

Liberty

March 1994

Vol. 7, No. 3

\$4.00

The
Great Bimbo
Eruption
of '93

What a Friend We Have in Chaos

by J. Orlin Grabbe and Pierre Lemieux

Surviving the Next Financial Crisis

by Victor Niederhoffer

Little Cover-Up on the Prairie

by R.W. Bradford

Manufacturing Child Abuse

by David Ramsay Steele

Secession as a First Amendment Right

by Robert Nelson

Also: *Stephen Cox* on an aborted papacy, *John Hospers* on the Great American Gulag, *Richard Kostelanetz* on wars that never end, *Jesse Walker* on Beavis, Butt-head, and Barney . . . and other articles, reviews, and humor.

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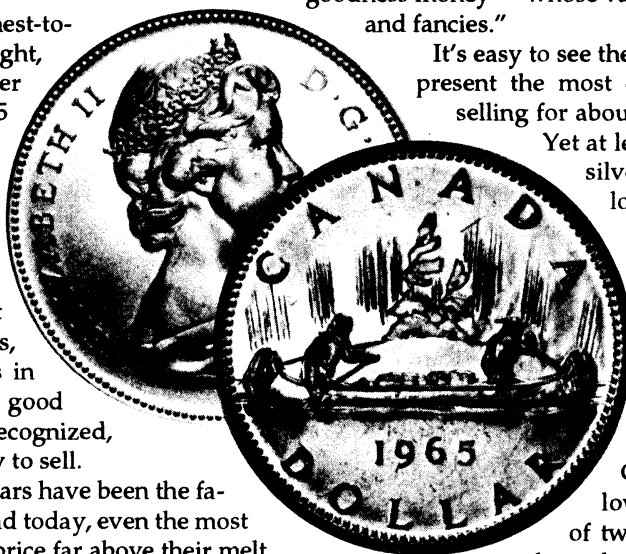
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Canada Silver Dollar	1966	10,786,596	\$ 3.75

Prices are for the commonest date of each series, in bulk lots of 1,000 coins.

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Letters

Is a Welfare State Stable?

I have a great deal of sympathy for the view expressed by Todd Seavey ("The Inevitability of the Welfare State," January 1994). Indeed, some 30 years ago, I published a similar article under the title "Is a Free Society Stable?" (*New Individualist Review*, Summer 1962).

However, he and I have one counterexample to explain. How is it that the United States was able to keep from moving toward a welfare state for over 150 years, from 1776 to 1933? During the whole of that period, with the exception of major wars, government spending at the federal, state, and local levels never exceeded more than about 10–12% of the national income and showed no significant long-term tendency to grow.

Seavey's argument inevitably reminds one of Alexis de Tocqueville's concern about the fear — not to say prediction — of "democratic despotism" which would end up with each nation as "no more than a flock of timid and hard-working animals with the government as its shepherd." The quotation is of course from *Democracy in America*, of which the final edition to appear during Tocqueville's lifetime was published in 1850. His prediction was not fulfilled for the next 75 years, and the welfare state that has since emerged bears little resemblance to the democratic despotism that he described.

Finally, another early writer on the subject who deserves mention is A.V. Dicey, the English constitutional lawyer. In his *Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England during the Nineteenth Century* (second edition, 1914), he clearly foresaw the expansion of the welfare state that did occur in Britain, and in a footnote he offered only one bit of hope: "If the progress of socialistic legislation be arrested, the check will be due, not so much to the influence of any

thinker as to some patent fact which shall command public attention; such, for instance, as that increase in the weight of taxation which is apparently the usual, if not the invariable, concomitant of a socialist policy" — a far more prescient and hopeful prediction than Tocqueville's.

I do not believe the welfare state is inevitable. Sweden may well be offering an example of what happens when the irresistible force of higher taxes meets the immovable object of a bureaucratic government.

Milton Friedman
Stanford, Calif.

Dispatch from the Amish Wars

I am every bit as pleased as my good friend Todd Seavey that he and I have not gunned each other down in a Pennsylvania killing field. I think, though, that he misunderstands both the values that have helped us avoid the Amish Wars and my argument about those values.

Liberalism was not born out of ethical skepticism, nor out of an Enlightenment moral code which held that the good life was one of rational, critical, autonomous thought. It was born out of religious wars, like the ones Todd fears. Deeply religious men believed that civil peace would be impossible as long as any of them tried to use the state either to enhance their own sect or to put down those of others.

Todd correctly asserts that I would support thinking about morality "in a two-tiered way. On the lower level, there are the competing sects, each with its own vision of the good life, and on the upper tier is the overarching structure of individual rights that allows all these groups to get along without attacking each other." His fear is that "the top tier seems to be increasingly losing out to the bottom tier in our society, and perhaps that is inevitable when people think of themselves as belonging to a sect first and to the general universe of moral agents second," or more generally if we give in to "the postmodernist practice of assuming each sect and community has its own 'legitimate' code."

Where Todd sees political principles giving way to private conceptions of the good, I see an absence of accepted, adequate political principles. People aren't abandoning the upper tier of morality. They don't *have one* — or, if they do, it's based on faulty principles. Will it be easy

to reintroduce and strengthen liberal political principles? No, but it's a far sight more possible than Todd's proposed project of converting everyone to an Enlightenment moral code.

Todd suggests that, in the absence of a cultural consensus friendly to liberal ideas, the welfare state can arise even if no one wants it — a sort of spontaneous disorder. Thus, even if we reach our goals through political means, the results will be unstable and prone to fall back into what we have now. But is it conceptually impossible to have a mutually agreed-upon truce, an economic equivalent of religious toleration? You needn't convince everyone to give up their religions, or to make religion an unimportant part of their lives, or to convert to Randianism. Just convince everyone that if anyone violates the terms of the truce, civil war will break out again. The public-choice dilemma — concentrated benefits, dispersed costs — can be mitigated if the amount of subsidy one group can get would be more than outweighed by the amount they'd have to pay in taxes if the entire welfare state reappeared.

This would require a more appropriate institutional environment. This is not the time or place to propose a constitution, but I might point out that the redistributive war is lessened in parliamentary systems in which a citizen votes for a party with a coherent set of broad policies. It is worsened in the American system, with its emphasis on electing those who will represent local interests. Most parliamentary systems have larger welfare states and higher taxes than the United States, but that's typically due to larger voter desire.

This is not to suggest that parliamentary systems are without problems, only that public-choice paradoxes are often correctable problems of institutional design.

Finally: I think it is worth noting the apparent circumstances of the Amish Wars. Todd once dreamt of "liberating" the Amish youth from their backward, superstitious, anti-technological way of life, preferably at gunpoint because this seemed the appropriate conclusion of his rationalist, atheist, modern theory of morality. Since Todd nowhere suggests that the Amish became violent aggressors in his nightmarish future, we can only assume that the war began with his rationalist tribe attacking "my" Amish one and seeking to liberate its children or destroy its "backward" way of life. A code of

Letters Policy

We invite readers to comment on articles that have appeared in *Liberty*. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. All letters are assumed to be intended for publication unless otherwise stated. Succinct, typewritten letters are preferred. Please include your phone number so that we can verify your identity.

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Reflections

The wages of marriage — The “marriage penalty” is back. Under Clinton’s tax increase, it is once again in the financial interest of myriads of working couples to eschew legal marriage, that is, to “live in sin.” Is anyone really surprised that this momentous turning back of the clock occurred in the first year of the First Philanderer’s administration? —TWV

Beltway mafia — The number-one topic of concern in the District of Columbia — the term we use to distinguish the place where we actually live from “Washington,” the imperial capital — is crime. Inside every day’s paper is a small article about the previous evening’s killings. The city has lost 200,000 residents over the past 20 years or so, and the rising murder rate is leading more and more people to discuss leaving the city.

The crime in the streets, of course, pales before the organized crime in Washington, the crime that involves sending young people off to die in Somalia and Macedonia, denying terminally ill patients access to painkilling drugs, arresting adults for engaging in consensual sex, forbidding unemployed people from working for a mutually acceptable wage, forcing banks to lend money to non-creditworthy borrowers, and confiscating \$1.5 trillion a year from productive citizens. Somehow, these crimes never generate the official outrage that random violence does. —DB

Patriot games — Right before the holiday season, the Beltway class discovered a new explain-all for the current “epidemic” of violence: the proliferation of “violent video games,” which were apparently “desensitizing” America’s youth to pain. Bans and regulations were proposed, even though the only people demonstrably unable to distinguish video violence from the real thing were the anti-game crusaders.

As for me, ever since Bush’s Middle Eastern Nintendo War, I’ve been less worried about kids mistaking video games for violence, and more worried about media stars mistaking real violence for a video game. Time after time, we were shown bombs and missiles homing in on their targets, while newsmen explained that another Iraqi germ-warfare installation (or some other equally odious enemy military target) was destroyed. Only later, during Congressional testimony (shown only on yawn C-SPAN) did the military brass confess that most of the missiles missed their targets, and some accidentally hit hospitals, schools, etc.

Now that’s desensitizing people to violence. And not a single Beltway voice is raised in protest. —RWB

Culinary note — David Brock’s pantsing of Bill Clinton in *The American Spectator* contained one whopper of a

revelation. According to Arkansas State Trooper Roger Perry, Clinton told him that Gennifer Flowers “could suck a tennis ball through a garden hose.” You may recall that in 1992, Gennifer confided to *Penthouse* that Swain Billy “was a champ at eating pussy.” This mind-blowing mutuality — and not any silly demonstration at Oxford — is the true Spirit of ’69. —BK

Party on — A controversial BBC documentary reveals, among other juicy tidbits, that the late Mao Zedong had an insatiable desire for young women — and that, in the process of satisfying these lusts, he spread around a great deal of VD. These revelations have not damaged the old butcher’s reputation; indeed, the centenary of his birth has prompted a grass-roots Mao cult among the rural Chinese masses — setting up small shrines, using Mao pins to ward off bad luck, etc. The Chairman has yet to be spotted shopping in Shanghai or Kalamazoo, but that will no doubt come in time. Meanwhile, in the cities, disco is all the rage; *The MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour*, in a recent burst of rare (and probably unintentional) humor, aired footage of young Chinese macho men dancin’ the night away to “YMCA.”

All this represents the darker side of China’s opening to the West: along with democratic rebelliousness and an entrepreneurial spirit, China has been infected with the dread Seventies Revival. Goofy Mao cults, the Village People — it’s like reliving a nightmare.

I think I’ll avoid things Chinese for a while. Let me know when they get to New Wave. —JW

Einstein at the trough — There are moments in life so astonishing in their horror that one knows they will scar one’s memory forever.

Such a moment came for some people with the news of President Kennedy’s assassination. For others, it came with Pearl Harbor, the election of Bill Clinton, or the sudden discovery that the real estate market does not always go up.

For me, it came on a warm, bright day last autumn. I was making an aimless but innocent tour of the cable channels, when horror erupted from the all-news station. The shock burned every feature of my environment deep into my quivering brain cells. The hands of the clock stopped. My neighbor’s palm tree ceased to sway. Every speck of dust on my window pane suddenly became visible. When time began to move again, I realized that a satisfied voice from my television had announced that the Senate of the United States had voted to continue funding for the Superconducting Supercollider, then under construction in Waxahachie, Texas.

This country has had it, I thought; I always knew that science would finish us off.

At that moment, the world’s largest concrete doughnut was growing beneath the sun-baked plains of Texas. There,

atomic particles would be hurled through fifty miles of giant tunnels, for the purpose of discovering what happens when atomic particles are hurled through fifty miles of giant tunnels. Depending on the results of this new form of rapid transit for God's little messengers, scientists might or might not be able to find out something interesting about the structure of matter. No practical applications were foreseen.

At first, the cost of the Superconducting Supercollider was estimated at something around five billion dollars. "Final" estimates hovered around eleven billion. But the Superconducting Supercollider was a small project, practically microscopic by normal American standards. What was remarkable was the grim odds against which the dauntless doughnut struggled.

Few people in America care anything at all about atomic particles. Maybe they should, but they don't. The Space Station, the Martian exploration madness, the endless busywork of the Space Shuttle, all have some appeal to voters, at least to those of the Star Trek faction. Atomic particles have no appeal. They are, at best, an annoyance.

The AIDS lobby, the breast-cancer lobby, the school-lunches lobby, every other lobby, knows that sending atomic particles for a ride may possibly mean less mileage for something else. Even among research scientists, the particles' natural constituency, the Superconducting Supercollider has been highly unpopular; most of them fear that eleven billion dollars for Waxahachie will be eleven billion dollars that won't be available for a hundred thousand other research projects. Then there's that ridiculous name. Waxahachie.

At no time in recent history have the prospects for continued funding of so large, yet so peripheral, a project seemed less likely than they did in 1993. The country found itself, at long last, in a tizzy about deficits. Congress and the administration poked through the budget, hunting for fatty substances that might be offered as sacrifices to the spirit of the age. In mid-year, the House of Representatives voted to kill Waxahachie. And yet — Waxahachie survived. The Senate would not let it die. And if the Senate would not let Waxahachie die, it would not let anything die. In that case, the republic's fiscal doom was sealed.

At some point, at some late hour in a civilization's orgy of self-destruction, a mysterious writing appears on the wall. In the book of Daniel, the words were "*Mene, mene, tekem, upharsin*" ("Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. . . .") The mysterious writing on America's wall looked a lot like "Waxahachie."

Almost, but not quite. In early winter, the Senate went back on its moronic word. Genuflecting, with a grimace, to outraged public opinion, it accepted a conference report that eliminated funding for Waxahachie. The cable news station now broadcast the reassuring squawks of "betrayed" construction workers, "demoralized" scientists, and "impartial" commentators. America was saved; the exterminating angel had passed her by.

But permanent salvation is by no means assured. There is still talk of "mothballing" Waxahachie until the return of a more favora-

ble political climate. Apparently we have been weighed in the balances, and found . . . waiting. —SC

New boondoggles for old — For 40 years the taxpayers coughed up billions of dollars for weapons systems that couldn't meet their required performance specifications, took far longer than promised to deliver, and cost much more than initially expected. We grew jaded. Everybody knew that when the Pentagon and its contractors plunged into a new project, their glowing description was nowhere near the truth.

Thank God the Cold War's over. Now the public's money can be diverted into worthwhile channels, like cleaning up the pollution generated by the military-industrial complex during the Cold War.

But wait. According to former EPA chief William Reilly, the biggest cleanup job of all, at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington state, is just an enormous waste of the billions of dollars being spent on it. "We can improve the environment," says Reilly, "but not at this time at Hanford."

Why is that? In brief, the cleanup people just don't know how to deal with the really nasty nuclear wastes at Hanford. So far, in four years of the project, *no* significant cleanup has been accomplished.

Still, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary says the cleanup at Hanford will remain a priority for her department. Her political instincts are sound. People don't really care whether there's a cleanup or not — the place sits in the middle of a desert. Just calling the project a cleanup gives environmentally sensitive people the warm feeling that their government is doing the right thing. —RH

Breaking away — Last year, Staten Islanders voted in overwhelming numbers (65%) to secede from New York City and set up shop as an independent metropolis. The matter now goes to the state legislature, where the Republican Party shall thwart the public will in the best tradition of Abe Lincoln. After all, Staten Island is a valuable dumping ground for the debts and bums and junkies and degenerate millionaires who populate New York and make New Jersey seem like the Elysian Fields.

Up north in Canada, the role of opposition now belongs to two of the most wonderful parties in Christendom, the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party. These are the kind of organizations that young Bill Clinton never would

have joined: they're too *dangerous*, and some of the faithful are (eeck!) *irresponsible*. Whatever their differences, both parties emerge from the same wellspring: regional pride. The culturally minded separatists of the Bloc want an independent Quebec (Staten Islanders understand), while Reform, nursing the historic and justified grudges of Western Canada, speaks, literally, for the provincials. If either party succeeds in its aims, Canadians can expect an invasion by Mr Boutros-Ghali and his gang of polyglot thugs.

Other than the feisty Alaskan Independence faction, we Americans have no expli-

Liberty's Editors Reflect

DB	David Boaz
RWB	R.W. Bradford
SC	Stephen Cox
BD	Brian Doherty
RH	Robert Higgs
BK	Bill Kauffman
LEL	Loren E. Lomasky
WPM	William P. Moulton
JSS	Jane S. Shaw
TWV	Timothy Virkkala
JW	Jesse Walker

citly regionalist parties — at least, none that I know of. Lively secessionist movements exist in several states (California, Kansas, New York, Oregon) and in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston, but the Deciders have decreed that the fifty-first star in Old Glory will represent not West New York or North California but Puerto Rico. Presidents Ford, Reagan, and Bush have endorsed statehood for the island colony — who said Republicans aren't multiculturalists? Of course, any Puerto Rican worth a damn supports independence for his homeland; the fact that so few do suggests the debilitating effect of colonialism on subject people.

Fifty is a nice round number, so why don't we just do this: in one fell swoop free Puerto Rico, free Hawaii, free Alaska, and restore the contiguous United States. Then let the secessionists in the real 48 American states fight it out for the honor of claiming the two available stars. Or have we fallen so far and so fast that we are incapable of producing a Bloc Québécois, let alone a Confederacy, of our own? —BK

The sins of righteousness — During a coffee break at an academic conference, someone started talking about Cardinal Bernardin, the Roman Catholic official who has been accused of sexually molesting a 34-year-old "unemployed mental health counselor" and AIDS victim named Steven Cook, when Mr Cook was between 16 and 18 years of age. That's as close as Mr Cook can come to an accurate dating, because he's just barely been able, with the assistance of psychotherapy, to "recover" his memory of the traumatic event.

On the strength of his strangely tardy memory, Mr Cook is suing Cardinal Bernardin for \$10,000,000 — while asserting with enormous self-satisfaction that he prays for the Cardinal "every night" and knows that eventually he will be able to forgive him, when Mr Cook has completed his own therapeutic "process" of grief, anger, and so on.

Cardinal Bernardin once had a better chance than any other American to become pope, and now, of course, he has none. He'll be lucky if he can keep his red hat affixed to his head. Personally, I don't care whether he becomes pope or converts to Seventh Day Adventism. But the molestation scandal seems like a hell of a thing to happen to someone — a tragedy without a fatal flaw. It's as if Macbeth had come to grief because one of the witches happened to remember that, 15 years before, she had seen someone killing the King, and that the someone looked a lot like Macbeth.

Now, when the matter of Mr Cook and Cardinal Bernardin came up in conversation at the conference I mentioned, there was a good deal of discussion from the ACLU-liberal members of the group

about the evils of the Roman Catholic Church, a "sexually repressive cult" that was finally getting what was coming to it. There was much clucking of the teeth and rolling of the eyes, and many allusions to the bad things that "we've always known" about the Catholic clergy. At last one brave soul pointed out to the thoughtful academics that everyone in the country, most assuredly including them, could be accused by anyone whatever of precisely the same crimes, and with precisely the same evidence. A long silence ensued. Everyone in the group was presumably thinking about that mysterious stranger who, 15 or 20 or 30 years from now, will "remember" those heinous acts that each person was supposedly perpetrating at that very moment.

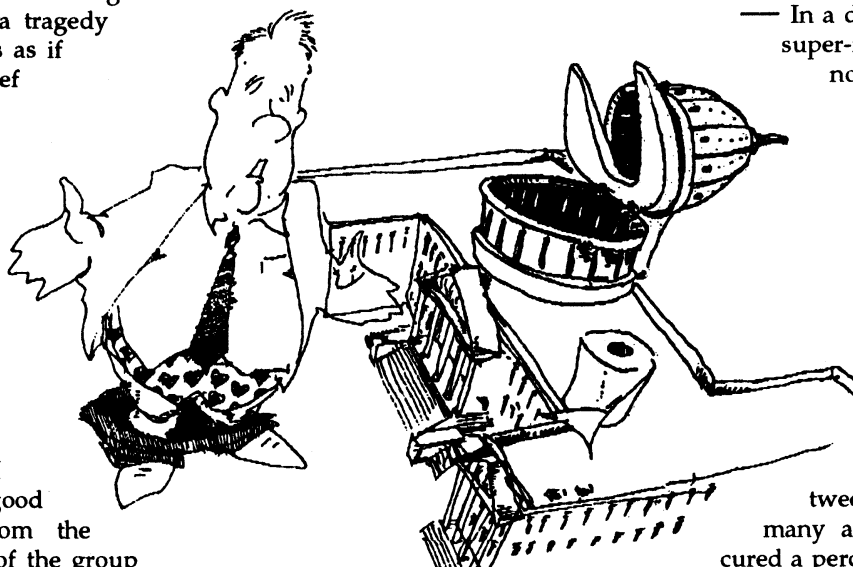
And, in truth, we have reached the point where everyone is in danger of ruin from the new cult of victimization, a cult fostered and encouraged by modern left-liberal self-righteousness. The liberal media respectfully publicized the ludicrous allegations of Tawana Brawley and the gargantuan self-pity of Anita Hill, who claimed that she was permanently traumatized when her boss, years before, had asked her who had put a pubic hair in his Coke. The liberal media respectfully publicized the wild accusations of AIDS activists that the Reagan administration intended to exterminate the homosexual population by "refusing to acknowledge the epidemic." The same media turned a blind eye to the reign of moral terror unleashed on campuses and businesses throughout the country by unsubstantiated allegations of "racism" and "sexism," allegations that went far toward removing all meaning from those terms of moral discourse. In short, the media showed themselves to be as ethically incompetent as those leaders of the American Right who once delighted in "exposing" homosexuals, leftist ribbon clerks, and village atheists as dangers to the moral fabric of Everytown, U.S.A.

Now that the current witch-hunt has broadened, as witch-hunts always do, to the point at which it threatens everyone, we will see if self-righteousness will yield to some small degree of self-knowledge and respect for fairness among leaders of opinion. —SC

Billionaire boys clubbed

— In a disastrous month for the super-rich, two of our most noteworthy billionaires were shot down. Mr Pablo Escobar was felled last November by a barrage of hot lead from Colombia's finest. Less sanguinary but almost as definitive was the puncturing of Ross "Sucking Sound" Perot during the Great NAFTA Debate.

The parallels between Escobar and Perot are many and revealing. Each secured a perch among the super-rich



by taking shrewd advantage of economic niches created by governmental intervention. Escobar's billions were earned by cartelization of the cocaine industry, a dominant market position that could not have been achieved but for the illegalization of that commodity. The vast bulk of Perot's fortune was made by supplying data processing services to Medicare and Medicaid, markets created by governmental edict.

Both men were charming when they wished to be, but when crossed each would bite with the conviction of a piranha. Escobar made no secret of his capacity for vindictive fury; it was a prime business asset. Potential competitors were afforded reason to worry about losing not just market share but

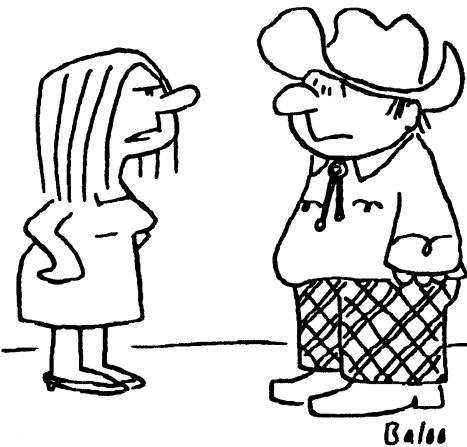
Perot was curt, cross, and just plain rude. Medical possibility aside, he seemed to be someone in the throes of acute PMS.

their *cajones*. To Larry King and the CNN audience Perot was, prior to his recent fall from grace, avuncular ol' Ross who, with homespun charm, would spin from his seat on the crackerbarrel a medley of quips, folksy tales, and sage advice. Those who had worked for him or crossed him, though, supplied different characterizations. Their Perot was recognizably the same person as the man who on the eve of the election told bizarre tales of a plot by fiendish Republicans to forge pornographic pictures of his daughter, who lapped up conspiracy theories like Dr Pepper, who saw enemies lurking behind every bush (and every Clinton?). Less deadly than Escobar, but not very nice.

Interestingly, although both Escobar and Perot fattened themselves mightily on the state, each forged a reputation as its sworn foe. Colombia (and, indirectly, the United States) conferred fame and riches on Escobar, but it resisted his will to complete power. So sniping between state functionaries and Escobar escalated until last month's shoot-out wrote a dramatic coda to his career. Perot's dissatisfactions with official Washington are longstanding, but they markedly intensified during his on-again, off-again pursuit of the presidency. His strategy was to paint himself as a disaffected outsider in order

to secure from the electorate anointment as its number-one insider. When that failed to propel him to the top in 1992 he flipped the pages of his calendar four years ahead and intensified the demagoguery of his rhetoric of opposition.

For both men the end came suddenly, dramatically, unexpectedly.



"I wish your mamas wouldn't let you cowboys grow up to be babies!"

No one believed the Colombian constabulary capable of catching a stray dog. Perhaps that is why Escobar let down his guard. An incautious phone call to his family, a few extra minutes in a safe house no longer safe, and — poof! — South America's boldest entrepreneur had become mostly bullet holes. Perot's fall was even more unlikely. He was on his home turf, guest for the umpteenth time of the sycophantic Larry King. And his jousting opponent was Al Gore, the man who had managed to come off second best in a debate with Dan Quayle. With respect to wit, warmth, and expressiveness Gore is comparable to one of the faces of Mt. Rushmore. Perhaps that is why Perot let down his guard. The debate revealed his preparatory study to have been lackadaisical, and time after time Gore surprised him, wrong-footed him, left him gaping and grumpy. Perot had read too many clippings describing him as a lovable curmudgeon; this evening he was curt, cross, and just plain rude. Medical possibility aside, he seemed to be someone in the throes of acute PMS. Even his loyal troops from the heartland must have found the performance off-putting. When the evening came to an end, Perot, like Escobar, had been consigned to the status of mostly hot, vacant air interspersed with stringy bits of desiccated flesh.

Escobar is not coming back. And, barring a resurrection of near-Biblical (or Nixonian) proportions, neither is Perot. Because Escobar was such a dominant player in the cocaine business, it may be several weeks before that market regains its erstwhile equilibrium. But because creative chemistry on the far side of the law continues to create opportunities for riches beyond dreams of avarice, it's certain that many others will carry on the work so notably, if not nobly, begun by Escobar. And because politics offers ample rewards to those who know how to make the rubes salivate and cry for more, we can be equally sure that Perot's peccadillos too will outlive their author.

—LEL

Vex populi — The mavens of Global Democracy are showing their true colors. Crazy adventurer Vladimir Zhirinovsky surprised them with a strong showing in the recent Russian elections, and they are not cheering. Not even the most idolatrous of our National Endowment for Democracy crowd dare declare Zhirinovsky's vote-total a declaration of the holy popular will, or cheer it simply because it is an expression of democracy in action. Maybe, now, they'll start to admit that popular vote isn't a political panacea. Maybe they'll realize that political and economic liberty depends on a government's powers and policies, not on whether the people running it receive popular votes. Or maybe they'll just maintain their hypocrisy, praising democracy only when its results mirror their own policy goals.

—BD

An argument for gun control? — Recently in Seattle, a 16-year-old lad chanced upon his three-year old sister as she was being mauled by a dog. The boy went into his house, got a gun, and shot the dog. His sister, who would have been a goner, survived.

The press and politicians, usually quick to make object lessons out of every such violent event — advocating laws against "dangerous dogs" such as pitbulls, or the regulation of weapons — were oddly silent. No one, it seemed, dared draw the obvious conclusion: that having a deadly weapon in

the home, and children who can use it, can be a blessing, a very great blessing.

Of course, the reason for their silence is obvious. Both media people and political people thrive on a helpless populace, a populace afraid of every momentary "crisis"; this, as H.L. Mencken explained, is their particular form of charlatanism. They publicize a hazard, then provide the "solution," in their op-ed pages, magazine sections, and television "specials." I suppose it is inevitable for newspeople to express opinions on the stories they report. But we should hold them to higher standards than they themselves promote. If they report on a tragic instance of an accidental shooting by children "playing" with their parents' gun, the moral should be: parents, train your children in gun safety.

The dominant ethic in many of today's gun-owning households appears to be just the opposite: keep the weapons out of reach of the children, don't let the children touch the guns; *guns are for adults*. But this sort of prudery is merely the "liberal" version of an older belief about sex: deny the existence of a fact of life when you can, demand abstinence when you can't, and whatever you do, *keep discussion to a minimum*. Guns, apparently, are an awful lot like sex: something dirty and regrettable that only adults can be allowed to have. This is irresponsible.

Parents: if you can't talk to your kids about sex, you have a problem — and your children may wind up "in a family way" long before their time. And if you can't talk to your kids about guns, you have a problem — your kids may wind up orphans.

What is needed, of course, is a culture of responsibility, where knowledge, wisdom, and skill are expected and demanded. "Gun safety classes" are not something that just prospective hunters should take. And gun cleaning should become a family event — like saying grace — in every home that harbors a gun. Though parents should still regulate their offspring's gun use (of course of course of course), the guns should not be something foreign and mysterious to the children of the household.

And, of course, families aren't the only beneficiaries of privately owned handguns. In early September, in Federal Way, Washington, a retired schoolteacher and her housemates were threatened by their knife-wielding handyman — a homeless man whom they had helped find both work and

shelter — in the early hours of the morning. But one of them got a gun. He attacked her and the gun fell to the floor, where it was picked up by another of the intended victims, who shot the felon in the head. He died. Altogether a happy ending, though I can imagine a better one: the moment the assailant moved toward the first woman who held the gun, *this* woman fired. Perhaps if she had not been brainwashed by a "liberal" culture that instructs victims to be too solicitous of its aggressors, or a sexually segregated culture that regularly leaves the boys to clean the guns (once a year) while the girls "do the dishes" (every night), she might have had the wherewithal to avoid the danger of a loaded gun flying, uncontrolled, through the air.

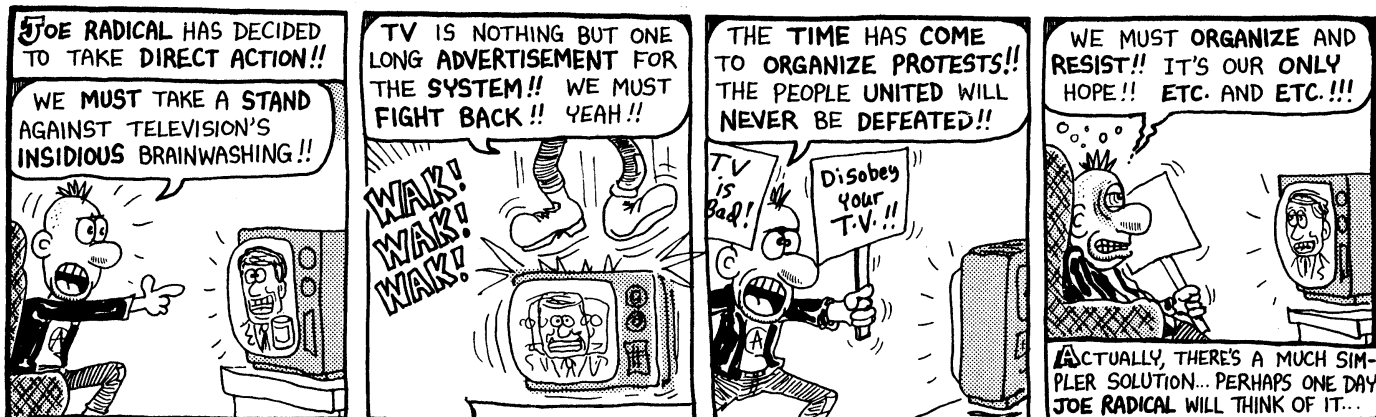
Sure, I'm an advocate of gun control. Gun owners: control your guns!
—TWV

P.C. reservations — The University of Minnesota has announced that its athletic teams will no longer compete against non-conference teams whose names use politically incorrect references to ethnic groups. But what about un-P.C. names *within* the Big Ten? For the sake of athletic harmony, I suggest that the Indiana Hoosiers change their school's name to Nativamericana University.
—RWB

The North shall rise again — Nearly 20 years ago, browsing in the Chicago Public Library, I came across *The Rise of the Western World* by Douglass C. North and Robert Paul Thomas. The title attracted me, because I like history, particularly early European history. But most history books disappoint me; they strike me as themeless puddings. I usually get bogged down in the facts and lose the point, if there is a point.

This book was different. It was compelling. Yes, it was rich with information of the sort you would find in other books (Fernand Braudel's, for example) — information about medieval population trends, the woolcloth trade, agricultural prices, feudal law, the Hanseatic League, and technological innovations from three-field cropping to windmills. But in this book, in its authors' words, "the bits and pieces of historical evidence . . . can, with the aid of economic theory, be made to reveal a theoretically consistent picture." In other words, it had a *theme* — one that would be carried much further by North in the years to follow.

TWISTED IMAGE by Ace Backwords



The theme was the identification of sources of economic growth, especially rules and institutions. Economic progress in thirteenth-century Europe, to give one of Thomas and North's examples, started with the growth of population. Although this population growth led to diminishing returns in agriculture, it expanded opportunities for trade. This trade stimulated specialization and the division of labor and new institutions such as trade fairs, insurance, and deposit banking.

What Europe lacked for many years, however, was widespread, secure property rights. Land could not be freely bought and sold, for example, to get it into the hands of those who would use it more productively. Nor were there patents to protect innovations. Innovations could be freely copied, and this "served to discourage the investment of resources in any research or development beyond that naturally attributable to specialization." Thus innovations diffused slowly, often retarded by secrecy, until secure property rights were established.

Such insights were just the beginning. Using economic theory, North and Thomas audaciously addressed growth in Europe as a whole, from the tenth century to the eighteenth. They cheerfully conceded that "few professional scholars have ever attempted a systemically cosmic enough look at so large a topic as Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."

In sum, this 1973 book, which is only 171 pages long, packed in more meaningful history than any I had ever read before. It pointed to a way of thinking about history that I had never known before; indeed, as the importance of property rights was a completely new idea for me, it was more than this Wellesley graduate could absorb. Sadly, the book remained an isolated curiosity for me for nearly a decade.

Perhaps because an economic book that tightly wrapped facts in theory but remained accessible to the lay reader was so unusual, I didn't pursue the subject further. So I did not learn that *The Rise of the Western World* was the first fruit of a "property rights school" of economics at the University of Washington, which had its roots in the neoclassical economics associated with the University of Chicago. Or that it was the beginning of a broader school of institutional economics, whose theories were still under development. Or that the

work would culminate in a Nobel Prize for Douglass North, as it did in 1993. But I feel good that, in a way, I was present at the beginning.

—JSS

River Phoenix, 1970–1993 — Drug warriors like to maintain that those who say the government should end criminal penalties against people who sell or use officially disapproved psychoactive substances, must also accept — and, it is often implied, be responsible for — the social and personal effects of those drugs.

Film actor River Phoenix was a friend of mine. He died from ingesting too much heroin and cocaine. The fact that they were illegal didn't stop him from making this fatal error. Maybe the lack of an established, legal market in which dosages could be standardized and regularized was the root of his mistake, but I'm not going to blame drug warriors for his death. From what I understand, Phoenix took those drugs of his own will, and his own will was important to him. One of the last conversations I had with River concerned an essay I had written about the government's obsession with enforcing its notions of safety on all of our heads, at any expense to our liberties. He was more excited about this theme than any of my other political enthusiasms, except possibly cutting taxes.

