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The death of politics

by [James Bowman](#)

There's something rather touching about the public service announcement I often hear on the radio for a multiple sclerosis charity that invites us to imagine "a world without MS." The progress of science and medicine has, after all, given us a world pretty nearly free from smallpox and polio. Where there are reasonable public health facilities—not, alas, in Zimbabwe at the moment—the world is also without cholera and typhus. Sooner or later, we look forward to the "cure for cancer" and all other diseases. Some starry-eyed futurologists even dare to imagine the eventual death of death.

Yet one of the drawbacks of this kind of easy faith in progress—a young workmate of mine used to dismiss the risk of cancer from his incessant smoking on the grounds that, by the time he got it, they were bound to have discovered a cure—is that i ...

James Bowman is the author of *Honor: A History* (Encounter Books) and *Media Madness: The Corruption of Our Political Culture*, also published by Encounter (2008) .

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