

Why We Use the Word 'Idiotarian'

Using the word 'idiotarian' has some obvious disadvantages. It is inherently insulting, and hence potentially misleading in a context where one is trying to make factual statements. It has unintended connotations: users of the word do not mean to imply that idiotarians necessarily have low intelligence. It looks frivolous, and is therefore distracting in any serious piece. It is new and may soon be obsolete. Also, as a general rule, consideration for the reader should make one reluctant to use terms with which many people are unfamiliar.

Nevertheless, we use the i-word from time to time here on **The World**. Why?

Because there is no alternative. The fact is, there is a huge and influential segment of Western public opinion which systematically sides with evil without itself **adopting the evildoers' objectives**. That's an approximate definition: as with other terms such as 'left-wing', 'right-wing' or 'anarchist', there are about as many definitions of 'idiotarian' as there are users of the term. But there can be no doubt that idiotarianism is a distinctive political stance playing a major role in contemporary politics. As we have **said before**, it is mind-boggling that such a significant strand of political thought did not even have a name before 2002 when Charles Johnson **coined the term** 'idiotarian'.

We don't see any option but to use it. For instance, although idiotarianism is predominantly associated with political parties of the left, 'idiotarian' is by no means synonymous with 'left-wing' or 'Democrat': one has only to consider the likes of **Tom Lantos** (or perhaps Tony Blair), or, on the right, **Pat Buchanan** or **Matthew Parris**. Likewise, idiotarianism usually involves, say, moral relativism, yet there are moral relativists who are anti-idiotarians, and there are people who believe in right and wrong but think that idiotarian policies are the morally right ones. The term "useful idiots", allegedly coined by Lenin, has a similar though narrower meaning, but it also has similar disadvantages; and the term "cicadas", coined by **Oriana Fallaci**, has gained little or no currency.

So until someone tells us a better idea, we are going to have to live with the disadvantages of 'idiotarian'. And there are consolations:

OK, it's insulting, but it's insulting something *bad*. (And even

idiotarians might take consolation from the fact that long-lived terms often become detached from their original meanings: 'Tory' was once a term of abuse meaning 'thief'; 'hysterical' meant 'affected by one's womb'.) Its psychological connotations are not wholly inappropriate: it *is* a psychological stratagem more than a political theory. A lighthearted touch is no bad thing in political writing. And as for the term being unfamiliar: well, this very item will put an end to that, won't it?

UPDATE: We're still hoping that someone will do **this** study.

UPDATE: We now have **a new word** for "idiotarian": "**villepinist**".

Wed, 06/18/2003 - 22:32 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

What it means

I think the biggest problem with using the term *idiotarian* is that so many people don't understand what it means.

So, I suggest that when you use the term you include a link to a page like **this one** that makes it clear. The definition used there is:

The species of delusion within the moral community of mankind that gives aid and comfort to terrorists and tyrants operating outside it.

There's a lot more than the definition worth reading there.

by [Gil](#) on Thu, 06/19/2003 - 00:06 | [reply](#)

What is the psychological stratagem?

I'm beginning to understand what idiotarianism is, and to recognise it, but I completely fail to understand what motivates idiotarians. Why do they 'seek to prevent the triumph of Good over Evil, at any price' (Kolya)

It's enormously frustrating not to understand, because on occasions one simply feels *beseiged*

Is it because they think it's sexy or wise (in a nodding, knowing sort of way) to rebel against whoever triumphs, in order to secure the love of others like themselves? Are they afraid of authority because of crushing defeats in their past? Do they have stuff in common with pacifists or even vegetarians? Why are they so slow to believe that people tend to want the right things?

Please can someone enlighten me as to what the psychological stratagem is, then we can work out how to fight it.

by [Tom Robinson](#) on Thu, 06/19/2003 - 00:10 | [reply](#)

Stratagem

Tom Robinson

I've heard a few good answers to your question. One theory (credited to David Deutsch) is that, after the trauma of WWII and the blotting out of Nazism, people wanted to blot out violence in general by pretending it doesn't exist. For children, violence is forbidden as a topic of conversation at the dinner table, forbidden on the TV and is **never** discussed in school. In fact, violence of any kind is punished in school, **regardless of who is at fault**. The result is systematic ignorance about the proper use of force, that is, idiotarianism.

