

Chapter 1 : Our Culture, What's Left of It - Wikipedia

Theodore Dalrymple is the Edmund Burke of our age. Our Culture, What's Left of It is not simply an important book, it is a necessary one. (Roger Kimball) Dalrymple's moral courage shines through the most. Compelling reading; highly recommended. (Library Journal) Engrossing.

An earlier collection of essays, *Life at the Bottom: The Worldview that Makes the Underclass*, was highly acclaimed. This latest collection of his essays comprises 26 pieces arranged under two headings titled, "Arts and Letters" and "Society and Politics". It is rare for a book on social issues to be so readable, but this is not a work of abstract social theory. In his preface he begins by saying: This expectation has been shattered as some have deliberately embraced barbarism; others are ignorant of boundaries needing "maintenance and sometimes vigorous defence". Some are attempting to abolish the line between civilisation and barbarism completely. Dalrymple recognises that the greatest threats to civilisation often come from within. The intellectual and political elites regard being "unconventional" and opposing "traditional social rules" as high virtues. But Dalrymple says, "No man is so brilliant that he can work everything out for himself, so that the wisdom of the ages has nothing useful to tell him. What is good for the bohemian sooner or later becomes good for the unskilled worker, the unemployed, the welfare recipient - the very people most in need of boundaries to make their lives tolerable or allow them hope of improvement. His account and analysis of underclass life, and the elite ideas which support it, resonate in most Western nations. He has witnessed at first hand the tragic results of the work of social engineers and their distorted vision of reality. He observed that most of the social pathology exhibited by the underclass has its origin in ideas that have filtered down from the intelligentsia. Whether the subject is alcoholism, drug addiction, sexual relations or marital abuse, he finds an essential self-deception at work among his patients. Its roots may be found in fashionable social policy. Dalrymple believes long-term poverty is caused by a dysfunctional set of values that is continually reinforced by an elite culture searching for victims. This culture persuades the underclass that they have no responsibility for their actions and are not the moulders of their own lives. A society has been created where "there is no evil, only victimhood". Dalrymple notes the replacement of the word "unhappy" with the word "depressed" by patients. The doctor is precluded from passing any judgement on his patients that could be interpreted as moral, and has no option but to play along with this deception. Gross over-prescription of medication, without any reduction in unhappiness. Social disaster The elites cannot acknowledge the social disaster that has occurred, as this would be an admission that their ideological libertinism was responsible. Two of the essays deal with the inherent problems of Islam as it encounters the West and modernity. Its melancholy, withdrawing roar may well unlike the Church of England be not just long but bloody, but withdraw it will. The fanatics and the bombers do not represent a resurgence of unreformed, fundamentalist Islam, but its death rattle. Figures examined include Virginia Woolf, D. The author has spent most of his working life treating the victims of illegal drugs, and mounts persuasive arguments against their legalisation. That people will continue to use drugs when they are illegal is not a valid reason to legalise them or any other criminal behaviour. Anyone concerned about the fate of Western civilisation should read this book. Purchase this book at the bookshop:

Chapter 2 : Our Culture, What's Left of It : Theodore Dalrymple :

Our Culture, What's Left of It: The Mandarins and the Masses is the second book I've read by Theodore Dalrymple. The book is a collection of short essays united by the underlying theme of social critique.

