

Liberty

June 2005

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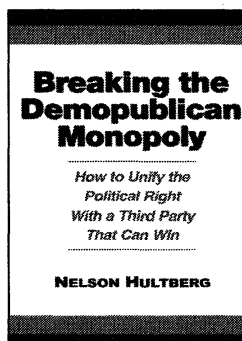


"For what is liberty but the unhampered translation of will into act?" —Dante

Breaking the Demopublican Monopoly!

How to Unify the Political Right with a Third Party that Can Win

by Nelson Hultberg (with a special Appendix by Dr. Antal Fekete) Softcover, 94 pgs., \$11.95



All libertarians realize that America is a one-party state. The Democratic and Republican parties are nothing but two divisions of the Central Leviathan Party. No matter who wins, we always get more spending, more taxes, more inflation, more wars, and LESS FREEDOM.

What libertarians don't realize, however, is how to effectively challenge this travesty. Freedom is one of the greatest ideas in history. Yet here in the land of its origin, libertarians can convince very few that it is worth restoring. They get left out in the cold every election year like mongrel dogs that stink up the house. Only a smattering of faithful choir members ever trundle to the polls to patronize their efforts. Why? This book answers this mystifying question and challenges the conventional logic about third parties.

It is a fallacy to say that third parties in America cannot work!

All third parties like the Libertarians and Reformers that have sprung up in the past century have been built upon two major strategic flaws that automatically doom them to failure. But correct these two fundamental errors, and a genuine challenge to the Demopublicans can be launched.

Breaking the Demopublican Monopoly shows how to avoid these two errors, and with its uniquely designed "Two Pillars Strategy," attract millions of voters to the cause of freedom and Constitutional government.

The next 10-15 years are going to be a tumultuous, watershed era of history. From this tumult, a radical realignment of our political system is almost a certainty. To meet this challenge, AFR is bringing into being a grand coalition of libertarians, conservatives, constitutionalists, independents, reformers, etc. to form a true **Party of Freedom**.

Many are too young to remember, but Barry Goldwater got 28% of the vote in 1964 with a radical platform of reduced government. This book explains how to do so again with its "Two Pillars Strategy," which will propel a Freedom Party into the national spotlight and the televised debates in a dramatic way.

Neither Republicans nor Democrats will ever move toward LESS government unless they are confronted with a credible third party competitor that poses a threat to their rule. But in order to succeed, such a competitor will have to start "thinking outside the box." It will have to correct the two strategic flaws that all third parties make. The means to accomplish this are laid out simply and clearly in *Breaking the Demopublican Monopoly*.

About the Authors

Nelson Hultberg is a freelance writer in Dallas, Texas and the Executive Director of Americans for a Free Republic. His articles have appeared in publications such as *The Dallas Morning News*, *Insight*, *The Freeman*, *Liberty*, *The Social Critic*, and on Internet sites such as Gold-Eagle, FinancialSenseOnline, etc. He is the author of *Why We Must Abolish the Income Tax and the IRS*.

Dr. Antal E. Fekete is a Hungarian born economist who taught in Canada for many years and also worked in the Washington office of Congressman W.E. Dannemeyer on monetary and fiscal reform. Presently Professor Emeritus, Memorial University of Newfoundland, he is the author of numerous scholarly articles that have appeared on many Internet sites and also the widely read *Monetary Economics 101* course.

What They're Saying about this Book

"Mr. Hultberg pulls us out of the economic dream-world in which so many Americans live today." – **Dr. John Hospers**, Professor Emeritus, University of Southern California

"Too many independents, conservatives, and libertarians live in an alternative universe, ignoring political realities. Hultberg, by contrast, realizes that we have to start where people are. His political realism is just what the doctor ordered."

– **Dr. John Attarian**, Author of *Social Security: False Consciousness and Crisis*

"Everyone who is seriously interested in knocking the two main parties from their pedestal and creating a constitutionally limited democratic republic should wish Nelson and his colleagues well in their endeavor." – **Jerome Tuccille**, Author of 21 Books Including *"It Usually Begins With Ayn Rand"*

"Bull's eye! Nelson Hultberg has hit the target dead on with his latest work. All those who love liberty and long for a true, limited government, as bequeathed to us by our Founding Fathers, must read this book." – **Dan Norcini**, Market analyst, LeMetropoleCafe.com

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Letters

The Objectivism of the Left?

In his May 2005 article, "Marxism of the Right?" John Coleman denies that libertarianism is an ideology.

Ideological thinking happens whenever we allow our likes and dislikes to influence our judgments of what is true and false. To an extent, all of us do this. Nevertheless, it is wise to make an effort not to. Dwight Eisenhower once said, "A man should be aware of his prejudices."

Ideological thinking on the left happens when one denies the importance of genetics in determining ability levels. Those on the left have effectively prevented a public debate on this issue by endangering the careers of those who disagree with them.

Those on the right have not tried to stifle dissent from their opinions since the end of the McCarthy Era. Nevertheless, they indulge in ideological thinking when they disregard evidence of the greenhouse effect. Moreover, despite the economic history of the past 25 years, virtually all Republican and libertarian economists still argue — often truculently — that tax cuts balance the budget.

Ayn Rand's "Objectivism" is certainly an ideology. This word comes from Rand's assertion that her list of values has the same objective truth as the multiplication table.

John Engelman
Wilmington, Del.

Setting the Serpent Straight

For all Robert H. Miller's apparent knowledge (May 2005), I find it odd that he states that each rattle on a rattle-

snake represents one year of age. I thought that myth had been dispelled among outdoorspeople by the time I was 10 (46 years ago).

A rattlesnake gains a rattle each time it sheds its skin, which might happen two, three, even four times a year, depending on how much food the snake gets, which partially determines its growth rate.

A foot-long rattlesnake with six rattles implies a pygmy variety.

Other than that, Miller's story was entertaining and fascinating.

Bob Newland
Hermosa, S.D.

Rational Ignorance

Who owns the Fed? Who cares? May as well ask, "Who owns the government?"

Kuyle Ledbetter
Minneapolis, Minn.

Fanatics, Not Elitists

I agree with David Brin that the Libertarian Party practices all-or-nothing fanaticism, a strategy that has gone nowhere. But it was not my observation during my 22 years in the party (1980–2002) that typical members regarded the voters as fools. Rather, I noticed that LP members generally believed the following:

Average voters already are libertarians — they vote the way they currently do, not because they are fools, but because they are resigned or have been tricked. The LP is fighting against "the government" and the small number of

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Letters to the Editor

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

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Reflections

Genetics of scholarship — According to the Associated Press, University of Colorado professor Ward Churchill is being investigated by university faculty to see if he lied about being an Indian to “beef up his credentials as a scholar.” Strange that the circumstances of your birth are now considered scholarly credentials. It runs directly counter to the notion that all men are created equal, the major premise this nation was founded upon, and recalls a time when titles were granted at birth.

— Tim Slagle

Robert's Rules of Dueling — The controversy over the filibuster, the “nuclear option” in the debate over Republican judicial nominees, is ridiculous. The object of a filibuster, or in any case its practical effect, is to shut down debate on a matter unless a certain number of senators insists otherwise. Rudimentary parliamentary procedure could achieve this object: yea and nay votes decide such questions all the time.

That's not good enough for the upper house of the federal legislature of the world's only superpower. Its august members instead use the filibuster, a custom by which a senator divests himself of his dignity (such as it is) by reciting recipes for favorite dishes, or the first names of all the Smiths in the phone directory, or any damned thing he can find, while struggling to remain standing for hours or days, straining to talk as his throat becomes raw, and ingloriously pissing every now and then into a diaper or a bucket.

If debate in the Senate on important questions is to come down to physical endurance, we ought to kick it up a notch. Bring back the duel. Give pistols to the earnest senator who wants to filibuster, and to one of the senators who calls for cloture. Ten paces, shoot, clean up the mess, and get on with business.

The debate is whether to get rid of the filibuster so Republicans can advance their agenda, or keep it because losing it could upset Democratic interests for decades. Why don't we get rid of it because it's *stupid*? — Patrick Quealy

Fine for ordinary people — Peter Jennings is seeking treatment for lung cancer. Perhaps I'm being cold to observe that despite all the glowing praise Jennings has

heaped upon the single-payer health care plan of his native Canada, he has no intention of seeking treatment there.

— Tim Slagle

Hourly wages — Suppose that terrorists somehow discovered a way to destroy the productive lives of three million Americans, a thousand times more people than were killed on 9/11? What would be the economic effect? What would be the effect on the nation's morale? Immense . . . overwhelming . . .

But that degree of devastation, according to a report issued on April 14 by the Internal Revenue Service, happened to America this year — and, you can be sure, will continue to happen to America, every year in the foreseeable future — solely as the result of the federal tax code. Just the effort to file 1040 forms requires 1.6 billion hours of work. The total paperwork effort of taxpayers is 6.6 billion hours. Assume that a working year is 2000 hours long, and you will see what I'm talking about: the total waste of a year's work for 3.3 million Americans.

That is more than the number of working people who inhabit any American city. That is

more than the number of people who inhabit 90 countries of the world. That is approximately as many free people (men, women, and children) as were counted in the first census of the United States (1790). That is more than the number of people who voted in any American election until 1856.

I could go on like this. You understand the point. Now ask yourself, What would be the effect of a sudden *addition* to the American economy of 6.6 billion hours of productive work? It would be the biggest boon to any economy in the history of the world. And that could happen by the simple institution of a flat tax.

— Stephen Cox

Christianity, the Church, and liberty — Most libertarians that I've heard from dismissed the sadness with which so many people responded to the passing of Pope John Paul II as an orgy of mass hysteria. This is hardly surprising: the intellectual leadership of the libertarian movement in the 20th century has consisted overwhelmingly of unbelievers. Ayn Rand and Murray Rothbard were both



SHCHAMBERS

explicit and evangelistic atheists, and I've neither heard nor read anything from Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises or Milton Friedman that indicate any religious belief. All seem overwhelmingly secular in their thought.

But I think that contemporary libertarians are poorer for their inclination simply to dismiss religion in general and Christianity in particular.

Yes, yes, I know. During the Middle Ages, the church was part of a social system that can only be described as repressive. And during the early modern era, the Church actively opposed the evolution of western society toward

Contemporary libertarians are poorer for their inclination simply to dismiss religion in general and Christianity in particular.

greater liberty. And the Church has continued to harbor out-right reactionaries who oppose liberal ideas and the liberal social order, and at the same time advocate "liberation theology" that is socialistic, if not quite socialist.

And yes, I know that fundamentalist Protestants have often opposed modernism and liberty, even at times trying to suppress scientific inquiry. And, yes, so-called "liberal" Protestants have often pushed for much greater government power and even supported totalitarians like Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

But is it mere coincidence that the love of liberty found its

most fertile ground among Protestant Christians and, indeed, that libertarian thinking had its origin among Protestants? Or is there something about Christianity or Protestantism that helped give birth to liberty?

Is it mere coincidence that the Roman Catholic Church is by a wide margin the most enduring human enterprise, lasting (so far) more than 1,700 years? Or is there something about the Church that resonates with human beings, thereby enabling it to endure?

I don't know whether these questions have occurred to the libertarians who dismiss Christianity as mere folly that may be amusing but is worthy of no serious consideration. But I am convinced that those who dismiss the millions who mourned the passing of John Paul II as mere fools, and dismiss John Paul himself as a fool or an exploiter of fools, miss a great deal.

