun-loving and awesome, rich = boring and evil) but it actually just sort of comes across as some disturbing and socially inappropriate obsession. . . . [T]hey aim death glares at whatever unfortunate broke person happens to get in their way. Look, here are their Looking At The Poor faces:



I TOLD YOU.

Anyway! Back to Zane! . . . Tragically deprived of a cape and/or moustache to twirl, he nevertheless fills out the character with a pseudo-British old-timey American accent. . .

I leave you with one of the many sermons . . . delivered by the old lady who apparently used to be Kate Winslet: a woman's heart is a deep ocean of secrets. And one of those secrets may or may not be a desire to be bossed around by a well-intentioned hobo.

(An aside: movie characters *always* have to f***. That is the one sacred tenet and holy sacrament of modern popular culture: "Thou shalt not speak ill of fornication, nor imply that there may be a moral issue involved in sex under any circumstances.")

TV is stupider

"I want to be entertained. Instead, I get Ice-T threatening strangers, a fat kid who thinks she's cute, and reality shows that are so obviously scripted, you're watching bad actors do a fake action movie for free. I want to enjoy TV, but every time I open my mind, a TV executive in LA takes a dump in it."

– "10 Things I Hate That Everybody Loves," by Gavin McInnes, *Taki's Magazine*, September 28, 2012

In saying TV is stupider, I'm not especially thinking of "reality TV" shows, mainly because I don't watch them.

But plenty of other people have commented on the apocalyptic stupidity of the genre. Dave Barry, for instance, said (in "Dave Barry's Year in Review 2012", *Washington Post*, <http://articles.washingtonpost.com/>):

This year the "reality" show "Jersey Shore," which for six hideous seasons has been a compelling argument in favor of a major Earth-asteroid collision, finally got canceled, and we dared to wonder if maybe, just maybe, we, as a society, were becoming slightly less stupid.

But then, WHAP, we were slapped in our national face by the cold hard frozen mackerel of reality in the form of . . . "Here Comes Honey Boo Boo," which, in terms of intellectual content, makes "Jersey Shore" look like "Hamlet."

Barry has taken aim at "Jersey Shore" before. From "Dave Barry's 2010 Year in Review":

Let's put things into perspective: 2010 was not the worst year ever. . . . For example, toward the end of the Cretaceous Period, the Earth was struck by an asteroid that wiped out 75 percent of all the species on the planet. Can we honestly say that we had a worse year than those species did? Yes we can, because they were not exposed to Jersey Shore.

Kathleen Parker isn't fond of Honey Boo Boo, either, as she writes (in "Can't we aim higher than 'Honey Boo Boo'?", *The Washington Post*, Jan. 8, 2013):

. . . I finally decided it was time to discover what all the business was about Honey Boo Boo. . . . I'd never actually watched a full episode. I still haven't, but I watched enough to need a jaw adjustment.

Alas, a few minutes with "Here Comes Honey Boo Boo" confirms that even mindlessness has its limits.

It gives me no pleasure to add to the ridicule of Honey, whose real name is Alana, or her family. . . . Far more offensive than the show is the fact of an audience. . . . If we don't revel in the hilarity of poor, uneducated people, neither do we protest their exploitation. Our silence conveys approval. . .

A possible reason for reality-TV's popularity was thus advanced, namely, it allow the audience to revel in watching someone more socially inept and stupider than they are, a form of schadenfreude. Ashley Herzog, writing on Townhall.com ("Is America an Idiocracy?" Jan 15, 2013) said:

"These shows may be profitable, but the primary basis for many of them seems to be to put people in painful, embarrassing or humiliating situations for the rest of us to watch — and, presumably, be entertained," James Key wrote in USA Today. "This assault on our intelligence is not healthy for the soul."

We have to keep inventing new genres of TV shows, to find someone we can look down on as stupider than we are. TV is programming for the lowest common denominator; and that denominator is sinking.