A clear-eyed assessment of the human condition at the beginning of the 21st century. An unexpectedly moving illustration. Dalrymple has acquired a following on the sarcastic right; if anything, the thoughtful left should be reading him. Dalrymple paints a chilling portrait of what is happening these days in France. Dalrymple writes a clear and considered prose that makes him formidable indeed. Compelling reading; highly recommended. Dalrymple is intelligent, witty, uncommonly perceptive about human affairs, and scathingly honest about human folly. His gift for storytelling will keep readers turning pages. Penetrating analysis and literary eloquence make the book a worthy read for anyone concerned with the fate of civilization. Read the words of a man who has been on the street Ridiculously prolific and a favorite of bloggers Surgically incisive essays by a British psychiatrist who deserves to be considered the George Orwell of the right. Dalrymple is direct and his judgments are so true. The book is elegantly written, conscientiously argued, provocative and fiercely committed The brutal, penetrating honesty of his thinking and the vividness of his prose make Theodore Dalrymple the George Orwell of our time. The manner in which Dalrymple wields his critical scalpel fixes our attention The sobering, fiery and ominous truth. Theodore Dalrymple has succeeded once more in publishing a book that is both thoughtful and absorbing. Theodore Dalrymple is the Edmund Burke of our age. Our Culture, What 's Left of It is not simply an important book, it is a necessary one. Theodore Dalrymple is the best doctor-writer since William Carlos Williams. There is so much learning and unconventional wisdom in it that you want to make the reading last. These bracing essays horrify, irritate, enlighten, amuse. They also stir you to remember, as Dalrymple puts it, what we have to lose. Whether you find Dalrymple refreshing or infuriating will depend on your political point of view. Dalrymple calls them as he sees them, and there is not an ounce of political correctness in him.

Chapter 3 : Our Culture, What's Left of It: The Mandarins and the Masses | The Skeptical Doctor

Our Culture, What's Left of It: The Mandarins and the Masses is a non-fiction book by British physician and writer Theodore Dalrymple. The book is composed of twenty-six separate pieces that cover a wide range of topics from drug legalisation to the influence of Shakespeare.

The Mandarins and the Masses. Theodore Dalrymple, welcome to Frontpage Magazine. It is a pleasure to have you with us. Dalrymple Thank you very much for having invited me. Dalrymple, as your essays evoke so many profound themes. I guess we can begin with your observations on the root causes of many of our social ills. Can you talk a bit about this? And the doctor, enjoined to pass no judgement that could be interpreted as moral on his patients, has no option but to play along with this deception. The result is the gross over-prescription of medication, without any reduction in unhappiness. Moreover, one does not have a right to the pursuit of happiness, one has a right to happiness itself. I decided, as a matter of experience, that these attitudes are very destructive and - not surprisingly - lead to a lot of misery about which a mere doctor can do nothing, at least without making judgements. In your discussion of evil, you observe one central phenomenon: Let me give a small and seemingly trivial example of this. About half of British homes no longer have a dining table. People do not eat meals together - they graze, finding what they want in the fridge, and eating in a solitary fashion whenever they feel like it which is usually often, irrespective of the other people in the household. This means that they never learn that eating is a social activity many of the prisoners in the prison in which I worked had never in their entire lives eaten at a table with another person; they never learn to discipline their conduct; they never learn that the state of their appetite at any given moment should not be the sole consideration in deciding whether to eat or not. And this is the model of all their behaviour. This is not evil, though it is antisocial, but you can easily see how people who attach such importance to their own desires, and lack any other criteria to help them decide to behave, come to do evil. Could you share your thoughts with us about this? Dalrymple It is clear to me that people often want incompatible things. They want danger and excitement on the one hand, and safety and security on the other, and often simultaneously. Contradictory desires mean that life can never be wholly satisfying or without frustration. I think it was Dostoyevsky who said that, even if the government were per cent benevolent and arranged everything for our own good, as judged by rational criteria, we should still want to exercise our freedom by going against its dispensations. One reason for the epidemic of self-destructiveness that has struck British, if not the whole of Western, society, is the avoidance of boredom. For people who have no transcendent purpose to their lives and cannot invent one through contributing to a cultural tradition for example, in other words who have no religious belief and no intellectual interests to stimulate them, self-destruction and the creation of crises in their life is one way of warding off meaninglessness. I have noticed, for example, that women who frequent bad men - that is to say men who are obviously unreliable, drunken, drug-addicted, criminal, or violent, or all of them together, have often had experience of decent men who treat them well, with respect, and so forth: Without religion or culture and here I mean high, or high-ish, culture evil is very attractive. It is not boring. You mention that your dad was a communist. Tell us about his world view and how this affected your family and your own intellectual journey. Dalrymple My father was a communist though he was also a businessman. Our house was full of communist literature from the 30s and 40s, and I remember such authors as Plekhanov and Maurice Hindus and Edgar Snow. He found it difficult to enter an equal relationship with anyone, and preferred to play Stalin to their Molotov. We had The Short Course in the house, incidentally, and one of my favourite books which I used to leaf through as a child was a vast picture book of the Soviet Union in which you mention how Lenin did not want to hear Beethoven because it made a person want to pat children on the heads, a behaviour that is not synonymous with running a death cult. I have always been interested in what music represents and how it poses a great danger to totalitarianism. Today, in facing Islamism, we know that this deadly enemy also despises music the Taliban or most kinds of music Khomeini. What do you think it is about music that so threatens totalist ideologies? Dalrymple Music escapes ideological characterisation. Just as there are some social scientists who believe that what cannot be measured does not truly exist, and some