John Paul II stood up to the two great tyrannical ideologies of the 20th century, national socialism and communism. He lived and suffered under both, and was instrumental in bringing down the latter. The defeat of national socialism, in which he was at most peripherally involved, cost hundreds of thousands of deaths in Poland alone. His homeland's victory over communism, a victory in which he was the critical figure, cost at most a few hundred deaths. John Paul was a man of peace, and the peaceful demolition of communist tyranny in his homeland illustrates truths that we should all learn. He was the 20th century's greatest advocate of peace, and the most prominent opponent of the United States' conquest and occupation of Iraq.

From his early adulthood, he was an eloquent spokesman against tyranny. He spent most of his life fighting it, and played as big a role in the late-20th century ascendancy over

News You May Have Missed

Congress KO's Right to Die

WASHINGTON. In a surprise middle-of-the-night session, Congress passed emergency legislation making death without specific congressional authorization a federal crime. An FBI sweep of car accident sites, hospitals, and morgues throughout the country early this morning resulted in 1,314 arrests, all of them involving people who had expired during the night without filling out the newly required federal forms and waiting for approval. The detainees, who offered no resistance, are to be brought before a new Federal Unappellate Court of Aggregate Meddling established by Congress in an underground chamber below the Capitol, where, after brief trials at which they will be found guilty if they make no plea, most illegally deceased

persons will face sentences of up to 15 years in a federal minimum-security facility, though suicides will be subject to harsher measures, including the death penalty. The legislation was co-sponsored by House Republican whip Tom DeLay, who said that it is the federal government's job to restore, as a multicultural initiative, the ethical and spiritual oversight formerly exercised by the Spanish Inquisition, which will be now be turned over to the new cabinet-level Department of Health and Human Thumbscrews.

President Bush, who interrupted a vacation at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, and flew to Washington to sign the bill, said that while the federal government should not play God, it might nevertheless soon be forced to

recreate the world in six days, though Iraq will probably take a little longer. He also, during brief remarks in the Oval Office, set his face against his people, and against their iniquities, and his wrath was kindled against them, for they have forsaken the ways of righteousness, and have whored after idols and abominations and privacy rights, and they have girded themselves with harlotry and did not give an Oscar to Mel Gibson, and they have taken the name of the Lord thy Bush in vain, though he added that he was willing to appoint an independent commission, consisting of 15 distinguished fundamentalist whackjobs, to review the allegations and recommend policy changes. — Eric Kenning

tyranny as any human being. He also opposed the socialist tendency within his church, quietly discouraging the "liberation theology" that had come to dominate Roman Catholic thinking in Latin America.

He was a great respecter not only of liberty but also of life. In a century in which the value of life was demeaned by totalitarian governments and by stupid, vicious wars, he did everything within his considerable power to encourage a reversal of this trend. We libertarians may not agree with all his views, particularly those on abortion, but we certainly should respect them.

When warned of papal opposition to communism, Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin is famously supposed to have asked, "How many divisions does he have?" thereby revealing his own ignorance of the power of moral suasion. John Paul used this power more effectively than anyone else in recent memory. He never commanded any divisions, nor even the Church he headed. But his love of humanity, of liberty, and of peaceful human endeavor captured the moral imagination of many millions.

The Roman Catholic Church is not a perfect institution. No human institution is perfect. Nor has any institution with a history even a quarter as long as that of the Church failed to have bad days as well as good ones. But the Church respects human reason more than any other religion and has made its peace with the liberal social order. John Paul had a hand in that. He left the Church a better institution, and the world a better place.

— R.W. Bradford

FDA mandates gutter humor

— On Friday, April 15, the FDA posted a letter sent to the Bayer corporation criticizing its ads for Levitra, a second-generation impotence pill. Comedians around the country poked fun at the ads for Levitra, which warned that users should consult a physician if their erections lasted for four hours or longer. The FDA was upset that the current Levitra ads did not include this warning, even though gutter humor based on this potential side effect has made it common knowledge. It is ironic that the FDA is demanding that this warning be broadcast over the public airwaves, since a different branch of government, the FCC, has warned morning radio hosts that it will fine them half a million dollars every time they talk about this side effect.

— Tim Slagle

Outlawing science — The Native Americans Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) is a federal law that requires any skeleton of a member of an Indian tribe to be returned to that tribe, if the skeleton is found on federally owned land. In 1996, when a 9,000 year old skeleton called Kennewick Man was found, it became the flashpoint for a lawsuit over NAGPRA, and over the

degree to which the federal government should curtail scientific research in the service of a religious orthodoxy. Although Kennewick Man was too old to be a member of any modern-day Indian tribe, a group of tribes demanded that the Army Corps of Engineers give them the remains so that they could "repatriate" it — i.e., bury it, thereby destroying it for scientific purposes. The Army agreed. On orders from the Secretary of the Interior, who declared that any bones dating from before 1492 must belong to an Indian tribe, the Army ordered that the bones be returned for destruction. Only a lawsuit by a group of scientists calling themselves Friends of America's Past managed to preserve the skeleton. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals held that NAGPRA only applies to bones of a member of a present-day tribe.

Now Senator John McCain is leading the charge to amend NAGPRA. He is sponsoring a bill to change the statute's definition of "Native American Indian" to read "of, or relating to, a tribe, people, or culture that is or was indigenous to any geographic area that is now located within the boundaries of the United States." This means that any skeleton found anywhere on Federal land, even if it is thousands or tens of thousands of years old and in no way related to any present-day Indian tribe, must be given to a tribe that claims it, rather than to scientists for research, and destroyed rather than studied — all to appease Native American creationists. This is an extremely serious threat to archaeology and anthropology in the United States.

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Unfortunately, it is part and parcel of a rising trend towards "repatriation." The Smithsonian's recently opened National Museum of the American Indian — which the Washington Post recently described as "more like a cathedral than a museum," has an open policy of repatriation, even though it now has access to the federal government's priceless collection of Native American anthropological specimens. But, as the Washington Post article explains, "the National Museum of the American Indian has no anthropology department and likely never will. Gerald McMaster, a deputy assistant director for the museum and a Plains Cree, says, 'Anthropology as a science is not practiced here. . . . Science is not going to be the final arbiter at the museum.'" This is a startling development to anyone who has regarded the Smithsonian as one of the world's finest scientific institutions. — Timothy Sandefur

Take this job and shove it

— I'm glad I'm not a college president. Like gas station attendant, radio repairman, cotton picker, and elevator operator, it's not a great career field. You don't make nearly as much money as the football coach. You don't have his fame. And you rarely get your picture in the paper. I guarantee that more Alabamians can identify Tommy Tuberville, Auburn head football coach, than what's-his-name, the Auburn president.

Worst of all, the job description boils down to panhandling. Begging for money. Billy Shakespeare said it. "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." And he could have gone on to say that if you call a skunk a rose, it still will stink like a skunk. Begging is begging even if you call it fundraising or "endowment enhancement."

Institutions of higher learning (a title applied to Northwest Central State Teachers Community College as well as Harvard) used to look for scholars when they needed a chancellor. Now they look for salesmen. Remember Professor Harold Hill, the huckster played by Robert Preston in "The Music Man"? He'd make a perfect president of a small, lightly endowed liberal arts school. You not only have to schmooze the alumni or anybody else who wants their name over a dormitory portal — you gotta keep the faculty happy. And they're a restless lot who have a firm grasp on a single management principle: they don't work for you, the Prez. They don't work for anybody. Try influencing curriculum or, heaven forbid, imposing limits on tenure and you'll find out in the snap of a chalk stick that you're as powerless as the football team's water boy. We know you can't run a

grammar school that way — there's got to be a boss somewhere — but for some reason, we believe management chaos can work at State U.

Look what happened at Harvard. The boss, President Summers, is in big trouble. First, he tried to tighten the budget. And then, in an epileptic fit — or maybe while drunk — he ran off a well-known professor of African-American studies. Then his life got really bleak: while defending himself from an attack by the diversity demons, he claimed that men and women were different!

But President Summers — whose mouth is an automatic weapon, not a single-shot — was only wounded, not dead.

He stumbled on to say that scientific studies would lead you to expect under-representation of women in Physics, just as we observe disproportional gender and racial representation in other fields. With his death rattle he asserted that there's not a lot of white guys in the NBA!

Sufferin' succotash, no one is supposed to say stuff like that. The faculty is madder than a scalded dog. Don't misunderstand: scalded dogs probably get no madder than scalded cats. I see absolutely no difference in the two species. Or men and women either. I like my job. But I think Mr. Summers is in trouble. Read all about it in your local paper.

— Ted Roberts

Conversation lost — "What's so bad about Wal-Mart?" I asked, regretting the question even as it came out of my mouth. It was clear that the woman across the table from

me, who had been explaining to our group of acquaintances that Wal-Mart had to be stopped before it destroyed more small towns, would make no distinction between devil's advocate and devil. In all fairness, she did try to give me the benefit of the doubt.

"They drive all the mom-and-pop stores out of business. They go into a town, sell everything at prices too low to compete with, and drive out all the competition," she explained.

"Do they raise the price at that point — stick it to the consumer?"

"No, but they've already done their damage. They ruin a lot of people's lives. The government needs to do something to stop them."

"What about the people whose lives become easier due to the money they save when their food bill drops? I sympathize with the mom-and-pops, but if I can save a few bucks here and there, it makes a real difference for me. I think a lot of people are in a similar situation."

The change in her posture made me suspect I'd been



upgraded from innocent fool to corporate shill. The change in her tone confirmed it. "The problem is that they sell everything cheaper than other companies can even buy it wholesale. They have an unfair advantage."

"That sounds like a good thing from my perspective," I said. "Again, I don't want to dismiss the effect on other businesses, but that's the law of the jungle, right? And my bottom line is, well, my personal bottom line. If my food is cheaper, I'm better off. What's wrong with that?"

"They don't even always have the cheapest prices," she gasped. "I got this shawl from a little shop downtown for a lot less than it costs at Wal-Mart. They don't even sell these at Wal-Mart."

I looked to my friends for help. Nothing. I looked over at her husband. Surely he could say something. He was conspicuously not paying any attention. Everyone at the table had more sense than I did. I won't be playing poker in this group.

I folded. "That's beautiful," I said. "It really sets off your eyes. Where did you say you bought it?" — Mark Rand

Terri Schiavo, abortion, and Ted Williams

— Three years ago, baseball great Ted Williams had his head quick-frozen on the theory that at some time in the future, it might be possible to thaw it out, cure him of the diseases that wrest him from this mortal coil, clone a new body for him, and return him, if not to his days as baseball's greatest hitter, at least to a more or less normal human life.

As Terri Schiavo lay vegetating, it occurred to me that Ted Williams had a better chance of coming back to life than Schiavo did. Unlike Williams', Schiavo's brain was dead. Most of her other organs were alive and functioning, thanks to elaborate machines that kept them going. But brain-dead is the end of her life, and no matter what advances science may make, she wasn't ever going to come back to life. Sure, maybe someday scientists might be able to transplant a new brain into what's left of her, but the resulting being would not be Terri Schiavo.

Ted Williams' brain is a frozen mess, with most of its cells as dead as respect for the U.S. Constitution among members of Congress. But there may be a few cells that are in some sort of suspended animation, like the viruses that scientists have recovered from the bodies of those who died and were frozen in the flu epidemic of 1918. Terri Schiavo's brain was a gooey mass with no cellular structure at all.

I have very strong sympathies with the notion that human life has become undervalued. I have strong reservations about abortion, especially in the second and (especially) the third term, when the fetus has taken the form of a human being. But I had very little sympathy with those who claim to share my reverence for human life and wanted to keep Schiavo's organs functioning indefinitely. A fetus at 24 weeks may not be able to get along without the life support system of its mother, just as Schiavo (or more accurately, many of her vital organs) could not survive without the life-support system of medical equipment. But in the natural course of things, the fetus is going to be born and, still needing life support, eventually become a fully functional human being.