Another possibility is that idiotarianism arises out of resentment of authority. If you grow up oppressed by your parents, you may end up seeing the world in terms of power relations, authorities trying to fuck you over. This could translate to a hatred of America, and of successful people and countries in general.

by [Daniel Strimpel](#) on Thu, 06/19/2003 - 04:09 | [reply](#)

The idiotarian stratagem

What motivates idiotarianism is the same impulse that motivates true morality: the quest for self-validation through identification with intrinsically worthwhile goals.

Where idiotarianism goes astray is in its pathological conception of what constitute worthwhile goals. Whereas moral people try to discover and embrace that which is conducive to human flourishing; idiotarianism perceives relative success as evidence of malfeasance, and relative failure as evidence of victimhood. The entire intellectual edifice that idiotarians construct is just a rationalisation of what is, at root, an unsavoury emotional disposition, namely a form of self-righteous resentment, writ large.

Put more succinctly, idiotarianism is a rationalisation of a pathological identification with people whose own bad values are the cause of their misfortune.

By the way, I think the term "idiotarianism" obscures more than it reveals. I prefer my own term, "moral inversion", because it brings out the fact that the cardinal error concerns morality rather than rationality, and it captures the Alice in Wonderland quality of idiotarian argumentation, which is characterised by a rational attempt at defending a moral falsehood, rather than by arbitrary irrationality.

by [Kolya](#) on Thu, 06/19/2003 - 15:34 | [reply](#)

Defining 'idiotarian'

Doesn't the definition quoted by Gil have the weakness that a certain class of actual evildoers and wannabe evildoers (those 'operating in a moral community', whatever that means) also count as 'idiotarians'? And doesn't that defeat the whole purpose of having a separate term?

And isn't the same true of Kolya's term 'moral inversion' as well?

Defining idiotarian

David,

I think being an evildoer or a wannabe evildoer places you outside of the "Moral community of mankind".

You'd be in the "Immoral community of mankind".

by [Gil](#) on Thu, 06/19/2003 - 19:16 | [reply](#)

Idiotarianism is part of the same continuum as evil

In terms of their psychology and philosophical content, idiotarianism and outright evil differ only in degree. Both are parts of the moral inversion continuum. Both are driven by a logic-of-situation imperative to deny the true explanation for human progress and to discredit those who live by it. That is the reason why idiotarians and evil-doers from widely diverse backgrounds all agree on hating and blaming the morally most progressive peoples, such as Americans and Jews.

Where an individual ends up on this moral inversion continuum depends more on contingent factors, than on their own philosophical commitments. Their moral and intellectual trajectory is largely shaped by the objective logical and epistemic constraints of trying to pin the blame for the failure of immoral cultures, at the feet of the most virtuous cultures.

Moral inverters learn what to think and how to argue partly from the intrinsic logic of this predicament, and partly by memic transmission from others who have trodden the same ground before them. Generally speaking, an individual moral inverter's only substantive contribution to his or her own stance is deciding how far to go down this road.

I think the transition of German culture from pre-WWII idiotarianism, to the extreme evil of Nazism, and then, following its defeat, back to idiotarianism again, bears out my thesis that evil and idiotarianism are parts of the same continuum, and can be inter-converted under suitable external circumstances.

Having said that, for many practical purposes the distinction between evil-doers and their mere apologists, is very real and very important. So I agree that having a separate term for the latter is useful. But I still think that "idiotarianism" works better as an in-jibe, than as a term that is conducive to the enlightenment of the uninitiated.

The reason is that it obscures the fundamental psychological and moral relationship between full-blown evil and its precursor stance, which we might more accurately call "proevil".

by [Kolya](#) on Thu, 06/19/2003 - 20:46 | [reply](#)

Idiotarianism is part of the same continuum as evil

I agree with Kolya here.

The differences between idiotarians and "full-blown evil" people is more a matter of degree than kind.

I think I said as much when commenting on Woty's blog.

I understand the desire to want to make the distinction. We want to say something like "They're not *bad*, they're just *mistaken*!" But what does "bad" mean, if not being mistaken about fundamental moral issues and being willing to act (or not act) based on those mistakes?

Nobody's perfect, but many people have made and acted on choices that place them on the road to evil.

by **Gil** on Thu, 06/19/2003 - 21:09 | [reply](#)

I agree

Im pleased to see that my previous intuition on the evil vs. misguided question is in fact in agreement with Kolya's and Gil's.

by **Daniel Strimpel** on Fri, 06/20/2003 - 17:41 | [reply](#)

terms

So should we call idiotarians "idiotarians", "moral inverters" or "proevil"?