psychologists used to believe that consciousness does not exist because it cannot be observed by instruments, so ideologists find anything that escapes their conceptual framework threatening - because ideologists want a simple principle, or a few simple principles, by which all things may be judged. When I was a student, I lived with a hard-line dialectical materialist who said that Schubert was a typical petit bourgeois pessimist, whose music would die out once objective causes for pessimism ceased to exist. But I suspect that even he was not entirely happy with this formulation. You mention how 19th century French aristocrat, the Marquis de Custine, made several profound observations on how border guards in Russia wasted his time pushing their weight around in stupid and pointless ways, and that this is connected to the powerlessness that humans live under authoritarianism. Tell us a bit more of how this dynamic works in Russia. Dalrymple With regard to Russia, I am not an expert, but I have an interest in the country. I believe that it is necessary to study 19th century Russian history to understand the modern world. I suspect that the characteristic of Russian authoritarianism precedes the Soviet era if you read Custine, you will be astonished by how much of what he observed prefigured the Soviet era, which of course multiplied the tendencies a thousand times. I suppose that people who feel little control over their own lives or destinies can obtain a slight sense of agency by interfering in the lives of others, in tiny ways. I have noticed that many of the men who are violently dictatorial at home often count for little once they pass their own threshold. They are the Stalins of their own home. Dalrymple Political correctness is communist propaganda writ small. In my study of communist societies, I came to the conclusion that the purpose of communist propaganda was not to persuade or convince, nor to inform, but to humiliate; and therefore, the less it corresponded to reality the better. When people are forced to remain silent when they are being told the most obvious lies, or even worse when they are forced to repeat the lies themselves, they lose once and for all their sense of probity. To assent to obvious lies is to co-operate with evil, and in some small way to become evil oneself. A society of emasculated liars is easy to control. I think if you examine political correctness, it has the same effect and is intended to. You discuss how Custine noted the "wide streets" of St. Petersburg and that these spaces were built this way intentionally to negate the possibility of spontaneity among the citizens and of crowds appearing to be large. It was a way to thwart the possibility of revolution. Can you expand on this a bit? Dalrymple Custine thought that the architecture - or rather town planning - of St Petersburg made the gathering of any crowd very conspicuous, and therefore a target. He thought that people could not gather spontaneously there as they could in, say, cities with narrower streets and vistas. He also thought that the grandeur was an attempt to impress upon the citizen how small and insignificant he was, and how powerful and important the state was. Whether he was right or not with regard to Petersburg other explanations of its grandeur are possible, it was definitely a lesson learnt by the builder of modern Pyongyang, for example, who had the fole de grandeur all right, but not the taste of the builders of Petersburg. You have a fascinating essay in your collection "Why Havana Had to Die". Can you summarize the main thesis in a few sentences? Dalrymple Havana is one of the most beautiful cities in the world, and it has perhaps the most harmonious ensemble of architecture, from the 16th to most unusually the middle of the 20th century. Moreover, the area over which this harmony extends is very large i. Hence, the city contradicts entirely the orthodox communist historiography of Cuba as an undeveloped society with a tiny rich class and everyone else deeply impoverished. It must be admitted that ruins have a charm of their own for visitors. Islamists and leftists have many things in common. One of them is that they are miserable, hate life and see cheer and joy as a dangerous enemy. You make the comment that "the acceptance of the inherent limitations of existence that is essential to happiness. Dalrymple I take it as given that man, having contradictory desires, is always subject to frustration, even when happy. For example, we want both adventure and safety, and when we have the one we long for the other. All forms of human happiness contain within themselves the seeds of their own decomposition. Modern man particularly - or so it seems to me - is particularly bad at recognising that much of his unhappiness or discontent stems from this inevitable source. Rather, he blames the structure of society and thinks that a perfection that will resolve all contradictions and eliminate all frustrations can be achieved, if only we abolished private property or followed the example of the 7th century followers of Mohammed. The attempt to force people to do so gives meaning to their existence, and of course a lot of sadistic pleasure into the bargain. You note that Alfred Kinsey had pierced his own

