



THEY THINK KINGS AND QUEENS ARE BETTER THAN THE REST OF US

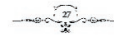
Why do you think America's Founding Fathers had to write "all men are created equal" into the Constitution? Was that something they took for granted? Something they were used to under British rule? No way! The idea of equality under the law may seem completely obvious to us today, so obvious that we take it for granted, but George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and all the rest wrote it into the Constitution because they knew how painful it is to bow down to be judged by your daddy's coat of arms instead of by your character's content.

And who exactly does the Prime Minister minister to? The British people? Hate to break it to you pal, but it's the Queen. To this day, the British political universe revolves around an old lady who didn't do a lick of work to get there. Now, the progressive lad down at the pub will tell you that the royal family is kept around for purely ceremonial reasons, sort of like the giant Mickey Mouse balloon that floats down Fifth Avenue in New York every Thanksgiving and spends the rest of the year mothballed in a warehouse. If that were the case, would British taxpayers willingly pay £37 million each year for her royal retinue, wardrobe, and upkeep? Would they allow her to live, rent-free, in a sprawling palace defended by redcoats in unnecessarily opulent beaver-fur hats? Would they append the words "Her Majesty" onto the names of government bureaus, fighting planes, and sailing ships? Would they have stood aside while Prince Charles committed marital



offenses that mortal politicians would be pilloried over?

No, clearly something far more insidious is at work in the relationship between the British people and the monarch. It's more than tradition. It's worship. The British mind desperately needs a strict hierarchy to function. It needs to put a crown on an old lady simply for the sake of having something to bow down before.



THEY Demean "PRIMITIVE" CULTURE IN THE AMERICAS

Around 200 BC, while the Romans were building aqueducts and the Greeks were perfecting the foundations of science, the English were busying themselves pushing dirt into circular mounds and undertaking other shamefully useless projects. Among these was the Cerne Abbas giant, depicting a man 180 feet tall, near Dorset. The giant is formed by a trench carved into a hillside. He is carrying a giant knobbed club. He has a rock-hard penis, pointing straight up, that's thirty feet long.

Way to be a mature civilization, guys. Instead of covering up the giant and his monstrous Lord Nelson, the people of this shire scrub out the phallic ditch every seven years to keep him looking as fresh as the day the Druids made him. No one is sure exactly what the giant was used for. Some have speculated he marked a place where orgies or fertility rites were held.

The apparent uselessness of Stonehenge, similarly, has befuddled historians looking to find some practical motive in the ancient Englishman's Neolithic rock gardens. Why would ancient men have spent more than 240 of their years building something with no apparent purpose? The pyramids, after all, were tombs, and the greatest of Maya temples served some astrological functions. We can only conclude that the beliefs of the ancient Briton were so alien to the way we experience the world today that they are beyond interpretation.





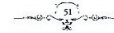
THEY HOOKED THE CHINESE ON OPIUM



What could be worse than looking out your window and seeing a drug dealer on the corner, peddling his narcotic wares to every passerby? How about a drug dealer who sets up camp on your doorstep and pummels your walls with musket fire and cannonballs until you finally allow him to sell drugs from inside your very home?

Grisly stuff, I know, but it's exactly what Britain did to China during the nineteenth-century opium wars. The Brits began exporting opium into China in the 1700s to help fund their addiction to another powerful drug—tea. But while tea is good for little more than a mild afternoon buzz, opium (much like heroin, its trendily pierced grandchild) will wrap you up in a cocoon of irresistible pleasure as it rots you from the inside out.

Such was the fate of the estimated fourteen million Chinese who were hooked on opium by 1900. Their lost livelihoods and broken homes amounted to little more than so many hash marks on John Bull's ledger. Daoguang, the Chinese emperor, was so fed up with the Brits' drug-dealing ways that in 1839 he expelled the British opium traders from his country. They soon returned with gunboats, willing to use violence to keep the Chinese hooked. After enduring such a trauma at the hands of the Evil Empire, is it any wonder China eventually succumbed to the siren song of Communism?



THEY BEFOUL THE WORLD'S STAGES WITH INCOMPREHENSIBLE DRAMAS



Despite the major cleavage that tends to bunch up at the top of those lacy Victorian corsets, the plays of William Shakespeare are way overrated. Professors like him because he kept so many dead words alive, which gives them something to talk about. Actors like him because his roles let them inhabit their true selves—vainglorious, overly solemn nitwits who speak as though they've got tubas lodged in their throats. But the common man doesn't like William Shakespeare, because even for native speakers of English, his plays are too damn hard to understand.

Good stories should be like a gangster movie: accessible, excessively violent, and easy to understand. You shouldn't have to whip out a concordance to figure out what the hell the people on the stage are talking about. Also, good stories should be about everyday people, and most of Shakespeare's characters are royals of one stripe or another. The sum effect is to make theater yet another pretentious token of "culture," a way to show off that you went to such-and-such private school and spend your evenings reading the *Oxford English Dictionary* by candlelight. Please. We'll take Tarantino any day of the week.



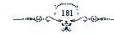


THEY'RE BEHIND GLOBAL WARMING

Coal is nasty stuff. Tiny particles of it get stuck in miners' lungs, gradually cutting off the flow of oxygen to the blood. It burns hot but dirty, blackening and corroding whatever is in its path. What's worse, burning coal releases noxious CO₂ into the atmosphere, a greenhouse gas that lets the sun's rays into our atmosphere but won't let them back out. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Britain designed the entire Industrial Revolution around engines that ran on steam heated by coal as well as coke, coal's fiery cousin.

It didn't have to be this way. We could have stuck with wood furnaces and water wheels, or just waited a few years until solar power hit the scene. Guiltiest of all was James Watt, whose popular steam engine proved indispensable to manufacturers and who set the world irrevocably down the coal-lined path to destruction. But because the Brits were so impatient to get those factory fires burning hot right then, we may be stuck with a few centuries of floods, hurricanes, and coastal towns being drowned in the rising tide.

Today, there is nearly a ton of coal burned each year for every man, woman, and child on Earth. Never before in the planet's 400,000 years of history have carbon dioxide levels been half as high. Living on a cold, dreary island protected from rising water levels by high cliffs, the British will never have to experience the ill effects of the planetary destruction they have wrought.



THEY'RE SCREWING UP THE WAR ON TERROR

When bin Laden flew those airplanes into the towers, my fellow Americans and I were pissed. Someone had to pay. We were more than happy to fly out to the Middle East by ourselves and start rounding up civilization's enemies. We'd happily spend our own money and send our own young men to get the revenge we sorely craved. All we needed was a friend, a buddy country to nominally turn our unilateral effort into a "coalition." We needed a partner, someone to help us put on a pleasant dog-and-pony show for the international community.

But Britain, you couldn't even give us that, could you? Tony Blair's literalism and weak-willed internationalism forced us to invade Iraq on the pretext of "Weapons of Mass Destruction," when what we really wanted was regime change with a side of holy crusader vengeance. Even more of a nuisance than Blair himself were the touchy British people, who seemed to want our mission to fail the day it began. While most of the American people stood solidly behind the War on Terror, measures to impeach Blair and/or try him for "war crimes" made serious headway in the United Kingdom. Odd behavior for a country that spent most of the last two hundred years imposing its will on the rest of the world.

Instead of complaining, England ought to be grateful that our troops are out there sweating in the desert heat, cleaning up the despotic mess they made of the Middle East.

