



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on October 12, 2012

## Socially Slow Laughin' Joe

One of the most important qualities in a leader — in fact, in anyone who must manage, and negotiate with, people — is having a feel for man's nature. This brings us to what has not yet been explored about Joe Biden's bizarre behavior at last night's vice-presidential debate: what it tells us about his grasp of reality.

For the record, it's clear to me that Biden's overtly obnoxious, condescending manner was the result of an act. But the vice president is a phony from way back. In 1988, it was [discovered](#) that he plagiarized a speech by British Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock and, even more incredibly, appropriated elements of Kinnock's life story to weave his own false life narrative. This forced Biden to quit the '88 presidential race, yet people today consider him qualified to be a heartbeat from the presidency.

If time heals all leftists' scandals, however, it doesn't heal all their character defects. As recently as 2007, Biden was falsely claiming that his wife and daughter were killed by a drunk driver in 1972. Now, they were killed in an auto accident, a tragedy any which way you slice it. And a surviving loved one has every moral right to talk about how such an event affected him — assuming he is sincere. But is this a logical assumption in Biden's case, when he clearly embellished his tragedy for campaign-trail consumption? It's reminiscent of Al Gore's story about how his sister's 1984 lung-cancer death inspired him to become an ardent foe of big tobacco, when in reality he was [trumpeting his tobacco exploits](#) while running for the presidency four years later.

But while Joe Biden is a phony, he's the bush-league variety. A skilled phony has a feel for human nature, for what will appear authentic and what won't. What did we see, however, in the October 11 debate? It's not just that Biden was putting on an act (although this applies even if you credit him with genuine obnoxiousness); it's that he clearly was oblivious to how other homo sapiens would react to the act. His phoniness was *Third Rock from the Sun* caliber: like an alien snake-oil salesman trying to imitate human behavior. "Okay, I'll smile wide like a Cheshire Cat, laugh, cackle, shake my head, and roll my eyes while my opponent is talking, and everyone will get the message that his arguments are not to be taken seriously. With phoniness, as with most other things, understatement works best.

This pathological inability to read others is common to leftists, however. For instance, in the mid-nineties, Democrats said that if the Republicans prevailed in the budget battle, the elderly would have to eat dog food if they wanted to be able to afford medicine. Rush Limbaugh then spoofed this in a GOPAC speech, evoking laughs with a [joke](#) about how he bought his mother a new can opener "so that she can get the dog food easier when she has to eat it." Well, liberal Congresswoman Patsy Schroeder





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took his comment literally and appeared on the House floor the next day to complain, emotionally and incredulously, that “[t]his is what it’s come to! ...Rush Limbaugh actually said he’s going to buy his mother a can opener so she can have dog food. Wow!” Then there were the feminists who approached me after one of their conventions because of comments I made during it. They asked me if I would give them my address so they could send me some literature, and I jokingly responded, “Sure, as long as you’re not going to send a hit squad to my house.” Stone-faced and with eyes projecting arrows, they took this seriously and said, “We don’t do that sort of thing.” It was a bizarre reaction, especially since my quip was rendered with an obviously comedic, light-hearted tone.

Getting back to Biden, phoniness is bad whether engaged in skillfully or not. It also reflects a lack of wisdom, a symptom of which is always a compromised ability to understand man’s nature (it’s just a matter of degree). But the larger point here is that, again, even if you believe Biden was sincerely obnoxious — just as Schroeder and the aforementioned feminists were sincerely humor-compromised — do we want someone so oblivious to how he’s coming off, and how others would react to a given behavior, a heartbeat from the presidency? If Biden didn’t know that obnoxiousness was obnoxiousness and how it would play in Peoria, will he be able to project the right image to Muslim jihadists, the Chinese, and Russians and read their intentions? And, in light of this, is it any wonder that his bird-of-a-feather boss projected weakness by bowing to potentates and pathologically apologizing for America?

And what of domestic matters? Many wonder how leftists can propose policies that obviously create an unfriendly business environment — diminishing profits through high taxation and over-regulation — when Human Nature 101 informs that if we reduce the incentive to create wealth, we’ll have less wealth. But there’s no mystery. You’re dealing with people who never passed Human Nature 101.

It doesn’t really matter whether you think Joe Biden and his fellow travelers have good intentions. They’re dangerous for a different reason. They spend years rationalizing — this is when you lie to yourself, when you bend reality for yourself — which is necessary if you’re to believe in leftist ideas, which have no basis in reality. But when you continuously bend it for yourself, year after year, there’s a consequence: You fall out of touch with reality. Some people call this being crazy.

One may dispute this, but it’s hard to dispute the obviously poor grasp of human nature Joe Biden exhibited during the debate. The question, to be answered in less than a month, is can the electorate grasp human nature well enough to read Biden and Barack?



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