Proevil sounds evil to me. Are we making too-fine distinctions here? Why the desire to have a term different than "evil" (tho' that sounds a bit too Biblical for me) or "bad"?

Is it because you're hoping your idiotarian friends and relations won't be so offended and you want to persuade them they're wrong? is there some denial here?

Sylvia

by **Sylvia Crombie** on Fri, 06/20/2003 - 19:09 | [reply](#)

Idiotarian/Evil Difference

A difference between idiotarians and evil people, is that idiotarians don't want us to die. I think this merits two terms.

-- Elliot Temple

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

by **Elliot Temple** on Fri, 06/20/2003 - 22:23 | [reply](#)

Honest disagreement

Gil wrote:

I understand the desire to want to make the distinction. We want to say something like "They're not bad, they're just mistaken!" But what does "bad" mean, if not being mistaken about fundamental moral issues and being willing to act (or not act) based on those mistakes?

Sylvia wrote:

Is it because you're hoping your idiotarian friends and relations won't be so offended and you want to persuade them they're wrong? is there some denial here?

I think it's about as offensive to call someone an idiotarian as it is to call them evil. I don't want to make excuses for people who side with evil, and I think most of them ought to know better.

However, I think there is a difference between being complicit in evil, and actually being evil. One example: Some people opposed the US invasion of Iraq because they wanted to be able to continue torturing people. Some other people opposed the invasion of Iraq because it conflicted with their idea of what nations should do in a peaceful world, and these people did not consider the torture to be an important consideration.

Similarly -- some people say that in Nazi Germany, most people didn't actively agree with what was going on, but they had no choice and just did what they were told. This is idiotarian. Some people think the Nazis were right. This is evil.

People who are unable or unwilling to consider the torture in Iraq or the moral culpability of the Germans are unable to take the right side in many vital issues. But that is not the same as actively wanting evil to triumph.

~Woty

<http://woty.blogspot.com>

by **Woty** on Fri, 06/20/2003 - 22:30 | [reply](#)

Idiotarianism is similar to evil, but quite different

In case this wasn't clear from my last comment, I think that from a *causal* point of view what is important is the continuity between idiotarianism and evil. But from a *moral* point of view it is their difference that is important. "Moral inversion" is my name for the unified causal explanation for the psychological and cultural mechanisms that give rise to both phenomena.

But I fully agree with David and Woty that when discussing the morality of the two conditions, there is an important difference between them -- one which justifies having two separate terms. The distinction is important, not least, because evil people such as

Hamas operatives and Saddam Hussein can merit being killed in

extra-judicial ways, whereas idiotarians cannot.

I still don't like the word "idiotarianism" and have never used it except when debating the nuances of its meaning with other readers of LGF. We need a term whose meaning is more apparent and which has connotations of immorality, rather than irrationality.

To that end, I propose the term "morality denial". Chomsky, the French, The European Union, and all those who believe America to be guilty of unilateralism, are morality deniers.

by **Kolya** on Sun, 06/22/2003 - 09:46 | [reply](#)

Brilliant

What a very interesting and illuminating thread. Great stuff. Thank you.

Alice

by a reader on Sun, 06/22/2003 - 22:03 | [reply](#)

who are the idiots?

The author of this blog is right about two things: the term "idiotarian" is inherently insulting, and potentially, if not inevitably, misleading. As I understand it, the argument here is that one is an idiot if one supports evil, particularly while in a state of moral denial.

Historical moment: Donald Rumsfeld shakes hands with Saddam Hussein. Idiot?

Historical moment: Franklin Roosevelt allies with Stalin to beat Hitler. Idiot?

Historical moment: Man buys wife diamond, sold to support brutal civil war in Sierra Leone or Algeria. Idiot?

Historical moment: Catholic Church officials fail to dismiss known pedophiles. Idiots?

Historical moment: You or I or anyone buys carton of Tropicana orange juice, made with fruit picked by illegal immigrants working under slave-labor conditions. Or we buy clothes made in Chinese sweatshops, etc etc. Idiots?

Historical moment: GWBush choosing to spend Vietnam war stateside, not fighting evil in Southeast Asia. Idiot?