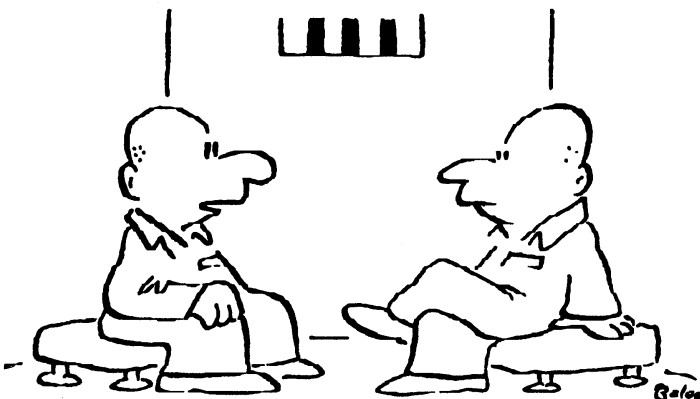
"Drug-related deaths" happen all the time and tend to give emotional and rhetorical support to those who wish to keep drugs illegal. The logic behind this seems to be that any tragedy involving a substance is *prima facie* evidence that that substance's circulation should be forcibly discouraged. Apply the same thinking to automobiles, and the problems with the argument become apparent. Drug warriors may find it difficult to believe, but people take drugs for reasons that aren't always pathological. Drugs can enhance experience; they can provide delight; they can be fun.

Philip K. Dick wrote the funniest, most accurate, and yet most tragic novel about drug overuse and obsession I know of, *A Scanner Darkly*. I recommend it to anyone interested in understanding the lure and potential tragedy of drug use and "drug culture."

In the novel's afterward, Dick dedicated the book to a list of friends and loved ones, including himself, who had died or been damaged by their drug use. "Drug misuse is not a disease, it is a decision," he wrote. "If there was any 'sin,' it was that these people wanted to keep on having a good time forever, and they were punished for that, but . . . I feel that, if so, the punishment was far too great, and I prefer to think of it only in a Greek or morally neutral way, as mere science, a deterministic impartial cause-and-effect. . . . The 'enemy' was their mistake in playing."

Like automobiles, drugs can provide a service or experience that one desires. Like automobiles, they can be used safely, most of the time. Every once in a while, whether through a foolish decision or your own negligence or just accident, they can kill you. This is true of both drugs and cars. It doesn't cause us to hate or to outlaw cars.

I hate the decision River made. Ingesting huge quantities of heroin and cocaine in combination just isn't prudent, much like driving 85 mph at night with the headlights off isn't prudent. But I can't deny the allure of the imprudent at times, and some of my most cherished memories — those moments I wouldn't trade for anything on Earth or under Heaven —



"Oh, there's a long Latin name for it, but basically I just swiped a bunch of stuff."

“Voilà logic!”

—P. J. O' ROURKE

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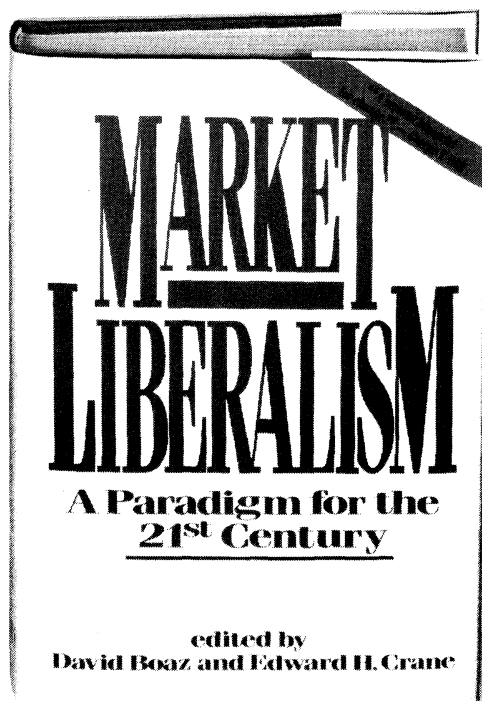
—MILTON FRIEDMAN

**“Bristles
with
uncomfortable
ideas.”**

—PETE DU PONT

**“Facts,
reason,
clear-eyed
and
disinterested
analysis ...
voilà logic!”**

—P. J. O'ROURKE



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have involved foolish, potentially dangerous behavior.

I have often scoffed at complaints of the supposed deadening effects of the mass media, but after weeks of news reports speculating as to what could have caused this brilliant young actor with a PR rep as a clean-living vegan to collapse and die outside a Sunset Strip nightclub, I think I understand. Reading about something too much can create an emotionless mediation of dreams and memories that can make you forget your own real life and experiences. After a few days, I had a hard time remembering what River looked like the last time I saw him, two months earlier; all I could see in my mind were Hollywood publicity head shots.

My disgust with this process is hypocritical, though no less real for it. I subscribe to *Entertainment Weekly* myself. Had this been the death of someone else, I would have read the reports uncritically, perhaps even with gallows humor. As it was, I could remember the man they were writing about, and with the sympathy borne of memory imagine the pain and discomfort the constant harping on his death and its ignominious manner was causing his family and his closest friends. That, I suppose, is life and death in the public eye.

But why I miss him has nothing to do with his public career, one some pundits tried to compare to James Dean's. That seems like a shuck to me. Except for River's soulful representation of eerie, floating disconnectedness in *My Own Private Idaho*, which except for his performance was a jumbled failure, none of his roles had the mythic generational heft that earned Dean his fame. What I'll remember about the "James Dean of my generation" were the little kindnesses that seem almost foolish in retrospect; how funny, sweet, and yet entertainingly and sardonically argumentative he could be, especially when it came to music or politics; how, despite his hectic professional life, he always called when he said he'd call and showed up when he said he'd show up; listening to him play his guitar and sing with his band; the dozens of treasured evenings of my life which were made more delightful by his presence, his music, his humor, his kindness, and his thoughts.

His death, brought on by his own grievous fault, has nothing to tell us about the political wisdom of drug legalization. His error was great, but I think his punishment excessive — his punishment, and all of ours. His absence from the world is a loss that those who only watched his movies will never understand.

—BD

Anthony Burgess, 1917–1993 — Screenwriter, composer, moralist, playwright, traveler, teacher, essayist, poet, literary and social critic, translator, soldier, musician, colonial bureaucrat, novelist — Anthony Burgess was a man of a thousand tasks. After his first symphony was "mercifully destroyed by the Luftwaffe," Burgess turned to teaching literature in Britain's declining Asian empire. His first novels evince what would be a lifelong dual concern: a passionate critical drive and a desire to please the reader/viewer/listener. His ideal reader was, as he described him, rather familiar: "a lapsed Catholic and failed musician, short-sighted, color-blind, auditorily biased, who has read the books I have read. He should also be about my age."

Burgess published works on writers (Lawrence, Shakespeare, above all Joyce), language, politics, religion, poetry, and film. But his novels elevate their author far above

his customary (and intermittent) humility: tales of dystopia, Russians, conscience, artists, spies, cannibalism, sex, gender, the end of the world. . . . His work was marked by an uncanny ear for speech, precision of word choice, audacious comedy, serrated cynicism, and a despairing love for the creatures he found to be essentially the same wherever he travelled — an array of skills worked into an unmatched and versatile style.

No author (except Blake) is flawless: Burgess is often cited for sexism, snobbery, and overdone flippancy, and I find his Catholicism tendentious and self-indulgent. But he is redeemed by his politics: visions of interventionist and catastrophic regimes in *The Wanting Seed*, the assertion of individual conscience against authority in *A Clockwork Orange*, and — "Governments are what I try to ignore. All governments are evil. . . . I suppose my conservatism, since the ideal of a Catholic Jacobite imperial monarch isn't practicable, is really a kind of anarchism." —Bryan A. Case

Frank Zappa, 1940–1993 — "Politically, I consider myself to be a (don't laugh) Practical Conservative. I want a smaller, less intrusive government, and lower taxes. What? You too?" Thus begins Chapter 17 of *The Real Frank Zappa Book*, the 1989 autobiography of the late rock star, social critic, classical composer, sometimes political activist, guitar virtuoso, entrepreneur, and all-around Renaissance iconoclast.

Zappa came to fame as the genius behind the Mothers of Invention, a '60s rock group that satirized suburban squares and urban hippies alike with songs like "Plastic People," "Rhymin' Man" (a.k.a. Jesse Jackson), "Who Needs the Peace Corps," and "We're Only in It for the Money." Of course, Zappa tweaked many conservative pretensions as well, on record and off. He especially earned their ire during his 1986 congressional testimony against a proposed ratings system for records with "pornographic" lyrics, as advocated by Tipper Gore's Parents' Music Resource Center. Zappa argued that a ratings system was a violation of his constitutional rights, and that its focus on rock music was a protectionist strategy on behalf of the country music made in Mr Tipper Gore's home state of Tennessee. The man understood economic and civil liberties.

Indeed, Zappa was outspoken on many political issues. He was both an advocate of drug legalization and a staunch



"How come you never talk about what's *right* with Egypt?"

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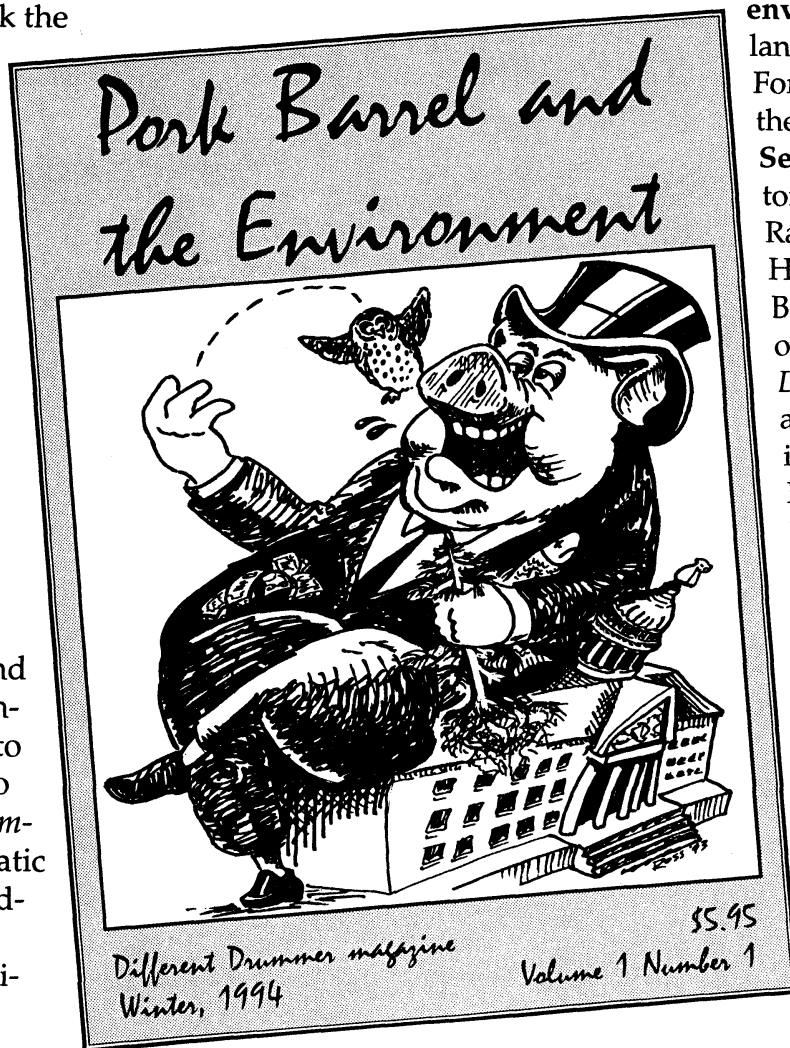
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opponent of drug use. "All I require, if somebody is on my payroll, is that they don't use drugs and don't have any drugs in their possession at the time they are performing a service for me."

Zappa saw no conflict between music as art and music as a capitalist act. "I provide money for people to run their lives because they play notes that I write. It's a very simple relationship. My boss is the audience. They rely on me to hire the best musicians that I can find and to train them as well as I can in order to bring that music to an audience in the best condition possible for the money that they pay for the ticket."

In 1987, Zappa's organic libertarianism led to a brief brush

with Libertarian Party politics. Robert Murphy, an LP activist, met with Zappa to propose that Zappa seek the Libertarian Party's presidential nomination. Zappa was interested, saying that if he did run, he would forsake the standard practice of campaign tours, relying instead on television. Alas, in the end he chose music videos over political ones.

Zappa died of cancer the same weekend the Clinton administration launched a new offensive against song lyrics — this time, against violent "gangsta rap." Therefore, a fitting epitaph might be one of his many quips from his debates with Tipper Gore: "If lyrics make people do things, how come we don't love each other?"

—Tom Isenberg

Medianotes

Paint it purple — Cox News Service reports that the Rev. Joseph Chambers of Charlotte, North Carolina has denounced Barney the Dinosaur as a "New Age demon," a sign that the republic "is under seige from the powers of darkness." He outlines this in a booklet, *Barney the Purple Messiah*, a lengthy denunciation of this publicly-funded interloper from "the world of demons and devils." I've never been a religious man, but I have to admit: the Reverend has a point. I plan to send him a donation shortly.

Beth Ryan, a spokeswoman for Barney's corporate masters, says she hopes Chambers won't use these charges in a political campaign, since "Barney doesn't believe in politics." That's a commendable sentiment, especially for a dinosaur, but I'm afraid it's too little and too late. Barney might not believe in politics, but he's on the public payroll — and actions speak louder than words. Come the revolution, we shall march him to the guillotine. *Sic semper tyrannosaurus!* —JW

Rush fools in where angels fear to tread

— Political correctness in its modern form has been a besetting sin of the Left, but, disturbingly, some conservatives have been adopting its tactics for their own purposes. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders' suggestion that the federal government at least *study* the possibility of some sort of drug legalization or decriminalization was met with a barrage of criticisms from right-wingers — right-wingers who said not simply that Elders was *wrong*, but that she should be *silenced*; that talk of decriminalization is simply evil, and ought not be tolerated.

Two of the greatest offenders have been Peter Collier, co-editor of *Heterodoxy*, and radio/TV star Rush Limbaugh. The former said flat out that the idea of drug legalization should be moved "out of the realm of legitimate discourse"; in another context, he commented that "the do-your-own-thing and get-government-off-our-backs stuff sounds good, but it isn't always." Meanwhile, Limbaugh proclaimed that Elders' views deserve "about 30 seconds" of consideration, after

which they should be permanently excised from the marketplace of ideas.

There is no difference between these attitudes and that of those left-liberals who refuse to debate affirmative action, radical feminism, or gender-norming on the grounds that that would only "give legitimacy" to "racists" or "sexists" or "fascists" (i.e., their opponents). And Collier and Limbaugh say they're against P.C.? Conservative, heal thyself. —WPM

Cartoons that kill? — Dateline: Moraine, Ohio.

Five-year-old Austin Mestner starts a blaze that consumes his two-year-old sister. His mother blames cartoon characters Beavis and Butt-head, who had recently been spotted playing with fire. Reports pour in from around the country, blaming the imaginary pair for further arson, for acts of vandalism, for cruelty to animals, and for fostering stupidity and nihilism among the young.

Rumor now has it the dastardly duo has been poisoning wells and munching on Christian babies. Or was that someone else?

Meet Beavis and Butt-head, simulated scapegoats. Once upon a time, social problems were blamed on living, breathing human beings — Jews, heretics, witches, lepers. This offends modern, P.C. sensitivities, so today's scapegoats tend to be inanimate (guns, drugs), incorporeal (rap lyrics, rock music), or wholly imaginary (Murphy Brown, Beavis and Butt-head). But the Inquisition is still on, and it still has its victims. Janet Reno, fresh from the Waco pogrom, arrives now in Hollywood to draw a line in the sand. If television producers do not "voluntarily" put an end to violent programming, says Reno, the federal government will have to do it for them. Throngs of talking heads cheer.

And don't bring up that damnable first amendment! These are *television producers* we're talking about. They're sodomites, all of them; they spit on the cross; they worship a severed head they call "Nielsen." *They have no rights.*

They certainly have no right to present us with a show like

Beavis and Butt-head. Jon Katz put it best in *Rolling Stone*: "To understand just how bold *Beavis and Butt-head* is, imagine the *Washington Post* satirizing its audience, a pair of middle-aged bureaucrats in Chevy Chase, Md., or NBC lampooning a factory worker in Duluth, Minn., sprawled in front of the set zapping Brokaw for *Inside Edition* or *Hard Copy*. Or the *Times* spoofing Connecticut commuters in a swivet over the latest theater review or squabbling over the best wine for dinner." Making fun of their own audience, indeed. Employing irony. Harrumph. Damn anarchists.

I tell you, folk culture was cleaner in the old days. Instead of *Beavis and Butt-head*, youngsters had wholesome role-models like Punch and Judy. There weren't any gangsta rappers like Ice Cube or Snoop Doggy Dog — just elevating ditties like "The Ballad of Staggerlee." And instead of playing violent video games, kids went out into the fresh air and hit each other.

The streets aren't safe, millions are jobless, and a five-year-old boy just torched his two-year-old sister. He watches *Beavis and Butt-head*? Well, *no wonder*.
—JW

The motorcade sped on —

John F. Kennedy was assassinated by a young American who had converted to Marxism in his high school years; who had later defected to the Soviet Union, lived and worked there, and married a Soviet citizen; who had, upon returning to this country, formed a chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee; who had spent his time passing out pro-Castro literature and engaging in radio debates with anti-Castro Cubans; and who had attempted to assassinate a right-wing American general.

Considering all this, wouldn't you expect that people interested in "uncovering the truth" about Kennedy's assassination would blanket the country with literature about Communist conspiracies, the Castro Plot, the Kremlin Connection, and the Last Dialectic in Dallas?

If you did, you would be wrong. In the 30 years that have passed since the Kennedy assassination, innumerable attempts have been made to depict Lee Harvey Oswald as a figure in, or a "patsy" for, a conspiracy of one type or another. Best-selling books and much-touted films continue to assert that Kennedy was killed because he had somehow gotten on the wrong side of the "big oil companies," the FBI, the CIA, warmongering generals, anti-Castro mafiosi, or some combination of the above. Popular explanations vary,

but their common denominator is the attempt to blame some force perceived to be on the ideological Right. Virtually any culprit will do, so long as it's not the obvious one, Communism.

No, I don't want to see any more allegations of conspiracies, even conspiracies on the Left. Perhaps something interesting may be learned when independent investigators eventually get their hands on Castro's files, but if evidence of a conspiracy were available in the here and now, I think we'd know about it. What I want is something simpler. I want you to write in to *Liberty* and tell me if you ever hear any television or radio announcer refer matter-of-factly to "President Kennedy, who was assassinated in Dallas in 1963 by a Communist gunman." Then I'll know that American

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Communism is no longer in protective verbal custody. Oh, yes, you might also write in and tell me when the media stop referring to Russian Communists as "right-wingers." —SC

Kennedy, what is the frequency? — When it comes to JFK assassination theories, I am a committed agnostic, but one moment of CBS's half-hearted examination of the conspiracy evidence demands comment. After going over some of the reasons mobsters might have killed the president, Dan Rather dismissed the entire notion of a mafia conspiracy by citing one "expert's" opinion that, had Lee Harvey Oswald been working for organized crime, "he wouldn't have lived to be arrested."

Now recall what happened a day after Oswald was arrested: he was gunned down by a man with obvious mob ties. Dan Rather must believe that mafia families are the most efficient organizations in the country, more efficient than the cops who arrested Oswald, or the networks, like CBS, who reported his alleged guilt.

Where do they find these experts? —JW

Positively fourth estate — I noted recently ("The Ungreening of the Media," August 1993) that the press is beginning to be more skeptical about the doomsday myths and scare stories created and sustained by "environmental advocates." I'm happy to report that the skepticism is continuing. Stephen Budiansky wrote a stunning story, "The Doomsday Myths," in the December 13 *U.S. News & World Report*. There, Budiansky made the daring statement that "some environmental researchers now concede that at least part of the blame" for the "backlash" must lie "with themselves: Environmentalists' penchant for doomsaying is coming back to haunt them."

He goes on to undermine four myths: the myth of the extinction of 50,000 species per year, the myth of the destruction of 40 million acres of rainforest per year, the myth that the ozone hole is spreading, and the myth that global warming is certain. Budiansky still considers all these issues worth worrying about, but his commentary brings them down to size.

Unfortunately, the journalist most responsible for this re-examination, Keith Schneider of *The New York Times*, has suffered opprobrium from his colleagues. A lengthy article in

the June 1993 *American Journalism Review* took Schneider to task for coming to the wrong conclusions about dioxin. (Last spring he reported that dioxin appears to be far less dangerous than anyone thought.) And the Fall 1993 issue of *The Amicus Journal*, published by the Natural Resources Defense Council, called Schneider "the most egregious offender" in a parade of proponents of "anti-environmentalist propaganda" that also included Rush Limbaugh, Boyce Rensberger of *The Washington Post*, and Holman Jenkins, Jr of *The Wall Street Journal*.

But don't expect Schneider to back down. He responded to the AJR article by pointing out that environmental reporters "are responsible for independently weighing conflicting scientific and technical data," and that's what he did with the dioxin issue. *The Times* has allowed Schneider to move to a small town in Michigan and serve as a roving environmental reporter. His recent stories have been eclectic but they retain a streak of political incorrectness. In a recent report on environmental racism, he quoted libertarian Kent Jeffreys of the Competitive Enterprise Institute before quoting a spokesman for the "environmental justice movement" — something that would have been unheard-of in the journalistic era just past. —JSS

What kind of man reads Liberty? — In its 1993 year-end issue, *The Economist* had a feature on the world's leading gurus, ranging (in alphabetical order) from Noam Chomsky to Edward Teller; the piece rated each for originality, intellectual coherence, influence, and devotion of followers.

Included in the catalog were two leading libertarians, Milton Friedman and Ayn Rand. Each was unique among the gurus catalogued: Friedman was the only one who scored a perfect 5 in every measure of guruhood, while Rand was the only one who is dead.

Even more curiously, I noticed that two of the gurus read this magazine. My curiosity piqued, I checked our subscriber base and found the name of another. I don't know what to make of this. Apparently, 20% of the world's leading gurus read *Liberty*, and at least one in every 3,500 *Liberty* readers is a leading guru.

You figure.

—RWB

Letters, continued from page 4

morality that looks universal is no guarantee for freedom, and a system of ethics based on autonomy can lead to the conclusion that we should go "liberate" those leading non-autonomous ways of life. Discouraging local, particular attachments and encouraging universal, abstract thinking can lead to Rousseau or Marx, Robespierre or Lenin, as easily as it can to Jefferson or Rand. Indeed, discouraging the importance of thick, particular conceptions of the good (such as religions) can make it easier for a Robespierre to try to redesign all of human society in accordance with an ab-

stract, universalist philosophy. On the other hand, reducing universalist thinking to the tier of political morality, and simultaneously emphasizing the importance to human flourishing of thick, particular conceptions of the good on the lower tier, seems to allow little room for Jacobinism. Some people might adopt Enlightenment or Randian morality at their lower tier, but that needn't be the case in order for liberal society to emerge. The minimal state need not convert the Amish in order to survive.

Jacob T. Levy
Canberra, Australia

Twelve Steps to Freedom

Clark Stooksbury's well-written and informative review ("My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys," January 1994) seems to me to deliver an erroneous impression in the end that all twelve-steppers are Wilbur Milquetoast liberals who look to government to solve all their problems. I can, by experience, tell him that this perception is as erroneous as the concept of a free lunch.

I must admit a great deal of libertarian criticism of these programs is earned, but I feel that most critiques

continued on page 69

Paean

In Praise of Chaos

by J. Orlin Grabbe

Don't be fooled by centuries of propaganda. Chaos means liberty, opportunity, and joy.

Chaos has a bad name in some parts. Some blame it for the Trojan War. Eris, goddess of chaos, upset at not being invited to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, showed up anyway and rolled a golden apple marked "kalliste" ("for the prettiest one") among the guests. Each of the goddesses Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite claimed the apple as her own. Zeus, no fool, appointed Paris, son of the king of Troy, to be judge of the beauty contest. Hermes brought the goddesses to the mountain Ida, where Paris first tried to divide the apple among the three, then made them swear they wouldn't hold the decision against him. Hermes asked Paris if he needed the goddesses to undress to make his judgment, and he replied, *Of course*. Athena insisted Aphrodite remove her magic girdle, the sexy underwear that made everyone fall in love with her, and Aphrodite retorted that Athena would have to remove her battle helmet, since she would look hideous without it.

As Paris examined the goddesses individually, Hera promised to make Paris the lord of Asia and the richest man alive, if she got the apple. Paris said he couldn't be bribed. Athena promised to make Paris victorious in all his battles, and the wisest man alive. Paris replied that there was peace in these parts. Aphrodite stood so close to Paris that he blushed, and not only urged him not to miss a detail of her lovely body, but said also that he was the handsomest man she had seen lately, and he deserved a woman as beautiful as she was. Had he heard about Helen, the wife of the king of

Sparta? The goddess promised Paris she would make Helen fall in love with him. Naturally, Paris gave the apple to Aphrodite, and Hera and Athena went off fuming to plot the destruction of Troy. That is, Aphrodite got the apple, and Paris got screwed.

While the Greeks had a specific goddess dedicated to chaos, earlier religions gave chaos an even more fundamental role. In the Babylonian New Year festival, Marduk separated Tiamat, the dragon of chaos, from the forces of law and order. This primal division is seen in all early religions. Yearly homage was paid to the threat of chaos's return. Traditional New Year festivals returned symbolically to primordial chaos through a deliberate disruption of civilized life. One shut down the temples, extinguished fires, had orgies, and otherwise broke social norms. The dead mingled with the living; afterward you purified yourself, reenacted the creation myth whereby the dragon of chaos was overthrown, and went back to normal. Everyone had fun, but afterward order was restored. The implication was, it was a good thing we had civilization, because otherwise people would always be putting out the fires and having orgies.

We can still see the age-old battle between order and chaos around us today. In the international sphere, the old order of Communism has collapsed. In its place is a chaotic matrix of competing, breakaway states, wanting not only political freedom and at least a semi-market economy, but also their own money supplies and nuclear weapons, and in some cases a society with a single race, religion, or culture. We also have proclamations of a New World Order on one hand, accompanied by the outbreak of sporadic wars and U.S. bombing raids in Africa, Europe, and Asia on the other. Is this alarming or reassuring?

In the domestic sphere we have grassroots political movements, such as the populist followers of H. Ross Perot, challenging the old order imposed by the single-party Democratic-Republican monolith. We have a president who is making a mockery out of the office, and a vice president who tells us we should not even listen to any dissenting opinions with respect to global warming. Is this reassuring or alarming?

In the corporate-statist world of Japan we are witnessing the demolition of the mythic pillars of Japanese society: the myth of high-growth, the

myth of endless trust between the U.S. and Japan, the myth of full employment, the myth that land and stock prices will always rise, the myth that the Liberal Democratic Party will always remain in power. Is this reassuring or alarming?

Even in the sphere of the human mind, central command may be losing control. Increasing attention is being paid to cases of multiple personality. The most recent theories see human identity and the human ego as a network of cooperative subsystems, rather than a single entity. (Examples of this viewpoint can be found in Robert Ornstein's *Multimind* and Michael Gazzanaga's *The Social Brain*.) If, as Carl Jung claimed, "our true religion is a monotheism of consciousness, a possession by it, coupled with a fanatical denial of the existence of fragmentary autonomous systems," then it can be said that psychological polytheism is on the rise. Or, as some would say, mental chaos. Is this reassuring or alarming?

The Myth of Causality Denies the Role of Eris

The average person, educated or not, is not comfortable with the Erisian realm. Faced with chaos, people begin talking about the fall of Rome, about the end of time. Faced with chaos, people begin to deny its existence; what appears as chaos, they say, is a hidden agenda of historical or prophetic forces that lie behind the apparent disorder. They begin talking about the "laws of History," or proclaiming that "God has a hidden plan." The creation, Genesis, was preceded by chaos (*tohu-va-bohu*), and the New World Order (the millennium), it is claimed, will be preceded by pre-ordained apocalyptic chaos. Chaos is just part of a master agenda.

Well, is there really a hidden plan, or does the goddess Eris have a non-hidden non-plan? Will there be a Thousand-Year Reign of the Messiah, or the Thousand-Year Reich of Adolf Hitler, or are these one and the same?

People are so uncomfortable with chaos, in fact, that Newtonian science as interpreted by Laplace and others saw the underlying reality of the world as deterministic. If you knew the initial condition, you could predict the future

far in advance. With a steady hand and the right cue tip, you could run the table in pool. Then came quantum mechanics, with uncertainty and indeterminism, which even Einstein refused to accept, saying "God doesn't play dice."

Philosophically, Einstein couldn't believe in a universe with a sense of whimsy. He was afraid of the threatened return of chaos, preferring to believe that for every effect there was a

Some religions allow you to wipe the slate clean in one fell swoop, say by baptism, or an act of contrition, which is sort of like declaring bankruptcy and getting relief from your creditors.

cause. A consequence of this was the notion that if you could control the cause, you could control the effect.

The modern proponents of law and order don't stop with the assertion that for every effect, there is a cause. They also assert they "know" the cause. We see this attitude reflected by social problem solvers, who proclaimed: *The cause of famine in Ethiopia is lack of food in Ethiopia*. So we had rock crusades to feed the starving Ethiopians and ignored the role of the Ethiopian government. Others asserted: *The cause of drug abuse is the presence of drugs*. So they enacted a war on certain drugs which drove up their price, drove up the profit margins available to those who dealt in prohibited drugs, and created a criminal subclass who benefited from the prohibition. Psychologists assert: *The reason this person is this way is because such-and-such happened in childhood, with parents, or siblings, or whatever*. So any evidence of abuse, trauma, or childhood molestation — which over time should assume a trivial role in one's life — are given infinite power by the financial needs of the psychotherapy business.

You may respond, "Well, but these were just misidentified causes; there really is a cause." Maybe so. Maybe

not. Whatever story you tell yourself, you can't escape the fact that to you personally, in Stephen Vizinsky's words, "the future is a blinding mirage." You can't see the future precisely because you don't really know what's causing it. The myth of causality denies the role of Eris. Science eventually had to acknowledge the demon of serendipity, but not everyone is happy with that fact. The political world is in the cause-and-effect marketing and sales profession, and has a vested interest in denying the demon's existence.

Philosophy and religion can be divided into three general schools of thought. The First School sees the universe as indifferent to humanity's joys or sufferings, and accepts chaos as a principle of restoring balance. The Second School sees humanity as burdened down with suffering, guilt, desire, and sin, and equates chaos with punishment or broken law. The Third School considers chaos an integral part of creativity, freedom, and growth.

First School Approach: Attempts to Impose Order Lead to Greater Disorder

Too much law and order brings its opposite. Attempts to create World Government will lead to total anarchy. Examples:

- David Koresh's principal problem, according to one FBI spokesman, was that he was "thumbing his nose at the law." So, to preserve order, the forces of law and order brought chaos and destruction, and destroyed everything and everyone. To prevent the misuse of firearms by cult members, firearms were marshalled to randomly kill them. To prevent alleged child abuse, the forces of law and order burned the children to death.
- Handing out free food in "refugee" camps in Somalia leads to greater number of starving refugees, because the existence of free food attracts a greater number of nomads to the camps, who then become dependent on free food, and starve when they are not fed.
- States in the U.S. favor equalizing wealth distribution. To finance

this agenda, more and more states have turned to the lottery, thereby giving away to a few vast sums of cash extracted from the many.

The precepts of the First School find expression in a number of Oriental philosophies. In the view of this school, what happens in the universe is a fact, and does not merit the labels of "good" or "bad," or human reactions of sympathy or hatred. Effort

Faced with chaos, people begin to deny its existence.

to control or alter the course of macro events (as opposed to events in one's personal life) is wasted. One should cultivate detachment and contemplation, and learn elasticity, learn to go with the universal flow of events. This flow tends toward a balance. This view finds expression in the *Tao Teh Ching*:

The more prohibitions you have,
the less virtuous people will be.
The more weapons you have,
the less secure people will be.
The more subsidies you have,
the less self-reliant people will be.

Therefore the Master says:

I let go of the law,
and people become honest.

I let go of economics,
and people become prosperous.

I let go of religion,
and people become serene.

I let go of all desire for the common
good,
and the good becomes common as
grass.*

You don't fight chaos any more than you fight evil. "Give evil nothing to oppose, and it will disappear by itself" (*Tao Teh Ching*, Chapter 60). Or as Jack Kerouac said in *Dr Sax*, "The universe disposes of its own evil." Again the reason is a principle of balance: You are controlled by what you love and what you hate. But hate is the stronger emotion. Those who fight evil necessarily take on the characteristics of the enemy and become evil them-

selves. Organized sin and organized sin-fighting are two sides of the same corporate coin.

Second School Approach: Chaos is the Result of Breaking Laws

In the broadest sense, this approach (a) asserts society is defective, and then (b) tells us the reason it's bad is because we've done wrong by our lawless actions. This is the view presented on the front page of any major newspaper. It's a fundamental belief of Western Civilization.

In early Judaism and fundamentalist Christianity, evil is everywhere and it must be resisted. There is no joy or pleasure without its hidden bad side. God is usually angry and has to be propitiated by sacrifice and blood. The days of Noah ended in a flood. Sodom and Gomorrah got atomized. Now, today, it's the End Times and the wickedness of the Earth will be smitten with the sword of Jesus or some other Messiah whose return is imminent.

In this context, chaos is punishment from heaven. Doing what appeals to you was not considered a good idea, because, as Jeremiah reminds us, "The heart [of man] is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9).

And in the New Testament, the rabbinical lawyer Paul says, "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20); and elsewhere it is written, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4). And, naturally, "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

New Age views of karma are similar. If you are bad, as somehow defined, you build up bad karma (New Age view), or else God later burns you with fire (fundamentalist Christian view). For good deeds, you get good karma or treasures in heaven. It's basically an accountant's view of the world. Someone's keeping a balance sheet of all your actions, and totting up debits or credits. Of course, some religions allow you to wipe the slate clean in one fell swoop, say by baptism, or an act of contrition, which is sort of like declaring bankruptcy and getting relief from all your creditors. But that's only allowed because there's been a

blood sacrifice in your place. Jesus or Mithra or one of the other saviors has already paid the price. Old Santa Claus is still up there somewhere checking who's naughty or nice.

What is fundamental about this approach is not the specific solution to sin, or approach to salvation, but the general pessimistic outlook on the ordinary flow of life. The first Noble Truth of Buddha was that "Life is Sorrow." In the view of Schopenhauer, Life is Evil, and he says, "Every great pain, whether physical or spiritual, declares what we deserve; for it could not come to us if we did not deserve it" (*The World as Will and Representation*). Freud can also be added to the Second School bin of philosophy, with his Death Wish and his image of the unconscious as a murky swamp of monsters. Psychiatry in some interpretations sees the fearful dragon of chaos, Tiamat, lurking down beneath the civilized veneer of the human cortex.

The modern liberal's preoccupation with social "problems" and the Club of Rome's obsession with entropy are essentially expressions of the Second School view. Change, the fundamental motion of the universe, is bad. If a business goes broke, it's never viewed

*"I was sent here for a reason
I have not yet been able to fathom.
I have no money, no resources,
no hopes. I am the
happiest man alive."*

as a source of creativity, freeing up resources and bringing about necessary changes. It's just more unemployment. The unemployment-inflation tradeoff as seen by '60s Keynesian macroeconomics is in the Second School spirit. These endemic evils must be propitiated by the watchful Priests of Fiscal Policy and the Federal Reserve, and you can only reduce one by increasing the other. This view refuses to acknowledge that one of the positive roles of the market is as a job destroyer as well as a job creator.