Terri Schiavo's vital organs lost that potential. They no longer constituted a human being, or a potential human being. She did not die when those organs stopped functioning 13 days after the equipment that kept them going was shut down. She died when her brain died, more than a decade ago.

— R.W. Bradford

High on hate — Sometime during the Terri Schiavo hysteria, I recalled the funeral of the Ayatollah Khomeini. A frenzied throng snaked through the streets of Iran heaving the ayatollah's coffin above their heads — passing it along, bouncing it through the crowd like some hapless victim in a mosh pit, until his corpse actually rolled out of the coffin and onto the street.

For a while, it looked like things outside Schiavo's hospital might get that crazy. Jeb Bush had called in the state troopers for a possible showdown, and religious intellectuals like Peggy Noonan were verging on hysteria. In her Wall

Noonan, writing like some overheated damsel in a romance novel, is the one throwing red meat to her ravenous religious conservative friends.

Street Journal column titled "In Love With Death," Ms. Noonan proclaimed her bafflement at those who believed that Terri Schiavo might not have wanted to continue living in her vegetative state. "Why are they so committed to this woman's death?" she asks. "They seem to have fallen half in love with death."

"In love with death" — an insulting and thoughtless pronouncement if ever there was one. It's a take that could only have developed from the insular perspective of one who is accustomed to falling in line with the knee-jerk demonization process that is the signature trait of today's religious conservatives, and who has never considered the limits of her own religious boundaries. Imagine putting a pet to sleep or having a family member withdrawn from life support and having some wordy melodramatic genius accuse you of



"'There's no such thing as a free lunch' — that'll be ten bucks."

being in love with death.

Noonan's tortured musing sounds like the lead-in to some '50s radio soap opera. "What does Terri Schiavo's life symbolize to them?" she asks. "What does the idea that she might continue to live suggest to them? Why does this prospect so unnerve them?"

"Again, if you think Terri Schiavo is a precious human gift of God," she continues, "your passion is explicable. The passion of the pull-the-tube people is not." She waxes on, warning that the culture-of-death people are taking us down a slippery slope to the gas chambers, and includes this crescendo of demonization: "Terri Schiavo may well die. No good will come of it. Those who are half in love with death will only become more red-fanged and ravenous."

Noonan, writing like some overheated damsel in a romance novel, is, of course, the one throwing red meat to her ravenous religious conservative friends who simply can

never get enough of this kind of stuff. Religious conservatives would blame death itself on liberals if they could.

But the guy the Christians really bloodied up this time was Michael Schiavo, who they introduced to America as "an adulterer." Professional Catholic William Donohoe chatted on cable shows about Michael Schiavo's "cheatin'," and World Net Daily labeled him a murderer. One of the True Believers actually referred to Schiavo's live-in girlfriend as "his concubine." Sen. Rick Santorum told his children that Terri was being starved to death by people who think her life doesn't matter. (With reminders to the kiddies, of course, that, thank God, those people are not like us.)

Noonan's shallow litany asks rhetorically what Terri Schiavo's life could have symbolized to those who were, as she calls them, the tube-pullers. For most of us, not as theologically knee-jerk as Noonan, what Terri Schiavo symbolized was a nightmare — the terror of becoming helpless and

News You May Have Missed

Government Overthrown in Central Asian Country That Starts with K

BISHKEK, K-something. Rebels in the capital city of Bishkek stormed the presidential palace yesterday, forcing authoritarian president Askar Akayev to go into hiding, successfully completing a stunning revolution in the former Soviet republic of Kryzgy . . . Kryzgy . . . Kyrzygystan, the strategically located . . . no, that's not right . . . maybe Kyrzygzagstan . . . Khyrrrgzzzstan . . . well, anyway, you know the former Soviet republic we mean.

The rebels demanded an immediate end to corruption, the rapid implementation of democratic reforms, and a name for the country that its citizens would know how to spell. But Akayev loyalists still held sway over large areas of the mountainous interior and vowed to resist, calling themselves the That's Not How You Pronounce It Liberation Front and claiming in a communique that the rebel takeover had been engineered by a secretive, well-financed international cabal of mapmakers and atlas publishers who want to force the country either to adopt a name that isn't longer than the space for it on the map or else to enlarge its territory by invading and annexing neighboring Yubetchastan.

The impoverished, windswept

country has seen prices for its chief export, consonants, fall in recent years, leaving its economy in dire straits, according to World Bank economist Dr. Dire Straits, and it is feared that the new crisis might undermine long-standing regional instability. President Bush recently named, or tried for several minutes to name, the country as part of the "Axis of Countries I Get Mixed Up with Other Countries," which includes Slovenia, Slovakia, Niger, Nigeria, Estonia, Eritrea, and Canada, and he pointedly reminded his audience what happened to Iraq after he received reports that Iran was developing weapons of mass destruction.

The newly installed government hopes that by giving the country a name that can be remembered and spelled by travel agents and airline executives, it will boost the country's troubled tourist industry, which was down to three tourists last year, two of whom turned out to be looking for some other Stan. The country offers picturesque gravel deposits, large areas of unspoiled virgin rubble, and four-asterisk hotels where a traveler's camels can be accommodated right in the guestrooms, but even the most

adventurous vacationers have had trouble reaching a country where the rickety two-passenger connecting flight involves waiting weeks for favorable winds and stopping halfway and asking a guy milking a goat to point in the general direction. The rebels themselves have stated that they would have seized power much sooner, but they were unable to find the country on the map that the CIA smuggled in to them, which dates from 1927.

Among the new, more tourist-friendly names the new government is considering for Kyr-whatever-stan are Starbuckstan, Disneystan, Gapistan, and Banana Republic. The new leadership also announced that the capital, Bishkek, would be renamed Beefcake and would be touted as the future site of Mr. Universe competitions, while Jalalabad, another major city, would become Jalalagood. As for cuisine, the new president, Asker Owmuch, who has just returned from exile, plans to open a Kyrgyz restaurant similar to one he owns in the Little Yrkyzg neighborhood of Manhattan, where the baked Zygyrk in Khrzzyglu sauce (\$16.95) is said to be very tasty.

— Eric Kenning

forever dependent on strangers to change our diapers. For those of us who love life more than we love theology, it is no way to live. For the Republicans, what Terri Schiavo symbolized was a political football.

I remember when, on the day the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded, killing everyone on board, Peggy Noonan healed a nation by penning exactly the right words. The speech she wrote for Ronald Reagan inspired even the nonreligious, bringing us closer together, and even, perhaps, closer to God. Noonan said they were "ad-libbing disaster."

"The crew of the space shuttle *Challenger* honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives," she wrote. "We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for the journey and waved goodbye and 'slipped the surly bonds of earth' to 'touch the face of God.'"

"Sometimes painful things like this happen. It's all part of the process of exploration and discovery. It's all part of taking a chance and expanding man's horizons. The future doesn't belong to the fainthearted; it belongs to the brave. The *Challenger* crew was pulling us into the future, and we'll continue to follow them."

Healing and bringing people closer to God is not what the current crop of right-wing Christians are up to. They clearly view themselves as warriors fighting a "culture of death," and intend to go to whatever lengths necessary to ensure that the laws of the land reflect their divinely inspired vision.

Noonan is tone deaf if she really believes that those she demeans as "the tube-pullers," are in love with death. In reality, Noonan and much of the religious right are addicted, as were the Pharisees, to the power of hate, a condition nicely described by William Hazlitt in his essay "On the Pleasure of Hating."

"The pleasure of hating, like a poisonous mineral, eats into the heart of religion, and turns it to rankling spleen and bigotry; it makes patriotism an excuse for carrying fire, pestilence and famine into other lands; it leaves to virtue nothing but the spirit of censoriousness, and a narrow, jealous, inquisitorial watchfulness over the actions and motives of others."

— Sarah McCarthy

Principled pandering — Rick Santorum has introduced the Workplace Religious Freedom Act. It would strengthen the language of the Civil Rights Act that requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for employ-

ees' religious practices; for example, by allowing time off for observance of holy days. Senators Clinton and Kerry are co-sponsors of the bill.

Conservative Sen. Santorum is working to legislate against a thought crime, thereby increasing the intrusiveness of the federal government into employment practices. Sen. Clinton is finding religion in time for 2008. God only knows what the inscrutable senator from Massachusetts is up to, but you can be sure he's doing it for the children.

Each of these senators is working to expand the influence of an unconstitutional law, and doing it in a way that compromises his or her, uh, "principles." So this is bipartisanship: conservatives legislating like big-government liberals, while still talking like bigots; and liberals talking about civil liberties, but appealing to religious conservatives whenever

it suits them. I prefer partisan politics as usual. Two sides are better than one, even if they're very predictable sides.

— Patrick Queally

Rule of law on life support —

As I write this, Terry Schiavo is dead.

Her body still exists, pumping blood and exchanging carbon dioxide for oxygen on its own, though it too may have ceased to exist by the time you read these words.

But Terry Schiavo died back in 1990. Her persistent vegetative

state means she has neither a conscience nor the capacity to think, in a more profound sense than could be said of Tom DeLay or George Bush.

The personal tragedy of one woman has become a national tragedy for the Constitution and rule of law. People susceptible to Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity now believe that the Constitution allows Congress to pass laws which apply to one person only, and that a judge engages in "activism" whenever he follows legal tradition by allowing legally appointed guardians to ascertain a person's wishes. Large numbers of people now seem to think adults are better cared for by their parents than their chosen spouses. This is a very frightening thought.

I do not wish to cast aspersions on Terry Schiavo's parents, who obviously place belief over evidence in denying their daughter's condition. But it seems to me that, having lost the person that was once their daughter, they prefer to treat her like a pet — cooing over her, praising her for turning her head when they wish her to, as if she's learned a trick — rather than seeing her random motions for what they are. This pitiable situation happens thousands of times a year



SHCHAMBERS

throughout the United States. But it has become all the more pitiable now that Republicans have passed a plainly unconstitutional and cynically symbolic law — a bill they would quickly condemn if the Democrats proposed it — merely to bring in cash and votes.

Some thoughtful conservatives, like legal scholar Bruce Fine, have denounced the Republican congressional action. But most Republicans are so overwhelmed by “culture of life” rhetoric that they forget how it can threaten liberty and autonomy.

Terry Schiavo died 15 years ago. But now is the time of tragedy for her family . . . and, for very different reasons, the rest of us.

— Ross Levatter

What's the deal with airport food? — On a recent flight I figured out something that had been bothering me for a while. I've always enjoyed putting hot pepper seeds on my pizza, but for some time now, I've noticed that airport pizza vendors never have the seeds available. It's been a repeated frustration asking the server, who usually has a minimal grasp of English, what I am looking for and why. Until recently, I always attributed this oversight to regional taste preferences, but on a recent trip to the East Coast (where I believe the tradition of peppering pizza slices originated) it occurred to me that there is perhaps another reason for the absence: pepper seeds could be used as a weapon. Ground into a fine dust, and poured into a drinking straw, they could be blown into the face of an air marshal, temporarily incapacitating him.

A different attempt at thwarting MacGyver-style terrorism was initiated April 13: butane lighters are now banned on all U.S. flights. I understand the danger of butane leaking into the luggage compartment, and I know that a simple explosive device can be manufactured from a disposable lighter, but banning butane lighters seems excessive, especially since matches are still allowed on flights. It is apparent that TSA officials did not spend as many pre-adolescent hours as I did cutting off match heads and packing them into CO₂ canisters. A close friend of mine once had to be rushed into the emergency room to have a fragment of shrapnel removed from his leg after a particularly good detonation. I doubt that matches will be allowed on board once the TSA realizes their oversight.