Of course, reality TV did not arrive in a vacuum. It came along after Oprah had softened up the intelligence of TV viewers with a relentless barrage of doltishness for 25 years. Regaling her audience with quack therapies, sob-sister exhibitionism, and the chronicles of her vejayjay, she lowered the national I.Q. with every episode of her show. She was a mother lode of emotional gushing, crackpot pseudo-scientific theories, schlock psychology and half-baked superstitions on subjects like autism-vaccination links. She was a platform for mumbo-jumbo like this (as reported by <http://jezebel.com/>):

Oprah's favorite gyno, Dr. Christiane Northrup, answered lots of vagina questions for O and her audience today. Dr. Northrup is way into spirituality, so she employs methods other than straight medicine as remedies for physiological problems. Today she taught the women about Qigong (pronounced chi gung), which is when you use your mind to increase energy flow to the body. Naturally, they were trying to send the energy downtown (to their "low heart" aka vajayjay), as a way to arouse themselves — which was kinda weird, since they still had another 30 minutes of the show to tape once they were all worked up.

Oprah now has her own TV channel, the Oprah Winfrey Network, as well as an eponymous magazine. An appropriate motto for her media empire would be, "All ignoramus, all the time." Oprah and reality TV may be seen as the Scylla and the Charybdis, the phony uplift and the exhibitionist descent, of American TV.

Music is stupider

"Here's my problem with hip-hop music: there's no singing, no one's playing any instruments, and anything catchy has just been stolen from another song. . . . Since when did yelling over our favorite hits from the 80's become music?"

– stand-up comedian Natasha Leggero

Music is also regressing – perhaps not all music, but most. Like our use of English, our music is shrinking beneath us like an ice floe under a polar bear.

One genre, rap or hip-hop, has discarded melody (and therefore harmony) altogether, reducing itself to a sort of witless doggerel chanted over a rhythm track. This is the stupidest form of musical performance ever invented, at least since cavemen recited their odes to the tune of hollow logs beaten with sticks (if that ever happened).

The performances rap most closely resembles from the past would probably be the beatniks of the 50's, who used to recite their poetry over a bongo-drum accompaniment. Rappers too recite their doggerel over a drumbeat, or chant it in a sing-song voice. The difference is, beatniks never claimed their poetry recitals were music, and their poetry, though no doubt amateurish and pretentious enough, never sank to the illiterate, violent and pornographic depths of rap.

To show that this is not just one man's eccentric opinion, here are some disparaging words from people with music credentials. First, from an interview with rhythm & blues (and jazz, and standards) great, Ray Charles (<http://entertainmentmagazine.net/>, "Interview with Ray Charles and 'My World'", 1993) :

Q: How do you feel about today's music? Are you hearing anything you like?

A: Not much. I'm just not into rap. What is rap? Nothing but somebody talking. . . . See, I call myself a musician, so I want something to trigger my brain and make me sit up and say, "Did you hear that?" . . . That's what I'm looking for. I don't hear that in rap.

On another occasion Charles said his opinion on rap would be unprintable ("Black History Month/ Ray Charles," Gale Cengage Learning – <http://www.gale.cengage.com/>):

Commenting on rap music, he said in the same source [*U.S. News and World Report*] that "You can't even print what I think.... Just to talk to music, I did that years ago on 'It Should've Been Me' and 'Greenbacks'." . . .

People apparently look for different things in music today from what they used to. They aren't seeking enjoyment, a beautiful melody or harmony, or a catchy tune. As a people, we are too stupid to appreciate such

things. We listen for shouted imprecations, for the catharsis of venting hatred against our supposed enemies, or ranting about sex fantasies, or some other devolved aspect of music.

Of course, people say, "Old-timers have always hated and failed to understand new music of the young. Just like rock-and-roll, rap is a valid form of music, denounced by old fogies."

That's a plausible argument, until you actually listen to some rap – a really ugly, assaulting experience. That argument really means (to paraphrase the famous comment about Wagner), "rap is better than it sounds." But it isn't. It's a dumbed-down performance medium, for people not capable of appreciating melody, harmony, and in fact, *music*. Therefore they resort to a shrunken, diminished remnant of music; they regress to a childish chanting of nursery-school rhymes, like small children at recess who chant in a sing-song voice things like,

It's raining, it's pouring,
The old man is snoring...

Or

Jenny and Johnny sitting in a tree,
K-I-S-S-I-N-G,

But even *that* had more melody than rap does.