More generally, the Second School

* Chapter 57, Stephen Mitchell translation.

has generated whole industries of "problem solvers" — politicians, bureaucrats, demagogues, counselors, and charity workers who have found the way to power, fame, and wealth lies in championing causes and mucking about in other people's lives. Whatever their motivations, they operate as parasites and vampires who are healthy only when others are sick, whose well-being increases in direct

Science eventually had to acknowledge the demon of serendipity, but not everyone is happy. The political world has a vested interest in denying its existence.

proportion to other people's misery, and whose method of operation is to give the appearance of working on the problems of others. Of course, if the problems they champion were actually solved, they would be out of a job. Hence, they are really interested in the process of "solving" problems — not in actual solutions. They create chaos and destruction under the pretense of chaos control and elimination.

Third School Approach: Chaos is Necessary for Creativity, Freedom, and Growth

You find this view in a few of the ancient Greek writers, and more recently in Nietzsche, who said, "One must still have chaos in one to give birth to a dancing star."

The fundamental point of view here is: Existence is pure joy. If you don't see that, your perception is wrong. And we are not talking about Mary Baker Eddy Christian Science denial of the facts. In this approach you are supposed to learn to alchemically transmute sorrow into joy, chaos into art. You exult in the random give and take of the hard knocks of life. It's a daily feast. Every phenomenon is an Act of Love. Every experience, however serendipitous, is necessary, is a sacrament, is a means of growth.

Saying Yes to life even in its strang-

est and hardest problems, the will to life rejoicing over its own inexhaustibility even in the very sacrifice of its highest types — that is what I called Dionysian, that is what I guessed to be the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet. Not in order to be liberated from terror and pity, not in order to purge oneself of a dangerous affect by its vehement discharge — Aristotle understood it that way [as do the Freudians who think one deals with one's neuroses through one's art, a point of view which Nietzsche is here explicitly rejecting] — but in order to be oneself the eternal order of becoming, beyond all terror and pity — that joy which included even joy in destroying.*

It is an approach centered in the here and now. You cannot foresee the future, so you must look at the present. But, as Vizinczey tells us, because nothing is certain, nothing is impossible. You are free and nobody belongs to you. In the opening paragraphs of *Tropic of Cancer*, Henry Miller says, "It is now the fall of my second year in Paris. I was sent here for a reason I have not yet been able to fathom. I have no money, no resources, no hopes. I am the happiest man alive."

Your first responsibility is to take care of yourself, so you won't be a burden to other people. If you don't do at least that, how can you be so arrogant as to think you can help others? You make progress by adapting to your own nature. In Rabelais' *Gargantua*, the Abbey of Theleme has the motto *Fay ce que voudras*, or "Do as you will." The implication is: Don't go seeking after some ideal far removed from your own needs. Don't get involved in some crusade to save the human race because you falsely think that is the noble thing to do, when what you may really want to do, if you are honest with yourself, is to stay home, grow vegetables, and sell them in a roadside market. (Growing vegetables is, after all, real growth — more so than some New Age conceptions.) You have no obligation under the sun other than to discover your real needs, to fulfill them, and to rejoice in doing so.

In this approach you give other

people the right to make their own choices, but you also hold them responsible for the consequences. Most social "problems," after all, are a function of the choices people make, and are therefore unsolvable in principle, except by coercion. One is not under any obligation to make up for the effects of other people's decisions. If for example, people (poor or rich, educated or not) have children they can't care for or feed, one has no responsibility to make up for their negligence or to take on one's own shoulders responsibility for the consequent suffering. You can, if you wish — if you are looking to become a martyr, the world will gladly oblige, and then calmly carry on as before, the "problems" unaltered.

One may, of course, choose to help the rest of the world to the extent that one is able, assuming one knows how. But that is a choice, not an obligation. Modern political correctness and prostituted religion have tried to turn all of what used to be considered virtues into social obligations. Not that anyone is expected to really practice what they preach; rather it is intended they feel

"I am chaos. I am alive, and I tell you that you are free."

guilty for not doing so, and once the guilt trip is underway, their behavior can be manipulated for political purposes.

What would, after all, be left for social workers to do if all social problems were solved? One would still need challenges, so presumably people would devote themselves to creative and artistic tasks. One would still need chaos. One would still need Eris rolling golden apples.

In the revelation given to Greg Hill and Kerry Thornley, authors of *Principia Discordia*, or *How I Found Goddess and What I Did to Her When I Found Her*, the goddess Eris says, "I am chaos. I am the substance from which your artists and scientists build rhythms. I am the spirit with which your children and clowns laugh in happy anarchy. I am chaos. I am alive, and I tell you that you are free." □

* *Twilight of the Idols*, Walter Kaufman translation.

Exploration

Chaos, Complexity, and Anarchy

by Pierre Lemieux

Behold the implications of the new science: Artificial Life, Artificial Anarchy, and the end of the planner's dream.

Ours is the epoch of uncertainty. The first three decades of this century witnessed Einstein's theory of relativity, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, and Gödel's undecidability theorem. Logician Kurt Gödel proved that some arithmetic truths (truths about numbers) are forever unprovable and that, more generally, no formal system can be self-contained. Yet even this looks innocuous compared with the theorems developed by computer scientist Gregory Chaitin over the last three decades: almost all numbers are random in their decimal expansion but we cannot actually prove it for any single one of them (say, $\pi=3.14159...$ or $\sqrt{2}=1.414213...$). In fact, the very structure of arithmetic is random.¹

Random means unprovable, undecidable, uncomputable, and unpredictable. These scientific results mean that there are aspects of the world that we don't know about and can never know about. It is one of the greatest and most disquieting conquests of reason to have demonstrated that certain facts and truths — perhaps most facts and truths — are forever inaccessible to reason itself.

Starting at the turn of the century, if not before, the tide of uncertainty also washed the human sciences: psychoanalysis, anthropology, sociology, political science, economics. Two interpretations were possible. One is that there is no obvious, rational basis for coercive, centralized intervention in social processes. The other interpre-

tation is that, since knowledge and values are uncertain, conditioned, and arbitrary, state intervention is warranted to fix the proper norms. During the crucial years that go from the 1910s to the end of the '30s, the second interpretation completely won the day.

Chaos theory appeared 30 years ago as the latest wave of uncertainty. It is related to fluid turbulence, which already worried Werner Heisenberg. According to one (probably apocryphal) report, he declared on his deathbed that he would have two questions for God: *Why relativity?* and *Why turbulence?* "I really think," Heisenberg continued, "that He may have an answer to the first question." Chaos theory shows that even deterministic phenomena can be unpredictable. Yet it does not simply fuel uncertainty, for the other side of the chaos coin is that unprovable, undecidable, uncomputable, and unpredictable do not necessarily mean non-deterministic.

Chaos theory and its related fields rapidly gained academic prominence during the last decade as a new common paradigm to many disciplines —

mathematics, physics, computer science, ecology, biology, epidemiology, etc.² More recent attempts have been made to apply chaos theory to the social sciences (especially economics³), finance, and management theory.

Views differ as to the usefulness of chaos theory outside mathematics and the hard sciences. The main danger is scientism, i.e., the blind application of the tools of the hard sciences to the study of society, disregarding the distinctive characteristics of human action and the special brand of social complexity it generates.⁴ But this does not mean that the paradigm itself is of no use in the study of society.

Unpredictability

The main thrust of the chaos paradigm is that randomness in its traditional sense is not necessary for unpredictability. A completely deterministic, but dynamic and nonlinear, system can be as unpredictable as a random variable.

A system is said to be dynamic when its evolution is a function of its history — that is, when its behavior at time t depends on where it was at

step $t-1$ or farther in the past. A nonlinear system is characterized by complicated interactions that do not simply add up; mathematically, this means that some variables are squared (or raised to a superior power), that its equations cannot be represented by straight lines in the Euclidean plane.

Consider a simple population model where the rate of demographic growth is directly proportional to how far the population lies from the capacity of its environment to support it. If the population is very close to zero, it will increase at its maximum rate until it gets closer, or exceeds, its environmental limit. Negative growth will then bring the population back under the environmental limit, and the process repeats continuously. Question: If the initial population is 10% of the environmental limit and the growth rate of this ratio equals three times the environmental capacity still to be filled, what will be the population level in nine years? In 16 years?

As we say in French when a question does not seem to have a clear relation with the statement of a problem, "How old is the captain?" The questions above actually make sense, but finding a solution requires a mathematical formulation — hence the usefulness of mathematics.

The model is described by the following equation:

$$p_{t+1} = p_t + r p_t (1 - p_t)$$

where p_t is the ratio in year t of the actual population to the maximum population allowed by the environment; and r represents its ("natural") rate of growth when p_t is very small. Note that p_t is a proportion that goes from 0 to 1 as the actual population grows closer to its environmental limit, and exceeds 1 when the limit is overshoot.⁵

We are now in a position to explore the time path⁶ of the population/limit ratio. If, for instance, $r=1.9$, and we

start with a population at 10% of its environmental limit ($p_0=0.1$), we can see that the population will be at 27.1% of the environmental capacity the following year, i.e.,

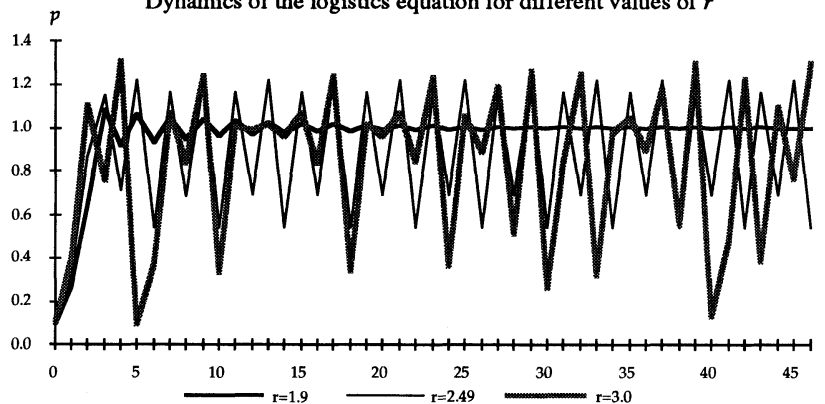
$$p_1 = 0.1 + (1.9 \times 0.1 \times 0.9) = 0.271$$

The process continues with p_2, p_3 , etc.

This seemingly innocuous equation (called the logistic model) will provide us with a striking demonstration of chaos. Note that we indeed have a dynamic, nonlinear system. Its nonlinearity appears in the fact that p_t is multiplied by itself in the second term

Figure 1

Dynamics of the logistics equation for different values of r



of the right-hand member.

The behavior of the system depends on the value of the parameter r ; i.e., the "natural" population growth rate. For $r < 2$, we observe dampened cycles that converge towards a fixed value of p , as shown on Figure 1 in the case of $r=1.9$. As values of r gradually increase over 2, regular, non-dampening, cycles appear: first, a cycle of period 2 (the same p appears every second time period), then of period 4 (illustrated on Figure 1, with $r=2.49$), then period 8, etc.

In fact, as r increases toward a value of approximately 2.6, the number of periods continuously doubles until it eventually reaches infinity. That is, as we see for the curve $r=3$ on Figure 1, the oscillations will never be repeated, the time path of the population will never go through a previous value. This is chaos.

And it is no accident. Mathematicians have proven that chaos is a frequent feature of nonlinear dynamic systems. Moreover, chaos normally

coexists with order and regular periodicity: changing one parameter⁷ of a simple dynamic model like the above produces both order and chaos. Actually, within the very region where chaos appears (approximately after $r > 2.6$), there are islands of order intermingled with ranges of chaos.

When you have a chaotic trajectory (like when $r=3$ on Figure 1), there is no way to predict what the future values of your variable will be. Although completely deterministic, the time path is just as unpredictable as if it were random.

Even if one has the equation of the system, it will be impossible to predict its future because of tiny measurement inaccuracies. Suppose you know that the logistic equation describes your model and that $r=3$. But because measurements are never perfectly precise, or perhaps just because of rounding procedures, you measure your starting population ratio at 0.106 in-

stead of 0.100 — an error of 0.006. Figure 2 shows that after only five periods, this tiny initial error has multiplied in such a way that the new computed time path bears no resemblance to the one you wanted to predict. This is indeed how meteorologist Edward Lorenz discovered chaos in the early '60s and concluded that long-term weather forecasting would always elude science.

This magnification of errors in the initial conditions is called the Butterfly Effect. The metaphor says that the flapping of a butterfly's wings in Brazil may cause a tornado in Florida.

This paradigm is relevant to society. Social phenomena are historical and hence dynamic. They are nonlinear because individual actions do not simply add up into social results. This explains why social and economic phenomena are inherently unpredictable, whether we talk of market prices, political regimes, or urban migrations.⁸ As for macroeconomic forecasters, we

all know how inefficient they are at predicting interest rates, housing starts, and recessions.

The chaos paradigm accounts for the possibility that singular events may influence not only an individual's life but also the course of social events. My life might have been entirely different had I not randomly met this woman. Sometimes, such individual events translate into social results. Although historicist approaches (e.g., Marxism) and institutional analyses (e.g., Public Choice) typically negate the significance of individual action, the world would probably be different if Marx had not been Marx or James Buchanan had not lived. Man's free will certainly brings additional indeterminacy. In other words, social/historical development is sensitive to initial conditions.

Order in Chaos

Chaotic phenomena are not completely disorderly. There is a hidden, self-organizing order in chaos. This order is represented by "strange attractors."

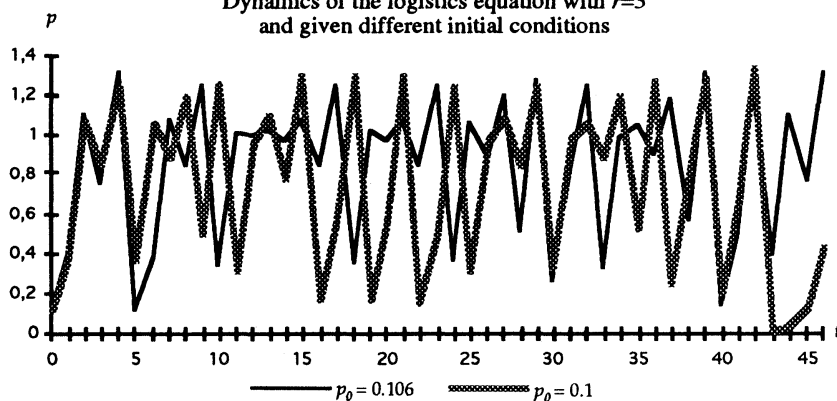
Generally, attractors are equilibrium trajectories toward which time paths starting at different points converge. Consider for instance the curve corresponding to $r=1.9$ on Figure 1. The time path of p_t converges with dampening oscillations towards the value 1, and once it gets there, it will stay at this equilibrium forever. This is true whatever the system's starting point p_0 : it will always be attracted to, and eventually settle on, the equilibrium path $p=1$. This equilibrium trajectory is thus called an attractor — a stable attractor in this case. At certain critical values of parameter r (called "bifurcation points"), new equilibrium trajectories will be defined for the whole system. As we can visualize on Figure 1, with $r=2.49$, the system has passed the bifurcation point from where every time path is now attracted to a four-period equilibrium trajectory: from $t=42$ on, p_t will oscillate forever as 0.54, 1.16, 0.69,

1.22, and over the same cycle again. This is a periodic attractor. And again, wherever the system starts from, it will be attracted onto it.

A strange attractor is simply an attractor that is chaotic instead of stable or regular-periodic. The existence of strange attractors reflects the fact that a chaotic time path, although unpredictable, is not random, for it follows a deterministic trajectory.

Figure 2 depicts two strange attractors (one identical to curve $r=3$ on Figure 1), each one, in this case, corresponding to a unique starting point. Depending on where you start, you get attracted to a different strange attractor. But in general, in systems of higher dimension (i.e., systems with more than one variable changing as time passes), many starting points will lead to the same strange attractor — exactly like in the cases of stable periodic regular attractors we just saw, where you

Figure 2
Dynamics of the logistics equation with $r=3$
and given different initial conditions



can get on the same attractor even if you start at different points. In higher-dimension space, the locus of the points leading to a given attractor is called an "attraction basin" or "fractal basin." Typically, there are many fractal basins, so that the system converges toward a different strange attractor depending on where it starts from. Near the boundary of two fractal basins, a small change in initial conditions leads again to the Butterfly Effect.

There are fascinating relations between chaos and Benoît Mandelbrot's fractal geometry. Fractal figures are characterized by their irregularities, roughness, or kinkiness: think of a sea coast, a cloud, a snowflake, a tree.

Stylized fractals are constructed by applying simple, mechanical rules which create striking and intricate figures (especially when drawn in color by a computer). These fractal figures are characterized by perimeters of infinite length that enclose finite areas. They are also self-similar at different scales, which means that the larger figure is made of smaller similar figures, and so on ad infinitum. Finally, and however strange this may seem to a Euclidian mind, dimensions of fractal figures are fractional: an object with a dimension of, say, 1.7 is more irregular than a line but not yet a surface.

Fractals are the geometric representations of dynamic systems. A strange attractor is a fractal figure as it draws a convoluted and infinite path within a finite region of space, and also because it is self-similar at different scales. (To see this, we would have to draw a multi-dimension strange attractor in what is called "phase space.")

In more than two dimensions, strange attractors are graphically represented by fractal basins, regions where all starting trajectories are pulled to the attractor. Odd things have been discovered — for instance, that the time path of measles epidemics follows a strange attractor with a fractal dimension of 2.5.

Strange attractors are strange creatures indeed. They wander unpredictably in solution space, reaching uncomputable points. According to mathematician John Casti, strange attractors can be seen as a way to find solutions that are otherwise unprovable by Chaitin's and Gödel's theorems. In a sense, chaos is an alternative road to elusive truth.

Social institutions have their own logic; in a sense, they look like strange attractors. In chaotic, unpredictable, apparently random society, there is hidden, spontaneous order. Apparent social disorder coexists with order. It is because society is both chaotic and orderly that, as Hayek says, we can never

predict precise social configurations but only the general characteristics of the order that will develop from given initial conditions.

When chaos theory appeared in the social sciences, there were naïve planners who thought that it would help them plan the unpredictable. "Critical bifurcation points," wrote two authors, "can also be recognized and predicted using this conceptual framework." They then fantasized about a sort of "androgynous attractor" that would save mankind from "the centrally powerful andocratic or dominator paradigm driving us towards global tyranny and/or nuclear war . . ." Our enlightened thinkers wanted to jump on the attractor and "feed back informed humanistic guidance into social process."⁹

Most social scientists probably now think that chaos negates the planner's dream. Confronted with a dynamic and nonlinear system like society, the planner can predict neither its actual development nor the results of his interventions. At best, given all the equations, he will only be able to predict short-term developments.¹⁰ Intervening in social development is as futile and dangerous as intervening in the weather.

From Simple Rules to Complex Systems

Chaos is a special case of so-called complex systems — systems that are nonlinear and dynamic. Complexity involves the unprovable, the uncomputable, the unpredictable — in other words, what is unknowable to reason. Chaitin has shown that there exist levels of complexity that no scientific theory can explain. These scientific results are strikingly parallel to the Hayekian mistrust for constructivist reason¹¹ — although Hayek himself was probably not aware of this.

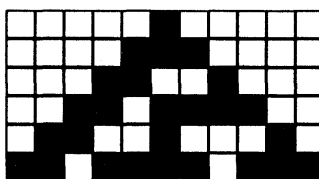
Another crucial discovery about complex systems is that they are the product of simple rules, as illustrated by cellular automata and by Craig

Reynolds' "boids."

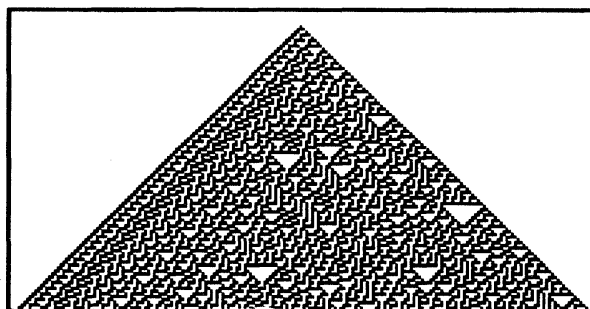
In the late '80s, computer scientist Craig Reynolds programmed bird flocking on the basis of simple rules followed by the individual birds (which he called "boids"). Eschewing any kind of central coordination, each boid in Reynolds' computer followed only three local rules: (1) maintain a minimum distance from other boids or other objects; (2) match the velocity of boids in the neighborhood; and (3) move toward the perceived center of mass of the nearby boids. Flocking thus simulated turned up to be strikingly similar to real flocking in nature.

Figure 3

Wolfram's one-dimensional cellular: construction rules (top of figure) and evolution after 5 and 100 generations



5 generations



100 generations

Faced with an obstacle, the artificial flock would spontaneously split around and reunite past it, although it had not been programmed to do this. The artificial flock showed unexpected, emergent behavior.¹²

Cellular automata, invented by John von Neumann, provide another, related technique for modeling dynamic systems. To see what a cellular automaton is, start with a finite automaton, a device conceptualized by logician Alan Turing that can take any of a finite number of values (0 or 1, for

instance) according to its internal rules and external input. Write the rules of a finite automaton such that its only input is the values of its neighbors on a conceptual checkerboard. Put one such finite automaton on each cell of the checkerboard. The whole checkerboard is called a *cellular automaton*.

Cellular automata based on a few simple rules can show extremely complex behavior and patterns. For instance, to draw the (chaotic) cellular automaton of Figure 3, you need only the rules described in the top panel of the figure. You start from a black cell on the first line and let the rules decide

whether each cell of each of the following lines remains white or turns black, depending on its three nearest top neighbors. This one-dimensional cellular automaton, developed by mathematician Stephen Wolfram (designer of Mathematica software), is only the beginning of the story. Cellular automata have been used to model such phenomenon as infectious invasions and crystal growth.

In the late '60s, Cambridge University mathematician John Conway invented a cellular automaton game called Life. This one was two-dimensional, which means that every turn was played on the whole checkerboard (instead of one line after the other, as in the Wolfram automaton above). On the unbounded Life checkerboard, each cell is either alive or dead. You start

with any arbitrary or random configuration. At the next run, a live cell remains alive if two or three of its eight neighbors are presently alive; otherwise it dies. A dead cell will become alive only if exactly three of its neighbors are alive. Life was soon popularized by Martin Gardner in his *Scientific American* column. With the advent of personal computers, it attracted a growing number of fans to simulate its unexpected behavior.

The spontaneous evolution of the game creates stable, moving, and often

unpredictable creatures called "clocks," "R-pentominos," "gliders," etc. R-pentominos, for example, stabilize after 1103 turns. Gliders move forever, or until they hit something. The complicated patterns of 0s (dead cells) and 1s (live cells) actually generate everything that is conceptually needed to build a computer, from memory spaces to logical gates. Indeed, it has been mathematically proven that the game of Life belongs to the class of "universal computers" — devices that, according to the Church-Turing hypothesis, are capable of emulating any process that can be described thoroughly — a novel, the Ninth Symphony, society, and life itself.¹³

Society is a complex system. It is dynamic because history matters. Social phenomena are nonlinear: they are more than a simple addition of individual actions. Society is a large feedback, recursive, computation process. It follows that society could theoretically be modeled as the complex result of simple proximity rules followed by the individuals who compose it.

Long before cellular automata were in vogue, Harvard economist Thomas

Chaos theory shows that even deterministic phenomena can be unpredictable, and that unpredictable does not necessarily mean non-deterministic.

Schelling used a simplified form of them to model racial segregation. His models showed how individual preferences for a minimum of similar neighbors lead, via moving, to highly segregated neighborhoods.¹⁴

This is precisely what economists and social scientists grounded in methodological individualism have been doing: explaining social results as the complex consequences of individual actions based on relatively simple motivations and neighborhood relations. This is true whether individuals are conceived of as maximizers (the rational choice model) or as rule-followers (the Hayekian view). Individuals react to local prices or local

rules which, in a free society, incorporate information about general conditions in society.

In other words, cellular automata-based models share three basic assumptions with the most productive currents in the social sciences: methodological individualism, relatively simple rules of individual motivation, and proximity signals.

Information and Computation

This leads us to the role of information in complex systems. Organic life, especially human life, is probably the most complex of all systems. Biology has taught us that this complexity depends essentially on the information embedded in DNA.

The work of John von Neumann, Alan Turing and Alonzo Church is based on the idea that everything is information-processing or computation. Man-made computers are not a special kind of machine but a constructed representation of the stuff the universe is made of. Indeed, universal computers represent the ultimate information-processing paradigm. Life is only a special case of computing.

This may imply that life could be reproduced as an autonomous and self-reproducing creature within a computer. A living creature could be silicon-based as well as carbon-based. "Wet life" is only one form of life, for the stuff of life is not "matter" (whatever that means) but information. Examples of elementary forms of computer-based life include the self-reproducing automata first programmed by Christopher Langton, and computer viruses. The quest is on for the creation of more complicated artificial life forms.

Indeed, the game Life takes its name from the idea that, as a universal computer, it could theoretically evolve towards the emergence of a living organism on its checkerboard. No simulation on Life has ever produced one, however. Some argue that this would require a checkerboard larger than the physical universe!

This approach to the study — and perhaps eventually the construction — of life as a dynamic information processing system has generated a new

field of study: Artificial Life.

If information is the basic ingredient of complexity, the more information in a system, the more complex it will be. The mere quantity of information is not everything, though, as there may be a limit to the volume of information a given system can usefully process.

Building on the work of Stephen Wolfram, Christopher Langton has de-

Wasn't Herbert Spencer already breaking the battle lines when he used both methodological individualism and the biological metaphor in the study of society?

vised a measure of the information content of a system. This measure is represented by a parameter λ , which falls between 0 and 1. Small values of λ are associated with the simplest systems — systems that tend toward a fixed, unchanging equilibrium. Systems characterized by a somewhat higher λ fluctuate with regular periodicity. If you jump to a λ close to 1, you get a system with too much information to process efficiently; i.e., the system becomes chaotic. Now, just between periodical and chaotic systems — "on the edge of chaos," as Langton puts it — you find the most complex systems, including life itself. The game of Life, which has a λ value of 0.273, falls in this range.

What would be society's λ value if it could be computed? In a sense, human society appears to be more complex than life, for it is itself a complex arrangement of the most complex living creatures of the universe (as far as we know). This, however, is only true of a free society. As Hayek has shown, only a free society maximizes the information incorporated in peoples' actions, by allowing each individual to use freely his own (local) knowledge for his own ends. Planned or otherwise controlled societies are more like fixed or periodical systems. In societies, as in cellular automata, certain rules and institutions generate

more complexity than others.

The fact of social complexity raises the possibility of using Artificial Life methods to analyze it, of simulating artificial societies within computers. The trend was started by Nobel Prize-winning economist Kenneth Arrow and the Santa Fe Institute (New Mexico), especially with their 1987 conference on "the economy as an evolving complex system." This has stimulated the development of Artificial Economics, Artificial Sociology, and Artificial Political Science, new fields of social science that use dynamical methods to simulate social phenomena.

Studies in Artificial Economics often seem naïve to those schooled in Hayekian and Austrian approaches, which stressed rules of conduct, information, disequilibrium, and evolution long before these concepts were "discovered" by Artificial Life.¹⁵ Actually, much of the new Artificial Economics could already be found in Gerald O'Driscoll and Mario Rizzo's 1985 Austrian treatise, *The Economics of Time and Ignorance*.¹⁶

Society is also very different from a living organism. For one thing, it is much more chaotic. This is not really surprising, for individuals are not to society what cells are to a living being. Individual liberty brings diversity, surprises, and disorder to society as much as it contributes to the circulation of information. Hayek had already pointed out that society differs from a living being since its components do not have fixed places and predetermined roles. The fact that society is both very com-

plex and inherently chaotic suggests that interesting things happen not only at the edge of chaos, but also in the very midst of chaos. Order and disorder may not be as distinct as Langton's classification would imply.

This raises the old question of social organicism and, more generally, of holism against methodological individualism.

Traditionally, you had two camps. On one side, methodological individualists viewed society as a collection of individuals or, at most, as the resulting configuration of their actions and interrelations. In this sense, society does not exist as a distinct entity. It may be more than the sum of its parts, but only in the sense that it includes also the relations between the parts. On the other side, holists and proponents of social organicism conceived of society as a superindividual with organs, blood, nervous system and brain. Of course, they usually saw themselves as the brain and not the foot or the appendix of society, which explains why social organicism has been embraced by totalitarian leftists and rightists of all epochs.

Many of the early theoreticians of chaos, who are former flower children of the '60s, thought of their work as a vindication of holism, of social organicism and state intervention. In *On Power*, one of the most important books of this century, political scientist Bertrand de Jouvenal made a convincing argument that the organicist theory of society has brought more grist to the mill of state power than the theory of sovereignty.¹⁷

Perhaps one lesson of complexity theory will be that the battle lines are not that clear-cut. In my opinion, chaos theory provides more of a vindication of methodological individualism as it explains the complex behavior of wholes on the basis of individual actions — rules at the automaton level for instance. Yet, it may be that complex wholes have more importance than methodological individualists used to think.

Wasn't Herbert Spencer already breaking the battle lines when he used both methodological individualism and the biological metaphor in the study of society? The question remains open.

What seems certain is that life and society can be analyzed as two instances of computation, and that information is central to both.

This raises a host of other questions. If, as the American social science tradition would have it, everything is a process, if information is the basic stuff of everything, if in other words there is no substance under the ultimate processes, then what happens to natural rights? Are we led towards an exclusively contractarian foundation of individual rights?

This may be as disquieting a question as the one raised by Gregory Chaitin at the end of one of his articles. Although we will never be able to answer the question as to whether a diophantine equation (a kind of equation related to undecidability) has a finite or infinite number of solutions, "I have always thought in the deep of my heart," Chaitin added, "that God can."¹⁸

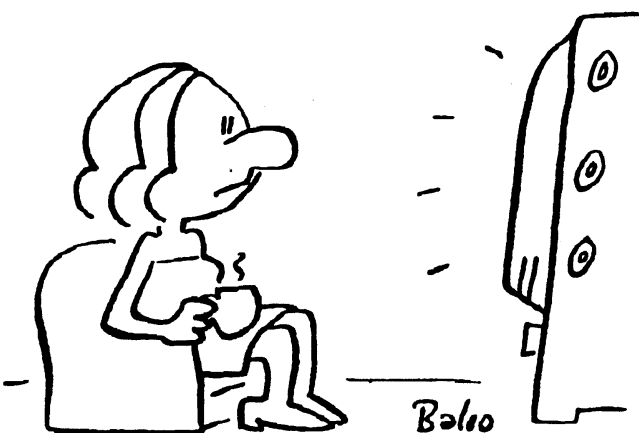
Evolution's Surprises

There is another way in which processes are paramount: the fact that time passes, that history matters — in a word, evolution. We know that life and man are products of evolutionary processes. Although completely deterministic (as far as we know), evolution is inherently unpredictable. Perhaps we can argue, like old Catholic holist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, or like some Artificial Life theoreticians, that matter and life naturally tend towards increasing complexity, but we can never predict what form complexity will take. Evolution is full of surprises.

For Artificial Life to understand living processes, it must analyze their evolution. But just like most differential equation systems do not have analytical solutions, evolution cannot be theoretically analyzed only simulated. Can we simulate evolution?

The answer is yes, with a computer. This was beautifully demonstrated in the '70s by John Holland, a University of Michigan computer scientist.

Start by admitting that any being is



"On 'L.A. Law' tonight, all the screenwriters went back on strike, so the actors will just throw pies at each other."

made of bits of information — 0s and 1s. In a living organism, this information is coded in the genes. In a computer program, the "code," or instructions, contains the information; indeed, a computer program can be represented as a string of 0s and 1s.

Recall that living organisms have evolved mainly by sexual crossover (the mixing of parents' genes), reproduction of offspring, and selection of the fittest among them. Random mutations have played a role, but computer simulations have demonstrated that it must have been minor compared to sexual crossover. Fitness means adaptation to, and survival in, one's environment. "Why sex?" is a question that worried biologists. Why not asexual, one-parent reproduction? The answer, apparently, is that sexual crossover increases offspring fitness.

The mechanism of evolution can be reproduced with computer programs called "genetic algorithms." This form of computer programming solves opti-

Human society appears to be more complex than life, for it is itself a complex arrangement of the most complex living creatures of the universe. This, however, is only true of a free society.

mization problems by selecting competing programs through a process similar to biological evolution.

Simple optimization problems are standard mathematics. You have a function and you want to find where it reaches its maximum, i.e., where its maximum or peak lies in a Euclidean plane or space. With a two- or three-variable function (you are in a two- or three-dimensional space), there are relatively easy methods to do this. Now imagine the most complicated optimization problem you can think of: you are in more than three dimensions, which means that you cannot visualize the shape of your function; the solution space consists of billions of points; and you do not even know the function you want to optimize!

For a biological version of the problem, imagine that you are God and that you have created an extremely complex universe, so complex that you do not yourself understand the billions of interactions occurring in it. (You are often discouraged when you look at your work.) Now you want to create a living, intelligent creature that will survive in this complex, dynamic, nonlinear environment. In other words, you, God, want to put a creature at the top of an optimization function you ignore. Just breathing life will simply not do. What the hell do you do?

In the biological case, you would plant some seeds of life here and there (or mix a "primordial soup"), and let them evolve. In the mathematical case, you do just the same.

You start with many computer programs as candidates for solving the problem at hand. The programs can be coded by you, or they may just be random strings of 0s and 1s. You let all individuals in your population of programs make a try at solving the optimization problem. Some will succeed better than others. You let the losers die, and let the best performers mate — this is natural selection. Sexual crossover means that in mating, each pair of good performers exchanges part of their respective strings of bits as if they were exchanging genes. Each pair then gives birth to one (or more) offspring who has half the code of each parent. A few random mutations — switching arbitrarily some 0s and 1s — are added. You let the new population have a try at the problem, and you repeat the process of selection and reproduction as long as generations improve.

The remarkable fact is that individual programs do improve from generation to generation. You will end up with a program that is more sophisticated, more efficient (it has climbed higher on the function), and shorter than what an outside, human programmer would have conceived. Just like in biological evolution, genetic algorithms produce unexpected methods of solution. Such genetically evolved programs have been used to solve practical problems like the optimization of pipeline systems.

In trying to explain the surprising

efficiency of genetic programming, mathematicians have discovered interesting properties of its physical analog, biological evolution. Evolution is full of surprises because there are billions and billions of possible combinations of information that can be used as solutions. Of the combinations tried, many will be blind alleys, and many will appear to be regressions. But then, some will search for original solutions, will explore unexpected paths, like climbing down from a local maximum until they hit an upward slope to a higher peak. Unpredictability and entrepre-

If everything is a process, if information is the basic stuff of everything, if in other words there is no substance under the ultimate processes, then what happens to natural rights?

neurship are assets in solving complex problems. Once you let the process loose — given the right conditions — you are bound to get better and better solutions.

Social evolution presumably operates in the same general way. This is indeed how it has been modeled by many institutionalist theoreticians, including Hayek himself. Social institutions are sets of rules (morals, the family, language, money, etc.) that evolve just like biological organisms or strings of information in genetic programs. The institutions that are the most efficient in dealing with problems of social coordination in a context of scarcity are selected; alternatively, social groups who adopt the most efficient institutions prevail over others. New experiments in social life — moral innovations, for example — will often lead to blind alleys or failures, but some will unexpectedly lead to new summits in social efficiency.

Similarity between the Hayekian theory of social evolution and the more recent Artificial Life evolutionary approach is even more striking if Hayek is right in claiming that Darwin himself had his first intuition of evolution

through the social theories of his time. For the social scientist, evolution is nothing new.

Yet, genetic algorithms provide a new tool for analyzing social evolution. It has already been used in conjunction with game theory to study the emergence and stability of social cooperation in prisoner's dilemma situations.

A prisoner's dilemma is a game-theoretic concept describing a situation

political scientist Robert Axelrod²¹ and, more recently, computer scientist John Miller²², who have used genetic algorithms to simulate the evolution of cooperation in repeated prisoner's dilemma games.