I can't help but think that these regulations are just another step in the march toward a tobacco-free society. After banning smoking on all domestic flights, in all public

areas of airports, and most cocktail lounges, the tobacco Gestapo is still frustrated that smoking occurs outside the baggage areas of all airports. By banning ignition devices, it is quite possible to prevent smokers from lighting up until they can get to a place where lighters are sold, well off airport grounds.

— Tim Slagle

Love hurts — “When Susan Peacher hung up her latex evening gown and wooden paddle for a job with the federal government, the former dominatrix thought she was done with abuse,” according to a recent news item by Elizabeth Fernandez at the San Francisco Chronicle.

The problem is that this ex-dominatrix went to work for the Treasury Department in San Francisco and found when she arrived at her new job that one of her supervisors was a former client.

It could have been perfect. She's out of money and gets a job with a boss who'll pay extra if she slaps him around a bit over morning coffee and occasionally takes him out during

I shouldn't have done it, given that the FBI is keeping a closer public eye on things private, but I typed “dominatrix” in Google to see exactly what's happening in these “sessions.”

lunch for a fast spin on the bondage wheel. After work, a brief detour to the old dungeon for a quickie session of verbal abuse and some “these boots are gonna walk all over you” trampling might well warrant another bonus.

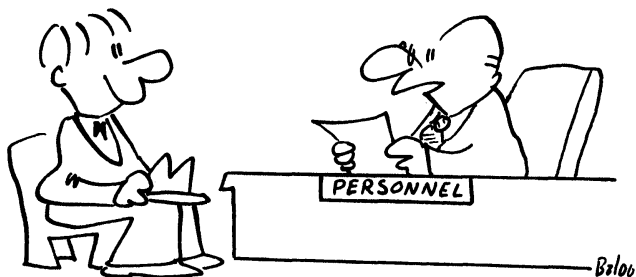
Instead, it all blew up into a lawsuit, as explained by Fernandez: “This man wouldn't leave her alone, she said in a sexual harassment and retaliation lawsuit, charging that he sexually harassed her, attempting to kiss her in the elevator, telling her she had ‘luscious lips,’ and repeatedly asking for ‘sessions.’”

I shouldn't have done it, given that the FBI is keeping a closer public eye on things private, and given the likelihood that a whole new crew of wax-drippers and other assorted sadists now has my computer inquiry, but I typed “dominatrix” in Google to see exactly what's happening in these “sessions.”

What first popped up was a solicitation from “Strict Aunty-Teacher” in the United Kingdom: “Mistress requires naughty adult schoolboys to attend her evening and weekend classes, for detention and judicial punishment. You will receive the punishment you deserve.”

That sounded goofy. I didn't like night school even when there was no hitting involved. Plus I can't think of anything I ever did that calls for being tossed over Strict Aunty's knee, so I clicked to the next homepage, an offering from “Nurse Despair, a skilled professional BDSM artist with three large well-equipped playrooms” (for novices, a footnote explains that BDSM means “bondage, domination, sadism, and masochism”).

Ms. Despair's three fully equipped rooms consist of a “Main Dungeon, 20' by 20', air-conditioned, mirrored cham-



“Any long-range goals other than retirement?”

ber with en suite shower facilities," a "16' by 18' Medical Examination Room," and a "16' by 14' Suspension and Rubber Bondage Room."

The arrangement in the Rubber Room is described as follows: "Be fully suspended in complete safety by industrial electric winches." And the good news is that if you're doing this sort of thing at lunch and going back to the office, there are no telltale signs after it's over, given that Nurse Despair has succeeded in becoming a "pain without marks specialist."

Overall, the pitch for any of the three rooms was "Await your fate, the hell within." Odd, but there must be a healthy demand for this stuff because the "hell," as Nurse Despair describes it, goes on all day and half the night: "Sessions available from Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. until 8 p.m." In addition, there are "Extended sessions available" in the off-hours, apparently to accommodate the needs of the severely guilt-ridden and true handdogs.

What else came up in the Google search was a lengthy S&M dictionary with a full array of what's available on the menu, starting with mild-mannered humiliations like "birching," i.e., a beating applied with a light branch, and moving to some less carefree activities like "strangulation and suffocation games during which the supply of oxygen to the brain is restricted."

At the risk of sounding too much like an economist, note the division of labor in all this, the specialization of tasks that didn't exist in earlier centuries. Medieval mystics, for instance, inflicted pain on themselves in acts of atonement and self-mutilation, and also made their own jelly. Now, it's Smucker's and Nurse Despair.

In any case, Ms. Peacher claimed that her client-turned-boss gave her an unfair performance evaluation and that she was given little to do after she complained to higher-ups. "Rather than sit idly at her desk," reports Fernandez, "Peacher spent her time studying workplace harassment and labor law."

Bottom line, in terms of dishing out the pain, Peacher had accomplished a smooth transition from whips to litigiousness. In March, she reached a settlement with the government, i.e., the taxpayers, that provided a job transfer, some 800 hours of leave, a new schedule that permits her to work at home one day a week, \$25,000 in attorney fees, and \$35,000 in damages.

And the guy? He's gone, beat to a pulp again, like in the good old days on the rack. — Ralph R. Reiland

Keep on keeping on — For years before the death of John Paul II, political pundits, including such conservatives as Bill O'Reilly, mocked his "dotage" and demanded that he "step aside" and let "younger men" take charge. The Pope paid no attention. Bent, crooked, shaking, he simply continued his work.

I disagreed with much that he did. I never felt personally attracted to him. But no one could regard him as an uninteresting figure, and some of his most interesting days were his last.

When we think of "interesting" people or events, we ordinarily think of complicated ones. But while John Paul himself was an extremely complicated man, his last days were very simple. He decided that he would continue, no

matter what happened, and he did. He decided that he would make an example of himself — bent, crooked, shaking, apparently contemptible — so that other people, similarly afflicted in body (though not in mind) would have a pattern to follow. Again, that's what he did.

As far as I know, he never lobbied "on behalf of the handicapped" or waxed self-righteous about himself. He just went on. He must have known that millions were praying for his death, that thousands were planning what they would do in response to it, that hundreds were maneuvering, in one way or another, to seize his power. He paid no attention. He went on.

During his last hours, long after media throughout the world had announced his death, he continued doing the routine business of his church. He had determined, long before, what would be his course of action. He followed his plan. May that be the way with all of us. — Stephen Cox

Intentions 9, Results 0 — Why do people choose to take jobs with the government? One reason, I think, was nicely illustrated by a recent front-page article in the Seattle Times about how well Sound Transit, a government-funded transportation enterprise, is doing.

"Sound Transit's buses and commuter trains aren't carrying as many riders as the agency promised voters back in 1996," when it was seeking the authority to tax in support of its activities. "Operating expenses are higher than anticipated," the article went on. "Many projects are costing more and taking longer to build. Some have been downsized, others eliminated."

For example, the promised light-rail line from downtown Seattle to the Seattle-Tacoma airport is now planned to end seven miles short of the airport, leaving air travelers to hitchhike or take a cab.

But happily for taxpayers, there is in place the "Sound

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Transit Citizen Oversight Panel," a "watchdog" agency that evaluates Sound Transit's performance. Unhappily, the Oversight Panel has concluded that Sound Transit, despite its manifest failures, is doing just fine. True, it has failed to fulfill any of its promises to voters back in 1996. But that's not really a problem. The problem is that its promise to meet its goals by 2006 "clearly was unrealistic." So it has cut back on what it proposes to deliver, delayed the delivery date, and increased the projected cost.

The Oversight Panel concluded that "on balance, Sound Transit has met the goals and adhered to the principles and commitments" that it presented to voters when seeking funding. And now it's time to go back to voters and ask for the money needed to complete the cutback projects years after promised completion dates.

The Oversight Committee, you'll be glad to learn, is completely independent of Sound Transit, despite the fact that Sound Transit's board appoints its members. "The idea that

Word Watch

by Stephen Cox

Something must now be said, though very reluctantly, about the relentlessly overplayed hands of everyone involved in the affair of Terri Schiavo (God rest her soul). Discussing this affair, my friend Mehmet said, "There's one thing it's taught me. You can make any case you want, so long as you can choose your own words to make it."

He was referring to the grossly self-serving vocabulary of both sides of the episode, the vocabulary that allowed Schiavo's "death" to be positioned either 15 years in the past or several days in the future, and the vocabulary that allowed it to be called either "murder" or "starvation" or "the withdrawal of life-support" or whatever else anyone wanted to label it, provided that the labeler had sufficient self-confidence to shout his words into a microphone.

I happen to be on the side of those who say that Schiavo "died" when she fell into an irreversible state of unconsciousness, but I realize that I have to make an argument for that view, not merely assert it by definition. I will be even more emphatically on the side of anyone who wants to argue that incessantly referring to the "victim" — the "helpless woman," the "patient," the "wife," the "daughter," and so on — by her first name only ("Terri's case has now reached the Supreme Court"; "Relatives report that Terri is now near death") is itself a gross abuse of language.

To refer to someone in that way, at this era of American history, is to turn that person into nothing more than a subject of one's own discourse. "Mrs. Schiavo" might have been a formidably individual presence; "Terri" is just that little dear on the hospital bed, an entity defined by other people's asserted affection for her. The fact that the vast majority of people who called her "Terri" on TV had never seen her, knew practically nothing about her, and presumably would care nothing whatever about her had she not landed in the middle of a series of celebrated court cases, passed without notice by anybody.

The first-naming of Terri Schiavo is one example of a wider problem. I don't mean to be frivolous, but look . . . How many times have you walked into your bank and heard the cheery teller say, "How ya doin' t'day, Stephen?" (Or "Bill" or "Barbara.") I hear that all the time. I don't like it. I'm an infor-

mal person, but that's going too far. "You've got my *##!* money," I want to shout. "Treat me with some respect! In fact, treat me with extra respect!" When I am called by my first name so easily and publicly, I feel that I am being reduced to the status of a child or dependent.

Well, someone might object, why don't you feel that being called by your first name *elevates* you to the status of a *friend*?

Sure, I could decide to feel that way. I could also decide to feel that Terri Schiavo (A) was murdered, (B) was merely withdrawn from life support, which was what she wanted, (C) was one of my closest friends; that's why I call her "Terri." I can feel any way I want to, but that doesn't change the facts. Terri Schiavo was not my friend. And I know that the bank teller isn't my friend, either. The evidence, if you need any, is what happens when one rejects the first-name relationship. You don't have to rear back and say, "I'm 'Mr. Cox' to you, sonny!" All you need to do is say very calmly, "I'd rather be called 'Mr. Cox.'" Actually, all you need to do is look at the little name tag next to the window and address the other party as "Mr. Smith" or "Mr. Allen," with just a tinge of stress on "Mr." You'll see how friendly the conversation is, after that. Not friendly at all, in my experience.

Of course, there is often more involved in first-naming than somebody's individual whim. Corporations hire people to do "customer satisfaction surveys," and these surveys routinely indicate that customers actually *want* to "be on a first-name basis with their bank," or mortgage company, or church, or used-car dealership. I assume this means that people would like those outfits to have the kind of friendly relationship with them that would mandate the use of first names. Fat chance. The teller doesn't know you from Adam.

The fundamental problem, however, is the growing tone deafness of the American people.

