

Eyes, Oys, and Ayes

Written by Alex Baer

Wednesday, 05 August 2015 23:47

Lies are marketing's best friends, just as Desire is the single best pal consumption ever had. Combine Lies and Desire, along with a hurried, staggering set of lunges and lurches to pick up any dangling or loose minutes or seconds in the evaporating days of our lives, and you've got a toxic cocktail -- one we call American Life.

We are about to have more American Life on Thursday, during a gathering not of eagles, but of turkeys, vultures, and turkey vultures. (It used to be a dog-eat-dog world in politics. Now, it is about rabid dogs biting one another, and themselves, and chewing their feet, chasing their tails, then springing out into the audience in search of unguarded jugulars.)

Yes, the Toxic Ten will be on Faux News, the four-letter channel, and they will be marketed to us like soap suds and light beer and 30-day steak pads, and eternal tire straighteners, and every other useless and tasteless invention from The Department of Citizenry and Voter Maintenance, Heavy-Duty Consuming Division.

The GOP candidates will be marketed to us, and to each other, once their in-depth research into unending polls, opposition research, focus group results, potential voter questionnaires, and their sponsors' Top 100 Wish Lists are all concluded.

Fast-food dives have figured out how to pull us in using our instinctual drive to pounce on dense-calorie foods, like fats and sugars. Political marketeers have figured out how to push our buttons equally well:

Emotional appeals are direct, contain knee-jerk realism, have good "gut feel," and are extremely powerful. They can be reduced to pithy-seeming sound-bites, presenting the appearance of Vast Learning in a Thimble. The short statements act as jolts to the reptilian brain, energizing it, and creating a more tightly unified Group Think mode, useful in marching and in acting as inert barricades.

Intellectual appeals are complex, ponderous, and involve facts requiring work-through. Voters must devote time in researching, evaluating, and digesting many ideas, aspects, and angles -- especially as much media has abandoned this previously normal and usual public service.

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Much more time is required in communicating these factual evaluations. They often do not lend themselves to clever 5-second sound clips.

The current political battleground has campaigns using media buys of 30 seconds and less. Many of the spots have no real ideas, just slams on opposing members which may or may not contain any remote element of truth or fact. Newspapers -- once revered for in-depth coverage and examination of ideas, discussions, and options, have been all but abandoned. Sound bites are cherished -- they are often considered the nuclear weapons of voter education by political campaigns. They are the slogans of candidates. *Fewer calories, less filling.* □ *I can't believe I ate the whole thing.* □ *Your mileage may vary...*

Guess which ways are most often used today. Guess what the founders of the country might have made of politicking today. For that matter, guess what they'd make of fast food. Guess what they'd make of the petty, purposeful logjams of lawmakers, of the refusal to do the work of the people, of the sway held by corporations and the super-wealthy...

Guess what they'd make of the current gibberish used by candidates to justify their votes, their positions, themselves.

* * * * *

We can hope, while the *duh-baters* are in their make-up chairs, they might think of the voters themselves, and what tangible things their constituents might actually need, versus what the candidates are planning to pass off on them, what the candidates will be willing to shovel and dump on them, what the candidates will be tasked to provide and withhold by sponsors and donors that, by law, no one may know or identify.

We can hope lots of things, while candidates are in their make-up chairs, getting strings of stats drilled into their heads by prep team members with pneumatic power tools, and while receiving lavish touch-up coloring dabs and stabilizing gel spritzes from specialists equally comfortable making show dogs ready for Westminster and ponies ready for the *My Little Pony* fan reunion.

- (Or, to note a wonderfully-named show from the 1880s, Morris's Equine and Canine

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Paradox. They really knew how to juggle words around for humorous effect, during the previous era of Robber Barons, unlike today, where circular logic doubles-down in the guise of critical thinking, while whistles, snorts, and grunts place the mantle of elder statesmanship onto the whistler, snorter, and grunter.)

It'll be quite a spectacle Thursday night. You won't be able to believe your eyes.

Of course, when it comes to Republicans, I haven't been able to believe my eyes for some decades now.

* * * * *

I've been hearing boatloads of *Oys* from me and from friends, along with the accompanying forehead slaps of frustration and self-flagellation, when it comes to all politics and current governing, and non-governing, both national and local.