Even in a repeated game with only two players and two alternative moves at each round ("cooperate" or "defect"), the number of strategies grows very large when each strategy can be

trix typical of the prisoner's dilemma. The best performers get more chances to mate among themselves. Two parents produce two offspring who share their genes (i.e., the code that describes them) through a standard crossover process. A small rate of random mutations is also applied. The new population goes through another run of interaction. Repeat the selection and mating process. And continue for, say, 50 generations.

Figure 4 shows that the average performance of the individuals increased continuously after ten generations or so — even if small random errors were introduced in the individuals' perceptions of other players' strategies.

The remarkable result is that all simulations of this kind have resulted in the spontaneous evolution and dominance of one general type of strategy: a strategy of voluntary cooperation with whomever shows a similar cooperative will. In other words, it pays to cooperate voluntarily in extended social interactions. Cooperators fare better in the long run than free riders. This result can be grasped intuitively when one realizes that a cooperator will gain more in the long run from its mutually cooperative

relations than he will lose from his clashes with free riders, who become rarer as cooperators take over. In economic jargon, voluntary relations can produce public goods through evolved social institutions.

The Ideal of Anarchy

There are, then, chaotic forces leading toward self-organizing complexity in nature. This self-organization works from the bottom up, from individual agents to the whole. Information processing and evolution provide the main mechanisms of efficiency.

Man is a peculiar animal. His reason, free will, motivated actions, and capacity to escape behavioral determinism distinguish his species from others. And there is more to the human mind than reason. Beyond "complexity 3 billion," which "represents the outer

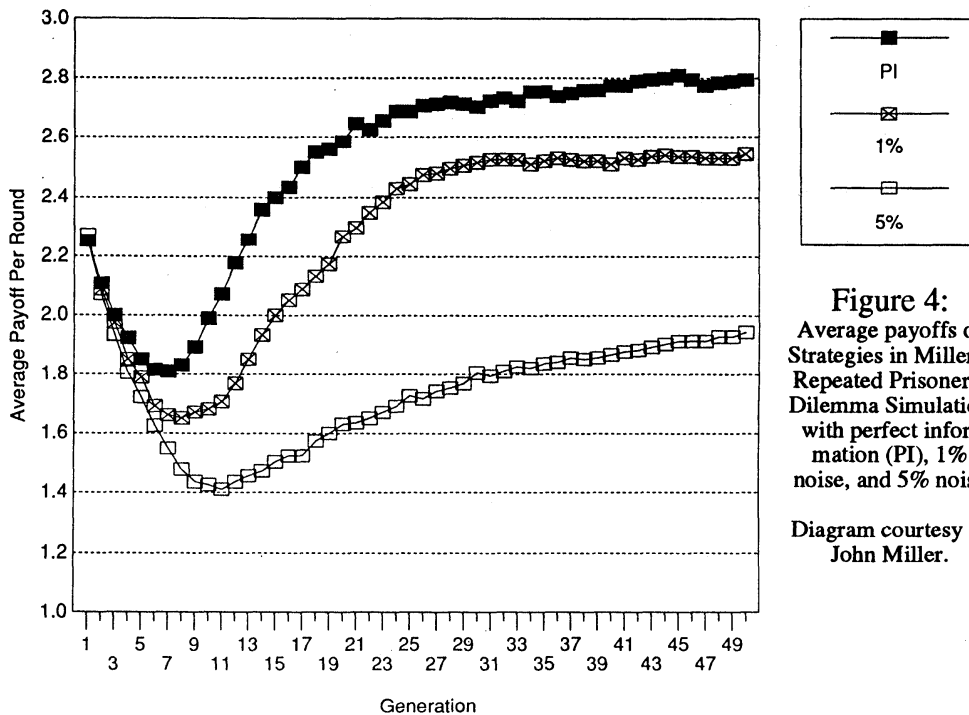


Figure 4:
Average payoffs of
Strategies in Miller's
Repeated Prisoner's
Dilemma Simulation
with perfect infor-
mation (PI), 1%
noise, and 5% noise

Diagram courtesy of
John Miller.

where two or more rational players prefer mutual cooperation to mutual defection but where each one is individually better off defecting whatever the other one does. Consequently, each will defect and the two players will end up in the worst situation. The situation is akin to the classical public-good and free-rider problem in economics. The traditional economic answer is that the state must intervene to guarantee the social cooperation that everyone wants but nobody can achieve.¹⁹

It can be shown that voluntary, spontaneous, cooperative solutions will emerge if the game is repeated, if it has more than one round — as is typical of social interactions. Robert Sugden has provided analytical demonstrations that social conventions can emerge this way.²⁰ But the most ground-breaking work has come from

based on the memory of past rounds. For example, with a three-move memory, there are 10^{21} different ways to play the game — a number so large that, as Axelrod puts it, "if a computer had examined these strategies at the rate of 100 per second since the beginning of the universe, less than 1% would have been checked by now."²³

Here comes the genetic algorithm. Consider each strategy as an automaton (or an individual) and code it with a string of 0s and 1s — 148 bits are needed in the Miller simulation. Start with, say, 30 randomly generated strategies among the astronomical number of possibilities. Each automata or individual is identified with a strategy. Let each one play many rounds of the prisoner's dilemma against every other one during the first run. The total score of each individual is computed from a payoff ma-

limits to the powers of human reasoning," writes John Casti, "we enter the 'twilight zone,' where reason and systematic analysis give way to intuition, insight, feelings, hunches, and just plain dumb luck."²⁴ Where reason and determinism stop, subjectivity and liberty come into play. The individual says "I," and he means it. He will never be a mere element of a social organism.

This does not make human society less self-organizing than other complex systems in nature. Indeed, social science since the time of Adam Smith has fruitfully explored the idea of an "invisible hand" or spontaneous social order. There is a striking parallel between the new science and the basic tenets of Austrian economics. Analogous to the physical world, social self-organization works through individuals applying simple rules of conduct in an environ-

ment of information and social evolution. This process is inseparable from disequilibrium, disorder, and chaos.

The new Artificial Social Science approach could bring a welcome revolution in Austrian thinking by importing new mathematical tools and simulation methods. Austrian economics has shown a strong prejudice against mathematics, due partly to a misunderstanding of what they are, and partly to the absence, until very recently, of the mathematical tools required to model dynamic, nonlinear, and chaotic social phenomena. An iconoclast may now dream of the day he will find in print something called *The Mathematical Foundations of Austrian Economics*.²⁵

The most interesting question for an Artificial Social Science relates to the role of the state and the feasibility

of anarchy. Chaos is everywhere. From the avalanches of political tyranny and the fall of empires, we know that political processes are also chaotic. Consequently, the alternative is not between chaotic anarchy on one side and the state's order on the other, but between two (or more) different kinds of chaos-and-order.

In general, chaos theory lends support to anarchy. The planner's dream is inherently impossible. The most complex and efficient systems evolve from the bottom up, without central direction. The main questions are: What are the initial conditions for stable anarchy? Is the state part of, or external to, the spontaneous social order? Could a kind of Nozickian process evolve a minimal state as a means to protect anarchy itself? Artificial Anarchy could contribute toward an answer. □

Notes:

1. John L. Casti, "Chaos, Gödel, and Truth," in John L. Casti and Anders Karlqvist (eds.), *Beyond Belief: Randomness, Prediction, and Explanation in Science* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 1991).
2. James Gleick's bestseller, *Chaos* (New York: Penguin, 1987) is still worth reading.
3. William J. Baumol and Jess Benhabib, "Chaos: Significance, Mechanism, and Economic Applications," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 3:1 (Winter 1989), pp. 77-105.
4. F.A. Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1979 [1952]).
5. The "mathematically challenged" reader should not be scared away by this equation, which only expresses symbolically my description of the population model two paragraphs above in the text. Maths are just a neat way to say complicated things. Recall that an equation has two members, the right-hand member and the left-hand member, separated by the "=" sign. Recall also that a term is a mathematical expression separated from others by "+" or "-"; and note that we have two main terms in the right-hand member of our equation. If we are now in year t , the proportion of the actual population compared to its environmental limit is now p_t , and will be p_{t+1} next year. The equation simply states that next year, this ratio (p_{t+1}) will be equal to this year's situation (p_t) plus a certain (positive or negative) growth, expressed by the second term in the right-hand member. In our model, this growth pro-

ceeds at the rate $r(1-p_t)$ which indeed multiplies p_t . This means that the constant growth rate, instead of being constant like, say, 1.15 (which would mean a constant annual growth rate of 15%), is actually a function of, or depends on, the population ratio of the previous year.

Consider the following cases. Case 1: If the starting population is very far below its environmental limit, i.e., p_t is very small (say, 0.01), then $1-p_t$ will be very close to 1 and the population ratio will grow at nearly its "natural" rate r — the rate at which it would grow if there were no environmental limit. Case 2: Suppose now that the population has grown fast and is now very close to its environmental limit, i.e., p_t is close to 1 (say, 0.99); then $1-p_t$ will become a small fraction that will decrease the value of constant r , and the rate of growth will be much smaller than r . Case 3: If the population exceeds its environmental limit, i.e., p_t is greater than 1 (say, 1.2), then $1-p_t$ will be negative, implying a negative rate of growth — a drop in population at a rate greater than r . The following paragraph in the text provides a numerical example.

6. The time path of a variable (like p_t) is the successive values it assumes as time passes — that is, as $t=1, t=2, t=3$, etc.
7. A parameter is a constant (as opposed to a variable) whose value defines the general shape of an equation or the general behavior of a system.
8. Erik Mosekilde, Javier Aracil, and Peter M. Allen, "Instabilities and chaos in non-

linear dynamic systems," *Systems Dynamics Review* 4:1-2 (1988), p. 14-55.

9. David Loye and Riane Eisler, "Chaos and Transformation: Implications of Nonequilibrium Theory for Social Science and Society," *Behavioral Science* Vol. 32 (January 1987), pp. 53-65.
10. T.J. Cartwright, "Planning and Chaos Theory," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 57:1 (Winter 1991), pp. 44-56.
11. See for example Hayek's last book, *The Fatal Conceit: The Errors of Socialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).
12. Stephen Levy, *Artificial Life: The Quest for a New Creation* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), pp. 76-80.
13. See William Poundstone, *The Recursive Universe* (New York: Morrow, 1985).
14. Thomas Schelling, "Dynamic Models of Segregation," *Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, Vol. 1 (1971), pp. 143-186.
15. Many of these naïve approaches are described in M. Mitchell Waldrop, *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).
16. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1985. On this, see also Don Lavoie, "Economic Chaos or Spontaneous Order? Implications for the Political Economy of the New View of Science," *Cato Journal* 8:3 (Winter 1989), pp. 613-635.
17. Bertrand de Jouvenal, *Du Pouvoir, Histoire naturelle de sa croissance* (Genève: Le Cheval Ailé, 1945); in English as *On Power — The Natural History of Its Growth* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1993).

continued on page 52

Single-Sentence Short Story

Ye Who Enter Here

by Richard Kostelanetz

We fired a single shot into the enemy's territory, the enemy fired back, with one bullet destroying the gun that had fired on them; when we fired a volley of bullets, we received a volley twice as large in return; as we moved our cannon to the top of the hill, it was immediately hit by a hail of bullets, making its operation impossible; once we sent a patrol of draftees to reconnoiter by night, they were met by a large spotlight that sent them scampering for shade; when we sent a radio signal promising their troops rewards if they surrendered, our message was jammed; when we tried to tunnel under their fortifications, we hit an underground river; once we tossed grenades, they were shot to smithereens before they could land; when we threw spears with poisoned tips, they were met by the force of a powerful magnet that made them all turn left and flow like a herd to a single repository; when we sent up a helicopter by night, it was shot down as it took off, indeed falling into our troop encampment and destroying several tents; when we sent home a radio message proclaiming a victory that vanquished the enemy, the media of the world were supplied with photographs and videotapes conclusively illustrating that we conquered nothing; when we fired a surface-to-air missile, they fired a projectile that intercepted ours in midair, our bomb exploding over the no-man's land between us; when we threatened to use a thermonuclear device that, if our demands were not met by the enemy, would annihilate us all, we discovered that the passkeys essential for detonating our device had suspiciously vanished; and finally when, demoralized by unending frustration, we offered to surrender and even ran up a white flag, our entreatings were refused. □

Secession as a First Amendment Right

by Robert Nelson

If we *really* separate church and state, what will be left of the state?

In the past three years, more than 20 new nations have achieved independence by secession. The Soviet Union has been replaced by a crazy-quilt of new countries, Czechoslovakia has split in two, and Yugoslavia has broken into God-knows-how-many warring shards. Nearly half the people elected to the Canadian parliament last October favor secession for Quebec. Secessionist movements are growing in China, Italy, Spain, Somalia, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, South Africa, even Kansas.

But secession is an old issue — older even than the modern nation-state. For centuries, the Roman Catholic hierarchy preferred burning heretics to letting them leave the church. The Protestant Reformation ultimately led to a new right of religious secession, but not without great controversy and bloodshed.

It took centuries for the modern distance between church and state to be firmly established in the West. This distance has yet to be applied to *secular* churches. Yet for millions, secular religions have become the most vital faiths of our time.

The Rise of Secular Religion

In 1951 Eric Voegelin delivered an influential series of lectures at the University of Chicago, in which he argued for a general theory of religious phenomena that would recognize totalitarian ideologies and other secular systems of belief — Marxism, Nationalism, Social Darwinism — as genuine religions. He argued further

that, contrary to common opinion, it is a mistake to consider such beliefs "neopagan." Although they have a "superficial resemblance" to pagan faiths, the leading ideologies of the modern era actually display Christian roots.

Modern thinking, said Voegelin, followed Christianity in promising salvation — only now, the redemption of mankind was to occur in this world, not the next. In this way, traditional religious energies were "diverted into the more appealing, more tangible . . . creation of the terrestrial paradise." In secular religions, humanity sought "salvation through world-immanent action," action which "released human forces for the building of a civilization."

Voegelin's model is being echoed today. In the Fall 1992 *Public Interest*, Peter Drucker assessed the future of what he calls the "post-capitalist world," and declared that we are today seeing "the end of one kind of history." Since the Enlightenment, Drucker explained, the West had been shaped by the notion that society "could and should create universal human perfection." Indeed, "salvation by society has been the dominant

creed of Western Man. And however much it pretends to be 'anti-religious,' it is a religious belief. The means are, of course, non-spiritual. . . . The goal, however, is . . . to establish the Kingdom of God on Earth by creating the 'New Man.'"

With so many secular faiths now collapsing, he concluded, the post-capitalist future will be shaped by new religious forces.

One of those forces is the Environmental movement, whose various denominations have attracted a rapidly growing following. Many Environmentalists explicitly advocate a spiritual renewal to create a new set of social values. In *The Voice of the Earth*, Environmentalist Theodore Roszak asserted that "the emerging worldview of our day will have to address questions of a frankly religious character." The Environmental movement must provide answers to "ethical conduct, moral purpose, and the meaning of life," thereby "seeking to heal the soul of its wounds and guide it to salvation." Joseph Sax echoes this message; arguing for a reduced human presence in the National Parks, he proclaimed that he and fellow Preservationists are in truth "sec-

ular prophets, preaching a message of secular salvation."

Environmentalism is not the first secular religion to sweep the United States in this century.

The Progressive Faith

The Progressive movement of the early twentieth century established a new vision for American statecraft, one that included new ground rules for the role of religion. For the Progressives, religious convictions played an important role in setting the values and goals of government, but the implementation of these goals was determined by science, which the Progressives be-

they were words such as reason, nature, and rights; during the past 50 years in America they have been such words as cause, reaction, scientific, expert, progress — and efficient." Historian Samuel Haber described Progressive Era America as possessed by "an efficiency craze" that represented "a secular Great Awakening."

If by "religion" we mean a category of beliefs broad enough to include Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, then Progressivism surely qualifies as a religion. Progress, as J.B. Bury observed in *The Idea of Progress*, "belongs to the same order of ideas as Providence or personal immortality. . . . Belief in it is an act of faith."

Like traditional religions, Progressivism provides an explanation for evil and prescribes a path to abolish sin and attain salvation. The Progressive gospel starts with the recognition that for most of history, poverty, hunger, and disease have been the human norm. This is the Progressives' fundamental explanation for murder, theft, dishonesty, and other evils: they have emerged from economic necessity. Material deprivation is the original sin of economic theology.

Salvation thus lies in the abolition of all meaningful shortages of goods and services. Such an outcome was scarcely conceivable as recently as 300 years ago, but the extraordinary powers of modern science and industry have since made it seem a real possibility. Believers look forward in the confident expectation that the advance of economic progress will mean the meeting of all real material needs, and thus the end of evil; the eschaton will be immanentized (as Voegelin put it), and heaven will arrive on Earth. This faith in the redeeming consequences of economic progress has inspired an enthusiasm, a willingness to sacrifice (even at times one's own life), and a degree of commitment no less powerful than that of Judaism, Christianity, and the other great religions of history.

In his 1930 essay "Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren," John Maynard Keynes delivered a prophetic message of economic salvation, declaring that economic progress would transform the world within 100 years. Markets and capitalism were

necessary in the short term, but could be dispensed with in the long run. The very rapid economic growth being achieved under capitalism would result in a condition of general abundance, allowing for "a return to some of the most sure and certain principles of religion and traditional virtue — that avarice is a vice; that the exaction of usury is a misdemeanor; and that love of money is detestable." Declaring that the current market system was founded on self-interest and other false values, Keynes nevertheless advised bearing with them "for a little longer still. For only they can lead us out of the tunnel of economic necessity into daylight."

Although the idea that economic progress can resolve all problems is under strong challenge today, it is still influential. Why, for example, the endemic violence and family breakdown in all too many inner-city neighborhoods? Most Americans believe that the cause of these problems lies in the deep poverty in which the people of those neighborhoods live. The basic source of human misbehavior is to be found in material circumstances — and thus is solvable by economic means.

In sum, the Progressive gospel did not separate religion from the state, but rather displaced one kind of religion

Freedom of religion must now include a constitutional right of secession.

lieved can and must be "value-free." Thus the famous dichotomy between "politics," where religious and other values could legitimately be expressed, and "administration," where value-free science alone must prevail. For the Progressives, religion could and should be kept strictly separate from the myriad of government activities that belonged to the basic task of administration.

It was not long before this dichotomy began to break down. By the 1960s, political scientists Charles Lindblom and Aaron Wildavsky were offering a more realistic description of the state. The values and goals of government, they pointed out, could not be established separately and in advance, and in fact were worked out jointly with the administration. Indeed, the social values actually being pursued could in many cases only be fully recognized after-the-fact.

The Progressives' theory failed in another respect. Progressivism itself would increasingly appear to scholarly observers as yet another religion: the "gospel of efficiency." As Dwight Waldo commented in 1948, "every era has a few words that epitomize its world-view. . . . In the Middle Ages they were such words as faith, grace, and God; in the eighteenth century

Progressivism was yet another imperial faith, cloaking its aspirations behind a veneer of value-neutrality.

with another. Progressivism was yet another imperial faith, cloaking its aspirations and methods behind a veneer of value-neutrality.

Economics as a Mystery Cult

A recent article in *Time* magazine examined the steps companies are taking to accommodate their employees' changing family circumstances: maternal leave, on-site day care, etc. *Time* argued that the new work practices made it easier for parents "to raise healthy, happy children," which would help to ensure "the quality of the next generation of workers" and in

this way represented "a critical investment in America's economic future." For *Time*, a policy's worth is now established by its contribution to society's continued economic progress. In earlier eras, the word of God would have been invoked.

Kings once sought the counsel of priests; today, presidents look to economists and other professional advisors. Then and now, the advisors have attempted to maintain clear boundaries between themselves and ordinary people, their authority resting largely on a system of exclusive knowledge. In the Middle Ages, the priests shrouded their mysteries in Latin; today, economists use mathematics. The results often look surprisingly similar. Herbert Simon, winner of the 1978 Nobel Prize in economics, commented not long ago that current economic theorizing frequently takes on the character of a "scholastic exercise." The analytical task consists of making a set of assumptions and then working out with great precision the logical implications. There is little empiricism involved; economists frequently "don't talk about evidence at all."

The internal workings of the economics profession also parallel those of earlier priesthoods. Historian Robert Weibe has observed how economists and other professional groups that emerged in the Progressive Era experience "the shared mysteries of a speciality" that allows "intimate communion." The social science professions were a fraternity, bound together by a common desire to "remake the world." They offered a sense of "prestige through exclusiveness," as well as the "deep satisfaction" that accompanied the "revolution in identity" that followed initiation into a select order. The rites of professional life were designed to ensure that "the process of becoming an expert, of immersing oneself in the scientific method, eradicated petty passions and narrow ambitions," so that the initiates, thus illuminated, could effectively serve their society as dispassionate philosopher-kings.

In the first half of the twentieth century, professional administrators, engineers, foresters, and other scientific groups played a major role in shaping Progressive society. After World War

II, confidence in central planning began to erode, and by now, the decisive instrument of progress has come to be seen, not as government administration, but as the "market mechanism." The scientific management of society is to consist of the scientific

The Progressive gospel starts with the recognition that for most of history, poverty, hunger, and disease have been the human norm. Material deprivation is economic theology's original sin.

management of the market; in the welfare state, the efficiency of the market is to be put to use in the service of Progressive ends.

Following in the footsteps of John Maynard Keynes, the chief architects and proponents — the high priests — of this latest gospel have been the members of the American economics profession.

Salvation, Christian and Economic

It almost seems that for every Christian understanding of salvation, there is an economic school that offers an analogous secular version of the same theology. I have addressed this subject at length in my book *Reaching for Heaven on Earth*, so I shall limit myself here to a single example of this phenomenon.

Consider the Reformation thinking of Martin Luther and the revolutionary Socialist thinking of Karl Marx. Both saw history in apocalyptic terms. Luther believed he was living in the final days before God would finally intervene to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Marx believed he was living in the final days before a revolutionary apocalypse and the triumph of the proletariat. Both Luther and Marx saw mankind in their respective times as having sunk to its lowest state ever. For Luther, venality and evil were everywhere, even in the church; human beings had been slaves of their

depraved natures since the Fall. In the gospel according to Marx, mankind is similarly enslaved by capitalism. For Luther, original sin occurred in the Garden of Eden; for Marx, original sin was an economic phenomenon, the class struggle for surplus production.

The similarity of Marx to Luther extends even to salvation. For Luther, salvation must be an act of God unrelated to any human action; Luther broke with the Roman Catholic church over his uncompromising insistence that good works, human merit, or any other feature of human behavior could not influence the saving actions of God. For Marx, the laws of economics predestine all history; they are the secular equivalent of the God of Luther. In the Marxist view of history, the course of economic progress is not influenced by benevolent actions, well-meaning people, or a generous spirit. For Marx, the minds of most were ensnared by illusion, by false consciousness, by the ideological and institutional superstructure that rationalizes existing arrangements of economic power. Humanity is no more rational in the Marxist vision than in that of Luther.

Both Luther and Marx lived in periods of rapid change that created severe stresses and strains within the social order. When economic historian R.H. Tawney said Luther "hated the economic individualism of the age not less than its spiritual laxity," he could as easily have been speaking of the man who wrote *Das Kapital*. As German theologian Ernst Troeltsch observed, Luther's goal was "a social order which is free from competition" — a message to be repeated three centuries later in the new gospel as revealed by Karl Marx.

Transfigured Rights

As modern ideologies become genuine — not just metaphorical — forms of religion, an unsettling question arises: If secular gospels are to be accorded the status of religion, what happens to the principle of separation of church and state?

For many secular faiths, such a separation would be impossible in the usual sense, as the state is central to the very practice of their religion. The

Socialist gospel, for example, is realized only through government action. The ceremonies of the Socialist state become secular religious ceremonies, the state schools teach the official state gospel, leading government advisors become a secular priesthood, etc.

So it may seem impossible to apply the separation principle to secular religions. Yet to apply a basic constitutional principle to one category of religion and not to another would be highly discriminatory. Indeed, in the 1961 U.S.

Governments of the future may come to look more like private organizations. Private organizations, on the other hand, may start to look more like governments.

Supreme Court decision *Torcaso v Watkins*, Justice Hugo Black cited approvingly a previous decision of the court that the principle of separation of church and state must be applied with respect to "any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion." Writing for the court without dissent, Black explained that no distinction could be drawn in this regard between "religions based on a belief in the existence of God as against those religions founded on different beliefs." The Justice included "Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism, and others" in the latter category as valid, if less conventional, religions.

Black's reasoning leads to a radically new interpretation of the first amendment. The primary purpose of the establishment clause — to protect the free practice of religion — can be accomplished in another way. In an age of powerful secular faiths, freedom of religion will have to include *the right to secede from the state*.

For secular religions, the right of free secession becomes the equivalent of the older right to withdraw from the established church to form a new one. It can provide all religions, traditional and secular, with an important protec-

tion against the coercive imposition of an alien church's dogmas.

Breaking Free

The Protestant Reformation led to religious wars, as believers in divergent views of the Christian message of one God and one truth for the whole world fought for supremacy. The Roman Catholic Church burned its heretics, and Protestants were scarcely more tolerant.

As the wars of religion raged, an idea emerged: a diversity of beliefs within Christianity might be unavoidable. The costs in blood and treasure of these conflicts could be minimized or even eliminated altogether by separating the realms of church and state.

As the state gradually supplanted the church as the central organizing institution in society, there arose secular religions whose object of devotion was not a magical, otherworldly God, but magical beings of this world — "the race," "the people," "the state." For millions, secular religions have become the most vital faiths, and battles between secular religions — Communists against Fascists, Environmentalists against Industrialists, one brand of Nationalist against another — became the central conflicts of our era. World War I and, even more so, World War II were new wars between new secular religions.

The state has proved to be just as integral to the practice of many secular religions as it was to the practice of traditional religions. The bloody course of the twentieth century demonstrates the continuing urgency of defusing religious conflict and maintaining religious freedom. Now that so many of the greatest conflicts are between secular churches, however, the relationship between church and state must be rethought. Separation of church and state as traditionally and literally understood cannot exist so long as religions use the state to implement their vision.

Some might consequently argue that secular religions that inextricably mix the state with the church ought to be abolished. But this would itself be a severe violation of religious liberty; indeed, it would impose an "anti-religion." A new approach is required to defuse the secular religious wars of

this era, just as a new approach was required to defuse the internecine wars between Protestants and Catholics in the early modern era.

As already noted, this entails a new political right: the right of secession.

If a geographic region within a Socialist state dissents from the Socialist gospel — preferring a free-market economy, an economy grounded in strict Christian piety, an economy shaped by Native American spirituality, or whatever — it should have the right to leave. Conversely, a region inhabited by Socialist communarians within a state that requires free trade within its boundaries should also have this right. Nationalist religions would not be excluded: Tibet would be free to withdraw from China, Biafra from Nigeria, Quebec from Canada, Scotland from England, and so forth.

Just as the establishment of freedom of religion and the separation of church and state in the early modern era freed people from coerced participation in otherworldly religions with whose views they profoundly disagreed, so the right to secede can free people today from coerced participation in secular religions with which they profoundly disagree. If secession results in a set of many religiously homogeneous sovereign states, if a common religion thus shapes each state's actions, and if these governments act in the furtherance of the religious consensus, the problem of freedom of religion is substantially resolved.

This is not to say that secession of secular religionists will be universal. Some people may prefer to live within states whose secular religion differs from their own views, and secular religious states may evolve into confederations, in which component states would have jurisdiction in some matters, while the confederation retained jurisdiction in others. While the right to secession allows for the peaceful formation of relatively small, religiously homogeneous states, it does not require their universal establishment. Confederal and multi-faith states in which the right of secession is universally agreed upon might very well flourish.

Granting a *right* of secession is far from *advocating* secession for any partic-

ular region or group. In many cases, secession would pose serious problems — depending in particular on future relations with the remaining parts of the nation-state, and whether a common economic market would be maintained. For many, secession would amount to a last resort — an ultimate guarantee of religious freedom for those willing to pay the necessary price.

Privatization Rights

Partly because of the constant influx of immigrants and partly because of the relatively high level of personal mobility within its borders, ethnic and religious ties to a particular region are weaker in the United States than in most countries. For that reason, an additional right may be needed: a right of *privatization*.

The right of privatization would enable each citizen, at his or her full discretion, to withdraw from delivery of any government service or other public function. In effect, it would amount to a radical extension of the right to con-

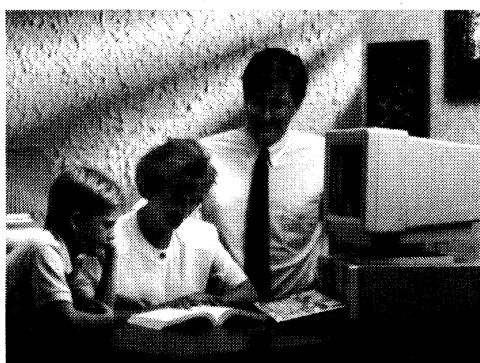
scientious objector status that has been granted to subjects of U.S. military conscription. It would explicitly recognize that state edicts can be a coercive imposition of a secular religion onto people who do not share the faith. It would not be a matter for a nation-state to decide on the basis of the "public interest" or some other secular religious goal.

To make this right truly meaningful, those withdrawing from a government function would have to receive either a rebate of taxes or a share of public revenues devoted to supporting the government activity. For example, parents would be able to withdraw their children from public schools at their discretion, enter the children in private schools of their choice, and receive a proportionate share of the state revenues currently allocated to support of education. Private organizations would also have to have constitutional protections against state interference in their workings, analogous to protections now granted only to officially recognized church bodies.

A constitutional right of privatization would allow neighborhoods the ability to withdraw from the government system of zoning and local service delivery. Mechanisms could be established to allow neighborhoods of

The bloody course of the twentieth century demonstrates the continuing urgency of defusing religious conflict and maintaining religious freedom.

individually owned homes to establish condominiums or other forms of common ownership over the neighborhood's exterior elements — parks, roads, sidewalks, and the like. Neighbors could arrange with private contractors or associate among themselves for their own policing, fire protection, sanitation, and other local services, as



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well as create their own system of neighborhood regulations. Or they could choose to have no collective service delivery or regulations at all.

Indeed, many community associations already provide such extrastatutory governance. And some communities have eschewed virtually all regulations, except those prohibiting crimes against persons and property.

Other communities might choose a higher degree of regulation. Wilderness areas are today the churches of many Environmentalists: places to find spiritual inspiration, experience solitary contemplation, and commune with the eternal. John Muir spoke of the wilderness as his "temple"; another early enthusiast said, "my God is in the wilderness. . . . My church is the church of the forest." In a large and religiously diverse nation such as the United States, the wilderness system cannot be administered by the government without violating the religious freedom of those who are not Environmentalists. But if the right to secession were adopted, Environmentalists who see wilderness as sacred could acquire wilderness through private efforts and put stringent prohibitions in place to maintain its spiritual purity as a place of worship, while those who do not subscribe to the tenets of the Environmental gospel would not be required to pay for the churches of those who do.

The right to secede and the right to privatize, both corollaries of the right to religious freedom and the separation of church and state, might lead to governments that look more like private organizations. The world's rich nations may find they have to make cash payments to the poorer governments in order to create an incentive to maintain biological diversity; preservation of a poor nation's forests could come to look much like a private profit-making activity. Private organizations, on the other hand, may start to look more like governments. As noted above, community associations are already assuming roles historically fulfilled by local governments. Secession might some day come to be recognized as a special form of privatization that occurs on a geographic basis, while other privatizations could associate

along non-geographic lines to create federations within large national agglomerations, joined together on a non-religious basis. Indeed, it is even possible that the "governments" of the fu-

Religious differences already exist. As a practical matter, the danger lies in attempting to impose a single vision on all the people in one religiously diverse area.

ture might consist of non-contiguous territories, or even be extraterritorial.

An Ecumenical Future

Contemporary secular religions promise peace and prosperity, but in practice all too often bring about more warfare. They also often fail on their own terms. Rights of secession and privatization might be the salvation of these secular religions.

Traditional Christianity remains vibrant in the U.S., where it has been denied state support and where freedom of religion has been guaranteed. In contrast, Christianity is almost a dead letter in much of Europe, despite widespread state support and restrictions on religious liberty. This is not as paradoxical as it seems: the attempt to impose religion tends to foster resentment, hostility, and outright opposition. Lacking rights to secession and privatization, adherents of secular religions have no alternative but to use force to attempt to gain an overarching hegemony. If the rights to secession and privatization were accepted, secular religionists could concentrate on making marginal improvements in their own communities, in rather the same way that Christian sects in America have.

The widespread acceptance of the right to secession and privatization might also be very good for traditional religions. It would give a new vitality to those religions currently suffering from the imperial dictates of one dominant creed, today most often secular. It would mitigate the tendency of a large, pluralistic society to impose

tight limits on all traditional religious activities, limits that reflect the least common denominator.

Some will say secession rights contain the seeds of social polarization, perhaps even inciting the religious violence that has plagued the past. In fact, the opposite is true. Religious differences *already* exist. There are *already* religious conflicts breaking out all over today's world. As a practical matter, the danger lies in attempting to impose a single vision on all the people in one religiously diverse area.

To be sure, there have been churches that engaged in practices that would today be unacceptable. Some religions might seek to deny emigration rights. Others might preach the conquest of their neighbors. Some might practice ritual human sacrifice. Such activities should still be prohibited (although prior consent might in some cases be a mitigating factor). A world of free secession requires a human community willing to defend a set of core values — including the right of secession itself. How far these core values should go, how we might come to an agreement on them, and what appropriate enforcement mechanisms might be are important topics which lie beyond the scope of this essay.

The basic governing vision of the twentieth century — that there is one correct scientific belief structure suitable for one correct scientific management of all people — has given rise to worldwide warfare, genocide, and other horrors. The high hopes of the early years of this century that scientific and economic progress would soon lead to the perfection of the human condition — to heaven on earth — have been dashed. If future conflicts, and future disasters, are to be avoided, the principle of separation of church and state must be taken to its logical conclusion: the recognition of the rights of secession and privatization.

The twenty-first century can be an age of peace and prosperity, with a new emphasis on global cosmopolitanism at one level and the small and homogeneous community at another, bound together by these new rights. Secession may guarantee the peace our great secular religions have striven for, but have been unable to deliver. □

Denial

Partial Recall

by David Ramsay Steele

Across the nation, men and women are being convicted of heinous crimes upon the recovery of long-lost memories. But memories can be faulty.

On September 22nd, 1969, eight-year-old Susan Mason was raped and murdered near her home in Foster City, California. Over 21 years later, on November 29th, 1990, George Franklin was found guilty of the crime.

Franklin was convicted because of the eyewitness testimony of his daughter Eileen, who claimed that she had seen her father kill little Susie, *and then forgotten about it for over 20 years*, after which the memory of that old event had come back to her in flashes until it was full and detailed. Eileen also remembered that her father had sexually molested her and her siblings.

Eileen's memory of the killing did not contain anything verifiable that could have been known only to an eyewitness. The murder had been reported in the press in 1969, and the account given by Eileen could have been put together from easily available facts, plus added elements that are impossible to check. Eileen's account had been adapted with successive retellings, to remove conflicts with facts known to the prosecution, and to incorporate details as she learned them from the prosecution.

Because of a judge's ruling, the defense was unable to explain to the jury that there was no independent corroboration of Eileen's memory of the murder. But Harry MacLean, who interviewed jurors as part of the research for his detailed account of the trial, considers that allowing the excluded evidence would probably not

have changed the verdict. So a man was convicted of murder purely on the testimony of a witness who claimed that she had seen the murder at age eight (Eileen was the same age as her friend the murdered girl), forgotten the whole thing for over 20 years, then recollected it in detail. Evidently the jury considered that an eyewitness testimony, delivered with an assured air and filled with graphic detail, by a self-assured and articulate person, did not lose much credibility through having been lost in oblivion for two decades.