I could write ten columns about this, and so could you. Remember the last time you encountered an objectionable expression in conversation. It might be the waiter's constant, withering refrain as he or she stares at your plate, preparing to snatch it: "You still *workin'* on that?" Eating as "work": no, I don't like that metaphor. It's obnoxious. But suppose one

we're not independent from Sound Transit," the Oversight Committee's vice chairwoman said, "is just not true."

Can you imagine anything similar to this happening in the world of commerce? Suppose the CEO of a corporation asked its stockholders to pony up billions of dollars to, say, build a shopping center that would earn a profit for them. Suppose further that when the day rolled around when the CEO had promised to open the shopping center, the stockholders were told that (a) construction hadn't yet started;

replies, with the kindly emphasis that is meant to educate, "Yes, I'm still *eating*." The response will inevitably be, "OK! When you're through workin', I'll come back to you." You can lob any verb you want over the net, but "workin'" will just keep comin' back. I know that I've mentioned this before, but that's just evidence for what I'm saying about the problem of tone deafness. "Workin'" is still with us, despite all efforts to make it go away. (You *have* been making an effort, haven't you?)

Tone deafness is not limited to a particular class, profession, or region. It's omnipresent. I am sure that the people who make television documentaries have heard other people talk about "infantry" and "cavalry"; they may even have seen the word "cavalry" written in a book. But that doesn't stop them from claiming that Colonel Custer and his "calvary" were destroyed at the Little Big Horn, any more than spokesmen for the U.S. Army, who must have heard innumerable discussions about "caches" of weapons, are deterred from describing the discovery of another big "cachet."

My beloved aunt in Southern Illinois has spent a lifetime in conversations like this:

Neighbor: I went past and seen you layin' here on the sofa, so I knew you was home.

My aunt: You *saw* me *lying* here?

Neighbor: Yeah, I seen you was home.

After almost 90 years of conversations like this, she has reached the conclusion that verbal modeling simply doesn't work. But there's no essential difference between the tone deafness of her acquaintances and that of the people I run into at the university.

World-famous expert: My major critical project at present is the problematization of the private/public differential, largely in respect to dimensions of gender and transgender.

Me: Ah. So you're trying to find out whether gay people behave differently in private from the way they do in public.

World-famous expert: Precisely. That is precisely the problematic into which I am currently inquiring.

Whether you're dealing with invincible ignorance or the invincibility of what St. Paul termed "falsely called knowledge," it's pointless to suggest, exemplify, or insinuate. No one is listening. They are completely tone deaf.

The only option is to go into a Lord Vader mode and announce in a low, rough, threatening voice, "Your lack of grammar [or clarity, or whatever it is] *disturbs* me." This will immediately put you on a truly intimate footing with whom-ever you are speaking to. It will be better than a first-name relationship. You can share your feelings. You can discuss your differences. You can shout and scream. But it still won't do a bit of good.

(b) the shopping center was going to be a lot smaller; (c) it would be completed years later; (d) it would never turn a profit; but nevertheless, (e) he'd like the stockholders to put up a lot more money to complete it.

What are the chances that a stockholders' committee would conclude that the CEO's original goals "were clearly unrealistic" but his performance was nevertheless quite satisfactory because he had "on balance, met the goals and adhered to the principles and commitments" he'd made?

What are the chances that the CEO would continue to hold his job? What are the chances that he'd manage somehow to stay out of jail?

I suspect that this illustrates the appeal of government jobs. Those who take them can enjoy job security, excellent salaries, and even praise, while ignominiously failing to fulfill any of the requirements of their positions. This seems sufficient to explain one side of the phenomenon, the side visible from the office-holder's direction. But what about the side visible to the taxpayers? Is anybody looking?

— R.W. Bradford

Concealing your rights — In Columbia County, Oregon, if you want to apply for a non-resident concealed weapons permit, there isn't much eyebrow-raising. They cheerfully accept your money in exchange for considering granting your 2nd Amendment right. Of course, they aren't in the habit of telling non-resident folk that \$15 of the \$65 fee must be in the form of a check or money order, made payable to the Oregon State Patrol. Nope. You find this out when you show up.

After you obtain the appropriate checks, money orders, and bills, you find that they happen to be fingerprinting that day, so you'd best come back another time, say, next week-end: Friday 8a.m.–12p.m., Saturday 8:30a.m.–3p.m., or Sunday 9a.m.–3p.m. You drive back to Clark County, Washington in your safe and sturdy but only moderately fuel-efficient automobile. And you wait.

You go back. You've got everything (again): check for OSP, cash for Columbia County, proof of firearms training, driver's license, Washington concealed weapons permit, letter to Sheriff Derby explaining why you should be allowed your right, a letter from Olympia stating that you've never been committed to a mental health institution, and a completed license application which includes your last four addresses and the names and addresses of two personal references. You wait for prisoners to be let out of jail for visitations. You wait for parents of the incarcerated to deposit money into in-house prison accounts. You wait for the office clerks to come back to the counter. You open your book. You wait.

The office clerks come back and you pay your money, you smile pleasantly, you comply with requests for signatures and — even though not technically required for the license, you know that it's best to stay low-profile — you acquiesce to the demand for your Social Security Number. When they peer across their counter and into your personal briefcase, noticing an envelope from the Florida Department of Agriculture, they demand to know what business you have with it. You know that this is a rule of men and not of law, so you release what is none of their business: you are applying also for a concealed weapons permit in Florida (a

state where you don't have to apply in person).

When they fingerprint you, the ink pad is dangerously low on ink. They will print you two, three times. They will tell you that you will likely be a "retake," because they're uncertain that the state's computers will be able to classify the faint, gray smudges on the fingerprint card. They assure you that if you are a "retake," the state will be kind enough to put your prints on the top of its to-do list. You won't have to wait twice as long. You won't have to wait. You drive back to Clark County in your gas guzzler and go about the rest of your weekend. You go out, do chores, run errands. You find a message on your machine from the Columbia County Sheriff's Office. They explain that they forgot to have you sign the third fingerprint card they did on you. You stare at your answering machine.

You cancel your plans for Sunday. Sunday morning the Columbia County clerks watch you sign the illegible fingerprint card that you know you will have to redo and sign again. You drive home, and you wait. You wait.

— Katelyn B. Fuller

Who benefits from Wolfowitz? — How pleasing it is to hear that Dubya has rechanneled Paul Wolfowitz into the World Bank, not as a deputy, as he was in the State Department, but as the bank's president. As the architect of the disastrously expensive, needless Iraq war — and as a profligate spender with a top-down statist approach toward stimulating economic growth abroad — he contributed mightily to the whopping deficits that will cost U.S. taxpayers and their children for years to come. Remember that Wolfowitz is the political genius with a doctorate in political science from Chicago who predicted that receipts from Iraqi oil would compensate the United States for the costs of invasion and occupation. Can't such a huckster sell the world all the used cars in America?

Will he, in his new position, continue to initiate profligate moves that wreck the world economy? Or will he merely bankrupt the World Bank, which is more vulnerable to going under than the U.S.? If the latter, perhaps his appointment should be considered just another neocon effort to sabotage "do-gooding social programs" not just in the U.S. but around the world. On further thought, if his appointment is meant to subvert the World Bank, isn't it reasonable to ask whether he functioned as a subversive in previous positions? If so, on whose behalf?

I'm reminded of a distinction attributed to Milton Friedman. If someone uses his own money to purchase something for himself, he pays attention to both price and quality. If he uses his own money to purchase something for someone else, he customarily cares more about price. If he uses someone else's money to purchase something for himself, he pays more attention to quality than price. Who high in the current administration cared less about quality or price, believing that enough money can buy everything, even military victory, in the face of continuing resistance?

Wolfowitz's appointment will also alienate other countries, whose loyalties for one or another Dubya project will then need to be purchased through grants, loans, or foreign aid bribes, thus deepening the budget deficit indirectly.

Not a builder but a bankrupter is this Wolf, soon to be ensconced in a traditionally sheepish position.

— Richard Kostelanetz

Aiming to please — Fonda is coming 'round again doing her dancing tricks and pirouettes to please us, like some pretty ballerina on a music box. She is still captivatingly pretty, and when she's on I always tune in to see how she looks and what she's doing now. At 67, wrapped in creamy white spandex, blue eyes sparkling against lavender

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News You May Have Missed

Entire Universe Named in Steroid Scandal

PALO ALTO, Cal. The steroid scandal continues to gain momentum as new allegations this week extended the controversy far beyond baseball. Astrophysicists at the Stanford Institute for the Advanced Study of Research Grant Applications have concluded that the rapid growth of the universe, which is still expanding at an accelerating rate, is highly suspicious and probably could not have been achieved simply by strenuous daily workouts or other natural means. As one Stanford scientist, Dr. Felix Culpa, pointed out, the universe was, just 14 billion years ago, moments after the Big Bang, "thinner than Lara Flynn Boyle and even less interesting," but now it's approximately 1.9 billion light years across, or 66.4

billion trillion football fields wider than Rosie O'Donnell, an increase in size and strength almost impossible to attain without anabolic steroids. Traces of the illegal, growth-enhancing hormone have in fact been discovered during a careful spectrographic analysis of telescopic images that show, on the outer edges of the visible universe, a large, dense lump of the mysterious substance known to physicists as "dark matter," Dr. Culpa says, though some skeptics in the scientific community believe that the telescope was accidentally trained on San Francisco, about 25 miles north of Palo Alto, and what the scientists were in fact looking at was Barry Bonds.

Elsewhere, theologians are ponder-

ing the possibility that the frequent, inexplicably irate biblical passages along the lines of "Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee . . . and mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity" (Ezekiel 7:8-9) suggest the possibility that God may well have been hooked on a rudimentary, early Middle Eastern form of steroids and was suffering from the common side effect known as "roid rage" throughout much of the period covered by the scriptures. Others now under suspicion for past steroid use include Hercules, Atlas, Thor, Conan the Barbarian, The Incredible Hulk, Superman, Goliath, Attila the Hun, Vlad the Impaler, and Ann Coulter.

— Eric Kenning

Searching for Evil in Syria

by Doug Casey

Getting into Syria is difficult, but when you get there, you'll be surprised by what you see, hear, and smell.

On my recent trip through the Middle East, I spent nearly a week in Syria. I also tried to visit Iran, but visa procedures were overwhelming; as is becoming standard operating procedure all around the world today, due mainly to Bush's "War on Terror," many countries are now insisting your visa be issued in your country of residence. I am going to try to get to Tehran before Bush turns the current epicenter of evil into a sea of glass or, alternatively, cleanses it with the heavily armed teenagers employed by the U.S. military.

It wasn't easy to visit Syria. But however inconvenient, I felt that it was now or never; for all I know, the next time I'm in the area Syria might be transformed into a war zone by thousands of trigger-happy young crusaders. So I filled out the forms, submitted the photographs, and sent the whole thing to the Syrian Embassy in Dubai.

I was able to get my Syrian visa in Dubai overnight, complicated only by the Syrian officials' request that the local U.S. Consulate notarize a statement proclaiming that there was no reason I shouldn't visit. The Syrian officials were, surprisingly, not only polite, but friendly and helpful. The Syrian Embassy itself is a perfectly ordinary, if rather run-down, house in a residential area, untroubled by security or guards — rather unlike the American consulate, which resembles a high-rise fortress with armed guards, metal detectors, steel doors with buzzers, and bulletproof glass windows, behind which lurk surly clerks who might have been transplanted from your local DMV. And that is just the Consulate; the U.S. Embassy for the U.A.E. in Abu Dhabi (as well as the one in Qatar), is a massive high-tech affair, a blockhouse-style building, a bunker really, surrounded by a high blast-wall that leaves the whole compound looking as formidable as any prison — very much the template for all

new U.S. embassies around the world. Not that I'm a connoisseur of embassy design, but I know of no other country employing such paranoid architects. It says a lot about the success of our foreign policy that such extreme measures are required. But I digress.