Historical moment: You or I put gas in car, and a portion of the money lands in Saudi Arabia, used to prop up repressive and arguably evil regime. Car perhaps made by Ford, whose founder once used his profits to disseminate anti-Semitic propaganda. Idiots?

Historical moment: US allies with Taliban to fight Russians in

Afghanistan. Idiots?

One man's opinion: for all the bile heaped on the hapless heads of the liberals of the world, they are far from the most powerful forces of moral relativism. That prize goes to business and government. History shows, without question, that either will ally with virtually anyone if the alliance advances their interests. While it's not inevitable that either will support evil, it happens all the time, whether with local governments and small businesses, or "big" gov't and big biz.

Certainly it is honorable to be infuriated by the presence of evil in the world. But it seems to me that the so-called left wing is a poor target - or at least, a potentially misleading one. Not only because the left has demonstrably acted as a force that countered evil in the past - fighting, for example, segregation and labor abuses when the mainstream was prepared to tolerate them - but because the left isn't all that powerful.

Thus the term "idiotarian" to me represents a facile and shortsighted interpretation of the role evil plays in the world - and the role we as Americans play in its support.

by a reader on Wed, 06/25/2003 - 13:39 | [reply](#)

My, if this isn't a case of...

...the pot calling the kettle "idiotarian".

by a reader on Wed, 06/25/2003 - 16:42 | [reply](#)

Idiotarian counter term.

Personally, I like "Idiotarian", at least as an internal shorthand - the fact that it's inherently insulting is a plus, not a minus - but I agree that it's not precise as a general use term that's intrinsically understandable by the casual reader.

I'd like to propose "antirational" [and "antirationalism" as descriptive of the phenomena]: describes someone who willfully pursues a counter rational philosophy, even though they're capable [in other areas] of applying rational thought to situations. The antirational person goes to great and often strident lengths to bolster arguments and positions that even casual observers can see on examination bear no resemblance to fact, data, evidence or any other basis other than "faith".

"Antirationalism" describes a philosophy of denial based upon adherence to viewing the world and reality as one would like it to be, rather than as it is.

I'm not sure that "evil" and "immoral" should be a part of the definitions: those are often by products of pursuing an antirational stance, rather than inherent to the antirationalist.

It has the benefit that "idiotarian" lacks: a casual reader can look at

the term in context, and deduce from the root words and context the definition, whereas idiotarian can be fuzzy even in contextual use.

Sherman Barnes

by [Ironbear](#) on Wed, 06/25/2003 - 23:17 | [reply](#)

I have the alternative

I posted about it [here](#).

by a reader on Fri, 06/27/2003 - 10:54 | [reply](#)

The Idiotarian vs. the merely Unprincipled

"business and government ... will ally with virtually anyone if the alliance advances their interests." - a reader

That to me is the key difference between the Idiotarian and the merely Unprincipled.

The unprincipled will cynically make choices that further his own interests.

The idiotarian will cynically make choices **that harm his own interests**. He'll cut off his nose to spite his face. Example: what small-L liberal would ever, **ever** defend the sovereignty of Taliban Afghanistan? What feminist? Answer: quite a few would, and did, because they wanted to deny Bush's will more than they wanted to bring the freedoms they claim to love to Afghanistan.

(And I agree that the motivation for this perversity can be traced to resentment, which Nietzsche saw as one of the great motivators of human thought.)

Reader X

by a reader on Sun, 06/29/2003 - 07:49 | [reply](#)

you're right

Listen, cats:

The bottom line here is that you all like calling people who disagree with you "idiots."

Being good smart people, you're constructing a series of rationales that justify this behavior. The writer above, for example, essentially is saying, "Idiotarians are people who deliberately chose wrong over right." Naturally such people deserve only scorn. And their behavior would indeed be a perversity if it worked like that, but I have news for you:

It doesn't.

The people you disagree with think they're right. And they may be

right. But that isn't important to this crowd; you're sure that you're right and they're idiots and so you call them "idiotarians," taking a smug, and dare I say resentful, satisfaction in your rhetorical bravery.

So here's what you should do: give up this flimsy pseudo-rationalism and go down to your local campus or your lefty bookstore and just shout, "You're all a bunch of god-damn idiots!" Go ahead. Roll in it. When someone asks you why, answer, "Because you're wrong!" If you think, like the guy at the top, that this makes them evil, go ahead and squeeze off a few rounds on 'em.