Intimations of Immorality

Though it is an extreme example, the Franklin case is no isolated curiosity. Over the past six years it has become fashionable to suppose that child sex abuse is extremely common, that its memory is frequently "repressed" by its victims, that these "repressed memories" cause problems for the victims years later, and that the way to cure the problems is to resurrect the repressed memories and publicly humiliate the perpetrators — frequently the victims' parents.

A person consults a therapist, complaining of eating disorders,

panic attacks, gloomy feelings, low self-esteem, or other very common afflictions. The therapist tells the client that the root of the problem is a repressed memory of childhood sexual abuse. If the client protests that she can remember nothing of this, the therapist insists that the absence of memory is a symptom of "denial," itself evidence of the abuse trauma. The therapist urges the client to conjure up mental images of abusive incidents and dwell upon them. A few clients obligingly create such images pretty quickly and readily accept them as genuine memories. But most have to work hard and long to produce images which they at first find difficult to accept as true recollections.

The therapist explains that a quality of dreamlike unreality is a common characteristic of true memories under the influence of "denial," and that these fragmentary images must represent actual occurrences — as proved by the fact that the client is still depressed, or anxious, or overeating, or whatever. The therapist toils for months to persuade the client that the apparent fantasies are true memories. The therapist's air of confident certainty impresses the client, who as-

sumes that therapists know something other people don't about the human mind. The therapist exhorts the client to work on the fragmentary images, and every new detail is greeted by the therapist with warm approval, as a sign that the client is making progress and may be curable. An increasing number of therapists now use this approach with virtually every client.

After months of such treatment, many clients will have crystal-clear "memories" of their childhood abuse.

Prospective jurors who were skeptical about the possibility that memories were repressed and then recovered, or even about psychiatry generally, were excused from the jury.

They are then ready to spurn, shun, and sue the perpetrators, often their flabbergasted and agonized parents.

Legal safeguards built up over centuries, in recognition of the fact that memories become distorted with the passage of time, are now being dismantled. Statutes of limitation and other laws have been modified to permit and encourage suits for damages on the basis of decades-old incidents supposedly recalled in therapy. The state of Washington changed its laws in 1989 to permit recovery of damages for injuries resulting from child sexual abuse at any time within three years of remembering the abuse. Many other states have followed suit, and most states have by now at least begun the process of similarly changing the law.

Legislators, police, and other influential people have swallowed without a qualm the theory that there are such things as "repressed memories" which can "come back" after years of being forgotten. During the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings, one senator asked Anita Hill about the discrepancies between her earlier and more recent accounts of her sexual harassment, and helpfully offered the suggestion that she had "repressed" some of the memories. Professor Hill immediately concurred that, yes, she

must have repressed them.

In the jury selection for the Franklin trial, those prospective jurors who were skeptical about the possibility that memories could be repressed and then recovered, or even about psychiatry generally, were excused from the jury, whereas no move was made to excuse those who thought that recovery of repressed memories is feasible, and it was known that at least one juror was a zealous proponent of this theory. This is just as though, in a trial for murder by casting evil spells, prospective jurors were interrogated about their theological views, and only those committed to a belief in the efficacy of witchcraft were permitted to serve.

In Hollywood, the discovery of one's sexual abuse in childhood has rapidly taken its hallowed place alongside crystals, channeling, and politics in the style of Kim Il Sung. To those who can remember their past lives in the Neolithic epoch, or that even more remote era when Bolshevism was the future that worked, remembering that your parents abused you in infancy is a piece of cake.

The Q'ran of this psychotherapeutic jihad is *The Courage to Heal* by Bass and Davis, a manual for producing whole new memories of long-forgotten childhood molestation. Among this book's confident assertions: "If you think you were abused and your life shows the symptoms, then [even though you don't recollect it] you were" (p. 22). The authors maintain that "demands for proof are unreasonable," and strongly encourage the deliberate whipping up of hatred against the supposed perpetrators: "You may dream of murder or castration. . . . Let yourself imagine it to your heart's content" (p. 128). With evident regret, they counsel against actual killing or maiming, and recommend clients to "get strong by suing," then provide a list of lawyers eager to take up such cases. There is a chapter entirely devoted to conjuring up lost memories and a chapter entirely devoted to convincing yourself that these conjured-up memories are true. In all this book's 528 pages, there is not a word of caution that the memories produced may not be authentic.

Last Year In Manhattan Beach

The vogue for adults to recover memories of childhood molestation coincides with an enormous proliferation of accusations and prosecutions for recent sexual molestation of children. Frequently, as in the notorious McMartin and Edenton cases, alleged child victims are handed over to dedicated psychotherapists, who browbeat the children for hours on end, often to the point of physical exhaustion, demanding that the children say that the accused molested them. The theory is that the children are "in denial" and need to be helped to remember. Even so, it generally takes weeks or months of unremitting interrogation, in which the therapists work hand in glove with prosecutors, before the children produce the story the prosecutors want.

These two phenomena — the intensive interrogation of children to get them to "disclose" incidents of molestation and the intensive interrogation of an adult client's memory to get that client to "remember" incidents of molestation — have their similarities and their differences. The most obvious dif-

The popular view that we store every experience in our minds, but require special and difficult techniques to retrieve those experiences, has not been borne out by research.

ference is that in cases involving adult clients, it is usually undisputed that, throughout the years immediately before consulting a therapist, the client has no knowledge of any past molestation. This is explained by saying that the client has repressed the memory. By contrast, in the case of recent sex abuse allegations, the therapists need not take the view that the children have forgotten the molestation. The children could remember it, but be too embarrassed, scared, or cautious to mention it. Obviously, this sometimes happens in genuine cases of child molestation.

To many psychotherapists, the dis-

inction between forgetting and being afraid to talk is unimportant. Both are covered by the label "denial," which obscures everything and explains nothing, since in plain English a denial can be true and most commonly is. This is typical of the way in which people are persuaded to believe in repressed memories because of something quite different (in this case, being ashamed or scared to talk) that is made to sound similar.

Pressuring children to say that something happened recently and pressuring adults to remember that something happened long ago are alike in this respect: either method may result in the creation of a belief, in the child's or the adult client's mind, that something happened when in fact it did not. Although psychotherapy of small children may not begin with any claim that a genuine memory has been lost, it may, just like psychotherapy of an adult client, result in the manufacture of a counterfeit memory.

Memory à la Mode

A significant proportion of these stories, both from children and from adults, involve accounts of Satanic cults. Belief in the existence of such cults has been proliferating since the early 1970s, but was boosted by the publication in 1980 of the influential yet wildly implausible "survivor story," *Michelle Remembers*. Such real or imagined phenomena as ritual killing of animals and of blonde virgins, desecration of cemeteries, backward-masking of messages in heavy metal ditties, Goth make-up, drug-dealing, pornography, Dungeons & Dragons, missing children, and witches in children's literature are now routinely attributed to Satanic cults.

Intensive investigation of many incidents attributed to Satanic cults has always failed to find corroborative evidence, and in most cases has demonstrated the reports to be false. There are rare, isolated murderers who avow that Satan is giving them instructions to kill people, just as there are similar murderers who get their orders from God, the FBI, or Martians. There are groups of teenage daredevils, as ignorant of Satanism as of any doctrinal system,

who daub signs in public places. There are associations of violent criminals who use torture as a means of persuasion, and are sometimes also superstitious. There are avowedly Satanist groups totalling a few hundred members in the U.S., most notably Anton LeVey's Church of Satan, which appear to be thoroughly bourgeois and law-abiding. The Satanic cults which keep popping up in recovered memories,



vast networks of outwardly respectable people who secretly practice the ritual rape, torture, and sacrifice of animals and children, can be distinguished from all of the above.

One example, Gail Feldman's *Lessons in Evil, Lessons from the Light*, must suffice here to give the flavor of the kind of thing that has recently become respectable. Feldman's book, bearing effulgent blurbs from prominent writers and doctors, was published by a prestigious house and launched with a lavishly funded nationwide author tour. It is an account by a psychotherapist of one client, "Barbara," whose initial symptoms are that she feels tense during sex and sometimes gets angry with her daughter.

Dr Feldman immediately under-

stands that these symptoms can only have arisen from childhood sex abuse. Barbara has vague feelings, which she may have picked up from previous therapists, that she might have been sexually abused in childhood, but no memories. Using hypnosis, the therapist takes the patient back to the age of five, and the five-year-old reports the ritual killing of a cat by her grandfather, who makes her eat the cat's heart and drink its blood. Though Barbara is at first disinclined to accept that this scene is a real memory, the therapist knows better and reassures the patient that it really happened.

Feldman reads *Michelle Remembers* to find out what Satanic cults are all about, and then elicits many more macabre disclosures. It turns out that Barbara's childhood was crowded with incident. It's chop, chop, saw, saw, and scream, scream, with corpses both whole and in pieces, both freshly cropped and nicely matured, liberally bestrewn around the family hearth. Snakes in bodily orifices and drinking of urine are among the more prosaic of the everyday occurrences of Barbara's exciting home life.

Déjà Vu

Toward the end of the story, the patient is regressed to a prior existence, and learns that her daughter is the reincarnation of her father in that previous life. Told this by

Barbara, Dr Feldman responds: "'Whew.' I gripped the sides of my chair. 'That is really something. . .'" This finding, naturally, explains Barbara's anger towards her daughter, and the anger then goes away. We also learn that Feldman herself regressed to a previous life as an American Indian woman, and on one of these regressions is spotted by one of her current friends, also regressing — there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio — to the same eighteenth-century Amerindian village. Informed of this by the friend, Dr Feldman reports: "My mouth fell open" — but not, it's clear, with incredulity. In that previous life, Feldman died in childbirth, and this explains her hostility to her husband (the one in her current life), which also evaporates immediately

upon the discovery of its centuries-old cause.

Soon the recovered memory therapists will begin to be called to account for the misery that they and their infinitely gullible clients have unleashed upon this society. They will undoubtedly jettison memories of previous lives pretty quickly, and will denounce these stories as the work of a tiny minority of incompetents. Then, more hesitantly, they will dissociate themselves from the Satanic cult fables. It is

The repressed memories story is part of our folklore. It simultaneously appeals to self-pity, self-exculpation, and self-importance.

therefore helpful to understand right now that the quality of all evidence for recovered memories of childhood sexual molestation is *precisely the same in every respect* as the quality of the evidence for recovered memories of past lives or Satanic rituals.

Why do so many therapists' clients produce memories of being raped and sodomized, while a substantial minority (some say one in five) also produce memories of Satanic rituals, and a smaller number produce memories of previous lives? The answer is simplicity itself. Memories recovered conform to the views of the therapist. Many therapists believe in Satanic cults, and all *their* clients produce memories of satanic cults. Comparatively few believe in reincarnation, but all *their* clients produce memories of past lives. (Bass and Davis view any past-life recollections as symptoms of denial, and keep the clients working on these memories to move the recalled incidents into this life.)

Since reincarnation is absurd, and since there are no Satanic cults, as the controversy flares and the recovered memory therapists start to feel the heat, these stories will probably melt away. Child molestation actually does occur, so this more banal story is difficult to dismiss out of hand in any particular case, and this kind of false accusation is harder to combat. And

parallel with all the great witch-hunts of history, anyone who comes to the defense of those accused of sex abuse can be defeated by the simple ploy of accusing them of sex abuse.

You Must Remember This

The juggernaut of ill-founded accusations against innocent people is still accelerating, and can be expected to gather momentum for years to come. Resistance is growing too. The False Memory Syndrome Foundation was founded in February 1992, to assist victims of unsubstantiated accusations arising from allegedly recovered memories, and to promote research into the whole question of manufactured memories. By mid-1993, FMSF had more than 5,000 families on file, and cases continue to flood in week by week.

Unfortunately, one of the first fruits of this resistance has been escalating demands for stiffer licensing requirements for psychotherapists. Aside from the inefficiency engendered by government licensing — as well as the sheer insolence of a government telling me who I can pay to give me advice — such demands are misconceived in a more specific way. It's assumed that psychotherapists can do things which are so important that insufficiently qualified people ought not to be allowed to try to do them. The truth is that psychotherapists cannot do these things at all, or cannot do them any better than priests, rabbis, clairvoyants, bank loan officers, or radio talk show hosts.

If a person says that something happened to him last night, or 20 years ago, he may be telling the truth, or lying, or mistaken. *Psychologists, psychiatrists, and other psychotherapists are no better able than you or I to determine which is the case.* Research has shown that therapists are actually rather poor at discriminating truth from falsehood (and they are often not very truthful themselves, when describing what occurs in their therapy sessions). However, there simply does not exist a body of technique which permits anybody to discern whether what someone says is the truth — beyond the well-known methods we may all adopt, such as trying to find independent corroboration, examining the story for plausibility and consistency,

noticing whether related statements by the same person appear to be true, and so forth.

If a child says that Mr X took her to the Moon in a spaceship and raped her, a psychotherapist may tell us that the trip to the Moon is false and the rape a reality. But the psychotherapist is no better placed to make this judgment than you or I. The psychotherapist's statement adds nothing to the child's testimony.

Memories We've Been Sharing

According to a popular theory, the mind has an unconscious as well as a conscious part. All kinds of strange things may lurk in the unconscious, unknown to the individual, but capable of influencing his feelings and behavior. All our experiences are recorded accurately in the unconscious — as though we contained a perfect videotape record of everything that ever happened to us. If we have any emotional troubles, it is probably due to terrible memories of what befell us in childhood — memories of which we are entirely unaware, because we have "repressed" them as too horrible to contemplate. The cure lies in remembering them again. In one way or another, the thing to do is to explore those terrible things that happened to us in childhood. The exact technique recommended for accomplishing this varies widely, but the general theoretical framework usually goes unquestioned.

Where did this theory come from and how was it conveyed from a small group of intellectuals to the masses? A careful historical investigation would be necessary to ascertain the complete answer, but a great boost undoubtedly came from the activities of Sigmund Freud. I'm not sure just how many elements of the currently popular theory of the mind were widely believed before Freud, though all of them were accepted by some psychiatrists, and the belief that all experiences are stored somewhere in the mind has ancient roots.

Freud's doctrine, known as psychoanalysis, was launched upon the world with evangelical zeal. The new faith found some disciples in Europe, but more critics. It encountered less

opposition in the United States, where it rapidly infiltrated popular culture and made a living for thousands of psychoanalysts. Today we live in a post-Freudian culture, in which many questionable tenets of Freudism are taken for gospel by the public and the media.

These Foolish Things

Freud's specific theories include the famous Oedipus Complex, the theory that every little boy wants to kill his father and make love to his mother. To get the hang of Freudian dream interpretation it's enough to bear in mind that a bunch of flowers or a gate always means the female genitals, anything pointed or cylindrical always means the penis, gold coins always mean feces, and so forth.

Although such specific details had many adherents for a while, and figures like Dr Bird in *The Caine Mutiny* became very thick upon the ground, the Freudian movement has always generated numerous heterodox offshoots which abandon or dilute these picturesque flights of fancy, while re-

In Hollywood, the discovery of one's sexual abuse in childhood has rapidly taken its place alongside crystals, channeling, and politics in the style of Kim Il Sung.

taining the fundamental Freudian model of the mind, in which present neurotic problems are caused by disguised memories. Like Judaism, psychoanalysis has affected the world most profoundly through the intermediation of its apostasies and heresies.

For many years Freudians gave a standard account of the manner in which Freud came up with the fundamentals of psychoanalysis. According to this tale, Freud had a number of patients who told him they had been sexually molested in childhood. At first, Freud naïvely concluded that real incidents of molestation were the root of their troubles. Later, Freud decided that these childhood molestations were

indeed the source of the problem, but were in fact imaginary — they were fantasies of the patients. A few years ago, various feminist writers announced that they had uncovered a scandal about Freud: the stories Freud's patients had told him were actually true, and Freud had lacked the courage to offend the parents or other grown-ups who were the perpetrators. Allegations that Freud had "suppressed the truth" harmonized well with the galloping frenzy anent alleged child molestation, and a hurricane of enraged name-calling blew up.

This argy-bargy was all beside the point. Freud did indeed suppress the truth — by claiming that his patients had recounted stories of childhood molestation. As we now know from the researches of several writers, especially Allen Esterson, Freud's patients did not tell him any such thing. The episodes of child seduction were invented by Freud to explain his patients' symptoms, and then recounted by Freud to the bemused patients. Childhood "seduction" was a fantasy, not in the unconscious minds of the "patients," but in the conscious mind of the "doctor."

Early in his career, Freud was struck by the problem that he knew of no way to determine which of his patients' recollections were true and which were fantasies. Freud never did find a way, and neither has anyone else, but Freud cut the Gordian knot by postulating that *fantasized traumas were just as important as real traumas*, and this became the keystone of psychoanalysis. This comedy is even more richly droll because the "recollections" were not what the "patients" claimed to remember, but were all made up by Dr Freud in the first place. Verily, a prince among mountebanks!

Don't Forget to Forget?

Is there such a thing as a repressed memory? Recent accounts of research and theory are sometimes worded in a conciliatory and eclectic fashion, to give the impression that repression may be supported by the evidence. But on closer reading, such accounts merely note that some findings are compatible with parts of the repressed memories theory. For instance, people often forget things, and sometimes

later recall what they have forgotten. People tend to remember pleasant occurrences in preference to unpleasant ones. Extreme shocks may cause forgetfulness of the events surrounding the shock. Adults have an almost complete amnesia covering their first few years of life, and this includes any traumatic events.

Such conclusions do not substantiate the distinctive features of the repression theory: that we forget events because they are too horrible to con-

If the client protests that she can remember nothing of this, the therapist insists that the absence of memory is a symptom of "denial," itself evidence of the abuse trauma.

template; that we *cannot* remember these forgotten events by any normal process of casting our minds back but *can* reliably retrieve them by special techniques; that these forgotten events, banished from consciousness, strive to enter it in disguised forms; that forgotten events have the power to cause apparently unrelated problems in our lives, which can be cured by excavating and reliving the forgotten events.

The repressed memories story is part of our folklore. It simultaneously appeals to self-pity, self-exculpation, and self-importance. It is particularly relished by literary people, whose standards of argument are frequently undemanding, and who often find the post-Freudian mythology of symbols and childhood influences wonderfully stimulating. But as for the story's relation to the available evidence, it is in part refuted, in part seriously in doubt, in part untested, and in part untestable. There is no evidence that an upsetting early experience, remembered or forgotten, real or imagined, has any great bearing on the course of one's subsequent life.

We tend to forget those experiences that made little impression because they seemed unimportant at the time. Though most of us remember pleasant experiences in preference to unpleas-

ant ones, this is because we prefer to think about pleasant experiences, not because we can't bear to think about unpleasant ones. We also remember important experiences in preference to unimportant ones. Consequently, we will probably remember an important unpleasant experience. Gloomy people, prone to depression, tend to think gloomy thoughts and have better recall for unpleasant events — the opposite of what we would expect if their problems were due to repressing memories of unpleasant occurrences.

Individuals who have been interned in concentration camps, tortured, caught up in some natural disaster, or accidentally trapped for hours in a terrifying situation have no trouble remembering that these ordeals occurred. One study followed up adults who, as children aged 5–10, had witnessed the murder of their parents. Not one of them had the slightest difficulty in clearly remembering the event. There is a strand of folklore which acknowledges that harrowing experiences are difficult to forget — an account of the Titanic disaster was appropriately entitled *A Night to Remember* — and this is the strand that matches observable facts.

Those few studies cited to show that people forget major traumatic episodes are at best inconclusive. It proves little, for instance, to ask people whether they now remember something they had once forgotten for a while, since we have no assurance that their present memory is accurate. Furthermore, we often don't give some incident a thought for years, and in this sense "forget it," but are able to recall it if the occasion arises. Even if we forget something in the sense of being unable to recall it, this doesn't prove that the memory was repressed. We forget things all the time because we attach little importance to continuing to think about them.

We forget most of what happens in the first three or four years of our lives, including being sexually abused if that happened, but although it can't be ruled out that some recollections of early events may pop up after years of having been forgotten, there are no reliable techniques for recovering accurate memories of these forgotten years.

This amnesia is perhaps due to the physiology of brain development; as far as we know, it is more or less the same for almost everyone, no matter how idyllic or distressing their childhoods.

There is also a conceptual problem with the repression scenario. If a memory is stored but willfully not retrieved, consciousness has to recognize the memory in order to know not to re-

It generally takes weeks or months of unrelenting interrogation, in which the therapists work hand in glove with prosecutors, before the children produce the story the prosecutors want.

trieve it. But if that memory is recognizable, it must, one would think, be retrievable.

Thanks for the Memory

Our tendency to forget what is unpleasant more readily than what is pleasant is generally harmless and sometimes beneficial. If you dwell on a past traumatic event, you will probably remember it better. You may also make yourself miserable. There is no evidence for the popular idea that in order to make your peace with some disturbing event you must vividly relive it, work through it, or "come to terms with it." Your past experiences are powerless to cause you any pain or problem; only your willful and morbid dwelling on them can hurt you. Reports of concentration camp survivors show that many of them have no long-term emotional ill-effects — these are the ones who "put it out of their minds" as an irrelevant distraction and focus on their current and future projects. Similarly, it is of no great moment whether people believe you or not. If you were actually molested and other people are now skeptical, you may feel that insult has been piled upon injury. It would be nicer if they believed you, but if they disbelieve you, that's one of many disappointments of the kind that life has in store

for all of us. Neither the fact that you were molested nor the fact that other people won't believe you were molested is any excuse for snarling that extra slice of pizza.

If you don't dwell on a past traumatic event, the memory will slowly fade. With each year that passes, your recollection of the event (in the event that you hypothetically choose to make an effort to recall it) will become less and less reliable. If you don't think about it, the memory is not doing anything to you. It is not going to make you lose your sleep, or overeat, or work too hard, or become anxious — such everyday hazards are the normal lot of human beings, have nothing to do with repressed memories, and are usually not symptoms of any illness.

The Shock of Non-Recognition

People are sometimes inclined to believe in memory repression because of the well-known phenomenon of traumatic (or post-traumatic) amnesia. Individuals involved in serious accidents occasionally have a complete memory blank for the accident, and sometimes for a period preceding the accident as well. Or they may remember something of the event, but forget important details. Bouts of extreme pain are sometimes forgotten. The most common and clearly identifiable cases involve a physical assault upon the brain, as in electroshock therapy, alcoholic intoxication, or a head injury. In other cases, the same result seems to be produced by an emotional shock such as intense pain or fear.

These examples don't support the repressed memory theory. It is fairly clear that amnesia due to a physical interference with the brain arises because of the shock itself, and not because the shocking event would be too horrific to think about. It seems quite reasonable to extend this to cases of pure emotional shock: the amnesia could, for example, be due to interference with attention. You cannot remember anything unless you pay attention to it — this is why more than 90% of Americans cannot accurately describe either face of a U.S. penny, and most cannot even pick out the correct penny in a multiple-choice test. Extreme pain

or fear may interfere with the capacity to pay attention.

The superb thriller *Mirage* (1965), starring Gregory Peck, illustrates the conventional wisdom, with a psychiatrist and others telling the hero that he can't remember because he doesn't want to. Whether by accident or design, the action of the movie does not require this interpretation.

The idea that we forget things because we find them too horrible to think about appeals to the primitive theory that remembering is reliving. In fact, a memory of a harrowing experience need not be a harrowing memory, and normally, if the original experience were distressing, the memory of it would be much less so, if distressing at all. Nothing is ever too terrible to contemplate. Would you rather have another root canal or remember 20 times that occasion when you had a root canal?

I can remember such episodes as the time I was attacked and robbed by three ruffians in a subway station. This perturbed me while it was occurring, but subsequently I could go through

To many psychotherapists, the distinction between forgetting and being afraid to talk is unimportant.

the incident in my mind with no flicker of alarm. Yet if I think carefully about a story I once read in which, following a rock collapse in a mineshaft, a man squirmed for miles through a pipeline about 18 inches in diameter, I will break out in the proverbial cold sweat, though nothing like this has ever happened to me. Despite such evidence from introspection, many therapists believe that deep emotion accompanying the "recovery" of a "memory" confirms its authenticity. I say that any powerful emotional display is fair grounds for suspecting the memory to be counterfeit.

In traumatic amnesia, there is generally an awareness of a memory gap, and this gap is in itself often worrying. Although the individual loses all recollection for a certain span of time, he re-

calls the end of the period before the amnesia and the beginning of the period after the amnesia, and is usually in no doubt that something is wrong, something is missing.

It could be argued that awareness of a gap arises from the fact that other people talk about the traumatic occurrence, or talk about the unexplained circumstances in which the individual is discovered after the traumatic occurrence. If the trauma were a secret rape, the victim might therefore not become aware of the gap. I don't think that this is convincing; however, many of the recovered memory cases concern recollections of repeated episodes of abuse over several years. The victim would therefore have to forget each incident singly, or at some point forget several incidents collectively. Many of these incidents are supposed to involve the most bizarre concomitants (repeated ritual killings of babies are standard issue), and are supposed to have occurred in a day-to-day context where family discussion of the atrocities is quite frequent. The victim must therefore forget very numerous chunks of time over a long period without any awareness that there is a gap in memory. In cases of atrocities against several siblings simultaneously, each of the siblings has to have the same lack of recall without any suspicion of a gap. There is just no evidence that anything remotely like this has ever occurred or ever could occur.

Down Memory Lane

When I say "no evidence," I mean no evidence apart from the memories themselves — memories supposedly recovered by alleged victims under the spell of psychotherapists who passionately believe in the recovered memory theory. These therapists will indeed often say that there is "abundant clinical evidence" for recovery of repressed memories, but whenever they say anything like this, they mean only the ever-proliferating examples of clients who produce uncorroborated stories, usually after intensive persuasion by therapists. In the same way, a professional astrologer can honestly say that he has abundant clinical evidence that people's destinies conform to their birth signs. What could conceivably happen in consultations that

would count as evidence against the psychotherapist's or the astrologer's theories?

Recovered memory therapists usually maintain that the accuracy of the recovered memories is beyond question, and react with indignation to any suggestion that they might be artifacts of therapy. They cite the clarity and detail of the memories, the emotional display that accompanies their recovery, the similarity of different clients' experiences, and the absence of any motive to concoct false stories. Exactly these arguments are advanced by defenders of other tall tales, including sightings

Nothing is ever too terrible to contemplate. Would you rather have another root canal or remember 20 times that occasion when you had a root canal?

of ghosts, conversations with the dead, religious visions, recollections of past or future lives, and UFO abductions.

I have not been able to find a publicly recorded example of an indubitably repressed memory which has been recovered and then proved correct (Wakefield and Underwager review and criticize all the stock anecdotes). In order to qualify, the memory would have to be of a post-infancy event of such a dramatic nature that common-or-garden forgetting would be ruled out. Given the hundreds of thousands of recovered memory cases, we would expect to find some cases that could be independently corroborated. In other child molestation cases, where recovery of repressed memory is *not* involved, pretty clear proof capable of lasting for years does occasionally turn up — for example, a pornographic movie featuring the victim and the perpetrator. And the bizarre quality of many of the current spate of recovered memories makes independent proof quite likely. If babies have been dispatched by the dozen, like Thanksgiving turkeys, we might expect once in a while to turn up the infant remains that would confirm a recovered memo-

ry, but this has never happened.

Professor Lenore Terr, a vocal advocate of repressed memories who testified eloquently at the Franklin trial, maintains that isolated instances of trauma will be remembered, but numerous repeated instances may be repressed. This surmise, which has not been corroborated by any research, is arresting because of its conflict with common sense: one would think that the greater the number of incidents,

Like Judaism, psychoanalysis has affected the world most profoundly through the intermediation of its apostasies and heresies.

the more likely they would be remembered. Terr's proposal can be seen as an attempt to reconcile the repressed memories theory with the everyday observation that individuals generally do recall any uniquely horrible experience they have had since their fifth birthday. Cases of repeated trauma are rarer and more difficult to pin down, but casual reading and conversation suggest that people beaten by their parents for years, or trapped in wars or the worst kinds of prisons, can indeed recall the kinds of unpleasant things that happened, though they may be hazy as to details. Speculations like Terr's will be tested many times by research studies in the next few years, and they will be reclassified from unsubstantiated to disproven, or I will eat my hat. It is already noticeable that, among psychologists, researchers tend to be skeptical about repression, while the believers tend to be clinicians. Clinicians who pay no heed to controlled studies always run the risk of reading their own theories into their clients' histories, and thus repeatedly finding worthless confirmation of those theories.

Among My Souvenirs

One of the reasons for ready public acceptance of the colorful yarns spun by recovered memory clients is that people generally overrate the reliability of memory, and one of the reasons

for this overrating is the representation of memory in narrative works.

The novelist always strives to convince the reader of the story's authenticity, and many readers would regard the depiction of memories as fallible as people's memories actually are as a cheap trick, like wild coincidences or supernatural intervention. This is especially so with murder mysteries: the reader would feel cheated if recollections related in the story were dismissed as erroneous at the end, unless misperception of the conjuring-trick type were employed. Mysteries frequently involve elaborate and detailed memories of events years before the capable detective begins to ask questions, but these memories, as memories, are virtually always impeccable.

An outstanding exception is the corpus of 82 Perry Mason novels by Erle Stanley Gardner, which frequently focus on the fallibility of eyewitness testimony. In his own experience as a defense attorney, Gardner became well-versed in police trickery. Mason remarks that the worst kind of evidence is eyewitness testimony, and the best kind is circumstantial. At first blush this may seem paradoxical, because juries must rely on somebody's eyewitness observations of the circumstantial evidence. But there is no paradox. Circumstantial evidence usually endures in physical objects, and can be looked at by many different people with different prejudices on repeated occasions, whereas eyewitness testimony often relies on a few people's rapid interpretations of an unexpected, evanescent episode.

Gardner fully understood what has now been experimentally demonstrated: that it is easy to get someone to identify the police's nominee by suggestion and by letting the witness see the suspect, for example in a mugshot. The witness will then confuse the recollection of the photograph with a recollection of the crime. The witness will be hesitant at first, but will become more convinced as time passes. Note that, once the process is complete, the witness does *not* sense that the suspect is familiar and carelessly *infer* that this familiarity arises from seeing the suspect commit the crime. To the contrary, the witness distinctly "remembers" the

suspect committing the crime. A bogus memory has been implanted.

The outstanding treatment of memory in literature is Proust's marvellous *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. Proust believed that it is only when remembered that events take on their full emotional resonance. Of course! Once the memories have been suitably remodeled they are much more satisfying than when they were merely accurate. There would be no excuse for fiction if it did not improve upon real life.

Nowhere in Proust have I found an unambiguous declaration that departures from accuracy give memories their magical potency, much less that the lucidity of a recollection is insufficient grounds for supposing it to be true. There is no dispute that Proust's account of memory from a subjective standpoint, and the architectural lyricism of his writing, make this work one of the wonders of the world. But for what it's worth, Proust's memory was terrible. *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu* contains many quotations, for example, and they are nearly all wrong.

Many writers have invested too much faith in memory, with suspicious results. To mention only one conspicu-

Neither the fact that you were molested nor the fact that other people won't believe you were molested is any excuse for snarfing that extra slice of pizza.

ous case, Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" is a beautiful exercise in self-deception. The "glory and the freshness of a dream" don't characterize infantile perceptions of the world, but sentimental adult reconstructions of those perceptions.

False memory occurs in classic works only in the form of some evil potion or spell. In Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, Siegfried downs a draft which makes him forget all about Brünhilde and therefore feel virtuously free to marry Gudrun. His true memory returns, wholly intact, when he is

dosed with the appropriate potion. Such stories reinforce the popular view that there has to be an altogether exceptional explanation for any major mistakes of memory, that the true memory is always "there," and that it can be brought to consciousness by some arcane means, whereupon its truth is self-evident.

In science fiction, false memory was brought to the fore by A.E. Van Vogt in *The World of Null-A* (1945). This stupendous work of imagination stimulated one of the divine voices of this century, Philip K. Dick, who began to explore false memory and other systematically fallacious forms of awareness in such stories as *Time Out of Joint* (1959). Dick's most brilliant employment of the false memory theme is his little gem, "We Can Remember it for You Wholesale" (1966), the point of departure for the Schwarzenegger movie *Total Recall*.

For all its artistic perfection, "We Can Remember it for You Wholesale" endorses the popular view that all our experiences are accurately stored somewhere in the mind and that there is some intrinsic difference between a false memory and a true one. Dick's story freely uses the terms "false memory" and "extra-factual memory." It's interesting to speculate whether such terms were ever employed in this sense any earlier, but we can be sure that they are going to become familiar to everyone over the next few decades — one of many cases where the future is more certain than the past.

The movie *Last Year in Marienbad* (1961), an essay on the flashback, shows how someone can be in acute doubt as to what happened a year ago, and, in such scenes as the "crumbling balustrade," how fantasy can become confounded with memory.

No doubt many other examples can be found, but outside science fiction and stories with an amnesia or hypnosis gimmick, little attention has been paid to the false memory phenomenon. That is about to change.

Memories are Made of This

According to recent psychological research, *memory is imagination*. In remembering, we don't consult a videotape recording somewhere in our brains — no such recording exists.

Even though we remember some events accurately, we do so by reconstructing images of those events from incomplete traces, and we rely heavily on our interpretive theories, which change over time, modifying the memories themselves. If our theory tells us that something had to have happened, we may well distinctly remember that this very thing did happen, and picture it happening in our mind's eye just as

With evident regret Bass and Davis counsel against actual killing or maiming, and recommend clients to "get strong by suing."

though we had witnessed it. Of course, some people are more fanciful than others, and it has been claimed that about 5% of the population, because of the way their brains are wired, have daydreams of such vividness that they can be mistaken for genuine occurrences in the physical world.

The popular view that we store every experience somewhere in our minds, but require special and difficult techniques to retrieve those experiences, has not been borne out by research. We fail to remember, or subsequently forget, most of our experiences, and no techniques exist for *reliably* recovering memories that have been lost.

When we recollect something that seemed significant to us at the time, and has seemed significant ever since, and when we do so in a spontaneous, unpressured situation, our memories are overwhelmingly accurate for the main points, and somewhat less so for details. But when we have difficulty remembering, and rack our brains in an effort to remember, the accuracy of recall drops sharply — the racking of our brains will eventually turn up "memories," and these may possess a compelling verisimilitude, but they will be largely false. What often saves us from manufacturing counterfeit memories is that when we can't remember something, we sensibly accept that the memory is lost, and give up trying. If for some reason we don't give up, *we*

will eventually generate images, and if we are somehow convinced that these images are veridical, *we will* eventually turn them into lifelike memories.

Hypnosis has often been employed in an attempt to elicit memories of the details of incidents. Occasionally, an accurate detail will be produced, but more often, a "convincing" (that's to say, vivid) detail will be elicited that is later shown to be false. For example, hypnosis may get a witness to "remember" a car registration number, but it will most often turn out to be wrong. Hypnotic regression is employed to recover memories of past lives and abductions by aliens in UFOs. It can also be used to "progress" people into the future — it's easy for the subject to recall himself rich and healthy in retirement, or commanding intergalactic battleships a thousand years hence, but alas, a little more tricky to remember next month's commodity prices or Derby winner. As far as accuracy goes, hypnosis is no different from trying hard to remember something you can't remember; the rigmarole of hypnosis merely encourages you to keep trying. The same applies to "truth drugs" like sodium amytal and sodium pentothal. They will increase the output of apparent memories, but many of these will be false.