There has been a collective wasteland of *Ayes*. We cannot believe our eyes. We frankly no longer know *what* to believe. It's like we woke up in the middle of our unexpected brain surgeries, amnesia-filled and clouded, and suddenly conscious, quickly realizing there are spare parts still left on the operating room tray, beginning to suspect everything hasn't been all hooked up again the right way...

* * * * *

If you still think there is something to the expression, *You Have To See It To Believe It*, tune in on Thursday night, and help blow your mind while you make Faux News a few more ratings slices in the endless media race to get a share of your eyeballs and to plant butts in seats.

- The airwaves are public property, licensed in the public interest to such broadcast operations. This is like posting a leash-law notice in Jurassic Park, of course: good luck on enforcement.

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If you're not quite sure if you can believe your eyes, there is new software available to confirm your suspicions: *it removes unwanted reflections from images*.

Of course, this is the same technology available for the previous 23 years by all spy agencies, helping teevee and movie spies locate Dangerous Anti-American Thugs, based solely on the reflection from, say, a photo of a Mercury-head dime, on a sidewalk in Paris, at night, during a spring rain.

If you are sure you cannot believe your eyes -- perhaps from earlier exposures to magic tricks or past choruses of Republican Chest-Beating Duels & Horn-Blowing Festivals, take a look at the new software's demo reel (in the link below).

Image spoilers -- reflections -- are lifted off the pictures as easily as ghosts are sent packing, evicted as cleanly and easily as spooks scatter in cheap-process movies from the silent film days. (After hearing the *Duh-bates*, you'll wish no one ever developed Talkies. Or Language.) Seriously, check out the demo.

Unlike the *Duh-bates*, you'll learn something new, and come away with an appreciation for human ingenuity and for the scientific method -- theory, study, application. The Works.

Unlike the *Duh-bates*, you may also experience something like clarity. Maybe even connect with a stray shard of Hope still floating, free-range, here and there, making touch-and-go landings on the planet from time to time.

You'll wish the new software also worked on GOP Presidential hopefuls, and in countless handfuls of ways.

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There are many analogies available here, in the story regarding the new software, and the *Duh-bates*

-- what is revealed, what is concealed...

If you'd like to do a couple push-ups using only your brain, I urge you to consider this small exercise in demonstrating your own genius to your own self.

I believe it was Aristotle who suspected that genius often lies in the ability to see similarities in dissimilar things.

- (Of course, I think it was also he who thought the best form of education was a walk in the forest, allowing students to ask questions, and then continue to ask follow-up questions as answers were discussed. This would never work today, quite naturally, as the purpose of most schooling today -- as it was in the leading edge of the Industrial Revolution -- is simply to beat all creativity out of students, and acquaint them with the importance of the clock and showing up on time. Plus, forests are not as numerous as they used to be. Besides, disparate things like art, critical thinking, debating skills, and music, and so on, are no longer encouraged, as they have no immediate practical use in society, nor in existing or forecasted jobs.)

Like the ancient quote about statistics and swimsuits, what is said during the *Duh-bates* will be interesting in what is revealed, even if what is concealed is essential.

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Albert Einstein had a thought or two about genius. Here is one of them: *The difference between stupidity and genius is that genius has its limits.*

Here is another stray thought of my own: Like the old PBS show *Meeting of Minds*, I think it would be great to have an informal, casual dinner party featuring guests from across all human history.

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Einstein would make the list, as would Aristotle. Gandhi, too, if only for this quote: *There is more to life than merely increasing its speed.*

He would make it for many other reasons, too, of course.

- Pondering such a guest list is a good exercise for the mind, too, I find. I imagine I will scamper away to that corner of my mind when the Steaming Goat Fight Madness of candidates starts in on me on Thursday night, threatening to suck out my mind with a shop-vac when the group prattle kicks in to Way High Trauma mode.

It would be great if *Meeting of Minds* was revisited and a new series begun. Far worse series have been brought back to life. However, such an endeavor would require a staff of high-level writers well versed in history, writing styles, era trends, literature, art, music....

Nah. ☐ Explosions and gun battles are cheaper. ☐ Easier to do, too.

* * * * *

Looking for more things to think about while pondering our broken ships of state, our political and governmental systems, and how we've allowed them -- even encouraged them -- to bash themselves against the rocks in a howler of a mad storm tide?