foreskin and had put metal wires up his urethra. Who in their right mind would do this? What was the objective? Dalrymple Alfred Kinsey was a very strange man. He was repressed sexually until quite a late age, and then expressed his sexuality in more and more bizarre forms as he grew older. His was a classic case of the appetite increasing with the feeding. Once you are on the treadmill of exploring sensation as the key to contentment, you have to experience more and more extreme things. You have a fascinating essay in this collection: Could you talk about this? Dalrymple Childhood in large parts of modern Britain, at any rate, has been replaced by premature adulthood, or rather adolescence. Children grow up very fast but not very far. That is why it is possible for 14 year olds now to establish friendships with 26 year olds - because they know by the age of 14 all they are ever going to know. It is important in this environment to appear knowing, or street wise, otherwise you will be taken for a weakling and exploited accordingly. Thus, feelings for others does not develop. Moreover, the model of discipline in the homes has changed, with the complete breakdown of the family in my hospital, were it not for the Indian immigrants, the illegitimacy rate of children born there would be per cent. Children grow up now in circumstances in which discipline is merely a matter of imposing the will of one person on another, it is raw power devoid of principal. You touch on the eerie silence of Western leftist feminists on this issue, noting "Where two pieties -- feminism and multi-culturalism -- come into conflict, the only way of preserving both is an indecent silence. Yet today, it has reached out in solidarity with the most fascistic women-hating, gay-hating, minority-hating and democracy hating force on the face of the earth -- Islamism. Dalrymple I think the problem here is one of a desired self-image. Tolerance is the greatest moral virtue and broadmindedness the greatest intellectual one.

Chapter 4 : Our Culture, What's Left of It | Manhattan Institute

As in Life at the Bottom, his essays are incisive yet undogmatic, beautifully composed and devoid of disfiguring jargon, Our Culture, What's Left of It is a book that restores our faith in the central importance of literature and criticism to our civilization.