The folklore tenet that all our experiences are tucked away somewhere in our minds, if only we could get at them, is upheld by the belief that some people have "photographic memories." Certainly there are rare individuals whose memories are much better than other people's, but the record of the most spectacular and most famous of these — "S," studied by Luria — shows that his memory feats were accomplished by an extraordinary facility with mnemonics. "S" was essentially doing what you and I do when we refer to the word "HOMES" to recall the names of the Great Lakes, only the stories he made up to help memorize his material were sometimes far more complex than the material itself.

Ah, Yes, I Remember It Well

We habitually assume that our memories are dependable, but occasionally we reminisce with friends over something that happened years

ago, or we are called upon in a court hearing to give a detailed account of precisely what occurred. On such occasions we find to our disgust that other people's recollections are pitifully erroneous, and often spectacularly so.

In a series of experiments, Elizabeth Loftus and her colleagues reduced the creation of false memories to a practical technique. The experiments began modestly, as investigations of the reliability of eyewitness testimony. Subjects would be shown a movie of an auto accident, then their accuracy of recall would be tested. If a false assumption were put into one of the questions ("How fast was the car going when it passed the barn?" when there had been no barn), a high percentage of subjects would later recall a barn. Attempts by other researchers to show that the true memories are there all the time — that the leading questions merely influence what subjects report, not what they "really remember" — have been neatly refuted by several elegant experiments.

From these unambitious beginnings, which merely demonstrate more rigorously what has long been known, and do not transcend what was familiar to Erle Stanley Gardner, the implantation of false memories has ascended to greater heights. Memories of entirely bogus events have been put into the minds of experimental subjects. A man was encouraged to recall childhood occurrences, with the help of close family, under the direction of experimenters. One of these events — that of being lost in a supermarket — was made up by the psychologists. Once the subject had recalled this fictitious event, he continued to work on it for more details, which obligingly came. At the end of the experiment, the subject was asked to guess which of his recollections was false, and picked one of the true memories. Told of the implantation of the false memory of being lost, the subject at first refused to believe it, citing the clarity, detail, and emotionally upsetting quality of the recollection as proof that it must have happened.

A striking instance of implantation of false memories involved Paul Ingram, chair of the county Republican committee in Olympia, Washington, who was arrested for child abuse in

1988. He at first denied everything and was told he was "in denial." A psychologist and a Christian minister worked with detectives by suggesting to Ingram some incident and having the concerned and compliant Ingram ponder and visualize that incident. After five months of interrogation, Ingram began to "remember" and confess to numerous bizarre sexual crimes, including his involvement in — ho, hum — a Satanic cult which had polished off 25 babies.

Richard Ofshe, a social psychologist employed by the prosecution, smelled a rat, and tested the accuracy of Ingram's confessions by fabricating an incident and suggesting this to Ingram in exactly the same manner.

Recovered memory therapy is an audacious folly which already rivals the cruelties of the Inquisition and appears set to catch up with Stalin's purges.

Sure enough, Ingram at first couldn't remember it, but after a while increasingly elaborate memories began to appear, and eventually Ingram wrote a detailed statement confessing, with telling and authentic touches, to the story that Ofshe had made up.

There are well-documented cases where evidently sincere confessions have been subsequently refuted. Most juries don't grasp how malleable is memory, and hence how worthless as evidence is a confession to a crime, if made after considerable pressure and absent verifiable details which the confessor could have known only if he were the culprit. In general, it is a good rule of thumb that any conflict between a person's memory at one date and his memory at a later date should be resolved in favor of the earlier recollection — and this includes those cases where the memory is absent at the earlier date.

If Memory Serves

Induced, implanted, or artificially created memories are now called "false memories," but they might — for example, by sheer coincidence — corre-

spond to fact, just as a false clue left at the scene of a crime by a meddling person might happen to point to the real criminal. However, these memories are still false *as memories*.

On the other hand, a true memory may be quite false. This can occur because people's perceptions of events depend upon fallible interpretations. It was long ago demonstrated, in experiments which have been repeated many times, that if a dramatic event is staged unexpectedly for a roomfull of people, who are then immediately requested to record what they have witnessed, the accounts are filled with errors, often quite bizarre ones. A false perception may be truly remembered — this possibility should be distinguished from false memory. The well-known contradictions in different individuals' interpretations of the same event, most famously depicted in Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1951), seem to owe more to false perceptions than to false memories.

A false memory may be a slight inaccuracy in a recollection of a real event, a major misinterpretation of an event, or a completely bogus event. Such memories are not experientially much different from genuine memories — there is no way for a putative rememberer to be sure, purely by inspecting his memory, whether it really happened that way, nor is there any way in which another person can tell, purely by interviewing the putative rememberer. (There is some evidence that false memories may be subtly distinctive, but no method is known for reliably discriminating them.)

Some false memories are more vivid, detailed, and powerful than true memories of comparable age could be. Minute details of color, scent, and texture may be recollected as though the scene had been witnessed only moments ago — which, of course, may be the precise truth of the matter. The vividness, detail, and sometimes highly distressing qualities of these images are often taken as evidence of their truth, when in fact these features suggest the opposite. Any genuine memory of years ago has a faded, ill-formed character. If you remember talking to someone ten years ago you may well be right, but if you consult your memory of that conversation to determine an

which side his hair was parted, you are deluded.

Lest We Forget

There's no dispute that we may forget something for a while, in the sense of having no occasion to call it to mind, and then one day remember it — though it is likely that if the period of "forgetting" is many years, an accurate recall will have been helped by some refreshing of the memory during those years. For instance, we may recall an incident from 30 years ago, aided by the fact that it has several times been mentioned in conversation within that period.

There's equally no dispute that our memories may play us false. The greater the effort to remember something we have difficulty remembering, the greater the likelihood that the memory eventually reconstructed will be partly or entirely false. If we battle for months to recall something of which

we have no recollection, and then battle for more months to convince ourselves that the images produced in our minds are true, the memory thus constructed is almost sure to be false.

Recovered memory therapy, this latter-day exorcism, is an audacious folly which already rivals the cruelties of the Inquisition and appears set to catch up with some of Stalin's purges. As the sheer scale of this malevolent credulity becomes a scandal, we shall no doubt hear that there are a few irresponsible therapists who exercise insufficient caution. Yet *any* introduction of rational standards immediately disqualifies *all* recovered memory cases. This follows from three salient facts: that these cases are not independently corroborated, that the subjective quality of a putative memory cannot guarantee its veracity, and that there is no scientific evidence that anyone has ever repressed a memory.

If recovered memory therapists are

induced to be less aggressive in their suggestions to clients, they will be "successful" in fewer cases, and only the more fanciful of clients will "remember" the imaginary enormities. The sheer volume of bogus accusations will be reduced, but every one of them will be just as bogus. There is now talk about establishing "guidelines" for evaluating recovered memories, but as with guidelines for burning witches at the stake, such legitimizing fictions ought to be resisted.

Here is the only guideline we need: The fact that a memory has been recovered after a period of alleged repression is sufficient to show that the so-called memory is worthless as evidence of any actual occurrence outside that person's mind or brain. A tale supported only by a recovered memory merits exactly the same credence as we would accord to a story whispered in someone's ear by Wotan or Jupiter. □

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White House Watch

The Great Bimbo Eruption of '93

by Chester Alan Arthur

Perhaps the president's most compliant lovers are his acolytes in the press.

When I first heard that several Arkansas state troopers who had provided security service to Bill Clinton were revealing details about Clinton's sex life — private life would be a misnomer these days — I figured there wouldn't be much we could learn about our president from them. After

all, revelations that emerged during the presidential campaign pretty much established that Clinton had the opportunity, appetite, and inclination for extramarital sex, and a willingness to deceive women attracted to his position of power and/or personal charm. We further knew that he had violated public ethics (and the law) by rewarding at least one of his sex partners with a government job. All the new reports could do is add a few colorful details to what we already knew.

The story broke on Sunday, December 20, when CNN reported that *The American Spectator*, a conservative monthly, was about to publish an article by David Brock which reported the allegations of the state troopers. The *Spectator* article appeared the next day; the day after that, *The Los Angeles Times* published a front-page article detailing its own investigation of the same story.

Brock's account in the *Spectator* is a breezily written summary of the background to the story and a narrative of the troopers' revelations, with a fair amount of colorful detail and an unmistakable hostility to Clinton. My first reaction was to object to its lead paragraph, a summary of an August 1992 *Washington Post* report about a

Clinton aide's efforts to control what she called "bimbo eruptions." What was strange was Brock's characterization of the report as "little noticed" — I had heard it more than once, and I am not a reader of the *Post*.

The article mostly filled in details, as I had anticipated. There were some revelations, but most were not very surprising. The troopers reported that Clinton habitually had sex with a rather large number of women, which I hadn't known before — but somehow, I wasn't surprised. The troopers reported that Clinton was often unpleasant and inconsiderate to them, but no man is a hero to his valet. Nor was I astonished at his temper tantrums, his "outsized ego," or the fact that he is "personable" — these are very commonly characteristics of successful politicians. Even the report that Clinton continued to have illicit sex after his election didn't really surprise me: old habits are hard to break.

They did a lot of personal errands for him, including arranging meetings with women to whom Clinton had taken a shine, guarding his privacy during his assignations, and helping him deceive Hillary about the extent of

his adultery. But it seems to me that in our society using security forces as servants is generally considered to be one of the perks of high political office. Yes, there were some small but interesting details: Clinton's worrying about whether he could possibly earn a living if he were unable to continue his career as a politician, his ruminations about his personal stardom, his gargantuan appetites, his being briefed on the price of various common grocery items so he could avoid the sort of embarrassment Bush suffered when he appeared unable to recognize a supermarket scanner. ("When Clinton was later asked by a viewer on *CBS This Morning* if he knew the price of bread and milk, and he answered correctly, campaign strategist James Carville cited this performance in a *New York Times* op-ed piece as an example of Clinton's ability 'to empathize with average people.'")

The troopers' reports about Hillary's extramarital sexual activities did have some significance. Of course, I wasn't surprised by the fact of her adultery — after all, it has been plain for some time that she and Bill were probably not having sexual relations.

But the troopers substantiated a rumor that has been making the rounds for over a year: that she and Vincent Foster had a long-term affair prior to his suicide. This is significant — if corroborated — because of the unusual circumstances surrounding Foster's suicide: the fact that Clinton aides searched his office and removed various papers, while keeping police investigators away; his delphic suicide note, which seemed to suggest he was uncomfortable testifying about the Clintons' investments in Whitewater Development and the related failure of an Arkansas savings and loan, bailed out by the taxpayers to the tune of \$47 million.

The *Los Angeles Times* piece was a straight news report. In contrast to Brock's story, it was objective journalism of a very high order. *Times* reporters William C. Rempel and Douglas Frantz attempted to corroborate as much of the troopers' revelations as they could. They found, for example, telephone records that indicated that Clinton made extensive phone calls to some of the women with whom the troopers alleged he had sexual relations, including a 94-minute call placed at 1:23 a.m., followed by an 18-minute call at 7:45. They also contacted the women whose names were revealed, all of whom either denied a sexual relationship or refused to speak at all. They also verified details with other state troopers, who refused to sign affidavits or make their names published, and investigated the backgrounds and reputations of the troopers involved.

The first media analysis I saw of the troopers' revelations came only two days after the story broke, when *Nightline* devoted a half hour to the story. For me the highlight of the program was the following analysis from Sidney Blumenthal, political editor of *The New Yorker*:

This strikes me as a large, deliberate distraction. I think that what we do know is that there is a small, far right-wing group of people, who through these disgruntled state troopers have put out uncorroborated, salacious details and through that have been able to pull the strings of the mainstream media and sending them I think like mindless gumshoes down blind alleys. To the extent that there has been

some independent inquiry into this, what we have found, for the most part, are refutations of these charges. Now I wish to add that not only is Cliff Jackson involved whom you mentioned in your earlier report who has been engaged in a very long time personal and political vendetta against the president, but a younger right-wing writer — I hesitate to call him a journalist — David Brock, who has written on Anita Hill and accused her of being part of a conspiracy and a perjurer, charges that were very convincingly refuted in *The New Yorker*, my magazine, by two *Wall Street Journal* writers. Now in his report, he produces charges made by these troopers about the first lady's so-called sexual activities. They're quite lurid, they're quite explicit, about her affairs. Now either they're true or they're not true. Now Brock has said in *The Washington Post* of tomorrow that will appear tomorrow that the evidence is purely circumstantial. In other words, more uncorroborated evidence. Well either it's all true or it's not.

This is a remarkable reaction. Instead of responding to a single bit of evidence, Blumenthal launched a personal attack on Brock and *The American Spectator*, blaming the whole affair on the "far right wing." Apparently he hadn't noticed that the story was first investigated by the *Times*, which spent over four months investigating it, and published substantially the same findings as the *Spectator*. He concludes his case against the charges by observing that Brock not only reported what the troopers had told him about Clinton's extramarital recreation, but also about the extramarital activities of his wife, and pointing out that Brock's story is "either all true or it's not." He doesn't mention the possibility that it might be partly true or mostly true, nor that Brock was not accusing the first lady, but merely reporting the statements of witnesses who claimed to have firsthand evidence of her adultery.

His only comment on the evidence is that it is "uncorroborated" and "circumstantial." There are three kinds of evidence: confession, the statements of witnesses, and physical (i.e., circumstantial). Two witnesses have made public statements and two others have made statements privately to support-

ers. In addition, three Arkansas women have publicly stated that they were sexual partners with Clinton. In addition, reporters for both *The Los Angeles Times* and the *Spectator* discovered substantial corroborating physical evidence. If Bill Clinton were on trial for adultery, this would be ample evidence to convince a jury of Clinton's guilt.

But it fails to make the slightest impression on Blumenthal. The testimony of four witnesses and three participants he dismisses as "uncorroborated." The physical evidence he dismisses as "circumstantial." What is Blumenthal waiting for? A photograph of Clinton and a non-Hillary woman *in flagrante delicto*? A notarized confession from Clinton himself?

Whether David Brock is a journalist is not plain, but it is certain that Sidney Blumenthal is not. Characterizing Sid-

To characterize Sidney Blumenthal as an apologist or as a public relations flack may even be too generous.

ney Blumenthal as an apologist or as a public relations flack may even be too generous.

Meanwhile, *The New Republic's* Michael Kinsley led his commentary on the piece with the same observation I had made. "Little noticed?" Kinsley italicizes. "The implication is that Brock has picked up some important but overlooked piece of evidence here." Indeed, Kinsley had done a search of the Nexis database of "newspapers, magazines, wire services, and television transcripts" and noted that the "bimbo eruption" locution had appeared some 324 times.

He then accused Brock of inaccurately characterizing in the second paragraph of his *Spectator* piece the article from the *Post* in which the phrase had appeared. "Anyway, those are the first two paragraphs of Brock's piece," Kinsley writes. "You can judge the next 120 or so paragraphs on that basis."

I was stunned. Kinsley expects us to judge "120 or so" paragraphs on the

basis of his relatively minor quibbles with the first two? No, not exactly. "These minor matters don't prove the untruth of Brock's major accusations. But they do prove his fundamental bad faith, and that of his editors."

Well, I'm not sure what "bad faith" constitutes in this context. If Kinsley means that neither Brock nor his editors support Clinton, then he is surely correct. If he means that Brock intentionally lied about Clinton . . . well, here his case is weak. If he means that Brock is a sloppy journalist who is letting his evaluation of Clinton overshadow his judgment, and that his editors are not performing their proper critical role . . . well, he might be right. But maybe he should focus the same critical eye on his own writing.

Aside from criticisms of Brock's first two paragraphs, Kinsley pretty much limits himself to quoting a few items from the trooper's statements and saying that he finds them unbelievable. With one exception, Kinsley offers no evidence.

One of the troopers told Brock that Clinton was angry at Dukakis for making Clinton look like a fool at the 1988 convention, and that as a result, according to the trooper, Clinton "refused to endorse him [Dukakis] until a few weeks before the election." Kinsley re-

ports he did another search of the Nexis database and came up with a "whole string" of endorsements of Dukakis by Clinton, and concludes the trooper is "unreliable."

He does not consider the possibility that the trooper's statement about Clinton's belated endorsement of Dukakis may have been based on the trooper's observations of Clinton's private hostility, or that the trooper didn't read any of the newspapers, magazines, and television transcripts in the Nexis database in which Kinsley had found the "whole string" of endorsements. Or that the trooper simply had a lapse of memory which might not render everything else he and the other trooper said "patently unreliable." Put yourself in the place of the trooper, whose job required him to serve Clinton at every task from providing security to cleaning up after Socks the cat. Would you be more likely to remember the events of a political campaign five years ago, or whether you had seen Clinton receive a blow job from a department store clerk in a car in Chelsea's elementary school parking lot while you kept other cars away?

Kinsley follows this up with three statements from the troopers about Clinton's private behavior that Kinsley does not believe, though Kinsley offers

no evidence to the contrary. And worse — here is Kinsley's summary and criticism of one paragraph from Brock's article:

Do you believe that the Clintons "wouldn't go out to dinner with friends the way you or I would"? Too snobbish, according to one of Brock's troopers. Bob Woodward could probably nail this one down. Pending that, though, is this plausible?

Here is the paragraph from Brock's article:

Hillary, as described by the troopers, pursued power with a single-minded intensity, had few friends outside politics, and was not especially close to her family. "Everything was politics. They wouldn't go out to dinner with friends the way you or I would or the way I've seen [the current Arkansas governor] do," said Perry. "If they were invited to a private party, and there were only going to be eight or ten people there, she could say, 'We're not going to waste time at that thing. There aren't enough people there.' I never saw Hillary just relax and have a good time."

At no point does Brock (or one of the troopers) suggest that the Clintons didn't enjoy a normal social life be-

continued on page 52

One more thing — It is odd that Blumenthal would bring up the Anita Hill matter, which has curious non-parallels with this case.

Against Clinton, there is the testimony of four witnesses and three participants, plus extensive corroborating physical evidence. Against Thomas, there is the statement of a single witness relying on memory of events a decade earlier, supported only by some friends' claims that she had told them something about the events in question at the time. Despite "expert" witnesses' testimony that those guilty of the behavior of which Thomas was accused almost invariably exhibit that behavior habitually toward a wide variety of women, the prosecution was unable to come up with a single additional "victim," while the defense was able to parade a number of women with whom Thomas had worked close-

ly who testified that he had never engaged in any behavior remotely resembling that described by Hill.

Yet somehow the uncorroborated testimony of Hill is sufficient, in Blumenthal's mind, to convict Thomas, while the amply supported testimony of four witnesses and three participants is dismissed as if it were vapor. —CAA

And another thing — Kinsley's report that he found the phrase "bimbo eruptions" 324 times on the Nexis database seems to substantiate his view (which I share) that the original report was not "little noticed."

Kinsley is not the only journalist who cites the frequency of Nexis occurrences as evidence for one or another opinion. Nexis searches have almost become a staple in political commentary. (I suppose at this point I should

cite a Nexis search of how many times Nexis searches are cited. . . .)

Unfortunately, neither I nor the overwhelming majority of Kinsley's readers have any basis for judging whether 324 uses of a phrase amounts to big notice, average notice, or little notice, since we haven't done Nexis searches and, thus, don't have a clue to how often colorful political phrases are generally used. Nor for that matter do we have a clue to how many magazines, newspapers, and television transcripts are included in the database.

Although impressive-sounding, the fact that 324 uses of a phrase turned up is about as meaningful to most people as hearing that a *manzana* of farmland in Costa Rica currently sells for 50,000 *colones*. I mean 50,000 sounds like a lot of *colones*, but unless one knows what a *colon* is worth or how big a *manzana* is, it doesn't really mean much. —CAA

Clipping

The Real Hair Care Crisis

by Marc Rembert

Securing affordable hair care for all Americans should be a top priority for this administration.

The phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Christophe? It's Bill. Ah've gotta see you bad. Mah hair's gotten s'long ah could wear a ponytail."

"And what would be zo bad about zat?"

"Ah'm sorry. Ah know that was a mighty insensitive thing to say. Th' other kids used to call me fat, y'know."

"Az you are well aware, Beel, I am no longer permitted to cut hair."

"Ah'll let you go inside Air Force One."

"Zat plus two hundred dollars and you have ze deal."

"Deal."

"Speak to no one of zis conversation."

And so it had become by the Spring of 1993. It had all started innocently enough. A pilot program had been initiated by President McGovern to provide haircuts to low-income residents of selected cities. McGovern's words were uplifting: "We have taken a step, just one small step of many, toward the goal we all share — that one day quality hair care will be available to all Americans regardless of income. And that hair care can finally be viewed not as a privilege, open only to those who can afford it, but as a basic human right."

It seemed simple, and, in truth, it was simple, back in 1973. Beneficiaries of the new program went to the barber-shop of their choice. For every haircut provided, the barber completed a form, sent it to his regional administrator, and received a four-dollar reimbursement.

The program worked well enough. Barbers were fairly pleased to have the additional customers, the paperwork was not burdensome, and even those barbers that charged six or seven dollars per cut were happy to do their part to help those less fortunate.

Flush with the mandate of a landslide re-election, and buoyed by the success of the program, McGovern and the Congress took low-income hair care nationwide in the fall of 1977. Naming the expanded program HairCare USA, the

president asserted that "all of the income-disadvantaged in our society, from the homeless Native American in Wyoming to the working-poor Latino in east Los Angeles, will have equal access to quality hair care under the law."

Problems of access soon arose. Barbers and stylists in the nation's high-rent districts soon began freezing out HairCare USA recipients, as reimbursements remained static while costs rose. Full appointment books more often than not greeted HairCare USA callers at the fashionable Rodeo Drive stylists, long popular among the urban wealthy.

In 1979, Congress sought to address this problem by passing the Uniform Hair Care Provider Access and Fairness Act, mandating that all new and existing barbers and stylists reserve at least 30% of their daily appointment time for HairCare USA participants. Furthermore, this time had to be held for walk-in customers, so barbers often had paying customers demanding this space while chairs stood idle.

Hair care remained a hot political issue, as charges of sexism dogged the program. Beauty parlors, ignored so far by the HairCare USA legislation, simply refused to participate. When the initial program began in 1973, the average men's cut was indeed four dollars, and the ladies' cut and wash stood at about \$20. With inflation cutting into profits, there was no reason a beauty parlor would elect to provide its services at a price so far below the market value. (Remember, the reimbursements remained at the 1973 level.) Candidate Barbara Jordan made women's hair care equity a major theme of her 1980 presidential campaign, and in her speech accepting the Democratic nomination she bellowed out from the podium, "We are not men! Let the word go forth that no person — male, female, black, brown, yellow, white, or kru — shall be denied the dignity of basic hair care. Humankind will not forgive us if we fail."

On March 20, 1981 President Jordan signed into law the Hair Care Gender Equity Act, which expanded HairCare USA to include a multitude of services: men's cut, \$4; ladies' cut, \$10; men's style, \$8; ladies' style, \$16; and so on. The

problem of access now appeared solved, as any low-income American could now obtain proper hair care regardless of race or gender.

Hair care professionals continued to feel the pinch of rapid inflation coupled with static reimbursements. In addition, the new Gender Equity law created a mountain of new paperwork, as each of the newly-described services carried with it its own form — forty-four in all. A two-tier pricing system quickly developed and became entrenched as providers desperately sought to make up losses incurred by seeing

"Hair care can finally be viewed not as a privilege, open only to those who can afford it, but as a basic human right."

HairCare USA participants. It was not uncommon in cities for private customers to pay \$100 for a basic haircut, while the reimbursement for the same cut from HairCare USA remained at \$4 (increased in 1983 to \$6).

In a landmark speech before Congress in October of 1986, House Speaker Barbara Boxer denounced the "wanton greed and profiteering that grips our nation's hair care industry." She called for strict price controls, and she got her wish just one month later, when Congress passed and President Jordan signed into law the Hair Care Price Control and Compassion Act of 1986. The new law capped barbers' and stylists' fees at 10% over the HairCare USA reimbursement for all services.

At this point, many hair care providers simply closed up shop and/or went underground with their businesses. Access reemerged as the chief hair care issue, as private barbers simply could not be found in many areas. By 1988,

Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis was sounding the clarion call for "good haircuts at good prices for all Americans," condemning the profit-oriented system that had given the nation "back-alley hair care."

In his first State of the Union address, the new president exhorted the populace to "look to the north to solve this nation's hair care crisis."

And so the nation did, as the Congress quickly passed the Comprehensive Hair Care Act of 1989, which Dukakis signed on December 4 of that year. Modeled after the Canadian hair care system, the new law established the federal government as the sole provider of hair care for all Americans. Hair care clinics were hastily set up with governmental barbers and stylists, where all citizens could be served, free of charge.

There were serious problems with the new system. Clinics were centered mainly in urban areas, forcing rural dwellers to travel long distances for care. Long lines were reported at most clinics, and a thriving hospice industry emerged to accommodate those who had to wait weeks or even months for haircuts. The brightest and most able barbers either left the business entirely or headed for Mexico, where wealthy Americans could commute to escape the long queues. Strict enforcement of the new law prevented all but the most daring stylists from dabbling in the black market.

So bad, in fact, did the situation become that most men had their heads shaved by the government barbers, knowing that their hair was likely to be shoulder-length before they might secure another appointment. As the government barbers performed shavings almost exclusively, the quality of traditional haircuts diminished as well.

And so it was here that President Clinton found himself in 1993. Unable to be assured of a quality haircut from a government barber and knowing that a Mexican trip would be political suicide, he turned to Christophe. Pray he never needs surgery. □

Arthur, continued from page 50

cause they were "too snobbish." Kinsley is plainly guilty of mischaracterization, the same offense he believes is sufficient basis to "prove a fundamental bad faith" by Brock and Brock's editors.

In sum, in a 13-page article consisting mostly of statements by troopers assigned to provide security for Clinton during a 13-year period, Kinsley cites one allegation from one trooper that is false and three that he does not believe, and concludes that the troopers are "patently unreliable." Like Blumenthal, he has made himself an apologist for Clinton. This is a very sad development. Kinsley is an extremely intelligent man and a fine writer. He has no reason to prostitute himself. □

notes to Lemieux, continued from page 29

18. Gregory J. Chaitin "Le hasard des nombres," *La Recherche* No. 232 (May 1991), p. 615.
19. Pierre Lemieux, *L'anarcho-capitalisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988).
20. Robert Sugden, *The Economics of Rights, Cooperation, and Welfare* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).
21. Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); see also "The Evolution of Strategies in the Iterated Prisoner Dilemma," in Lawrence Davis (ed.), *Genetic Algorithms and Simulated Annealing* (London: Pitman, 1987).
22. John H. Miller, *The Co-evolution of Automata in the Repeated Prisoner's*

Dilemma (Santa Fe Institute Report 89-003, 1989).

23. Robert Axelrod, "The Evolution of Strategies in the Iterated Prisoner Dilemma," op. cit., p. 34
24. John L. Casti, "Chaos, Gödel, and Truth," in John L. Casti and Anders Karlqvist (eds.), op. cit., p. 310.
25. I owe this idea to a conversation with Jacques Raiman, chairman of the Générale de Service Informatique (Paris). Mr Raiman is the one who introduced me to chaos and complex system thinking while I was a consultant for his company. The proceedings of a conference by GSI on related topics is forthcoming.

Reviews

The Ghost in the Little House: A Life of Rose Wilder Lane, by William Holtz. University of Missouri Press, 1993, 425pp., \$29.95.

Freedom's Rose

R.W. Bradford

Along with Ayn Rand and Isabel Paterson, Rose Wilder Lane can be considered one of the founding mothers of the contemporary libertarian movement. In a peculiar historic coincidence, in 1943, just as libertarian thinking was at its nadir, these three women published important books that invigorated the idea of individual liberty. "It was three women — Isabel Paterson, Rose Wilder Lane, and Ayn Rand — who with scornful side glances at the male business community, had decided to rekindle a faith in an older American philosophy," John Chamberlain recalls. "There wasn't an economist among them. And none of them was a Ph.D."

All three were novelists. Lane had written two bestsellers and several other successful novels; Paterson had written eight novels, some very successful; and Rand had written two novels, both commercial failures. But only Rand relied on fiction to make her best case for human liberty. She chose to defend liberty in a venue far from politics and economics: *The Fountainhead* was ostensibly a story about the artistic integrity of an architect who only asked of society that it leave him free to produce. After getting off to a slow start, *The Fountainhead* gradually became a best-seller.

Lane and Paterson, despite their greater past success as novelists, presented the case for liberty in non-fiction

form. Paterson's *The God of the Machine* and Lane's *The Discovery of Freedom* were lengthy essays that defended the institutions of a free society with a vigor that transcended those of previous defenders of liberty. Like Rand, they posited liberty as a moral desiderata as well, focusing on the creativity of productive individuals, when unrestrained by government. Unlike past defenders of liberty, they brooked no compromise. They stood in sharp contrast to the apologists for business who dominated opposition to the growing power of the state, with their arguments that unhindered enterprise could build better bathtubs. They were beacons in the dull, grey ideological fog that blanketed the world. These women planted the seeds of the renaissance of libertarian thinking.

In the years that followed, the lives of Rand, Paterson, and Lane took divergent courses. Rand, the youngest of the three, returned to Hollywood and her career as a marginally successful screenwriter before dedicating herself to writing *Atlas Shrugged*, a huge, explicitly political novel; she eventually came to fancy herself the greatest intellectual since Aristotle, and built a cult around herself. Paterson continued her career as a critic for *The New York Herald Tribune* and, after she was fired by a management unfriendly to her views, wrote occasionally on social and political matters. Lane, however, pursued the ideas of free society on a virtually

full-time basis. She abandoned her career as a popular writer, and devoted herself to writing about matters libertarian, corresponding widely, raising funds for libertarian activities, and meeting and mentoring young libertarians.

Although all three women achieved national prominence as writers, all were born and reared remote from literary and intellectual centers, under circumstances that can only be considered extremely difficult. Paterson was born on a remote Canadian island in Lake Huron and reared in the frontiers of Utah and Alberta. Lane was born in Dakota Territory and raised in the Ozarks of Missouri. Rand was born in tsarist St. Petersburg and came of age during the violent years of the Communist revolution.

All had unsuccessful marriages: only Rand's lasted for more than a few years, and her husband ended up a dipsomaniac, cuckolded by Rand and her young lover, Nathaniel Branden. Little is known of Paterson's marriage, aside from its brevity: she married Kenneth Paterson on April 13, 1910, and by 1918

In addition to her careers as bestselling novelist and libertarian pamphleteer, Rose Wilder Lane led a secret life.

had lost track of his whereabouts. Lane's marriage to Gillette Lane was no more successful, lasting from March 24, 1909 until January 1915, when (in Rose's words) "I got rid of Gillette."

And the lives of all three were obscure. In Paterson's case, the obscurity was natural: after she lost her position at the *Herald Tribune*, she lived quietly, attracting little attention. Interest in her writing waned until Rand, who was very much indebted to her (though Rand would not admit it), recommend-

ed *The God of the Machine* to her readers. By then Paterson was dead, and only recently has research into her life and intellectual development begun.*

But both Rand and Lane deliberately obscured their earlier lives, and sought to build myths around themselves. In Rand's case, the process of self-mythologizing has been reasonably well-researched and documented, notably by Barbara Branden, whose biography *The Passion of Ayn Rand* provides a fairly complete record of Rand's life from 1950 onwards and a sketchy account of her earlier life. In addition, Chris Sciabarra has done extensive re-

One would expect a biography of an obscure, nearly forgotten libertarian to be ignored by virtually everyone except libertarians. The exact opposite has occurred.

search, as yet unpublished, on Rand's early education in the Soviet Union.

Though never a self-mythologizer to Rand's extent, Lane also seemed to obscure her early life. Only a bare outline of her personal history was known: she was born in DeSmet in Dakota Territory in 1886, raised on a farm near Mansfield, Missouri, and left for the outside world at about the age of 20. She married and worked as a real estate promoter and writer. Between 1918 and 1938 she was a newspaper writer, a public relations worker, ghostwriter, a magazine correspondent, and a successful author of short stories and novels. After 1938, she wrote mostly on libertarian matters, though she also wrote about needlecraft for a woman's magazine. Libertarians knew her for her contributions to the renaissance of individualist thinking and for the important role she played during the formative years of the reborn libertarian movement. So far as the general public was concerned, she was remembered only as the daughter of

Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of the wildly successful *Little House* books, the very popular juvenile novels about life on the American frontier in the late nineteenth century.

The first attempt at a biography of Lane was *Laura's Rose: The Story of Rose Wilder Lane*, a 45-page booklet written by William T. Anderson, published in 1976 by the Laura Ingalls Wilder-Rose Wilder Lane Museum in Mansfield, Missouri, for its gift shop. It is a serviceable account of her public career with a sketchy outline of her early life. A year later, there appeared *Rose Wilder Lane: Her Story*.

Alas, this book filled in virtually none of the missing details of the period of her life it ostensibly covered. Its title page identified its authors as Lane and Roger MacBride^{**}, but its dustjacket claimed that MacBride "fashioned the story of Rose Wilder Lane from her letters and diaries." In the introduction, MacBride described it as a "genuine fictional autobiography." But it was actually *Diverging Roads*, a novel Rose had written in 1918, with a few particulars of Lane's life (names and places, mostly) substituted for the particulars of her novel. Lane herself had claimed that *Diverging Roads* was not autobiographical, though there were similarities between its heroine's life and her own.

Aside from these two relatively uninformative accounts, all that was available about Lane's life was the scanty but provocative information from the introductions and book jackets of her libertarian writing. And the story that these suggested was a fascinating one indeed: Rose was a pioneer female real estate salesperson, a newspaperwoman, a world-traveler, a best-selling novelist and biographer; she had once settled in Albania, where King Zog, best remembered today for his collaboration with Mussolini, allegedly asked

her to marry him.

But it was difficult to flesh out the details. Until the publication of Holtz's biography, Lane remained a tantalizingly obscure figure.

One Book, Two Mysteries

The void was filled by the publication last year of *The Ghost in the Little House: A Life of Rose Wilder Lane*, William Holtz's readable and rigorous biography of Lane. One would expect a biography of an obscure, nearly forgotten libertarian to be ignored by virtually everyone except libertarians. Yet *Ghost* has been widely reviewed in newspapers and magazines, sold out two printings, and achieved bestseller status. Even more amazingly, hardly any libertarians have even heard of it.

The contrast between the libertarian responses to *Ghost in the Little House* and Barbara Branden's *The Passion of Ayn Rand* (and, later, Nathaniel Branden's *Judgment Day*) defies credulity. *Passion* was greeted with wild enthusiasm by libertarians. It was the best selling title ever for Laissez Faire Books, which mounted a direct-mail campaign on its behalf. *Ghost*, on the other hand, has not been featured on the cover of the Laissez Faire catalog, or even on its inside pages. *Passion* was reviewed in virtually every libertarian publication of note. But except for this journal, *Ghost* remains unreviewed in the libertarian press. So far as the libertarian world is concerned, *The Ghost in the Little House* may as well never have been published.

Why the disparity? Perhaps the importance of their subjects offers a partial explanation: Rand's books sold in the millions; Lane's in the thousands. Part of the disparity can be explained by the scandalous nature of the Rand biography, which revealed for the first time in print the bizarre sexual relationship between Rand and Nathaniel Branden, the young man to whom she was mentor and to whom she had given command of her tightly controlled movement; and how the end of that relationship virtually ended the Objectivist movement. And part of the disparity can be explained by the fact that the Rand biography was published four years after Rand's death, when interest in her remained very high, whereas the Lane biography was pub-

* Cf. Stephen Cox's introduction to *The God of the Machine*, Transaction, 1993; and his "The Significance of Isabel Paterson," *Liberty*, October 1993.