How we've let moments of mis-speak become fibs, then become truth-stretching, then become not-quite-answered questions, then become actively avoided answers, then become targeted informational deflections, then become lies, then become Big Lies, then become Flat-Out Propaganda?

How we've let ourselves, and politicians, and every other aspect of American life become corporately envisioned, controlled, produced, sanitized, inspected, scrubbed clean, made sterile, with an extended shelf life, marketed to us until we desire the packaging so much the contents are forgotten, and into the shopping basket, through the check-out process, lugged into our homes, and finally placed on the shelves of our long-term belief and short-term understanding?

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- Well, here's to our apathy, disinterest, and our being too distracted by entertainments to become the good citizens once envisioned to keep the idea of Constitution and country alive, people who were educated on the topics of the day, and who were engaged and involved in the process. *After all, we've got screens to check and gadgets to update, plus, our dads and granddads took care of all that boring stuff, so we could ride on their coat-tails, right?*

Thinking can only take you just so far, when you are fighting on all sides for some faint sign of a national pulse or a tinge of countrywide sanity. My advice: Keep cold beer stocked. And not the cheap swill -- get the good stuff. It'll help you endure the cheap swill on the Big Scream (TM) teevee while grasping for, or grappling with, the Big Picture.

* * * * *

Here are two things to consider, if you find yourself a castaway to thinking, hurled up onto the beach of a deserted island, battered and beaten:

- *Buzz Aldrin says he filled out custom forms on his arrival on Earth, back from the Moon.*
- *A drone was used to drop in drugs and various contraband into a prison yard*

ASSIGNMENT: Now, from a GOP point of view, using one of the personas of any of the Ten Toxic Horn-Blowers from the *Duh-bates*, tell us why you object to -- or encourage and support -- either of these two notions.

HINT: Take a drink every time the phrases "National Security" or "God-given..." are used on the teevee, and/or in your own explorations of disbelief.

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No one likes going to local zoning meetings, at least, not until a sheet metal shop opens on one

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side of where you sleep, and an aluminum smelter on the other side of your bedroom, across from the new iron and steel foundry. Then, EVERYONE wants to go to the boring old zoning meetings.

American politics is like this, I think. We haven't gone to any of the meetings in a long, long time -- and we're only just now, some of us, starting to realize what's being built all around our bedrooms, all over the countryside, and how they'll be going night and day, 24-7, 365, with no escape once they start up in earnest....

* * * * *

Be ready for another peachy, yeasty, frothy, bright-bunting-and-banners installment of *Loggerheads en Regalia*

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Loggerheads is a term sometimes applied to situations which appear to have no easy solution. Funnily enough, *loggerheads* used to be as polite idiom for calling people idiots. To an idiot, of course, everything has no easy solution. Not even a piece of toast.

I detest what the American political system has become, but I do enjoy noting how hard the Universe works, desperately trying to give us hints that something is very, very wrong.

* * * * *

Really: Don't forget to make some lager-heads in beer glasses, while enduring your order of *Loggerheads Under Glass*

. Not trying to encourage the abuse of the drug called alcohol. However, we have much to endure. Time is one enemy. The deafening roars of realization, and of conscience reawakened, are two others,

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We have limited time in our personal lives. We also have limited amounts of what we can park inside our heads -- be it cotton wads stuffed *into* our ears, or be it daylight, set free, and set loose, *between* our ears, allowing the light, and us, to shine and shine.

I've had enough *Oy*. It's time for some *Aye*. Me, I vote *Aye*.

- *Do the ayes have it -- or do the eyes have it?*
- *And what about those oys?*
- *All this and more, straight ahead.*

Stay tuned. Much more meaningless cannon fire, and cannon fodder, ahead, on all the all-Nonsense Channel, *right after this word from...*

Resources & Bonuses:

One paradox of many: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog_and_pony_show

Frank's *Peaches*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGQxI0G6mKk>

Like father, like son: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLXVWjs5ozA>

Peaches, sans brandy: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peaches_en_Regalia

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Obscuring the obvious:

<http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/08/05/429720274/obstructions-vanish-from-images-treated-with-new-software-from-mit-google>

Genius: <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/genius.html>

Mind Meeting: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meeting_of_Minds

The real Buzz:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/buzz-aldrins-surprise-paperwork-moon-mission/story?id=32871222>

Incoming:

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/drone-dropping-drugs-prison-yard-sparks-brawl-mansfield/story?id=32884817>