I once saw a list of the "best white rappers." That's like a list of "best white crappers." Crap is crap! It's not a field where there is room for skill, finesse, art. It's crap. Moronic crap. People who think there's art or something to it, are stupid beyond redemption.

Even the non-rap music segment is pretty dumbed-down. The talent just doesn't exist today as it did in the past. Today, to rise above a monotonously similar-sounding crowd of aspirants, a singer needs a gimmick; and the more ordinary and uninteresting the music, the more extreme the gimmick must be.

Not to pick on her alone, but Lady Gaga is typical of the phenomenon: a more or less bog-standard pop artist, she pulls such stunts as wearing a meat dress or a pistol bra, in an effort to stand out. Thus she is well on her way to becoming the Carmen Miranda of the girly-pop set, known more for her outlandish get-ups and gimmicks than for her musical performances.



<http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Hollywood>

We dress more stupidly

"Whenever anyone under the age of 50 sees old newsreel film of Joe DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak of 1941, he is almost certain to be brought up by the fact that nearly everyone in the male-dominated crowds. . .seems to be wearing a suit and a fedora or other serious adult hat. The people in those earlier baseball crowds. . . thought of themselves as adults, no longer kids, but grown-ups, adults, men.

"How different from today, when a good part of the crowd at any ballgame, no matter what the age, is wearing jeans and team caps and T-shirts. . ."

—Joseph Epstein, "The Perpetual Adolescent," *the weekly Standard*, March 15, 2004.



<http://www.peopleofwalmart.com/photos>

Too often we dress like overgrown, dim-witted children. Steve Amoia and Andrew T. Durham remarked on this, in "Why is Dressing Down the New Dressing Up?" www.americanthinker.com, July 6, 2008:

The point is that, coupled with the complete lack of common courtesy, common decency, and common sense in this waning culture, the "insult to injury" shows itself in what we can now call our National Dishevelment. . . .

In the United States, there is a general lack of respect and civility for other people. We convey that by how we dress. Sadly, the standard has declined in massive proportions. . . .

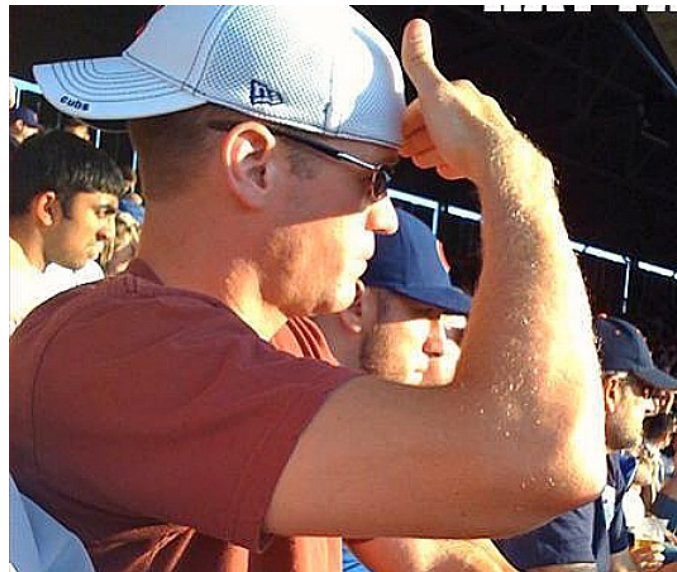


Baseball crowd in Lyndon Johnson's era (1962).



A typical fan today

http://cache.boston.com/bonzai-fba/Globe_Photo/



We are even too stupid to know how to wear a brimmed cap.

We Elect Stupider Politicians

"The sequester's critics correctly say it is not the most intelligent way to prune government; priorities among programs should be set. But such critics are utopians if they are waiting for the arrival of intelligent government. The real choice today is between bigger or smaller unintelligent government."

– George Will, "The manufactured crisis of sequester," *Washington Post*, February 22, 2013

"The Sequester Is Not Too Big, It Is Too Stupid"

– headline of an article by Howard Gleckman, *Forbes* magazine, 2/28/2013

The stupidity of our national government is perfectly illustrated by the current roiling tempest-in-a-teapot, or Chinese fire drill in an insane asylum, taking place in Washington, D.C. That noisy squabble or spat (one could hardly consider it a "debate") is about the "sequester" – an automatic, across-the-board decrease in planned spending increases. That is, these are small cutbacks in the anticipated percentage of budget *increases* in coming years – not actual budget cuts. But to hear our leaders tell it, any such take-back will be cataclysmic and apocalyptic.