** Roger Lea MacBride, Rose Wilder Lane's adopted grandson and heir, also played a role in the libertarian movement. In 1972, as a presidential elector committed to Richard Nixon, he decided to cast his electoral vote for the Libertarian Party ticket of John Hospers and Tonie Nathan. In 1975, he received the LP's presidential nomination, and in 1976, he ran an energetic campaign, financed in part by his very substantial inheritance.

lished a quarter century after her death.

These factors could explain why Rand's biography might be more enthusiastically received than Lane's. But they do not explain why the Lane biography has not been received at all.

The reason that *The Ghost in the Little House* has been ignored by the libertarian establishment but acclaimed by the media at large can most likely be found in one relatively small, but spectacular, aspect of Rose's life. In addition to her colorful and interesting careers ranging from bestselling novelist to libertarian pamphleteer, Rose Wilder Lane led a secret life, carefully hidden from all but a few close friends for more than three decades. It was this secret life that Lane was hiding when she deliberately obscured her story.

I got my first inkling of this secret when I read William Anderson's essay "The Literary Apprenticeship of Laura Ingalls Wilder," published in the Winter 1983 issue of *South Dakota History*. Anderson tells the story of an encounter with Rose in 1966. He had written a monograph on the life of the Ingalls family for which he did primary research, in which he reported that the Ingalls family had settled in Dakota Territory "through the mild winter of 1879-80 with a few white settlers as neighbors."

Before publication, he sent a copy of the manuscript to Lane. She reacted angrily:

"I object to your publishing a statement that my mother was a liar. The Ingalls family spent their first winter in Dakota Territory approximately 60 miles from any neighbor.

"This is a formal protest against your proposal to publish a statement that my mother was a liar. You will please correct your proposed publication to accord to my mother's published statement in her books. . . . I cannot permit publication of a slander of my mother's character, and I shall not do so."

Rose softened her tone a bit after learning that Anderson was a 13-year-old boy, but continued to insist on the literal accuracy of her mother's writing: "If my mother's books are not absolutely accurate, she will be discredited as a person and as a writer."

Anderson's 1983 article also detailed other discrepancies between the

historic record and Laura's account, and other episodes of Rose's refusal to cooperate with researchers into her family's life. Researchers' and critics' suspicions that Rose might have a much more powerful motive for her secretiveness and uncooperativeness than these minor factual discrepancies had been planted earlier, in 1971. That year saw publication of *The First Four Years*, Laura's account of the first years of her marriage. The book was an immediate bestseller, but critics and fans of the *Little House* books were troubled. In *The New York Times Book Review*, Eleanor Cameron noted that the Laura of *The First Four Years*, in contrast to the Laura of the previous *Little House* books, lacked the "ability to see with the eye of wonder and to memorably communicate what she saw. With her poetic seeing gone, we have nothing left but a flatly told procession of disasters. . . ." The new Laura was not, in Anderson's words, the "staunch, self-sacrificing, mature Laura" of the previous book, but "occasionally sharp-tongued, impatient, hysterical, and peevish." It was quite a change.

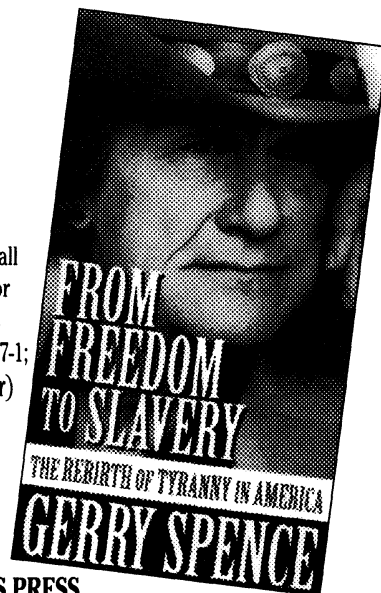
Perhaps, some suspected, Rose had played a bigger role in writing the *Little House* books than either she or her mother had ever indicated. It did seem peculiar that Laura, whose previous writing had been as unimaginative and dull as one might expect of an uneducated farmer's wife, suddenly began to write imaginative and sophisticated novels in her mid-sixties.

Even so, the authorship of the *Little House* books remained a problem. Critics and researchers were nearly all fans, reluctant to suggest that the books were something other than the work of a simple farm wife telling her own authentic story. There was remarkably little hard evidence to go on. Researchers had examined the original manuscripts for two *Little House* books that Laura had donated to the Detroit Public Library, and found them rather uninspired, lacking the imagery, pacing, and characterization that distinguished the published works. But how these manuscripts had become the finished books was not known, and the documents that might answer the question of authorship were not available to scholars.

THE MAN WHO
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OTHER LIVING
ATTORNEY NOW
CONFRONTS OUR
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AND ITS LACK OF
FREEDOM FOR ALL
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ST. MARTIN'S PRESS

The correspondence, diaries, and other papers of both Laura and Rose were the property of Rose, unavailable to scholars. After her death in 1968, ownership passed on to Roger MacBride, who also routinely denied researchers access to them.

In 1980 and 1981, there came a break: MacBride donated the bulk of Rose's and Laura's papers to the Her-

It didn't occur to Williamson that there was something odd about the apparently miraculous metamorphosis of a very conventional, little-educated, elderly farm wife into a literary genius.

bert Hoover Presidential Library, and, during the following years, researchers finally began to piece together the details of Rose's life. Gradually, a very different picture of the literary relationship between Rose and Laura emerged.

Laura wrote the first drafts of the novels; Rose completely rewrote them for publication. The storylines are mostly Laura's, though Rose added and deleted material at will. The events described are the events of Laura's life; the words are Rose's, as is the imagery and the characterization. "I know the music," Laura said, "but I can't think of the words." "Mama Bess [Laura] had very good story ideas, but she couldn't write for sour apples," said Helen Boylston, who lived with Rose and Laura dur-

ing the time the first *Little House* novels were written, "and Rose wrote like nobody's business." In Holtz's words:

What Lane accomplished was nothing less than a complete rewriting of labored and under-developed narratives. Her mother would deliver her own best efforts, elementary in grammar and punctuation and uncertain of spelling, in full expectation that her daughter would work her magic on it. . . . From the manuscript, Lane would retain the storyline and many of the incidents, but little of her mother's original language. She rearranged material freely to achieve foreshadowing and thematic clarity. She added much exposition, dialogue, and description, often inventing incidents as well. She suppressed much that is tedious or irrelevant or inconsistent. Almost everything we admire about the *Little House* books — the deceptively simple style, the carefully nuanced flow of feeling, the muted drama of daily life — are Lane's contribution, fiction made from her mother's tangle of fact. Laura Ingalls Wilder remained a determined but hopelessly amateurish writer to the end.

Lane was determined to keep her authorship of the *Little House* books secret, for reasons about which we can only surmise. But there is no doubt that she acted to suppress inquiries. Not only did she keep her and Laura's papers private, refuse interviews on the subject, and discourage researchers like Anderson from publishing the conclusions of their research, but she also asked at least one friend to cooperate in her program of suppression. She told Norma Lee Browning, a close friend of

It was only after the publication of Holtz's book that Browning publicly admitted that Rose was the true author: "She [Rose] certainly did write most of the books. Everyone who knew Mrs Lane knew that. . . . Holtz is absolutely right. . . . I'm delighted that all the controversy is going to bring Rose Wilder Lane the recognition she deserves for writing those books."

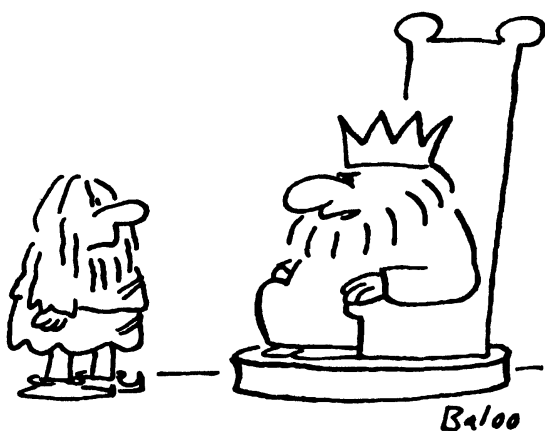
Holtz's conclusion is accepted, to one extent or another, by virtually all scholars who have examined the evidence, though many, like Browning prior to her recent admission, prefer to characterize the relationship as "collaboration" rather than "ghost-writing." Nevertheless, there remain a great many people who disagree with Holtz. Indeed, there are people who *hate* Holtz, if we are to believe press reports of anonymous threats against his life.

The reason for this reaction, I believe, lies mostly in the pivotal role the *Little House* books have played in the lives of many of their admirers. A few days ago, a friend asked me what I had

Rose did not retire from work, only from work that she hated.

been writing lately, and I told her about this review. She was aghast. "Don't you understand the importance of Laura's story? Don't you understand what a hero she is? How can we believe her story if she didn't even write it?" When I began to summarize the evidence in the case, she cut me short. "Don't you realize? When I was a young wife, staying at home having children, it was the story of Laura that kept me going. She lived a difficult life as a wife and mother on the frontier, and then as an old woman wrote beautiful and heroic books about it. It was important for me to believe that people like me can do what Laura did, live a life as wife and mother, and then write great literature." When I explained that such a feat was possible, but that Laura had not achieved it, she was unmoved. "Don't bother me with evidence," she told me. "You can prove anything with evidence."

This very emotional reaction came



"If you think it's tough being a poor, oppressed peasant, you should try being a king sometime!"

Rose's during the last 30 years of her life, "You are not to discuss these *Little House* books with anyone!" For years, Browning respected Rose's wish, dodging questions about the authorship of the *Little House* books by saying that Laura and Rose "collaborated," a term that can cover almost anything. Most inquirers were satisfied with that obscure characterization.

from one of the most intelligent people I know, a woman who is a literature professor and not commonly given to dismissing the importance of evidence.

My friend's reaction, I think, exemplifies the most common reason that people have reacted so bitterly against Holtz's book. It is not so much the story that the *Little House* books tell as the story of how they were written: at the age of 63, a frontier woman with little schooling who had reared a family and lived a very hard life sat down at her kitchen table and with a five-cent school tablet and a stubby pencil wrote a series of inspiring memoirs. It is much more attractive than the notion that they were written by a sophisticated woman who had seen much of the world, socialized with the literary elite, divorced early and had many lovers, and enjoyed a successful career as a publicist and ghost-writer.

Perhaps the most venomous reaction to Holtz's book comes from Chilton Williamson, a literary critic at *Chronicles*. Williamson, who had previously written very perceptively about the *Little House* books, denounced Rose as a twentieth-century "Lizzie Borden." This is especially silly, considering Rose's long campaign to suppress her effective authorship. Williamson's acrimony knows no bounds: besides killing her mother (presumably metaphorically), Rose was also "an early divorcee . . . a confirmed neurotic . . . incapable of a sustained relationship with a member of the opposite sex, and was finally repudiated by nearly every close friend of either sex she ever made . . . unsympathetic and essentially uninteresting . . . a hack journalist, slick fiction writer, and third-rate novelist. . . ."

Like my literature-professor friend, Williamson was a serious fan of the *Little House* books; in an earlier essay he had written:

I have been acquainted with Mrs Wilder's books since I was five years old, and I still read her with greater pleasure and emotion and appreciation than any other author I can think of.

But his vitriol seems to go further than simple disillusionment. A clue might be found in his earlier essay on the *Little House* books. Here he praises them for their "poetic freshness and di-

rectness supporting a keen observation and an unsentimental understanding," finding in them "a highly sophisticated example of Modernist poetry" and a "moving and brilliantly evocative description of the relatively unspoiled nature" that surrounded them. Their treatment of the romantic pursuit of Laura is "one of the loveliest and most delicate of its kind in literature." And: "Remarkable among Mrs Wilder's many and considerable literary abilities is her competence in handling that notorious problem known in the writing trade as 'point-of-view.' Here, the technique she employs is substantially that of the great fictionists of the Modernist school. . . ." He compares the *Little House* books favorably to the work of Hemingway, Faulkner, Dickinson, Twain, and O'Connor, declaring their author "one of the geniuses of American letters." Along the way, he briefly mentions that Laura had a daughter who "became a world-famous author," and notes that prior to the *Little House* books, Laura's writings "appear to be the work of a strong but highly conventional mind. They provide no hint of the work that was to result when Laura Wilder, in her early sixties, began to write the story of her childhood. . . ."

It didn't occur to Williamson that there was something odd about the apparently miraculous metamorphosis of a very conventional, little-educated, elderly farm wife into a literary genius, or that Laura's "world-famous author" daughter might have had something to do with the transformation. Williamson had written his critical study without bothering to investigate research on the *Little House* books. If he had, he would surely have discovered studies suggesting that Rose was responsible for precisely those elements in the *Little House* books he so admired. Five years earlier, one such scholarly study of the *Little House* books concluded by saying that Laura and Rose "adopted Lane's plan for an American novel. . . . The raw material, the recollections, were Laura Ingalls Wilder's contribution. The literary skills, the *savoir-faire*, were talents offered by Rose Wilder Lane." It was not the "raw material" and "recollections" that Williamson had found so brilliant in *Little House*.

Aside from purely literary ques-

tions, there is also the question of profitability. The *Little House* books are a minor industry, one that has generated millions of dollars of profits. Many believe that if Rose is accepted as their true author, sales will decline — and so will the profits of the *Little House* industry.

Ever since their publication beginning in the 1930s, the *Little House* books have been best-selling juvenile fiction. Sales of the seven *Little House* books made Laura Ingalls Wilder comfortably

During World War II, Lane refused to accept a ration card, going to considerable lengths to live on food she herself grew or for which she traded with neighbors.

well-off, if not actually wealthy, until her death in 1957, and supported Rose during the final decade of her life. Since Rose's death in 1968, revenue from the *Little House* books has gone to Roger MacBride, Rose's adopted grandson.*

Over the past quarter-century, MacBride has earned millions of dollars from the rights to Laura's and Rose's literary property. Aside from the royalty income from the original books, he has authorized publication of a number of related pieces, mostly from "discovered" Wilder manuscripts, most recently a new book written entirely by MacBride. He also sold the television rights to the stories in the mid-1970s, and from 1974 to 1983 the television series *Little House on the Prairie* was a tremendous commercial success, though

* Holtz presents contradictory information on Laura's literary estate. At one point (339), he says that Laura had left Rose only "the copyright and income from her books . . . during her life," with ownership to revert upon Rose's death to the Laura Ingalls Wilder Library of Mansfield. Elsewhere he acknowledges that Roger Lea MacBride is the current owner of the Wilder literary estate. Holtz at no point explains how ownership was transferred from the Mansfield Library to MacBride.

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many of *Little House*'s admirers loathed it.*

MacBride is the primary recipient of profits from the *Little House* books, but he is not the only beneficiary. The *Little House* series plays an important role in the economies of many small towns in the Middle West, where tourist attractions based on *Little House* sell souvenirs, fill motel rooms, and provide jobs in towns that might otherwise die.

MacBride has used his influence to discourage at least one *Little House* tourist attraction from offering Holtz's book in its bookshop. *The Washington Post* reported that he wrote Shirley Knakmuhs, the museum director at the *Little House* museum-campground-theater in Walnut Grove, Minnesota:

[A] professor at the University of Missouri has put out a book with the sensationalist title of "Ghost in the Little House" [I]n my opinion the book can only serve to disappoint children who read the "Little House" volumes. I certainly would recommend that you give serious consideration to not handling the book.

Of course, "children who read the *Little House* volumes" are not likely to read a 425-page scholarly biography. Even if they were so inclined, the complexity of its language would make it very tough going. Nevertheless, the museum took MacBride's advice, and does not offer Holtz's book.

Whether (and why) *Laissez Faire* Books accepted the same advice from MacBride is a matter for speculation. Perhaps *Laissez Faire*'s decision not to offer its customers *The Ghost in the Little House* was related to MacBride's decision to grant *Laissez Faire* permission to publish a new edition of *The Discovery of Freedom*.

MacBride's motivation for suppressing the information about the true author of the *Little House* books is hard to understand. It is difficult to be-

* For example, Chilton Williamson wrote, "Michael Landon is probably in Hell for his part in that trivialization of a work of high literary art, with Melissa Gilbert and company likely to follow him in due course."

lieve his actions are the result of a simple desire to maximize his revenue from the *Little House* books. For one thing, he has already made millions from them, and it's hard to believe that the revelation of Rose as their true author would force him into poverty. For another, revealing Rose as their true author can only enhance the reputation of his adopted grandmother, a person whom he dearly loved and admired. Perhaps his campaign against Rose's authorship is simply a promise kept to Rose. Or perhaps he is simply incapable of believing that Rose would deceive him.

A Rose is a Rose is a . . .

The Ghost in the Little House is a first-rate scholarly biography, meticulously researched and very readable. Despite the fact that it debunks a few stretchers Rose liked to tell about herself — King Zog never proposed marriage to her! — the story of her life is fascinating.

After growing up in rural poverty in the Ozarks, she took her first opportunity to escape to the big city, where she sought fame, fortune, and sex. She found all three. Her marriage to a Willie Loman-type salesman was not satisfactory, and she soured on the idea of marriage, sounding very much like a contemporary feminist. She traveled widely on three continents, living in Europe in the aftermath of the Great War and in Armenia in the days following the Communist revolution, and travelling by Model T across the roadless desert from Syria to Iraq. She was a genuine cosmopolite, who made her home at various times in some of the great cities of America and Europe, as well as such unlikely places as Albania and the Tex-Mex border.

Though she was ostensibly a journalist, most of the time she made her living as a public relations flack. In the years following the Great War, for example, her articles in American newspapers and magazines on conditions in refugee camps were paid for by American charities who hoped her articles would expedite fund-raising.

But she was not of the lost generation. Her roots in America remained firm, and her complex and troubled relationship with her mother constantly drew her back to Missouri. In December 1923, she abruptly decided to abandon Europe to return to live with her parents, from whom she had fled two decades earlier.

The home to which she returned was very much run by Laura, who (as Rose's friend Helen Boylston recalled) "nagged [her husband], and yelled at him, howled at him, and adored him. That he knew too . . . he told me once, 'I knew when I married her she had a temper. . . . She still does You just get used to those things.'" When Laura and her daughter would fight, Boylston remembered, her father "used to go up in the cornfield and disappear among the foliage up there."

Early in 1926, Rose escaped again to Europe, where she began to make a permanent home in Albania. Two years later, she returned to the Ozarks, again to live with her parents and her friend Helen Boylston. She had taken upon herself an obligation to provide her parents with a substantial cash subsidy, and now decided to build her parents a new house, and to redo completely their old house as a residence for herself and Boylston. Rose was a strong-willed woman, but in the contest of wills with Laura she always finished second. It was only after her mother became financially secure as a result of the *Little House* books, that Rose again left Missouri. For the remainder of Laura's life, Rose worried that one day she might have to return to the Ozarks to take care of her mother.

There were few opportunities for income from public relations work or legitimate journalism in rural Missouri, so while living there Rose was completely dependent for her very considerable expenses on income from fiction-writing. On December 17, 1931, her brokerage firm went bankrupt and she was broke — worse than broke, actually: she had substantial debts, not the least of which was the annual subsidy she had promised her mother, payment for which her mother pressed.

Perhaps it was the stress of her financial situation that stimulated her to achieve her greatest success as a writer of fiction during this time. In 1932, the *Saturday Evening Post* published in two parts her novella *Let the Hurricane Roar*, paying her \$3,000. *Hurricane* was the fictionalized story of her mother's parents' weathering hard times on the American frontier; its theme of self-reliance in times of adversity made it timely. It was enthusiastically received. Two months

later, it was published as a book, just as the bank holidays were declared. Its price was lowered to \$1.50 out of respect for the hard times, and it went through four printings in six weeks.

So encouraged was Rose by its success that she planned a grand series of many novels portraying the American experience. Although she ultimately abandoned this ambitious undertaking, she did write one more historic novel. *Free Land* tells the story of a young couple's attempt to homestead in Dakota Territory, of self-reliance, brutal nature, hardship, optimism, and failure. It was published in May 1938 after having been serialized in eight parts in the *Saturday Evening Post*. It was a critical and popular success, a bona-fide best-seller, recommended by *The New York Times* for the Pulitzer Prize.

Her parents were not the only people to whom Rose felt a powerful obligation. She also supported Rexh Meta, a young Albanian who had helped her and Boylston. She was generous to a fault: she even financed his education at Oxford, and provided funds for him to purchase land and build a home in Albania. She provided for John and Al Turner, two teenaged hobos whom she had informally adopted after they stopped at her door looking for a meal.

As the New Deal intruded more and more into the lives of individual Americans, Rose became more and more concerned with politics and more and more radical in her views. In 1935, she began work on an explicitly libertarian polemic. A year later, "Credo" was published in the *Saturday Evening Post*. In it she summarized her political philosophy, which by now was explicitly libertarian, though still palatable to conservatives, mostly because she couched her beliefs in terms of the radical tradition of the American Revolution. "Credo" was well-received, and published in book form as *Give Me Liberty*.

As the New Deal wore drearily on — by 1938 unemployment stood at 19%, higher even than in the Hoover years of 1930 and 1931 — and Europe seemed heading inexorably toward another Great War, Rose's attention increasingly turned toward political issues. "The American Revolution, 1939" for the *Saturday Evening Post*, expanded

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her earlier thinking along radical lines. "Rather than permit government to invade society, the free society must invade government. This invasion is a revolutionary necessity, which liberals will someday perceive and act upon." "[M]an is free to the extent that he is not governed — simply not governed."

In 1939, she wrote articles arguing for the Ludlow Amendment (which required a referendum to declare war, unless the United States were attacked) for *Good Housekeeping*, *Liberty*, and *Woman's Day Book*. She also testified before a Senate committee on behalf of the measure, insisting that she was a "revolutionary" (i.e., a supporter of the American Revolution) and not a pacifist, much to the confusion of the senators, then as now not particularly astute on subtleties of political philosophy.

By now Rose was in her mid-40s, and her life was changing. Thanks to the success of the *Little House* books, she no longer felt compelled to support her parents. Her informally adopted sons had left home, one with considerable acrimony.** Rose was tired of writ-

ing fiction to suit the popular market, and seemed to get more satisfaction from her political writing.

Also in 1939, she wrote a portrait of a "forgotten man" for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Rose's "forgotten man" was not the pathetic wretch of Franklin Roosevelt's speeches, forever in need of government support; he was Charles McCrary, a hard-working man she had met in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, whose livelihood had been destroyed first by fire and then by government. The *Post* rejected the story as anti-New Deal propaganda, leaving Rose more tired than ever of the pressure to make her writing conform to the demands of the popular press.

Some time in 1940, Rose made a decision that changed her life. As Holtz explains:

To be free of the past really meant to shed the career she had been making for twenty-five years. She would be free of old friends who could not follow her ideology. She would be free of the effort to write fiction, which meant freedom from the bondage of high fees for her work. Except for some hopes for Rexh Meta [her informally adopted Albanian son, now graduated from Oxford and ensconced in Albania's civil service], she was free of responsibility for her adopted family, and free finally of the drag of Mama Bess's financial worries. Small fees for occasional articles could meet her simple needs; a smaller circle of friends, who shared her political views, would suffice for her social contacts; and her energies could be focused on voluminous correspondence with other lonely and embattled watchers of a country gone sadly awry. Somewhere in all of this she had passed the midpoint of middle age, and she was now free to grow old and, as she felt compelled by circumstances, militant and defensive — and crochety. In effect, she had retired. And the long passages of painful self-analysis in her journals, the "ceaseless chatter" in her head,

had ended as well, as though she had lost contact with her inner self even as she had engaged the larger problems of history and politics.

This is Holtz's way of interpreting the way Rose changed her life. From the perspective of Rose Wilder Lane, writer of fiction, I suppose this interpretation makes sense. But what about the perspective of Rose's life as a human being?

Rose did not retire from work, only from work that she hated. She continued a career as a writer, but she no longer sought the mass market. Instead, she was focused on keeping alive the political ideals that she loved so much. She wrote extensively — and from what I have seen, very well — on a wide variety of subjects relating to politics, economics, and social issues. This new career, in which she had been dabbling for some time, may seem like "retirement" to Holtz, but to me it seems more like liberation. True enough, she no longer wrote "long passages of painful self-analysis in her journals." But might this be evidence of happiness?

Part of his interpretation is just plain wrong, if we are to believe the remainder of Holtz's biography. She continued a certain amount of commercial writing, mostly on handicrafts and mostly for *Woman's Day*, a second-tier women's magazine. It wasn't the *Saturday Evening Post*, but it paid enough to help meet her modest needs, and the editors at *Woman's Day* allowed her considerable editorial freedom.

But the primary focus of her life was day-to-day living. She delighted in such practical arts as baking and needlework. She was an active member of her community, making friends easily. While she took politics very seriously and might break a friendship over an important political or philosophical issue, she retained and built new friendships with her neighbors. (While it is certainly true that Rose felt profoundly alienated from the political culture in which she was immersed, it is manifest-

* Not this *Liberty*!

** After John Turner left Rose, he wrote her a letter explaining: "I feel I should be grateful to you and that I owe you something. The feeling has produced the usual results — I almost hate you. I have continued to accept your generosity until I almost hate myself. . . . To break completely and to stand entirely on my own feet is the only way that I will ever be able to really be myself. . . . This is the first time that I have been really honest with you."

ly not the case that she limited her social contacts to a "smaller circle of friends who shared her political views.")

She constantly refined her political thinking. Virtually from the time of its publication in 1943 until her death 25 years later, she revised and refined *The*

To dismiss Rose's political convictions with a snide psychological explanation is to miss a very important aspect of her life.

Discovery of Freedom, though her revision was never published. She was a voluminous and brilliant correspondent, maintaining contact with others in the remnant that advocated and advanced the ideals of individual liberty. She read voraciously, and wrote for whoever would publish her. She was a columnist for *The Pittsburgh Courier*, the nation's largest-circulation African-American newspaper. She wrote hundreds of book reviews for the National Economic Council's *Review of Books*. She was happy, intellectually active, and full of life.

Rose also took it upon herself to protest the growth of the state through profound personal demonstrations. During World War II, she refused to accept a ration card, going to considerable lengths to live on food she herself grew or for which she traded with neighbors. After the war, she refused work that involved payments to the Social Security Administration, eventually requiring her publishers to pay her attorney for her work on the theory that he was its author and she only an unpaid assistant.* These Thoreauvian gestures may ring strangely in our ears today, but those were different times, and Rose sought to protest the best way she felt herself able.

The libertarian movement was a peculiar place to be in those years. The publication of F.A. Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* in 1944 had a much more im-

mediate impact than the more radical works of Rand, Paterson, and Lane. Hayek presented a rather modest argument that economic planning leads to dictatorship, and suggested that it might be a good idea to roll back the power of the state somewhat. Hayek addressed his book to "the socialists of all parties," and it succeeded in engaging intellectuals and in making the notion of human liberty at least quasi-respectable in some academic and intellectual circles. Meanwhile, Ludwig von Mises was continuing his rigorous reformulation of Austrian economics and refining his vigorous defense of *laissez faire*, helping to establish a theoretical economic case for the radical libertarianism that Rand, Paterson, and Lane had argued for on moral and historical grounds.

But the culture remained overwhelmingly hostile to individual liberty, and libertarians were often given to pessimism, loneliness, and even despondency. Yet Rose remained optimistic, patiently seeking out sparks of libertarian thinking, helping to sustain nascent libertarian institutions, and fanning the flames of the movement's intellectual vigor.

Holtz treats Rose's life after 1940 as a period of idiosyncratic retirement, and most of the characterization of her later years I infer from *The Lady and the Tycoon*, a collection of Rose's correspondence with Jasper Crane, a wealthy executive with whom she maintained a long correspondence, and whom she encouraged to support various libertarian enterprises, most notably Robert LeFevre's Freedom School. She also tried to discourage him from funding those libertarian activities she found to be insufficiently radical. She was not always successful in these latter efforts, as her letters trying to get Crane not to support the Mont Pelerin Society attest.

The Lady and the Tycoon offers excellent testimony to Holtz's view that Rose was one of history's greatest correspondents. Her letters are full of information, passion, wit, and vitality, offering a window into the world of a libertarian exile in the heyday of modern "liberalism" (i.e., welfare-state anti-liberalism). The other published collection of Lane's correspondence, *Dorothy Thompson & Rose Wilder Lane: Forty*

Years of Friendship, consisting primarily of letters from an earlier period, also offers evidence of Lane's virtuosity as a correspondent, as well as insights into her feminist thinking.

Lane continued a vigorous life into her 80s, writing, making friends, corresponding, and travelling. In 1965, at the age of 78, she went to Vietnam as a correspondent for *Woman's Day*, and she was preparing for a journey to Europe when she died in October 1968.

Inside Rose Wilder Lane

William Holtz has done a first-rate job of researching the manuscripts, letters, and papers left by both Laura and Rose, and interviewing those who knew them. The result is a thorough, well-researched, well-documented, and readable book, written in the face of some formidable obstacles.

But it does have serious flaws. I have already mentioned Holtz's peculiar notion that Rose's decision to forego popular and literary writing in 1940 to pursue libertarian writing was some sort of retirement from active intellectual life, bordering on intellectual suicide. Holtz presents two other interpretations of Rose which I also believe are unjustified.

Holtz's interpretation of the peculiar relationship between Rose and Laura is simplistic. He portrays Laura as a cold and domineering woman who denied love to Rose as a child, and Rose as constantly striving and failing to win her mother's love. This hypothesis is reasonably consistent with the evidence he cites, but so are many others. It is my experience that mother-daughter relationships are extraordinarily complex, and I cannot imagine how anyone can explain a relationship as troubled as Rose and

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* See William Holtz, "The Woman vs the State," *Liberty*, March 1991, pp. 45-48.

Laura's without knowing them. A subtler analysis seems called for, as well as an acknowledgement of fallibility.

Even more peculiar is Holtz's view that Rose's libertarianism amounted to little more than a psychological disease or a profound reaction against the modern world that had passed her by:

The social scientist, reviewing the list of symptoms, would find a clear case of American right-wing pathology: an implicit monism that denied the chance of legitimate compromise with its opponents; a privileging of a past era; a sense of embattled danger from conspiratorial forces; an anti-statist political theory; a conservative economic theory The biographer [presumably Holtz himself], less clinical and schematic, cannot risk losing his subject in such a scheme: to dismiss Rose as a right-wing ideologue is to dismiss the pathos of her journey to that position and to reduce her pilgrimage to a reflex. Certainly that track lies somewhere in her baffled attempt to re-create in her own life something of her mother's triumphant assertion of will over circum-

stance; that effort had ended with the failure of her enterprise at Rocky Ridge and the loss of her fortune in the Depression. And just as she had summoned up her energies and optimism to face her own hard winter, she had found her pioneer assumptions betrayed by a national government that seemed determined to destroy initiative and create a dependent populace. The intervening years had truly been a period of reaction, as she attempted to recapture an honored past in her mother's books and to rationalize the values of that past in her own books and essays and in her daily confrontation with the world. (328)

Obviously, Holtz and I disagree about the merits of libertarian ideas. But my objection to his interpretation of Rose's political views is more fundamental. Holtz decries the "social scientific" interpretation of Rose's political views as an ideological disease, only to offer his own "biographical" interpretation of her views as a *psychological* disease. In doing so, he trivializes Rose's psychology, intellectual development, and deepest convictions. To dismiss Rose's political convictions with a snide psychological explanation is to miss a very important aspect of her life. One wonders how Holtz would react to a review of his book that explains his hostility to Rose's political views in terms of his own personal psychology ("Holtz was raised by an authoritarian father who denied him love, so now he desperately seeks his father's approval by explaining away libertarian political views in terms of their advocate's quasi-pathological psychological development.") I do not suggest that delving into an individual's psychology is always unwarranted; what I suggest is that dismissing a person's convictions and much of her life's work as the product of a semi-pathological psychological process shortchanges the subject of a biography.

Happily, Holtz largely keeps his psychological interpretations independent of his narrative, and leaves the critical reader free to accept or reject them.

The Libertarian as Extrovert

Unlike most other libertarians of her generation (and this generation as well), Rose was a "people" person. She

made friends easily, mentored and nurtured young people, and gave generously of herself to her friends and the world around her. Consequently, she made personal contributions of a nearly unique character to the development of the libertarian movement.

Rose Wilder Lane's influence on the libertarian movement, both as a thinker and as a personality, is waning. Al-

Roger MacBride's motivation for suppressing information about the true author of the Little House books is difficult to understand.

though an original thinker and a first-rate writer, Rose was not the towering intellect that Ayn Rand was, nor did she have Rand's inclination toward building a personality cult. Her role as intellectual entrepreneur, nurturer, and friend is rapidly fading into memory. *Give Me Liberty* is currently out of print, as was *The Discovery of Freedom* until very recently.

Three of her works of fiction remain in print: *Old Home Town*, a collection of short stories about the women of Mansfield in her childhood, a wonderfully evocative portrait of turn-of-the-century rural America with a powerful feminist theme; *Free Land*, a novel of a pioneer family's struggle on the frontier; and her best-known novel, *Let the Hurricane Roar*, now published under a new title (*Young Pioneers*) and new names for its characters, to conform to the two made-for-television movies Roger MacBride produced in the wake of the very successful *Little House* television series. Her 1963 *Woman's Day Encyclopedia of American Needlework* is considered a classic in its field. And, of course, her greatest work, the *Little House* books, are still in print and selling phenomenally well under her mother's byline.

Perhaps Holtz's biography will help us to remember Rose Wilder Lane, the life she lived, and her contributions to the cause of human liberty. The controversy the book has stirred up about the authorship of the *Little House* books will soon die away, as it should. For ul-

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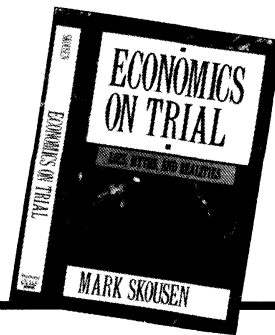
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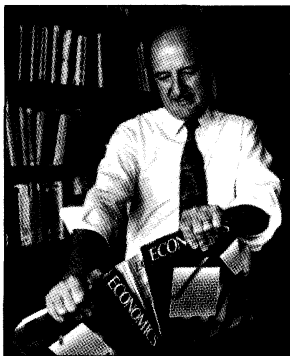
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timately, any work of art must be judged on its own merits, not on the character or even the identity of its author. Eventually, most of those who love the *Little House* books will take a more mature and reflective view of the

way the books were written, a view well expressed by Nancy Weitzman in *The Washington Post*: "With disillusionment comes enlightenment, and while I may have lost the Laura I thought I knew, I have gained Rose." □

Cages of Steel, Ward Churchill and J.J. Vander Waal, eds.
Maisonneuve Press, 1992, 435 pp., \$16.95.

Panopticon, U.S.A.

John Hospers

Countless books and articles have been devoted to the justice or injustice of capital punishment, but comparatively little has been written about the prison conditions in which the condemned exist. Many people don't care: "those guys deserve to suffer discomfort, it's not as bad as what they did to others." They have heard about prisons that are glorified country clubs, and are repelled by the thought that convicted murderers can get a college education at state expense. Many Americans have read about the torture chambers of the Soviet Union, not to mention China, Cambodia, and the assorted dictatorships of Latin America, but they have no idea that anything similar is going on in their society.

To such Americans a book like *Cages of Steel* will come as a shock. Edited by Ward Churchill and J.J. Vander Waal, *Cages of Steel* is an anthology of readings by criminologists and ex-inmates, describing prison conditions that are difficult to reconcile with a Constitution that prohibits "cruel and unusual punishment." Only a description in-depth could convey the depth and repetitiveness of the cruelties inflicted, but a few examples must suffice here.