Into the Heart of Darkness

Press reports intimate that Syria is a land of dark foreboding, an Arabic Mordor, inhabited mostly by orcs and other twisted creatures. I found an altogether different country. I traveled all over Syria looking for evil; but instead mainly found a quiet, tired place in a bit of a time-warp. The tone is set by the Damascus airport, which appears to have been built in the '50s when traffic was perhaps four or five flights a day; there are probably 15 or 20 now, but things haven't changed a bit. In the city, there's some renovation, but very, very little new construction aside from a Four Seasons hotel now breaking ground — which is a good sign, especially since it's financed by Kuwaiti money, which is to say, probably smart money. They can see that the country is changing. While I was in Damascus, I stayed in both the Sheraton and the Meridian, and although they were the best hotels in town, they were only between three and four stars. Syria doesn't get many visitors on either business or pleasure.

This is a country full of the ruins of history. That's all well and good for visiting history buffs like me. It's great to

see absolutely world-class sites like the Omayyad Mosque, the Krac de Chevaliers (one of the world's largest and best-preserved medieval castles), and the innumerable ancient ruins. But it really doesn't serve the locals very well, except for the occasional tour guide. It keeps people's attention on history which, as Gibbon aptly observed, is little more than a catalogue of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. Countries are, by and large, better off without a history. That way, people's attention tends to be naturally directed towards the future — which means high technology and a high standard of living. And, necessarily, the completely free flow of people, ideas, goods, and money across borders.

Unfortunately for the Syrians, Syria is a closed country, with few people coming in, and even fewer going out — partly because of the visas required by most other countries for Syrian passports, partly because of exchange controls, but mostly because few can afford to go anywhere but, say, Lebanon, to do mostly menial labor. A typical Syrian, like a government employee, earns about \$100 a month.

That doesn't bother someone like me, except on a philosophical level. On a practical level, it means there's no problem getting a hotel room without a reservation. It's easy to rent a car and driver for \$100 per 24 hours. It's nice being basically the only tourist visiting great sites. But it should bother the locals.

The Reality of Evil

You're probably wondering what Damascus is really like. I can't tell you with any great certainty because, regrettably, I wasn't able to form any relationships with any of the locals. But I can tell you that, to all one's senses, it's a perfectly normal Third World city. It is, I suspect, a great deal like Baghdad used to be before it was transformed into a war zone.

Your sense of smell is pleasantly engaged by the exotic cooking spices the Crusaders came here to steal, and less pleasantly by the odor of uncollected garbage and diesel from the trucks. In these places there are always too many trucks, generally badly maintained, since no one would dream of building a railroad in a socialist country, nor bother to maintain one that had been built during colonial days.

Your hearing is soothed by the cries of the muezzins at the mosques, calling the faithful to prayer five times a day. The musical chant of the muezzin is as charming as the

ringing of church bells in France. In Syria, my impression is that most people pay lip service to Islam, much as the French do to Christianity. The other thing you hear, at all times of the day, is the constant beeping of horns; people here use them in place of brakes.

What do you see as you look around Damascus? Lots of traffic. Lots of cheap taxis. People dressed casually; very few men decked out in traditional Arab garb. While many older women wear headscarves, very few wear an abbaya. Just as many young women sport exposed midriffs.

What you do, after you see the sights or wander around the huge covered souks, is sit down in one of the numerous restaurants, have some sweet tea and mezze, perhaps (usually, in my case) accompanied by a water pipe. Looking at passers-by, I was hard-pressed to find evil.

So I went far out in the desert to look for it. I went to Palmyra, which I recommend to any tourist in Syria. The new town is like hundreds of others around the Mediterranean basin, distinguished only by its prison, looking like an out-of-place U.S. Embassy, notorious for holding political detainees under Papa Assad. The ancient city of Palmyra, however, ranks with the very best Roman era ruins I've ever seen. The city was a major stop on the Silk Road that tentuously tied Rome to China. It's easy to envision the caravans, the shops lined up in the souk, the bathhouses, the fleshpots, the travelers topping up their appetites for wine, women, and song before again hitting a desert full of

bandits. Exotic types from all over the empire and beyond passed through the town with outlandish tales, some of them true. The place was undoubtedly the Dubai of its day; I wonder whether Palmyra is where George Lucas got his ideas for the desert cities featured in *Star Wars*.

On the three-hour drive back to Damascus, there were several signs for Baghdad, tempting me to drive in that direction. But, truth be told, approaching a border crossing into Iraq at night is potentially worse for your health than a lifetime of smoking. We stopped for nearly an hour at an obscure little cafe along the road, which styled itself the Baghdad Cafe, and were treated to Turkish coffee by the proprietor. Had he been to Baghdad? No. And neither had anyone else I asked in Syria. Travel to Iraq has been strongly discouraged since relations between Hafez and Saddam soured a couple of decades ago.



As I do everywhere, I looked for financial opportunities. Since there's no stock exchange — although they say one is in process of being set up — I checked out the real estate market. You might think property would be cheap in a backward socialist country, but while that's the case in many places (much of South America, almost all of Africa, and a few places in Asia, like Burma), it's not the case in Syria. I suspect this is largely because there are few alternatives to property for savings, so property in Damascus is expensive. I went to the beach to check out the country's 110 miles of Mediterranean coast. I found no bargains, although seafront condos go for about \$50 per square foot, which is cheap. But being the only foreigner at a beach resort in a Muslim country isn't my idea of a vacation.

The Politics of Evil

It's important to remember that — like Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq — Syria is an artificial construct, part of the Ottoman Empire, which was defeated in World War I. The French and British drew the lines creating these countries almost as arbitrarily as they did when they divvied up Africa. That naturally led to an unstable situation in this part of the world. After the Syrians kicked the French out, much the way the Iraqis evicted the British, they had frequent military coups until Hafez Assad took control after staging a coup in 1970.

Since his death in 2000, his son Bashar Assad has been president. Like Iraq, Syria has been a socialist police state since its independence. The "socialist" part means that the state owns the means of production, but since Syria doesn't produce anything of consequence, that's an academic distinction. Socialism here, like everywhere in the world, is a clever way for those in power to conduct a systematic swindle of those who aren't.

In the case of Syria, we're talking about the Baath (Resurrection) Party. Like the Communist Party in China, it is just a scam allowing individuals in government to live high and pad their foreign bank accounts. I suppose one can see the appeal, however idiotic, the Baath might have had in

To all one's senses, Damascus is a perfectly normal Third World city, a great deal like Baghdad before it was transformed into a war zone.

the post-colonial era. But now everyone under the age of 40 sees it as a corrupt and counterproductive anachronism that serves mostly as an ineffective limit on their supplies of hip-hop CDs, imported jeans, and Internet cafes. Half of the 18-million population is under 20, and a quarter of the working age population is unemployed. Exposed for the first time to the salubrious influence of the West — and just in the last decade or so because of the computer, the VCR, and the satellite dish — these folks are ready for a change.

Left alone, the pathetic old Baath dinosaur would likely die of its own accord, exactly the way the Soviet Union did,

and for exactly the same reasons. It's not only unnecessary, but counterproductive to threaten places like this with military action. The place is an economic disaster, with no worthwhile exports but oil. And that's coming to an end. Production is about 525,000 barrels per day, and domestic consumption is 275,000, leaving 250,000 for export. But the fields are in decline, and it's estimated that Syria will be a

The American consulate is a fortress, with armed guards, metal detectors, and bulletproof glass windows, behind which lurk surly clerks who might have been transplanted from your local DMV.

net oil importer in five years. That alone guarantees that the remainder of Syrian troops in Lebanon will be withdrawn sooner rather than later.

The Syrian Baaths haven't liberalized the economy, failing to realize, as the Chinese Communists have, that if people earn more they can extort more. The police state, however, has mellowed considerably since Hafez died, and that trend is likely to continue, at least if the U.S. keeps its hands off the place. Bush's saber-rattling does nothing but encourage large portions of the Syrian population to unite around the Baath.

Syria is still an authoritarian regime, but it's evolved considerably since the death of the old Assad in 2000. Now, under the 38-year-old Baby Assad, owning a fax machine no longer requires a security clearance, there's at least one paper not owned by the state, cell phones are available (though expensive), and you're allowed to own a computer or a satellite dish. The young Assad appears to be surrounded, at once, by young technocrats who want to see Syria join the modern world, and a bunch of old thugs from the military and security apparatus who don't want their rice bowls broken. If the old thugs are smart, they'll take the billions they've stolen and retire to Geneva while they still can.

My conclusion? As was the case with Iraq, the reality of Syria is vastly different from the propagandistic view disseminated by the U.S. government. It's a small, poor, quiet, old, and passive country. Its inhabitants have been suppressed by a socialist government for the last 50 years, but that form of government is about to die, and be tossed like a dead rat onto the garbage heap of history. Syria, and the whole fertile crescent region, is home to not only civilization itself but a people who have always been renowned as the world's sharpest merchants and traders. They will again become highly prosperous and productive. The last 50 years will eventually be seen as an insignificant blip on the 5,000 year screen of their history — exactly as the reign of the Emperor Mao is proving to have been for the Chinese — as long as somebody doesn't invade and turn the place into a second Iraq. □

A Man's Body, A Man's Right

by Bart Croughs

Some people would pay any price for the extra years a new kidney can provide. Too bad politicians won't let them.

The problem of organ shortage for transplants is well-known. In the United States alone, over 80,000 people are on the waiting list for an organ transplant. Every year, thousands of patients die while waiting for their transplant. What is the cause of this persistent shortage?

How many TV sets would reach the market if television manufacturers were not allowed to ask for money for their product? One does not need to be an economist to understand what the consequences of such a policy would be. Yet this is exactly the policy that exists today with regard to organs: it is illegal to pay or receive money for organs.

Adam Smith wrote these famous words: "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their self-love." The politicians who have prohibited organ trade and the opinion leaders who support this prohibition still fail to grasp this point.

This is not rocket science; the harmful consequences of the introduction of a maximum price for goods and services is part of Economics 101. The price mechanism sees to it that supply and demand are in equilibrium. When there is a shortage of a certain product, the price will go up; the higher price makes it more profitable to make the product, which will increase the supply of the product. If the government prohibits the rise of the price of a certain product, thus artificially keeping the price below the market price, the incentive to increase production disappears, and a permanent shortage of the product ensues. For organs a *de facto* maximum price of \$0 has been introduced, with predictable results.

Politicians often come up with new interventions, with no results to speak of. The only thing politicians do not consider abolishing is the initial intervention which has caused

all the misery.

Organ trade is illegal in most countries. India was a well-known exception, where organs were openly traded on a large scale, until the practice was prohibited in the mid-'90s. Organ trade in India was limited primarily to live donors selling a kidney. In the early '90s, a donor received a sum of money for his kidney equaling six times the average annual income in India. The extra supply of kidneys was not only used for kidney patients in India; patients from all over the world who had been put on waiting lists in their home country flooded in.

Why the prohibition of organ trade?

Most who oppose organ trade recognize that paying for organs will lead to more donor organs becoming available, but object nonetheless, mainly out of ethical considerations.

