



Cartoon by Ben Garrison Image: conservativedailynews.com

I get a kick out of ME!

Self-obsession: an undesirable quality for fighting the climate crisis.

(Please note that this article uses Christian names because that's how we refer to children!)

Today's pinnacle of the political arena appears littered with self-obsessed personalities: mostly white men with flourishing wrinkles, who crave adulation! Are these the leaders we need, in this age of global crisis?

It's acceptable to some degree, if you're a Grammy-winning rapper with beard trimmed like a laser beam, or Ballon d'Or footballer consumed by egg-whites and bulging thighs, but self-obsession is an unnecessary criteria for those elected to control our collective destiny, on whichever part of the planet we live.

Going back a few decades, the self-preening political appointee did not feature in our lives to the same self-serving degree as we see today. Yes, our more pretentious leaders included JFK the Heart throb and Bill the Saxman, even Teflon Tone; but they at least appeared to emphasise the wider frame, rather than their own self-portrait.

And that provides a clue as to how we came to this era of peacock-feathered politicians. In one word: technology! We rocketed up to the techno-stratosphere and into orbit, where our every waking hour is controlled by screens. From there we ended up on Planet Selfie: ME with my neighbour, ME with my neighbour's dog, ME with my neighbour's dog's turd! ME with a fly on my neighbour's dog's turd! You get the picture? A million photos - backed up on the cloud - nearly all of them featuring ME! (though the fly on the neighbour's dog's turd might want to argue about that!).

The other causal factor, made possible and supported by our high-tech world, is the ever-increasing opportunity to use the many arms of media to suit our self-fixated purposes: my very own sound-bite Twitter, her mirror-image Instagram, his self-opinionated blog (at times incorporating self-created, fake news). In our 20/20 world we can project a totally distorted view ...according to ME!

Perhaps this could still be considered a 'cool' approach (it's often argued reality is a subjective term) if those holding the rudder were dealing with the bubble-making potential of gum, or contact-adhesive quality of lipstick. Unfortunately for us, they are not! Based on a somewhat questionable theory known as 'Sovereign Right', they hold the power to control the globe that the rest of us live on: to singlehandedly create Heaven or Hell!

Let's take two self-aggrandising people that most of us know quite well, via the media of course: Donald and Boris. Donald has more wrinkles than Boris, but attempts to disguise them with fake tan, which comes from Walmart and is splashed on with a paintbrush (using the old bottle tops to cover the eyes)! For hair-colouring it appears they share the same bottle, though Don's needs a double dose to calm the grey. Don dresses smart – maybe a spin-off from his designer spouse - whereas BoJo looks like a retro spin-off from 'Men Behaving Badly'.

These two men think the world revolves around them ... not the sun! Donald said: “I decided not to attack Iran,” whereas Boris tossed out the line: I’ll die in a ditch,” rather than acquiesce to Europe. Donald believes the climate crisis is not an issue to worry about, though all the scientists around the world can prove it is. Boris believes he can erect a border on the island of Ireland and thus refute the hard-won ‘Good Friday Agreement’. The self-opinionated approach of Boris could destroy the UK union; the self-enriching stance from Donald, could end up obliterating life, as we know it, on Earth!

Both these Alpha-type males have a view of the world (and corresponding oratory ability) that most primary-school teachers identify with. In line with their misguided and often infantile views, they shift their allegiances and sack their colleagues in direct relation to the degree of benefits for themselves. Are these really the people that should hold our future in their hands ...and the futures of our children? Something needs to change.

Of all the key issues we entrust to elected leaders – including a homogenous Europe; religious and ethnic harmony; multilateral oversight of inter-country conflicts and humanitarian rights – by far the most important (and all-encompassing) issue, is the climate crisis. This is not only about an endangered European Union, or racial hegemony, or cross-border conflicts; the climate crisis is unique, because it has implications for all countries, each person and every species, on Earth.

The uneducated and outrageously uncaring view from the Land of Noddy (Oops, sorry ...Donald) is that business can proceed as usual. In fact, he’s done his best to support his fossilised friends and to increase (not decrease) the man-made causes of global heating. The Paris Accord of 2015 pledged a commitment from all countries to tackle the climate crisis; later, the untold wisdom of Donald disagreed, and the USA pulled out. We can only hope that Boris does not strike a deal with Donald that backtracks on Britain’s commitments to reduce carbon emissions (depending of course, if one, or both, remain in office!).

As Scomo (Australia) and Narendra (India) - with their selfie-sticks handy - help grease the wheels of the Donald bandwagon (even though their enormous lands are in the front-line glare of the climate debacle), and UK's Dom. pours hot oil on the cogs of the Boris machine, it has come to the stage where we are now taking the lead from people too young to vote, to guide us out of this man-made, climate change mess. Thankfully Greta Thunberg (note here the only use of surname) doesn't have much time for selfies: she's too mature for that ... and too focused on showing adults what should have been done, way back before she was born.

Self-obsession is not a desirable characteristic for anyone leading the fight to mitigate global heating. Confidence and self-assuredness are appropriate qualities, that enable a leader to take the helm and steer a course that is directed towards the welfare of people and the planet as a whole ... but not self-obsession. If only we could vote Ms. Thunberg for President, or Prime Minister, then common sense might begin to overcome the egos that currently rule many of our political systems.