In the lush green countryside of Illinois, in the rural town of Marion, is a high-tech federal prison in which the latest techniques for controlling human behavior are being perfected. An incoming prisoner is typically subjected

to solitary confinement in a darkened cell for a month, and periodically shackled to a steel bed with metal chains. Even after he has "graduated" to a regular cell, he is in lock-down 23 hours out of every 24 during his entire sentence — during which he can be taken out at unpredictable intervals for "behavior modification" experiments or injected with Anectine or other pain-inducing drugs. The intention is to make the inmate totally passive, a whimpering animal grateful for the slightest improvement in his treatment.

So "successful" has this system been that similar prisons are being planned, in order to perfect such methods. One has already been completed in Florence, Colorado, which "will refine the isolation techniques developed at Marion. [It] will be designed so that one guard can control the movements of numerous prisoners in several cell blocks by way of electronic doors, cameras, and audio equipment. . . . At Marion, the prisoners can scream to one another from their cells; prisoners have minimal contact with guards when their food is shoved between the bars. In Florence. . . 'these guys will never be let out of their cells.' . . . The buildings will be designed with no windows at all" (p. 105).

At the Lexington High Security Unit for Women, in Kentucky, all cells are one or more floors below ground. No natural light enters, and fluorescent lights are on, everywhere, at all

times, so that day is indistinguishable from night. Following an elaborate plan, "the severe isolation was accompanied by sensory deprivation and often by extreme voyeurism and sexual harassment by the mostly male staff, as well as sleep deprivation, overt hostility by the guards, completely arbitrary rule-changes. No meaningful work or recreational activities or educational programs were offered. Personal property was forbidden . . . as a way of establishing an independent identity in the midst of a totally controlled, sterile environment. Twenty-four-hour cameras and visual surveillance recorded every word and every activity: moods, illnesses, menstrual cycles, eating patterns" (115-6). A new and "more efficient" prison along the

Most of the vindictiveness is reserved for prisoners who belong to the "radical Left," though there is also evidence that some of the prisoners are selected at random.

same lines was opened in Marianna, Florida in 1988.

The authors claim that most of the vindictiveness is reserved for prisoners who belong to the "radical Left," though there is also evidence that some of the prisoners are selected at random. Prisoners exhibiting "personal integrity are singled out for brutal treatment — those with principles or intelligence"; "those with dignity and self-respect"; "motivated self-improvers" (143). The targets are prisoners who are most likely to challenge the prison system.

There is surely no excuse for *any* human being to be treated in such ways. Dostoevsky once said that if one wants to evaluate a society, one should first investigate the conditions in its prisons. By this criterion, at least some of the prisons in America come off as not much better than those of Turkey or Paraguay. Isn't a death sentence preferable to continued treatment such as this? For me at least there would be no doubt of the answer. □

Crisis Investing for the Rest of the '90s, by Douglas Casey.
Carol Publishing Group, 1993, 444 pp., \$22.50.

An Eccentric Genius

Victor Neiderhoffer

Douglas Casey's dazzling *Crisis Investing for the Rest of the '90s* sets out to complete two tasks. It performs both with extraordinary panache, but with very different results. In its more successful aspect, Casey's book distills the best Austrian-school economic thinking of the past 70 years, and applies it to our current predicament with ingenuity, humor, passion, and impressive thoroughness. Casey's other mission — applying his analysis predictively, with a view to formulating an investment strategy for the 1990s — is no less intriguing, but is fraught with risk, danger, and technical difficulties. These ideas, served up by Casey with supreme self-confidence, should be taken with a healthy dose of skepticism, and are best viewed as an interesting sidelight casting strange shadows upon the main drama of the book.

Indeed, reading *Crisis Investing* made me feel as though I were watching some wild and intense drama through a one-way mirror, darkly. The actors couldn't see me, but I could see them: a brilliant, somewhat eccentric genius of an interviewer, engaging all the greatest free-market theoreticians of the past century in a wide-ranging discussion of the world today in all its horrific splendor. Creative metaphors; hilarious, pithy anecdotes; innovative graphic analyses; psychological curiosities by turn fill the stage, bewildering and delighting the breathless spectator in their scope and astuteness. One minute we are contemplating real estate prices in Hong Kong, the next we are planning for thermonuclear war, and the next we are anticipating the molecule-sized machines that will reinvent

our lives in the next millennium.

But Casey cannot see me through the one-way mirror: he is too enamored with his own ideas to put them to a rigorous test. He doesn't particularly want to see me. The loud voice that jumps off the stage is addressed to everyone and no one, like a lone TV broadcasting in the wilderness. Aside from this very important limitation, *Crisis Investing* offers a remarkable array of analytical insights, for it is here that the author is at his best.

Casey organizes his book into three parts. The first section introduces the basic forces that Casey sees affecting investment in the next few years. The next investigates how to make money in this environment, and the final part describes where the financial world is likely to be once the dust settles.

In the first part, Casey posits an Austrian model of credit contraction and expansion by analogy to the community of Santa Monica, hypothetically modeled as an independent republic. "Under the Weimar government, people took shopping carts of paper money to the store to buy one or two grocery items," writes Casey. "There likely will be a titanic struggle between the forces of inflation and the forces of deflation. Each will probably win, but in different areas of the economy. . . . It will not be a mellow experience."

The author predicts an economic catastrophe, which he calls the Greater Depression, and which he says will be much more difficult to avert than the Great Depression of the 1930s. People are more urbanized now and less self-sufficient; there was then "no caste of institutionalized welfare recipients"; the maximum tax rate in 1929 was 23.1%; and regulation's heavy hand on

the economy was much lighter than today.

In recent years, M1 (the narrow money supply) has increased by about 10% per year. "As the state becomes more powerful and is expected to provide more resources to selected groups, its demand for funds escalates. Government naturally prefers to avoid imposing more taxes as people become less able (or willing) to pay them. It runs greater budget deficits, choosing to borrow what it needs. As the market becomes less able (or willing) to lend it money, it turns to inflation, selling ever greater amounts of its debt to its central bank, which pays for the debt by printing more money." Extrapolating present trends, Casey shows that by 1995, interest expenses on the Federal debt will consume 85% of all tax revenues.

This reasoning is sound as a nut. And it was equally sound in early 1988, when long-term and short-term U.S. government rates were respectively 9.5% and 7%. But the drop in Treasury yields to today's levels of 6% long-term and 3% short-term would have been catastrophic for someone who relied on Casey's analysis, or on any of the hundreds of other economic models pre-

Crisis Investing made me feel as though I were watching some wild and intense drama through a one-way mirror, darkly.

dicting sharp escalation in yields that have come down the hard-money pike in recent years. Perhaps the market in its wisdom is anticipating such factors as the decline in economic activity that accompanies confiscatory taxation, the decreasing ratio of deficits to GNP, or the stabilizing impact of bond vigilantes who jump on any uptick in yields, so that it no longer pays governments to buy votes by spending without raising taxes.

So what can the investor do? Casey's suggestions bounce around the globe. In Chapter 25, he recommends Aspen as a good place to buy property: 300 of the Forbes 400 own there. "It is

understandable that people with money want to insulate themselves from the problems that surround them. . . . Those who can afford to do so will pay a premium to move to areas that are at once beautiful, mellow, cultured, and safe." In Chapter 27, Casey demonstrates the levels of hysteria that can be reached in markets: "I happened to be looking at property in Hong Kong in 1985 and was taken aback when some penthouses were selling for less than

ground-floor apartments in the same building. Why? 'When the Chinese take over, they won't fix the elevators.' This indicated to me that it was time to buy not only apartments in general but penthouses in particular."

Elsewhere, Casey grabs the opportunity to recommend the Japanese stock market as the Short of the Century. He notes a 1987 comment from the director general of the Economic Research Institute of Japan's Economic

Planning Agency: "We have calculated land value in two places in central Tokyo close to the Imperial Palace, Ohtemachi and Toranomom. We found that if we sold all the land in those areas, we could buy all of Canada, or all of California. We thought at first we had made a one-digit or two-digit mistake, but we checked it, and it's crazy, but that's the reality." Casey suspects a level of about 8,000 on the Nikkei will be reached, versus approximately 20,000 when his book went to press in the third quarter of 1993. (As I write this, the Nikkei Average has plunged over 1,000 points to the 16,500 level).

The final section of the book ("What's Going to Happen Next?") is a freewheeling pastiche of new ideas, valuable information, cogent analysis, daring predictions and insightful reformulation of some investment chestnuts. Casey sees the meltdown of the Soviet Union as a key factor in the climate of the '90s, giving him an opportunity to voice a libertarian view. "Just hope that nothing untoward happens to any of the more than 25,000 nuclear weapons the Russian and sister republics currently control. Russia is a Third World country with a First World military, and one cannot predict who might gain control of some of that hardware. . . . Although it seems like a paradox, the way to unite the world and ensure peace is not by creating world government, but by abolishing the outmoded institution of government. That's likely to happen in the next century. But in the meantime we will see many borders evaporating and changing. . . . Unfortunately, it is unlikely to be an entirely peaceful process."

Casey goes on to analyze the future of warfare and the arms industry, arguing that the Gulf War was the opening gambit in this new chapter of the New World Order. His views on the Gulf War are predictably poignant. "Saddam couldn't help but win even when he lost, because scores of millions of Arabs, hundreds of millions of Muslims, and possibly billions of Third Worlders may eventually see him as a hero, however flawed, who stood fearlessly against fantastic odds," Casey writes. "The West lost even as it won in Iraq, because it was obvious that all its strength was needed to handle a

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small country."

Concluding the book, Casey rhapsodizes about nanotechnology: microscopic computers and other machines the size of molecules that will be put to use solving hitherto intractable problems ranging from medicine to manufacturing. He sees all this taking place by the year 2025. Commodity prices will plunge; the mere stuff of existence will be superabundant and therefore irrelevant. (This is a consummation devoutly to be wished, but I think I'll maintain my supply of tools and freeze-dried foods just in case scarcity manages to prevail.)

Unfortunately, despite the creative genius everywhere evident in the book, the reader who attempts to base actual investment activity on Casey's views should be forewarned. Casey espouses the scientific method as the ideal way of gaining knowledge, as a system of research and data-gathering, leading to formation of hypotheses that are empirically verifiable. But nowhere does Casey apply a methodology anything like this to his investment ideas. Quite the contrary: innumerable investment suggestions are discharged to the reader, without any indication that quite different, and equally plausible, recommendations have been made by expert analysts at brokerage houses, as well as market players with everything to lose if wrong.

Unlike many other hard money writers, Casey does not transparently plug his own inventory, or "talk his book," while seemingly proffering objective guidance. But this virtue is coun-

terbalanced by an inordinate tendency to fall into what psychologists call the hindsight bias — the "I-knew-it-all-along" effect. Time and time again we are told of some astute investment call of Casey's in the area of stocks, gold, or real estate. Has Casey ever missed at bat? Markets have a way of spinning around until they validate every prediction — on a Monday morning quarterback basis. If only we could pick the right entry and exit points, and the proper contract to trade, we'd all be infallible.

Casey is not alone in selectively reporting the accuracy of his past predictions. Anyone familiar with the thousands of investment newsletters advertised every day knows that not one of these, "back-tested" on a retrospective basis, was long stocks on October 19, 1987. But even if the reader were fortunate enough to discover a genius with a fabulous track record ready to share his secrets, there is another problem. This is what the famous race-track handicapper Robert L. Bacon refers to as the Principle of Ever-Changing Cycles. The public is always behind the form. Analysts who were good at forecasting recent markets are likely to stumble in today's and tomorrow's markets, precisely because they were so successful. They develop too wide a following; everybody mimics their play; and the big boys start trading against them for the next wave of the cycle. The average Joe never gets a chance.

During the period that Casey and other forecasters of the coming inflationary explosion have been looking

for increases in interest rates, a short position in U.S. Treasury Bonds, the main speculative vehicle for placing a bet on such a forecast, would have lost the initial margin on the position approximately 40 times. Certain bankruptcy would also have been visited upon anyone who has maintained a

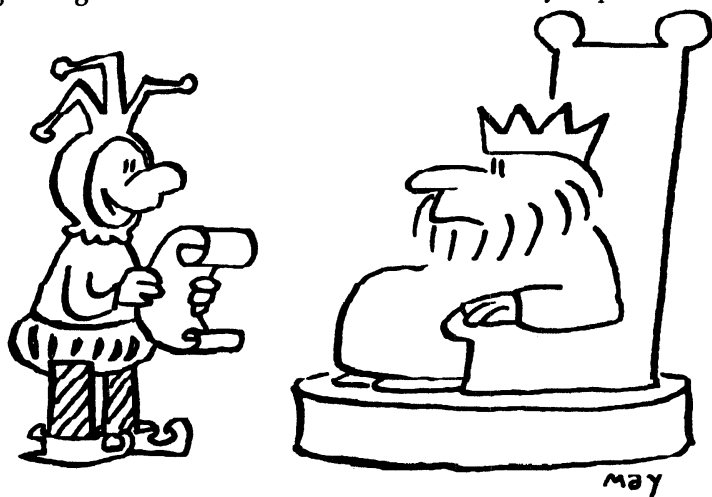
leveraged, bullish position in gold, silver, or oil during the last 10 years.

Free-market economists and investment advisors have read the wisdom of Friedrich Hayek, who pointed out how prices encapsulate information: "In abbreviated form, by a kind of symbol, only the most essential information is passed on and passed on only to those concerned. It is more than a metaphor, to describe the price system as a kind of machinery for registering change, or a system of telecommunications which enables individual producers to watch merely the movement of a few pointers, as an engineer might watch the hands of a few dials, in order to adjust their activities to changes of which they may never know more than is reflected in the price movement" (*Individualism and Economic Order*, pp. 86-7).

A dose of Hayek is an effective tonic for inducing the kind of humility that should be required when writing on the subject of investment advice to an audience of lay readers. Those who undertake such a task ought never to forget that their words might cause someone to lose big in the market. The market is very smart, and it is exceedingly difficult to beat it.

The worst recommendation in Casey's book is undoubtedly the suggestion that you can make a killing by shorting bad U.S. stocks. "What can the average investor do when he suspects a fraud is being perpetrated? . . . Fortunately, an immediate, direct, and profitable remedy is available. It doesn't require the services of either a policeman or a lawyer. When you find a bad stock, you short it. . . . The main reason for shorting stocks is the reason you are in the stock market in the first place: personal profit. There are, of course, risks peculiar to shorting . . . But on the whole, this is perhaps the single most profitable thing you can do in the market year in and year out, in good times and bad."

Tell that to the folks — some very smart money folks, too — who recently shorted an OTC high-flyer that I won't name because of potential legal consequences. The company turned out to be bogus all right. But the company's lawyers forced a trading halt and orchestrated a short squeeze, legally



"We now pause for this special weather bulletin: 'Sumer is i-cumin in, lhude sing cuckoo . . .'"

compelling all the shorts to cover at around 150% over their entry point. One major New York fund is rumored

to have lost over \$15 million on this one. Now the company has been delisted and is on the brink of bankruptcy.

So far this gambit has stood up in court, mainly because short-sellers have no friends in the legal and investment establishments.

George Soros, widely considered to be the most successful trader of all time, once told me that he believes he has lost more money shorting stocks than by any other type of speculative activity. The reason undoubtedly is that almost all groups of randomly selected stocks, for almost any ten-year period from 1860 to the present, have appreciated at a rate of around 10% a year. For the average investor, who perhaps is not as good at stock-picking as Soros, and who does not receive interest on the proceeds of his short sales, and who could never get an institutional commission rate of 2¢ a share or less — the chances of such a person making profits systematically by shorting stocks must be approximately zero.

Casey's advice to buy the TED spread (simultaneously buying Treasury Bills and selling Eurodollars in the futures market) is perhaps the second worst recommendation in the book. The TED moves are so small relative to the cost of the bid/asked spread and commissions that the investor would be much better advised to bet to show on the odds-on favorite at the local track (a strategy which on average will cost you only 25% of your money). Dozens of hard money advocates during the last five years have been recommending the TED spread as an alternative to being short bonds, apparently on the theory that if a cup of arsenic will kill you, a tablespoon a day must be salubrious. The results for anyone following this advice, even without adjusting for slippage due to bad trade executions, would have been around minus 100% per year, as the price of the spread fell 80%, from 150 points to 30, over the five-year period.

Having said all this, the acid test of my own evaluation of Doug Casey's book can be found in my decision to purchase 100 copies and give them as gifts to my friends. As in all matters in the area of financial advice, I attached a card urging caution and skepticism. But for stimulating economic discourse on a very high level, I could hardly recommend this book more warmly. □

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Letters, continued from page 16

lack in depth of information. The founder of Alcoholics Anonymous found that neither he nor anyone else could make other drunks sober, but by relaying his experience, strength, and hope to the others he could maintain his own sobriety. Note how this mirrors a common libertarian theme: voluntary action prompted by enlightened self-interest.

Most of the precepts of the twelve-step philosophy are supportive of individual liberty and responsibility even in the harsh light of earned criticism.

Kevin F.-W.
Milwaukie, Ore.

AIP, R.I.P.

Some of your writers are doing the libertarian cause a great disservice by bad-mouthing the Libertarian Party. C.A. Arthur was incorrect in stating that Alex Joseph is the highest elected official on the LP ticket ("Elections '93 Roundup," January 1994). What about the four LP members of the New Hampshire House and the county supervisor in California?

I have witnessed such venom before. For 13 years I was active in the American Independent Party. (I was a conservative before becoming a libertarian.) Constant infighting and splits within the A.I.P. caused it to dwindle from 50 state ballots and over 13% of the national vote in 1968 to less than a half-dozen ballots and a fraction of one percent.

Mike A. Bozarth
St. Joseph, Mo.

Arthur responds: I stated that Joseph was the highest-ranking official elected *solely* on the LP ticket. The New Hampshire representatives were cross-endorsed by major parties, and the county supervisorship in California is a nonpartisan office.

The Function of Liberty

Frankly, I've steered away from libertarian periodicals in the past. But I was pleased to find that *Liberty* manages to talk about a wide variety of issues and pompous asses in an intelligent, usually light-hearted manner — without relying on what Ayn Rand said about them to provide credibility. I still find what I understand of libertarian philosophy to be so intellectually elitist as to make it impractical for purposes of general governance, but it does free up its believers to practice the greater good of serving as fashion critics for the emperor's new clothes.

Earl Gates
Decatur, Ill.

Notes on Contributors

Chester Alan Arthur is *Liberty's* political correspondent — and *nothing* else.

Ace Backwords is the man behind *Twisted Image*, a mildly well-known comic strip.

"Baloo" is cartoonist *Rex F. May's* favorite pseudonym.

John Bergstrom is a cartoonist at *National Lampoon*.

David Boaz is executive vice president of the Cato Institute.

R.W. Bradford is editor of *Liberty*.

Bryan A. Case studies literature and doppelgängers at the University of Michigan.

Stephen Cox is Professor of Literature at the University of California.

Brian Doherty is a journalist who runs an independent record company in Washington, D.C.

James Gill, the cartoonist, is an American living in Massachusetts.

J. Orlin Grabbe is author of *International Financial Markets* and many short stories.

Robert Higgs is author of *Crisis and Leviathan* and other works of history and economics.

John Hospers is author of *Libertarianism, Human Conduct*, and many other books.

Tom Isenberg is editor of *FREE Perspectives*, published by the Founda-

tion for Research on Economics and the Environment.

Bill Kauffman is author of *Every Man a King* and the forthcoming *Country Towns of New York*.

Richard Kostelanetz is a critic, anthologist, multi-media artist, and gadfly.

Pierre Lemieux is a visiting professor of economics at the University of Quebec at Hull and the author *Le Droit de porter des armes* and other works.

Loren E. Lomasky is author of *Persons, Rights, and the Moral Community*.

William P. Moulton is the most libertarian Republican in Traverse City, Michigan.

Victor Neiderhoffer is an international money-market speculator.

Robert Nelson is author of *Reaching for Heaven on Earth* and a professor at the University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs.

Marc Rembert is a fledgling writer living in Nashville, Tennessee.

Jane S. Shaw is a senior associate of the Political Economy Research Center in Bozeman, Montana.

David Ramsay Steele is the author of *a From Marx to Mises*.

Timothy Virkkala is the first assistant editor of *Liberty*.

Jesse Walker is the other assistant editor of *Liberty*.

Coming in Liberty:

- "The Aristocratic Menace" — Socialism may be dying, but we're not out of the statist woods yet. *David Brin* sees an older threat to liberty reemerging on the other end of the ideological spectrum.
- "The First Libertarian Film Festival" — *Mark Skousen* reports from secluded Galt's Gulch, Colorado, where the world's greatest individualists are watching the world's most individualist movies.
- "Trafficking in Numbers" — *Gwynne Nettler* takes on the seat-belt warriors' dubious statistics.
- "Toad Trainers and the American Dream" — *John Briggs* takes the high road in education criticism and Earl Butz appreciation.

Terra Incognita

Skokie

Youth's ongoing revolt against empty simulation, described by the Associated Press:

Neo-Nazi Jonathan Haynes has been charged with killing a plastic surgeon and a hairdresser for tricking Aryans into breeding with non-Aryans. "I condemn bleach-blond hair and tinted blue eyes," said Haynes. "I condemn fake Aryan beauty brought about by plastic surgery."

Levallois-Perret, France

Advance in executive voyeurism, reported by *The European*:

The mayor of Levallois-Perret has decided to install more than 100 surveillance cameras around his town to make sure the locals behave themselves, 24 hours a day.

Perkins Township, Ohio

Serial killings, Buckeye-style, as reported by *The Detroit News*:

Police are investigating a man who may have been involved in slashing at least 20 Barbie dolls in Perkins Township stores.

Taiwan

The continuing synthesis of traditional values and high-tech modernity, as reported by *Coin World*:

The government of Taiwan is urging citizens to place credit cards in the coffins of the recently deceased for use in the afterlife, rather than burning traditionally used "ghost money" or "Hell notes" as a send-off.

California

Judicial breakthrough in the Golden State, as reported by *The San Diego Union-Tribune*:

Superior Court Judge David Gill refused to allow Dale Akiki to be released on bail for the remainder of his child-abuse trial, saying that under the law he is required "to presume guilt" in deciding the issue.

Montana

The vital importance of federal aid, reported in *The Great Falls Tribune*:

As one of Montana's wettest years ever neared its end, the state received \$1.3 million from the federal government to deal with drought. The timing was ironic but the money still is needed, according to Lt. Gov. Dennis Rehberg, chair of the state Drought Advisory Committee.

Milwaukee

Theater criticism in the Cheese State, as reported by *The Milwaukee Journal*:

Barry Patton wrote in his *Milwaukee Sentinel* column that "Dolly Parton helped bring out the families and delivered a solid performance" at the Country Jam Lake Geneva. In fact, Parton's set was rained out. His explanation: "She was backstage and was ready to go on when I had to leave. I assumed she would perform."

China

Note for travelers, from *The Detroit News*:

China hopes to attract tourists with a \$27 million 500-acre farm for 40,000 crocodiles scheduled to open on Hainan Island at the end of 1996.

Rochester, New York

Police harassment in upstate New York, reported by *The Detroit Free Press*:

Police swarmed around an illegally parked car, weapons drawn, demanding its passenger — a seedy-looking man cradling a rifle — to get out. The man turned out to be a mannequin.

Mondovi, Wisconsin

Creative law enforcement, reported by *The Milwaukee Journal*:

A Mondovi man received a \$57 ticket for riding a horse without headlights on a city sidewalk after midnight.

Sanford, Florida

New technique of ending a relationship, as reported by *The Detroit Free Press*:

Michele Roger stabbed, burned, and mulched her tree-trimmer boyfriend, then mixed his remains in cement and dropped the cement chips along Interstate 95.

Ann Arbor

Constructive criticism, from a letter from the Maoist Internationalist Movement to *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*:

"Even as we recognize Stalin's mistakes, where were the anarchists? Where is their superior historical alternative to Stalinism or Maoism for that matter?"

Singapore

Environmental progress in the developing world, reported by *Northern Express*:

Singapore's government ordered the first ten people arrested under a new anti-litter law to wear neon-green "vests of shame" and pick up garbage for an hour in front of jeering onlookers and television crews.

Portland, Maine

Musical trends in the teen set, revealed by *The Detroit Free Press*:

Merchants in a Portland shopping area, peeved at loitering teens, scattered them by blasting Schubert's "Grand Duo in C" over loudspeakers.

Scotland

Progress in privatization, reported by *The Economist*:

In response to an embarrassing series of break-ins, an Edinburgh police station has hired a private security firm.

(Readers are invited to forward newspaper clippings or other items for publication in *Terra Incognita*.)

Stimulate Your Mind! with *Liberty* back issues

(continued from back cover)

November 1990

- "Smokes, But No Peacepipe," by Scott Reid
 - "Sex, Drugs, and the Goldberg Variations," by Richard Kostelanetz
 - "Why is Anyone Virtuous?" by David Friedman
- Plus articles and reviews by Robert Higgs, Leslie Fleming, Sheldon Richman, and others; and an interview with Ed Crane. (80 pages)

January 1991

- "Meltdown: The End of the Soviet Empire," by David Boaz, James Robbins, Ralph Raico, and Jane Shaw
 - "Gordon Gekko, Mike Milken, and Me," by Douglas Casey
- Plus articles and reviews by Michael Christian, Ralph Raico, Loren Lomasky, and others; plus special election coverage. (80 pages)

March 1991

- "The Myth of War Prosperity," by Robert Higgs
 - "The Life of Rose Wilder Lane," by William Holtz
 - "The Strange Death of the McDLT," by R.W. Bradford
- Plus articles and reviews by Jan Narveson, Jane Shaw, Richard Weaver, Linda Locke, Krzysztof Ostaszewski, and others. (72 pages)

May 1991

- "Christianity: Something Anarchical in Denmark," by Ben Best
 - "Journalists and the Drug War," by David Boaz
 - "California's Man-Made Drought," by Richard Stroup
- Plus writing by John Baden, Scott Reid, Leland Yeager, and others; and a short story by Lawrence Thompson. (72 pages)

July 1991

- "Say 'No' to Intolerance," by Milton Friedman
 - "I Am a Casualty of the War on Drugs," by Stuart Reges
- Plus articles and reviews by David Friedman, Loren Lomasky, Sheldon Richman, Karl Hess, Richard Kostelanetz, and others; and Mark Skousen's interview with Robert Heilbroner. (72 pages)

Volume 5

September 1991

- "Stalking the Giant Testes of Ethiopia," by Robert Miller
 - "GNP: A Bogus Notion," by R.W. Bradford
 - "50 Really Stupid Ways to Save the Earth," by Karl Hess
- Plus articles and reviews by Bart Kosko, Frank Fox, John Hospers, James Taggart, Mark Skousen, and others. (72 pages)

November 1991

- "The Road to Nowhere," by David Horowitz
 - "Women vs the Nation-State," by Carol Moore
 - "Thelma and Louise: Feminist Heroes," by Miles Fowler
- Plus writing by Robert Higgs, Leland Yeager, and others; and a short story by J. E. Goodman. (80 pages)

January 1992

- "The National Park Disgrace," by R.W. Bradford
 - "Clarence Thomas and Zora Neale Hurston," by Bill Kauffman
 - "America's Bipartisan Apartheid," by Brian Doherty
- Plus writing by Leland Yeager, David Friedman, Henry B. Veatch, Jane Shaw, Karl Hess Jr, Richard Kostelanetz, and others. (80 pages)

March 1992

- "Albert Jay Nock: Prophet of Libertarianism?" by Stephen Cox
 - "P.C. or B.S.?" by Meredith McGhan
 - "Acid Rain and the Corrosion of Science," by Edward C. Krug
 - "Who Really Wrote *Little House on the Prairie*?" by William Holtz
- Plus writing by Karl Hess, Jane Shaw, Lawrence White, Randal O'Toole, and others; and an interview with Pat Buchanan. (72 pages)

May 1992

- "Clarence Thomas: Cruel and Unusual Justice?" by James Taggart
- "Hong Kong: Free Markets, Full Employment," by Mark Tier
- "Divorce, Czechoslovak Style," by Vojtech Cepl and Ron Lipp

Plus writing by Eric Banfield, Karl Hess, David Horowitz, Daniel Klein, and others; and fiction by J. Orlin Grabbe. (72 pages)

July 1992

- "Christians and Libertarians in a Hostile World," by Doug Bandow
 - "Returning America's Roads to the Market," by Terree Wasley
 - "The 'Lock' on the Electoral College," by David Brin
- Plus commentary on the L.A. Riots, and writings by David Kelley, Leland Yeager, George H. Smith, and others. (72 pages)

Volume 6

September 1992

- "War on Drugs, War on Progress," by James Ostrowski
 - "Wilderness, Church, and State," by Robert H. Nelson
 - "If Execution Is Just, What Is Justice?" by J. Neil Schulman
- Plus writing by Martin Morse Wooster, Ethan O. Waters, Jane Shaw, William Mellor III, and others; and an index to back issues. (80 pages)

November 1992

- "The First Time: I Run for the Presidency," by John Hospers
 - "Europe's Money Mess: We've Heard It All Before," Leland Yeager
 - "The Mystery of the Missing Detectives," by David Justin Ross
- Plus articles and reviews by Gabriel Hocman, David Kelley, Daniel Klein, Richard Kostelanetz, Loren Lomasky, and others. (80 pages)

February 1993

- "A Feminist Defense of Pornography," by Wendy McElroy
 - "Is Feminism Obsolete?" by Jane Shaw
 - "Eastern Dystopia, Western Myopia," by Ronald F. Lipp
- Plus election coverage, and writings by R.W. Bradford, Bill Kauffman, John Hospers, James Ostrowski, and others. (80 pages)

April 1993

- "Clinton and the New Class," by Douglas Casey
 - "How to Cut Your Taxes by 75%," by R. W. Bradford
- Plus writings by Mark Skousen, John Hospers, Bill Kauffman, and others; and an interview with Roy Childs. (72 pages)

June 1993

- "Who Benefits from the Clinton Program?" by Harry Browne
 - "Holocaust in Waco," by R.W. Bradford and Stephen Cox
 - "Understanding the State," by Albert Jay Nock
- Plus writing by Leland Yeager, Jonathan Saville, Randal O'Toole, Bart Kosko, and others; and other reviews and articles. (72 pages)

August 1993

- "The Ungreening of the Media," by Jane Shaw
 - "How Do I Hate NPR? Let Me Count the Ways," by Glenn Garvin
 - "What Happened in Waco?" by Loren Lomasky and R.W. Bradford
 - "Somalia: Operation No Hope," by Jesse Walker
- Plus writing by David Boaz, John McCormack, and others; other reviews and articles; poetry by Marc Ponomareff and fiction by J. Orlin Grabbe. (72 pages)

Volume 7

October 1993

- "The Real Health Care Crisis," by R.W. Bradford
 - "Crackdown on the Electronic Frontier," by Brian Doherty
 - "The Supreme Court and the American Police State," by Stefan Herpel
 - "White Liberals Can Jump," by William P. Moulton
- Plus writing by Greg Kaza, Stephen Cox, and others; aphorisms by Isabel Paterson; and other reviews and articles. (72 pages)

January 1994

- "First They Came for the Fascists. . ." by Gerry Spence
 - "My Dinner With Slick Willie," by Doug Casey
 - "The Inevitability of the Welfare State," by Todd Seavey
- Plus writing by R.W. Bradford, Ross Overbeek, Wendy McElroy, and others; and other reviews and articles. (72 pages)

Information concerning the first volume (six issues) of *Liberty* can be found on p. 66.

Stimulate Your Mind!

There is a world of good reading in *Liberty*! Whether you want to catch up on what you missed, provide intellectual relief to your friends (or enemies!), or complete your collection, now is a good time to buy. Enjoy!

Volume 2

September 1988

- "Scrooge McDuck and His Creator," by Phil Salin
- "Liberty and Ecology," by John Hospers
- "Libertarian Rights Justified," by Hans-Hermann Hoppe
- Plus reviews and articles by Douglas Casey, Murray Rothbard, L. Neil Smith, and others; and a short story by Erika Holzer. (80 pages)

November 1988

- "Taking Over the Roads," by John Semmens
- "The Search for *We The Living*," by R.W. Bradford
- Plus articles and reviews by Walter Block, Stephen Cox, John Dentinger, James Robbins, and others. (80 pages)

January 1989

- "AIDS and the FDA," by Sandy Shaw
- "Ronald Reagan's 'Revolution,'" by William Niskanen
- Plus articles and reviews by John Hospers, Jane Shaw, Leland Yeager, and others; and a short story by Jeffrey Olson. (72 pages)

March 1989

- "Ronald Reagan: An Autopsy," by Murray N. Rothbard
- "Sanity About Safety," by John Semmens and Dianne Kresich
- Plus articles and reviews by Stephen Cox, Jeffrey Friedman, David Ramsay Steele, Sheldon Richman, and others. (72 pages)

May 1989

- "Man, Nature, and State," by Karl Hess, Jr
- "The End of the Secular Century," by Murray N. Rothbard
- Plus articles and reviews by Stephen Cox, David Gordon, Justin Raimondo, and others. (72 pages)

July 1989

- "Viking Iceland: Anarchy That Worked," by David Friedman
- "The Myth of the Rights of Mental Patients," by Thomas S. Szasz
- Plus articles and reviews by R.W. Bradford, Tibor Machan, John Hospers, Jane Shaw, Jeffrey Tucker, Leland Yeager, and others. (80 pages)

Volume 3

September 1989

- "Holocausts and the Historians," by Ralph Raico
- "My Expulsion from the Rand Cult," by Murray Rothbard
- Plus articles and reviews by David Friedman, Richard Kostelanetz, Loren Lomasky, Gary North, Jeffrey Tucker, and others. (72 pages)

November 1989

- "The Lost War on Drugs," by Joseph Miranda
- "Life With (and Without) Ayn Rand," by Tibor R. Machan
- Plus articles and reviews by Loren Lomasky, Richard Kostelanetz, R.W. Bradford, and others; and an interview with Russell Means. (72 pages)

January 1990

- "The Greenhouse Effect: Myth or Danger?" by Patrick J. Michaels
- "The Case for Paleolibertarianism," by Llewelyn Rockwell
- "In Defense of Jim Baker and Zsa Zsa," by Ethan O. Waters
- "The Death of Socialism: What It Means," by R.W. Bradford, Murray Rothbard, Stephen Cox, and William P. Moulton
- Plus writing by Andrew Roller, David Gordon, and others; and an interview with Barbara Branden. (80 pages)

March 1990

- "The Case Against Isolationism," by Stephen Cox
- "H.L. Mencken: Anti-Semite?" by R.W. Bradford
- "Libertarian Intellectuals on Welfare," by George H. Smith
- Plus articles and reviews by Sheldon Richman, Richard Kostelanetz, John Hospers, Loren Lomasky, Leland Yeager, and others. (80 pages)

May 1990

- "Conservatism in Its Latter Days," by William P. Moulton
- "A Population Crisis?" by Jane Shaw
- "Killing as Therapy," by Thomas Szasz
- Plus articles and reviews by Bill Kauffman, Richard Kostelanetz, Robert Higgs, Bart Kosko, Loren Lomasky, and others. (72 pages)

July 1990

- "Conversations with Ayn Rand (part 1)," by John Hospers
- "If You Believe in Dentistry, Why Should You Mind Having Your Teeth Knocked Out?" by William P. Moulton
- "The Orwellian University," by Charles Thorne
- Plus articles and reviews by David Friedman, Bill Kauffman, James Robbins, Mark Skousen, John A. Baden, and others. (72 pages)

Volume 4

September 1990

- "Conversations with Ayn Rand (part 2)," by John Hospers
- "The Pro-Life Case for the Abortion Pill," by Dr Ron Paul
- Plus articles and reviews by Michael Krauss, James Robbins, Richard Kostelanetz, and others; and a *ficción* by Harvey Segal. (72 pages)

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