The spat is, as usual, being conducted with a maximum of heat and a minimum of light, as each side tries to seize the moral high ground and portray the other as cosmic villains. And the whole titanic, earth-shaking smack-down between prehistoric beasts Godzilla and Gamera is over a potential cutback of \$85 billion out of a \$3.6 trillion yearly budget, a sum that doesn't amount to a flatulence in a whirlwind.

The congressional conniption, brawl and hissy fit is standard operating procedure for the collection of miscreants, rejects, dimwits, morons and degenerates who constitute our federal government. Here are some pertinent comments on the matter from Rick Moran ("Let's Go Sequestering!", <http://pjmedia.com/> , February 22, 2013):

Indiscriminate, across-the-board cuts can only be described as irresponsible governance. While no one except the president and Democrats are arguing that the amount of the sequester isn't necessary . . . allowing the sequester to take effect is a tacit admission of abject failure of leadership. Collectively, the entire Congress should be fired for allowing this state of affairs to reach a point of no return.

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, governor of South Carolina, had this to say on the subject:

There is no leadership. There is no confidence. There is nothing that shows us that they actually care about what they're doing. What they're doing is playing games, and we as the taxpayers are having to cover for their games. We're not going to do it anymore.

And still the deficit marches on, \$16 trillion and counting, over the cliff to Armageddon. Congress is incapable of dealing with serious matters, and unbothered by the concerns of normal citizens. They resemble

what – an insane asylum run by the inmates? Ancient Rome during Caligula's rule? The bar scene in Star Wars?

Congress-Critters

"John Boehner is a spineless twerp, and few House Republicans are any better. . . . [Obama's] opposition doesn't have a full set of vertebrae between them. . . . A nation gets the government it deserves, and this is the one we got."

– John Derbyshire, audio podcast on *Taki's Magazine*, Dec. 8, 2012.

Time and space don't permit a discussion of all the stupidities of Congress. Suffice it to say: former Rep. Barney Frank. Nancy Pelosi. Maxine Waters. Harry Reid. Charles Schumer. Such a collection of power-mad, imperious, mentally-challenged autocrats and dolts has rarely been seen in the annals of "free," democratic nations.

For instance, there's Maxine Waters, who says sequestration threatens "over 170 million jobs that could be lost" (out of 155 million). We have Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, easily mistaken for "Casper the Smarmy Ghost" – as substantial as a bead curtain. And we have the clownish Nancy Pelosi, a ringleader in the whole circus of congressional clowns:



The Jets hit the streets to rumble with... the Sharks? The people?

[photo: scootersreport.com]

Maybe Caligula had the right idea, making his horse a consul. A horse is better than a jackass, any day.

The Executive Branch (Filled With Sap)

For one thing, I don't believe Biden is as stupid as he appears. I just don't see how any functioning human being *could* be that stupid.

– John Derbyshire, audio podcast on *Taki's Magazine*, Feb 23, 2013.



Vice-President Biden greets French Prime Minister Hollande – smooth!

But let's move on to the stupid-in-chief, the chief executive of stupidity. I don't want to be partisan here, but a discussion of governmental stupidity must cover Barack Obama, as well as the people who elected him.

The fact is, Obama is no brain trust. Though left-wingers automatically bestow on any prominent Democrat kudos for being the smartest person on Earth, Obama seems at best middle-management smart; he is qualified to run, say, a regional office of Tesco's or Holiday Inn. Despite his unearned reputation as a genius, he has never said anything remotely smart-sounding; on the contrary, he comes across as calculated and manipulative, possessed of low cunning, not intelligence.

And the people who voted him into office are even dumber. It's the stupid leading the stupid. First of all, we elevated Obama, a first-term senator with the most extreme, left-wing views in Congress, to the top job. And then we elected him a second time, even after he had left our consulate staff in Benghazi to die, not lifting a finger to rescue them while their plight played out live on TV in the "situation room." (What was he doing – eating popcorn?)