You know you want it. You do. You really, really do. That's what this is about. And that last guy is right - resentment is at the core of this - the smug bile of a bunch of wannabe supermen (and women) who feel that only the lilliputian minds of their fellow citizens prevent the arrival of The Good, The Just, and The Perfect.

I used to have a friend who would joke, "the world would be a great place if not for all the stupid people." That's the level that this debate operates at - without the joke.

by a reader on Wed, 07/02/2003 - 03:50 | [reply](#)

Logical Fallacies Are Fun

A Reader wrote "Being good smart people, you're constructing a series of rationales that justify this behavior."

Yup, we sure did! The thing is, this "criticism" applies to all the cases where we are right and explain why, in addition to applying to the cases A Reader intended. So, it applies regardless of whether we are right or wrong, and thus hasn't got any content as a criticism.

But I suppose I'm just rationalising...

-- Elliot Temple

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

by [Elliot Temple](#) on Wed, 07/02/2003 - 05:40 | [reply](#)

so then

.... what are you (to take one example) right about, and what are the "idiotarians" wrong about?

by a reader on Wed, 07/02/2003 - 15:17 | [reply](#)

What are idiotarians wrong about?

".... what are you (to take one example) right about, and what are the "idiotarians" wrong about?"

They typically blame Islamofascist terrorism on Western

colonialism. In reality, it has nothing to do with that and everything to do with their culture being evil, racist, anticapitalist, anti-freedom and self-destructive. There is no possibility that they will stop as a result of anything other than being devastatingly and comprehensively defeated, in particular ignoring them or making concessions to them will only lead to more death. They must be stopped, not coddled.

by [Alan Forrester](#) on Wed, 07/02/2003 - 18:00 | [reply](#)

oh, I get it

See, you've got the same problem going on - you choose an argument based on articles of faith, not reality.

You argue that the left "typically" blames the West for Islamofascism. More accurately, the left is typically aware of the connections between the west and the Islamofascists - years of support to the Taliban (not to mention Saddam), years of support to repressive Arab regimes. This is not the same as "blaming." Do we bear some responsibility? Of course. Total responsibility? No. Your article of faith is "the idiotarians blame America" but it is more accurate to say that the left is willing to confront America's partial responsibility for the state of things. To deny that history is to deny reality.

Your second article of faith is that Islamofascism can be isolated and destroyed. Let's assume that you're correct that it is "inherently evil." I'll buy that. But what is this "Islamofascism"? And how can it be totally destroyed? Was it the Taliban? Now that they're gone, is it gone? Will it be gone if we kill Bin Laden? Or his "senior officials"? Suppose you nuked everyone in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Iran? Would it be gone then? How will you know when it's gone? What IS it? Have we been doing the right things to stop it? I don't know. Maybe what we're doing is fostering it. We coddled it for years, and we're still coddling it (see: Saudi Arabia), so how do we stop? Do we have to bomb everybody? Everywhere?

"Screw these silly sophist hairsplitters," you say. "It's evil and it must be destroyed." Good luck. Call me when you're done.

by a reader on Wed, 07/02/2003 - 21:10 | [reply](#)

Not leftists, idiotarians

A reader is outraged by what he or she deems criticism of "leftists", but the piece was not about "left" vs. "right", it was about the word "idiotarian", which is NOT synonymous with "leftist". There are plenty of "right-wing" idiotarians too. And there are plenty of left-wing people who are not at all idiotarian. Tony Blair does not strike me as being very idiotarian. That is why a new word is needed. We can argue about whether the word "idiotarian" is the one to use or not, but let us not obscure the point that we do need to be able to refer to this group somehow.

--

Sarah Fitz-Claridge

<http://www.fitz-claridge.com/>

by **Sarah Fitz-Claridge** on Thu, 07/03/2003 - 23:13 | [reply](#)

true, true

It's true that this particular web community is a little more reasoned than many online outposts of "left" or "right." Libertarianism is an important thread in the overall Western political tapestry, and like liberalism, conservatism, socialism and freemarketeerism it's home to intelligent people and fools alike.

Which is why the term "idiotarian" is useless, in addition to being insulting. To recap: the sum of the argument here seems to be that the "idiotarian" is a person who chooses wrong over right, evil over good, dumb over smart, etc etc. The group can't seem to decide whether they are hoodwinked (like Lenin's "useful idiots") or conscious cultural saboteurs, but the bottom line of the definition is that idiotarians support what the anti-idiotarian considers wrong.