I must admit to having a soft spot for conservative pessimism, but I also have a soft spot for damn good writing. The skeptical doctor provides both. Incidentally, he also provides great old-fashioned reporting the kind that has died as newspapers have died. In this book the meta, subtle tie is a criticism of the leaders of our culture. Our intellectuals and stars — in short, our role models and opinion-makers. The doctor believes that these people have ruined our culture and condemned our poor people to a nearly hopeless life in the under classes. With that tie in mind, here are some of the highlights: They are the unacknowledged legislators of the world, and we ought to pay close attention to what they say and how they say it. Here we enter the realm of culture and ideas. For it is necessary not only to believe that it is economically feasible to behave in the irresponsible and egotistical fashion I have described, but also to believe that it is morally permissible to do so. And this idea has been peddled by the intellectual elite in Britain for many years, more assiduously than anywhere else, to the extent that it is now taken for granted. To paraphrase Burke, all that is necessary for barbarism to triumph is for civilized men to do nothing: They have denied the distinction between higher and lower, to the invariable advantage of the latter. A necessary, though not sufficient, condition [for the decline of our culture] is the welfare state, which makes it possible, and sometimes advantageous, to behave like this. In matters of public housing, it is actually advantageous for a mother to put herself at a disadvantage, to be a single mother, without support from the fathers of the children and dependent on the state for income. The increase in crime is a favorite topic of the good doctor: There has been a twelvefold increase since and an even greater increase in crimes of violence. And some marvelously old-fashioned bits: Until then I had assumed, along with most of my generation unacquainted with real hardship, that a scruffy appearance was a sign of spiritual election, representing a rejection of the superficiality and materialism of bourgeois life. There is also plenty of my favorite Dalrymple theme: He knows that the tension between men as they are and men as they ought to be will forever remain unresolved. There is even some Roissyism: But Isabella [a patient] knows that a society that places no value at all on chastity will not place much value on fidelity either: That civilized life cannot be lived without taboos — that some of them may indeed be justified, and that therefore taboo is not in itself an evil to be vanquished — is a thought too subtle for the aesthetes of nihilism. And there are unbelievable stories from his patients: Such is our cultural decline. Another interesting idea that came up in several essays was the idea that we are willingly living under conditions that are becoming increasingly similar to conditions under totalitarian regimes, for example: Custine would demonstrate to us that, without an external despot to explain our pusillanimity, we have willingly adopted the mental habits of people who live under a totalitarian dictatorship. The book ends with an interesting essay on Rhodesia and colonialism that I am still chewing on. And condemned Rhodesia most certainly was, loudly and insistently, as if it were the greatest threat to world peace and the security of the planet. By the time I arrived, it had no friends, only enemies. I expected to find on my arrival, therefore, a country in crisis and decay. Instead I found a country that was, to all appearances, thriving: There were no electricity cuts or shortages of basic food commodities. Mere equality of salary, therefore, was quite insufficient to procure for them [i. In fact a salary a thousand times as great would hardly have been sufficient to procure it: The thick network of social obligations explains why, while it would have been out of the question to bribe most Rhodesian bureaucrats, yet in only a few years it would have been out of the question not to try to bribe most Zimbabwean ones, whose relatives would have condemned them for failing to obtain on their behalf all the advantages their official opportunities might provide. Thus do the very same tasks in the very same offices carried out by people of different cultural and social backgrounds result in very different outcomes. And indeed, in all but one or two African states, the accession to independence brought no advance in intellectual freedom but rather, in many cases, a tyranny incomparably worse than the preceding colonial regimes. After several years in Africa I concluded that the

colonial enterprise had been fundamentally wrong and mistaken, even when, as was often the case in its final stages, it was benevolently intended. The good it did was ephemeral; the harm, lasting. Related This entry was posted on Wednesday, September 16th, at 1: You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2. You can leave a response , or trackback from your own site.

Chapter 5 : Our Culture, What's Left of It: The Mandarins and the Masses by Theodore Dalrymple

Our Culture, What's Left of It: The Mandarins and the Masses by Theodore Dalrymple This new collection of essays by the author of Life at the Bottom bears the unmistakable stamp of Theodore Dalrymple's bracingly clear-sighted view of the human condition.

Chapter 6 : Jamie Glazov -- Our Culture, What's Left Of It: Interview with Theodore Dalrymple

The line between civilization and barbarism is very thin, and needs to be zealously protected. Yet many of our intellectuals, argues Dalrymple, are either ignorant of the dividing line, or are doing their best to abolish that line altogether. Generally these intellectual and political elites are of the left.

Chapter 7 : Our Culture, What's Left Of It eBook: Theodore Dalrymple: racedaydvl.com: Kindle Store

This culture persuades the underclass that they have no responsibility for their actions and are not the moulders of their own lives. A society has been created where "there is no evil, only victimhood".

Chapter 8 : Book Review: Our Culture, What's Left of It | THE INK SLINGER

Without religion or culture (and here I mean high, or high-ish, culture) evil is very attractive. It is not boring. Frontpage: You mention that your dad was a communist. Tell us about his world view and how this affected your family and your own intellectual journey. Dalrymple My father was a communist though he was also a businessman. Our house was full of communist literature from the 30s and 40s, and I remember such authors as Plekhanov and Maurice Hindus and Edgar Snow.

Chapter 9 : Moonbattery Our Culture, What's Left of It - Moonbattery

A necessary, though not sufficient, condition [for the decline of our culture] is the welfare state, which makes it possible, and sometimes advantageous, to behave like this.