Far from being shocked, scandalized and outraged by that dereliction of duty, we re-elected him. That is a sign of an uncommon level of stupidity, not to say degradation – when we the citizens have no concern for our national honor, or for making sure the head man lives up to his duties and obligations.

Consider Obama's use of English – that is, his speaking style. He manifests a dumbed-down, childishly simple-minded style of rhetoric that grates on my adult ears. Since he is usually playing to a crowd of adoring acolytes, his simple-minded banalities go over well; but to observers outside the clique of true believers, he comes across as childishly manipulative. To me, he always sounds like a con man addressing a roomful of grade-school kids, trying to bamboozle them out of their lollipops.

One group which measures such things said Obama's last State of the Union address measured on an 8th-grade level of English complexity.* That sounds about right to me.

*From "State of the Union registers at 8th grade reading level," by Byron Tau, www.politico.com, Jan. 25, 2012:

President Obama's 2012 State of the Union address again rated at an 8th grade comprehension level on the Flesch-Kincaid readability test — the third lowest score of any State of the Union address since 1934.

The University of Minnesota's Smart Politics . . . found that President Obama's three addresses have the lowest grade average of any modern president. . . .

"The Flesch-Kincaid test is designed to assess the readability level of written text, with a formula that translates the score to a U.S. grade level. Longer sentences and sentences utilizing words with more syllables produce higher scores. Shorter sentences and sentences incorporating more monosyllabic words yield lower scores," the University of Minnesota's Eric Ostermeier explains.

Let's go to Jack Cashill for a summation of the intelligence of the First Family (from "Early Obama Letter Confirms Inability to Write," *The American Thinker* (<http://www.americanthinker.com>), August 29, 2011):

On November 16, 1990, Barack Obama, then president of the Harvard Law Review, published a letter in the Harvard Law Record. . . championing affirmative action. . . .

The [letter] is classic Obama: patronizing, dishonest, syntactically muddled, and grammatically challenged. . . .

"Since the merits of the Law Review's selection policy has been the subject of commentary for the last three issues," wrote Obama, "I'd like to take the time to clarify..."

. . .

Although the letter is fewer than a thousand words long, Obama repeats the subject-predicate error at least two more times. In one sentence, he seemingly cannot make up his mind as to which verb option is correct so he tries both: "Approximately half of this first batch is chosen ... the other half are selected ... "

. . . Prior to *Dreams [from My Father]*, and for the nine years following, everything Obama wrote was... an uninspired assemblage of words with a nearly random application of commas and tenses.

The First Lady is no brain trust either, despite the fact that she once held an important, well-paid, absolutely unnecessary job at the University of Chicago Hospitals. Here she is, answering the question of whether any TV shows are off limits to her daughters:

Barack really thinks some of the Kardashians--when they watch that stuff--he doesn't like that as much. But I sort of feel like if we're talking about it, and I'm more concerned with how they take it ~~in~~— what did you learn when you watched that? And if they're learning the right lessons, like, that was crazy, then I'm like, OK.

Diagram those sentences!

Cashill's article has some pithy comments about Michelle Obama:

Sympathetic biographer Liza Mundy writes, "Michelle frequently deplores the modern reliance on test scores, describing herself as a person who did not test well."

She did not write well, either. Mundy charitably describes her senior thesis at Princeton as "dense and turgid." The less charitable Christopher Hitchens observes, "To describe [the thesis] as hard to read would be a mistake; the thesis cannot be 'read' at all, in the strict sense of the verb. This is because it wasn't written in any known language."

But ultimately, the stupidity is ours, as is the blame. To quote an article which supposedly came from the *Czech Republic Observer* (though its actual origin was anonymous email):

The danger to America is not Barack Obama but a citizenry capable of entrusting an inexperienced man like him with the Presidency. It will be far easier to limit and undo the follies of an Obama Presidency than to restore the necessary common sense and good judgment to a depraved electorate willing to have such a man for their President. The problem is much deeper and far more serious than Mr. Obama, who is a mere symptom of what ails America. Blaming the prince of the fools should not blind anyone to the vast confederacy of fools that made him their prince. The Republic can survive a Barack Obama. It is less likely to survive a multitude of fools such as those who made him their President.