One of the reasons to prohibit organ trade is, as bioethicist and CNN's private philosopher Jeffrey Kahn puts it, that organ trade "could exploit people who need money and wouldn't donate except for payment."¹

The reasoning is that people should decide to donate voluntarily; when a poor man proceeds to donate out of a desire to be better off financially, it is no longer a matter of voluntariness but of coercion — the poor man is "forced by poverty." The Bellagio Task Force, a collection of scientists who have taken a stand against organ trade, put it as follows: the poverty and deprivation of organ donors can be

"so extreme, that the voluntary character of a sale of an organ remains in doubt."²

This argument proves far too much. If the poor should not be allowed to sell a kidney because transactions that are motivated by poverty are a matter of "coercion," then they should not be allowed to take a job at a factory either, or to shine shoes, etc. The poor agree to do any of these only because they are "forced by poverty" to do so. Why should someone be allowed to improve his financial position in one manner but not in another? This question is not answered.

Of course, there is a substantial difference between factory work and the sale of one's organs: selling an organ entails more risk than working at a factory or shining shoes. In the words of the Bellagio Task Force, the removal of an organ poses a "threat to [the donor's] physical health and bodily integrity."³ (They also note that "the risk to health in selling one kidney is truly minimal . . . at least in developed countries.") The risk is greater that one will come to regret the donation; because of that, the poor should be protected from themselves, to prevent them from making the wrong decision.

But the argument that the removal of an organ is not without risk also applies to organ donations motivated by altruism — they have exactly the same risks. There is no reason to assume that the risk of regretting an organ donation is greater when you are left with a large sum of money after the transaction, than when you are left with nothing except the satisfaction of having helped someone. (The opposite is more likely: there is a real possibility that the transplanted kidney will be rejected. The person who only donated out of altruism has lost his kidney for nothing; this is not the case for the person who gave up his kidney for financial gain.)

Nonetheless, there is a widespread assumption that the poor person who decides to go through life with one kidney in exchange for a large sum of money makes the wrong decision. For example, in 1998 Atul Gawande, writing for the online magazine *Slate*, argued that the sale of an organ "would be right for so few, if any, that permitting the option makes no sense at all."⁴ But on what basis Gawande drew this conclusion remains a mystery. By what magical means can an outsider, who knows nothing of the specific circumstances and preferences of the potential seller, be a better judge of which decision is the right one than the organ seller himself? The probable cause of the popularity of this view is that the relatively prosperous intellectuals and politicians who occupy themselves with these issues would not easily sell a kidney for money themselves, and therefore conclude that people for whom selling a kidney can mean the difference between poverty and relative wealth should not do so either — an understandable error.

In fact, the "forced by poverty" argument can be reversed: the more someone is "forced by poverty" to sell a kidney, the more important it is that organ trade is not prohibited. In the most extreme poverty, when the choice is between selling a kidney and starving to death, it is most in the interest of the poor that organ trade is legal.

The whole idea that actions that are risky should be forbidden is ridiculous anyway. It would mean that working as a taxi driver in New York should be prohibited, just like Formula 1 racing, taming lions, having sex without a con-

dom with homosexual junkies, etc.

Another argument from the "exploitation" category is put forward by anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes, the driving force behind anti-organ-trade organization *Organs Watch*. She laments the fact that donor organs move "from South to North, from Third to First World, from poor to

In the early '90s in India, a donor received a sum of money for his kidney equaling six times the average annual income there; patients from all over the world who had been put on waiting lists in their home country flooded in.

rich, from black and brown to white and from female to male."⁵ That may seem unfair, until you realize that there is also a movement in the other direction: namely, a flow of money from the rich to the poor, from the First World to the Third World, etc. And that flow of money is exactly the reason that the poor are prepared to give up their organs!

Moreover, the supply of organs is hardly the only service in which the provider of the service is generally poorer than the one who receives it. According to the reasoning above, the profession of housekeeper, for instance, should be prohibited — what great injustice that the flow of household work goes from the rich to the poor!

Yet another typical objection to organ trade is that inequality between poor and rich could result if people would have to pay for organs. As Jeffrey Kahn phrased it: "it could give rich people the chance to get available organs first."⁶

That possibility cannot be excluded, but at this moment, too, there is inequality: that between the patients who are on the waiting list and die before an organ has become available, and the patients who are lucky enough to make it to the operation. The main thing that legalization of organ sales will do is make more organs available, and therefore fewer people will be part of the unlucky group.

Apparently, those who use this argument do not consider inequality based on luck unjust, but they do consider inequality based on income unjust. But why? When you



realize how the current, luck-based system of inequality works, the opposite conclusion makes more sense. Patients who have the money to buy an organ are not allowed to do so; many are therefore prematurely regulated into their graves by the government. How this is just is not evident. At the same time, these unfortunate patients are forced to pay for the operations of those who are lucky enough to survive the waiting list. The fairness of that, too, is questionable at best. People who have the money to buy an organ do not cause other patients not to have that money, and neither are

If the poor should not be allowed to sell a kidney because transactions that are motivated by poverty are a matter of "coercion," then they should not be allowed to take a job at a factory either.

they the cause of those patients' illnesses; it is therefore unclear why it is just to make them financially liable for the cost of other people's organ operations. This is a violation of the elementary legal principle according to which people can only be held liable for the damage they cause.

The whole idea that inequality in health care on the basis of income is unjust and should therefore be prohibited is sanctimonious nonsense that few people really take seriously. Western countries have access to health care that is far better than that of the average inhabitant of the Third World, purely on the basis of higher incomes here. Why should this outrageous inequality continue to exist? Why not lower the level of Western health care to Third World level, and donate the money that is thus saved to the Third World to improve health care over there? The reason why abolishing inequality within a country is so much more popular than abolishing inequality between countries is simple: the desire to collect other people's hard-earned money with impunity is much better developed than the desire to lose your own hard-earned money to others. Considerations of "social justice" and "solidarity" are little more than sorry excuses for the desire to live at the expense of other people.

Another objection against organ trade that is often heard is that giving up organs should be done out of altruism and not out of pursuit of profit. As Jeffrey Kahn puts it: "the risk we run is that society comes to share the view that organ donation is no longer about altruism but about less virtuous motives."⁷

In this view, thinking of one's own interests is so reprehensible that it should be prohibited. This argument is diametrically opposed to the previous argument: this time, the donor should not be prevented from entering into an agreement that would harm him, but he should be prevented from entering into one that would benefit him. It's amusing that both arguments are typically used by the same people.

But even if we assume that the desire to benefit financially from a transaction should be prohibited, the problem remains that far too much is proven with this argument. If

giving up organs for financial gain should be prohibited because giving organs away for free is so much more noble and generous, then it is hard to see why, for instance, baking bread for financial gain is acceptable; the logical conclusion of such reasoning is that not only should people give up organs altruistically and non-commercially, but also bake bread, make clothes, build houses, etc. In other words: why only sacrifice the well-being and the life of the people who need organs? If it is so morally superior to sacrifice people on the altar of altruism, why not be consistent and let everyone suffer? Say of the communists what you want, at least they were consistent.

Another argument against organ trade that is often used is that it is reprehensible to "commodify" parts of the human body — i.e., to use them as objects. Nancy Scheper-Hughes denounces the markets: "By their very nature markets are indiscriminate, promiscuous and inclined to reduce everything — including human beings, their labor and even their reproductive capacity — to the status of commodities. . . [and] nowhere is this more dramatically illustrated than in the booming market in human organs from both living and dead donors."⁸

First of all, it is not markets that tend to reduce organs to the status of objects, but people. The reason for that is simple: both buyer and seller expect to gain and there is no third party involved. So what is the problem? This seems to be a primitive way of thinking: organs are (unconsciously) considered as beings who can think and feel, and should therefore be treated "with respect."

But even if you assume that "commodification" of organs is wrong, it is still unclear why this objection should only apply to organ trade and not to organ donations. Why is an organ that is sold being "treated as an object" and an organ that is given as a present not? Objects such as chairs and tables can both be traded and be given as presents; their status as "object" does not depend on whether anything is exchanged for them. It is hard to see why, when it concerns organs, their status as "objects" should suddenly be dependent on whether money is asked in return. In short, if organ

In the most extreme poverty, when the choice is between selling a kidney and starving to death, it is most in the interest of the poor that organ trade is legal.

trade should be prohibited because "commodification" of organs is reprehensible, then organ donations should be prohibited as well.

Another practical objection that is often used, as pointed out by the Bellagio Task Force: there are allegations of "babies and children kidnapped and murdered for their organs. Many journalists as well as individuals are

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Why Don't Americans Save?

by R. W. Bradford

Americans no longer save, and Alan Greenspan is upset. He has no one to blame but himself.

On February 16, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan testified before Congress, as federal law requires. He spoke about several subjects, including Social Security reform, interest rates, and inflation. But the article about his testimony on the CNN/Money website began, "Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan said Wednesday the economy is in good shape but warned that Americans urgently needed to save more."

Greenspan's worry was justified: if Americans don't save, the U.S. will inevitably become a huge debtor nation, an event that will undermine our prosperity and, given the exigencies of the democratic system, destroy the value of our currency.

And he certainly had his facts right: during the past 20 years, the Savings Rate (the percentage of income that is saved) has fallen from about 11% to about 0%, as you can see from the graph to the right.

Why has this happened? Why do Americans save so much less today than they did five, ten, or twenty years ago?

Historically people have saved mostly for two reasons.

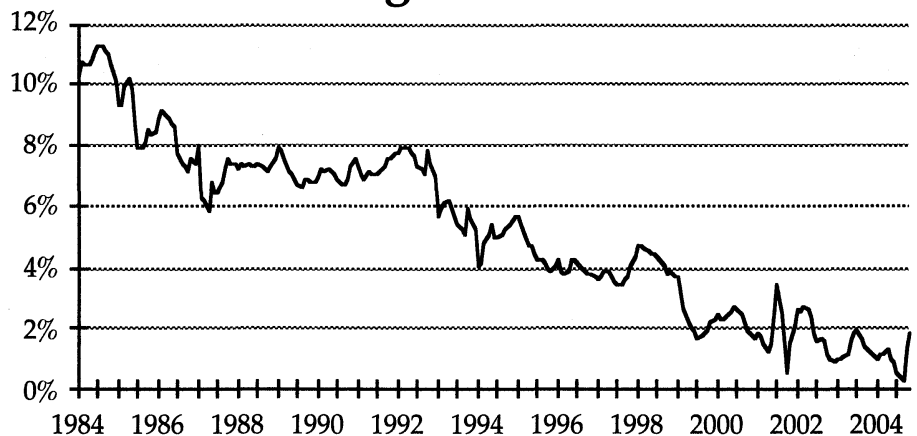
First, they save so they can remain financially solvent if they lose their job or their business becomes unprofitable or they become sick or they fall victim to a calamity of some kind. During the past half century, however, the effect of such considerations has lessened, thanks mostly to mandatory government insurance, pen-

sion plans, and the welfare state's ready willingness to pay for all sorts of things.

The second reason why people save is to get interest. Of course, they save more when the compensation they get for saving is higher than when it is lower.

Through most of history, the supply of money was relatively stable, and interest rates — the price of borrowing money — were a matter of supply and demand. Rates were

U.S. Savings Rate: 1984 – 2004



Source: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-soi/03inta.xls>

worked out between people who wanted to borrow — whether to expand a business enterprise or to acquire consumer goods — and people who were willing to lend, thus foregoing the expansion of their own business activities or postponing the acquisition of consumer goods.

About a century ago, all this changed. During the

increase interest rates?