By this definition, there is an idiot in every occupied chair. Everyone is doing something wrong by someone's definition. Just as every political philosophy becomes idiotic when extended to its logical extremes.

Personally, the word suggests to me a person who has reached the illogical fringe of his or her ideological passion, and remains unable to see it. This would include lefties who preach world revolution, or righties who preach world domination, or libertarians who rail against government, etc etc. But the words "extremist" or "fundamentalist" or "ideologue" are much more descriptive, accurate, and useful in these cases. "Idiotarian" is an insult, nothing more, telling me nothing about the individual referenced and everything about the speaker's opinion.

So back to my original point: "idiotarian" is primarily useful for insulting people with whom one disagrees. It is dismissive, reductive, and, while catchy, juvenile. It implies that the "right" positions are so self-evident that only an idiot would fail to embrace them.

In fact, the "right" positions - on everything from military intervention to abortion to taxation to internationalism - are anything but clear. The jury is still way, way out on the dominant neoconservative American ideology of the day, whose rabid anti-tax, anti-state domestic policies would seem to be on a collision course with its overtly interventionist, strong-state foreign and anti-terror policies. And that is only the tip of an iceberg of confusion. As we globalize, nothing is clear, besides the fact that the competition for wealth, power and resources will only get more intense.

Which leads me to conclude that anyone who walks around laying blanket terms like "idiotarian" on anyone is as likely to be an idiot as they are to be right. Why would someone take such a chance?

Because it is fun and a rush to insult people. It makes the user feel

large and in charge. It's a boner word. Some may use it in good faith and with reasoned justification (as there are, in fact, idiots in the world), but as I surf the net and the "anti-idiotarian" screeds that abound, it seems that the majority use it as a schoolyard dismissal for those whose opinions differ from their own.

by a reader on Wed, 07/09/2003 - 19:33 | [reply](#)

Idiotarian = someone we disagree with?

In reply to a reader above:

If you scan our posts, you will find that we use the term idiotarian quite rarely and very carefully, and only when no other term will convey the meaning. Our usage simply does not bear the interpretation

but the bottom line of the definition is that idiotarians support what the anti-idiotarian considers wrong

that you place on it. For instance, [here](#) we explicitly deny that a certain category of people with whom we disagree are all idiotarians:

But in any case, it's not just idiotarians. Why is nearly everyone, even the US administration, strangely subdued about this?

And as you scan our home page, you will see that we level vehement criticism at all sorts of people and schools of thought, without, in the great majority of cases, calling them idiotarians. Nor do we believe that they are.

by [Editor](#) on Wed, 07/09/2003 - 22:15 | [reply](#)

SO

... acknowledging that your site's use of the term is more measured than that of many others, what IS an idiotarian?

by a reader on Thu, 07/10/2003 - 00:51 | [reply](#)

what does the world think an idiotarian is? read the entry.....

quoting from the original entry:

The fact is, there is a huge and influential segment of Western public opinion which systematically sides with evil without itself adopting the evildoers' objectives.

back to my words, if you make excuses for terrorists, but do not want good people (or anyone at all, normally) to die, that's a good example

-- Elliot Temple

see, that's what's so frustrating

It sounds like a definition ... it looks like a definition ... but let's analyze it. A "huge segment" of society that "systematically sides with evil" ? That's not a definition, it's an accusation. Does that include the person who fills their car with Saudi gas? The person who voted for Reagan & through him supported the Taliban? The person who marched in New York to oppose Bush's war on Iraq because it didn't target Al Qaeda? The person who marched to demand a UN imprimatur on the Iraqi war? The person who marched because they believe killing is wrong?

Give me an example of someone (or some movement) you believe "systematically sides with evil."

Because, you see, everyone in America can be accused of that crime, just by virtue of our dependence on gasoline alone. Then there's all manner of arguably evil regimes which we either support (e.g. the Saudis, the Chinese communists) or ignore (e.g. Burma). Is our Congress entirely composed of idiotarians? Is our president an idiotarian?

by a reader on Thu, 07/10/2003 - 17:50 | [reply](#)

I love the internet...

...because nowadays I am sure to find someone who has bothered to write what I would have written, thus saving me the time and energy. So, thanks for that.

"Personally, the word suggests to me a person who has reached the illogical fringe of his or her ideological passion, and remains unable to see it."

Yes, "ideologue" is the word.