We Have Stupider Laws, Stupider Law-Enforcement, and Stupider Bureaucrats

"Sometimes a society becomes too stupid to survive."
-- Mark Steyn



"Hmmm, I feel a lump. No, two lumps."

The mindless interpretation and application of our laws is another sign of our growing arrogance and stupidity. As regards arrogance, an article by Angelo Codevilla* summed the situation up admirably, saying that we are now a society divided into the ruling class and the ruled.

* "America's Ruling Class -- And the Perils of Revolution," by Angelo M. Codevilla, *The American Spectator*, July-August 2010.

And members of the ruling class enforce the law and the regulations stupidly, indeed mindlessly. For example, this past summer there were several incidents where the full might of the law-enforcement apparatus was called out to shut down a child's lemonade stand (unlicensed! unapproved! unzoned!).

And we see incidents like this one (reported in "Not the absurdity he thought he was exposing," by Mark Steyn, *Orange County Register*, Dec. 28, 2012):

. . . 11-year-old Schylar Capo made the mistake of rescuing a woodpecker from the jaws of a cat and nursing him back to health for a couple of days. For her pains, a federal Fish & Wildlife gauleiter accompanied by state troopers descended on her house, charged her with illegal transportation of a protected species, issued her a \$535 fine, and made her cry. . . .

Sometimes a society becomes too stupid to survive. Eleven-year-old girls fined for rescuing woodpeckers . . . can all testify to how near that point America is.

On the subject of unreasoning tyrants who make little girls cry, we can look at this ("Philadelphia girl scolded, searched for pulling out paper gun at school, mom says," Jan. 23, 2013, FoxNews.com,

<http://www.foxnews.com/>) :

A Philadelphia elementary school student was scolded and searched by administrators in front of her entire class after she pulled out a paper gun in class last week, according to her mother.

Melody Valentin's mother, Dianna Kelly, tells Fox 29 that school officials . . . punished her daughter for pulling out the gun, which she says looks like a folded sheet of paper. . . .

"He yelled at me and said I shouldn't have brought the gun to school and I kept telling him it was a paper gun but he wouldn't listen," Melody tells Fox 29.

Kelly says school staff searched her daughter while other students watched [and] her daughter has suffered nightmares as a result of the incident.

"I kept telling him it was a paper gun." How many times, in how many tyrannical autocracies, have citizens tried to talk sense to their rulers and betters? It is a defining characteristic of komissars, gauleiters, and other such tinhorn tyrants, that they don't have to listen to reason. They may be *unable* to listen to reason, since arrogance combined with stupidity tends to blind people. Our ruling elite are just that sort.



Public (-School) Enemy Number One?
Melody Valentin

When someone – anyone – violates one of the cherished pieties of our ruling orthodoxy – pieties like the "non-violence" or "gun control" dogma – the offender must be crushed. The social taboos of the reigning orthodoxy are enforced mindlessly, pitilessly, without any sense of proportion or common sense.



The Offending Weapon – an assault paper.

Let us consider just one more piece of idiocy, chosen from among a myriad of such. TSA agents tormented and terrorized a three-year-old, wheelchair-bound girl, to the point that she sobbed, "I don't want to go to Disney World anymore." Here is one blogger's reportage on the story (from <http://chicksontheright.com/>, "Just When You Think The TSA Can't Sink Any Lower...they do", Feb. 22, 2013, including video) :

Wanna know what a terror suspect looks like to a TSA agent? Here you go:



Look at . . . little three year old Lucy, who has spina bifida and uses a wheelchair, getting patted down and having her stuffed animal taken away from her. THIS IS OUR GOVERNMENT AT WORK, folks.

We *must* be stupid, because we continue to allow these dim-witted thugs to dictate to us.

In conclusion, I defy anyone to say we're not the stupidest generation of Americans – possibly the stupidest generation of people anywhere, anytime. We owe more money than has ever existed, and every effort to trim a tiny fraction of our budget becomes a giant thunderous, reverberating soap opera.

We're no longer capable of managing our own affairs. We need a guardian or keeper. The only problem would be to find a competent nation, in this modern world, to handle the job.