I suppose to people convinced of their Critical Righteousness, differentiating between the blind ideologue and the seeing bad guy is useful if one's project is to "Set to Right" someone who is wrong - and one wants to decide whether to use persuasion versus a shotgun...though Kolya's continuum theory is a little worrisome...especially if a shotgun-leaning crowd takes him a little too seriously...since, well, shoot them all, and be efficient, no?

The sad thing about this group of people is that they have, to my mind, always shared that "elementary school" tendency to name-call and form in-groups. Which is really too bad, because it means that they consistently lose the posters they need to challenge their theories so as to improve them; instead, they opt for in-group jokes and pseudo-criticism.

Thanks, again. A delightful read, your posts...

Siding with evil?

Someone wrote:

'everyone in American can be accused of that crime [siding with evil], just by virtue of our dependence on gasoline alone.'

How so?

by [Alan Forrester](#) on Sat, 11/20/2004 - 02:33 | [reply](#)

I'm not capable of complex thought, but...

I don't think it is a difficult as some are making this out to be: an idiotarian is, by definition, someone who, when given the definition, still does not understand what an idiotarian is.

In other words, if you "get it" you use the word sparingly to illuminate a specific lapse in internal-external consistency. If you don't "get it" you try to make the term apply to every possible situation, thereby rendering it senseless.

A simple picture:

A man named Henry purchases an apple from an apple cart. The apple vendor is a rabid anti-abortionist who uses his apple funds to target doctors.

Henry is not an idiotarian.

A known criminal has access to legally-obtained funds. A woman named Sue swallows her disdain for the criminal and her unsubstantiated fears that there is a hidden evil in the collaboration, and works with the criminal to fund a relief effort for poor children. The poor children benefit, but later the criminal robs an orphanage.

Sue is not an idiotarian.

One night a man named Herbert hears screams coming from his neighbor's house. The next morning, Herbert discovers the bodies of his neighbors stacked like firewood on their front lawn, and the killer sitting in their kitchen, enjoying a breakfast of ham and eggs. Herbert invites the murderer back to his house for a sympathetic conversation about his motives and a light lunch, in the hopes that he won't be targeted next.

Herbert is an idiotarian.

by A passerby on Fri, 02/25/2005 - 23:16 | [reply](#)

Fighting the Minions of W.A.C.K.I.E.

What is an IDIOT? What is IDIOCY? How can one tell? Who is

fighting the war against them?

Good questions!

I'm glad I asked! :-)

Merriam-Websters has 2 answers:

IDIOT: A foolish or stupid person.

IDIOCY: Something notably stupid or foolish.

On IDIOTARIAN, IDIOTARIANS, and IDIOTARIANISM the compilers, and guardians of our beautiful and expanding language are sadly silent.

The snobbish nitpickers! Who appointed them to decide what constitutes a legitimate word in the English language?

Who in the hell do they think they are?

The freakin' French, for cryin' out loud??

My God! The Inhumanity!

I too have seen my share of idiots, and idiocy, and have written about it on MY Blog Sneakeasy's Joint over the past few years.

I, The Mad Macedonian, secure in my Branch MacejugoserbulgariGreekadonian Compound, on occasion expose the minions of the **World Allied Conspiratorial Kongress of Idiotarians Everywhere (better known as W.A.C.K.I.E.)**.

by **Kiril Kundurazieff** on Sun, 05/08/2005 - 08:09 | [reply](#)

I've been reading this over,

I've been reading this over, having very recently been intrigued in this group from reading the excellent Taking Children Seriously site.

First of all, I'd like to state that I fall into the category of "Moral relativist but not idiotarian" mentioned previously. To me, moral relativism is not a denial of morality- far from it. It is the belief that it is impossible for humans to know true morality, or even if it exists, so they create their relative morality. Since one creates one's own, there is no excuse for hypocrisy or moral cowardice.

Second, instead of "Idiotarian," how about just simply "Amoralists?"

by a reader on Sat, 06/18/2005 - 11:05 | [reply](#)

'can't know truth with certai

'can't know truth with certainty' is fallibility, not relativism

relativism denies there is a truth, and therefore that there is better or worse, more or less true. thus a relativist must insist there is no

such thing as progress, and discussion never gets anywhere (where

would it go?).

-- Elliot Temple

<http://www.curi.us/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Tue, 07/05/2005 - 22:41 | [reply](#)

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