But before we can charge him with creating or exacerbating the problem of low savings, we should explore the more fundamental question: do low rates inhibit savings? Of course, the commonsense answer to this question is an unequivocal "Yes." But common sense sometimes leads us astray. Is there evidence in the real world? Are there hard data? Can we identify the relationship between the yield on savings and the savings rate?

Several years ago, in an attempt to explore this issue and get a handle on what interest yields actually are, I postulated a new economic indicator. In a simpler era, when inflation was negligible and there were no taxes on interest, the yield on savings was identical to the nominal interest rate: if your bank paid you 2.5% on your savings, your actual yield was 2.5%.

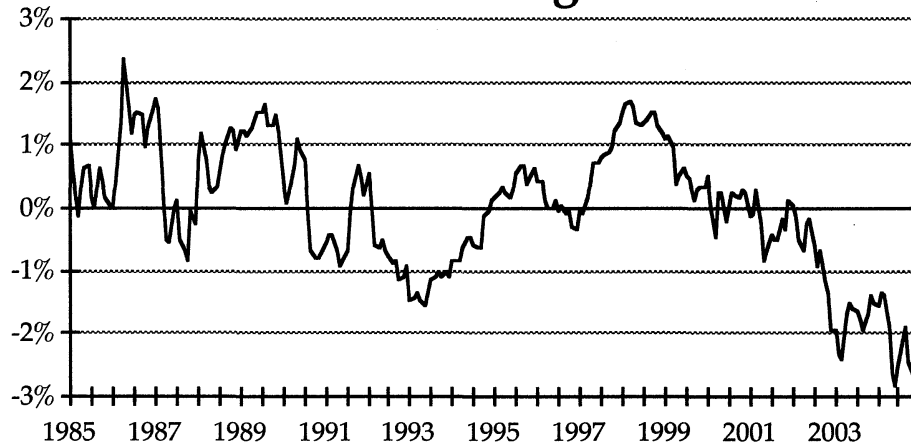
But the imposition of income taxes in 1913 and the rise of inflation that resulted from turning control of the money supply over

to the Fed, a problem exacerbated when the gold standard was abandoned in 1933 made the issue much more complex.

Today, a typical money market yield (I use the figure for Merrill Lynch Ready Assets Trust) is 2.13%: if you invest \$1,000 at 2.13%, you will get \$21.30 in interest over the course of a year. But you won't receive the full \$21.30. You'll have to pay taxes on that amount. Currently, the marginal federal income tax rate is 35%, which reduces the yield to \$13.85.

But thanks to persistent inflation, the value of both the interest you earn and the money that you saved declines. Currently, the Consumer Price Index stands at 3.0%, which means that the \$1,000 you invest at 2.13% will be \$970 at the

Total Yield on Savings: 1985 – 2004

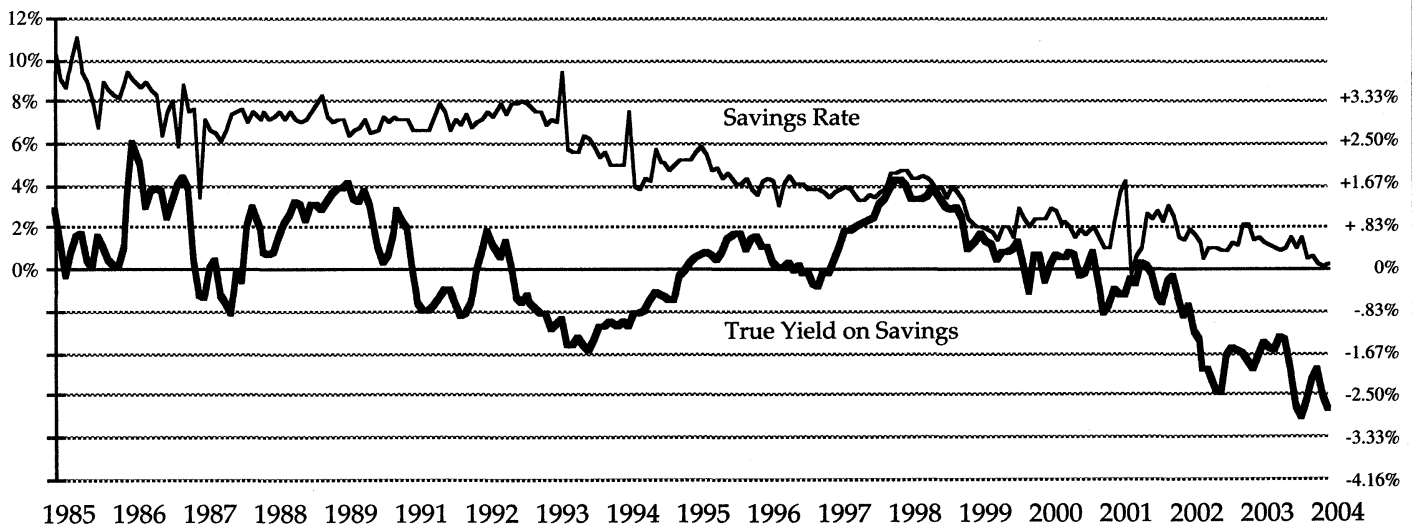


Sources: author's calculation, Wall St Journal, Internal Revenue Service, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Progressive Era, people came to believe that interest rates were too important to be allowed to fluctuate in the marketplace. In 1913, the Federal Reserve Act was passed by Congress, creating the Federal Reserve System and endowing it with powers to control interest rates by either increasing the supply of money (more of anything lowers its price) or constricting its supply (less of anything raises its price). Since then, as a result, interest rates, at least in the short term, have been pretty much absolutely controlled by the Fed, which today is pretty much absolutely controlled by Alan Greenspan.

This leads to an interesting question: if Greenspan is so worried about the savings rates, why doesn't he simply

True Yield on Savings vs. Savings Rate: 1985 – 2004



Left scale = Savings Rate; right scale = TYS

end of a year, and the \$13.85 after-tax income you receive amounts to \$13.43. So the \$1,000 you saved, with the interest that it nominally earned, has purchasing power at the end of a year of \$983.42. Your actual yield is -1.66%. That's right: you lose money when you save.

I call this figure the True Yield on Savings (TYS). I started calculating it about five years ago. I wrote an article about it in Liberty's February 2002 issue ("Today's Crazy Investment Environment"), in which I noted that the yield was negative.

I have since obtained the data needed to track YYS back to 1985, which you can see in the graph at the top of the previous page. As you can see, YYS has varied considerably, ranging from +3% to -3%.

Well, how does the Savings Rate correlate with YYS? Take a look at the graph at the bottom of the previous page.

In statistical terms the correlation is .432. My statistical friends tell me that this correlation is not perfect, but it is considerable.

The curious thing is that so far as I know, Greenspan has never acknowledged his personal responsibility for the collapse of saving in this country despite the fact that, as head of the Fed, he virtually controls interest rates. So long as he keeps rates so low that investors lose money on their sav-

ings the situation is not going to improve very much.

One can only speculate about why he has kept rates so low that Americans no longer save. He certainly knows the consequences. My best guess is that he has acted for political reasons, trying to keep the stock market strong and buoy Americans' confidence in the economy for as long as he can.

Back in the early 1990s, Greenspan increased interest rates to stimulate saving and prevent serious inflation. The Democrats responded by focusing on the economy during the 1992 election campaign. Remember Bill Clinton's campaign adage: "It's the economy, stupid!" And the voters responded by turning out of office a Republican who had just won a war with Iraq. I suspect that Chairman Greenspan had learned his lesson — and that now it's time for the rest of us to learn one, too. It's somewhat more difficult, because the evidence is somewhat more subtle. But it's much more basic and much more important.

We're not earning any money by "saving." The government is manipulating the economy for nobody's good but its own. Republicans and Democrats both do this; probably Democrats do it for worse purposes than Republicans.

But it's about time that we all learned what's going on. Call it a lesson in economic reality. □

A Man's Body, from page 22

convinced that the ready market for organs has stimulated these abuses."⁹

There is not much reason to assume that the risk of organ theft will increase when organ trade is legalized. The present shortage of organs for transplant is the product, at least in part, of the prohibition of organ trade; the supply of organs is low, so the price of an organ is high when a black market develops. When organ trade is legalized, the supply of organs will increase, which will make the price of organs drop. That will make stealing organs less profitable, so criminals will have fewer reasons to do so. And, of course, it's

The main thing that legalization of organ sales will do is make more organs available.

easier for organ traders to defraud organ donors (accepting the organs, but not paying the price that was agreed upon) when organ trade is prohibited. When selling organs is illegal, the victims of fraud are less inclined to go to the police. So rather than an argument against legalizing organ trade, the risk of people being robbed or defrauded of their organs is really an argument in favor of legalizing organ trade.

Even if it were true that the risk of crime would increase if organ trade were legalized, there would still be no reason to prohibit organ trade. People are killed to collect their life insurance; should life insurance therefore be prohibited? People are killed so others can quickly receive their inheritance; should the laws of inheritance therefore be abolished?

The objections against organ trade do not make sense;

the result of the prohibition of organ trade is that numerous patients are sentenced to death each year for no good reason, while at the same time numerous poor people are deprived of the chance to improve their standard of living.

Finally, this is also a matter of principle. To whom do my organs belong: me or the state?

A man's body, a man's right! □

Notes

An earlier version of this article appeared in HP/De Tijd. It was translated into English by René van Wissen.

1. <http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/bioethics/9905/organ.donate/template.html>
2. <http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList302/87DC95FCA3C3D63EC1256B66005B3F6C>
3. <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList302/87DC95FCA3C3D63EC1256B66005B3F6C>
4. <http://slate.msn.com/id/2676>
5. http://www.freeindiamedia.com/health/8_july_health.htm
6. <http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/bioethics/9905/organ.donate/template.html>
7. <http://www.newint.org/issue300/trade.html>
8. <http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/bioethics/9905/organ.donate/template.html>
9. <http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList302/87DC95FCA3C3D63EC1256B66005B3F6C>



"Don't panic, but I think I'm getting a blister."

The Plot to Regulate Video Games

by A. J. Ferguson

Insert enough quarters — say, \$90 million worth — and scientists will tell you why videogames ought to be regulated.

Rod Blagojevich, the governor of Illinois, has toured his state for months, conducting impromptu interviews and visiting town hall meetings to worry his constituency. Seems he's tilting at one of Illinois' most urgent problems: video games. Now the State House has voted 91–19 in favor of a bill requiring retail stores to figure out which games feature sexual content or "human on human violence" and thus can't be sold or rented to minors.

The governor won support for the bill by linking video games to antisocial behavior and, curiously, obesity. (I have yet to see the game that encourages me to eat all the ice cream in the freezer, but I'm waiting. Perhaps "Barbie Gets Jilted.") Harvard professor Michael Rich oozed out to anoint the governor's opinion: "Children are learning from video games. The question is: What are they learning?"

The implication, of course, is that they are learning the wrong things, and we must teach them the right things instead. Since Rousseau, at least, education theorists have sought to "make learning fun," and with the rise of video games in the '80s, that oft-lampooned goal* seemed at last attainable. Games were designed to teach math, spelling, geography, and even sex ed. A few caught on: "Oregon Trail," in which you guided a pioneer family westward, showed kids how to die of dysentery and carve rude messages on tombstones for the next class to discover; "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?," where you tracked criminals around the globe, gave kids the vague but mistaken impression that Interpol is useful for something; and "Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing" taught kids that, while driving, one should pay close attention to the letters being

formed by clouds in the sky. On the whole, they failed to teach a damn thing, yet updated versions sold well and received glowing praise. Eventually some marketing demon slapped the etymological abortion "edutainment" on the genre, and years later it chugs along even though no one plays such games without being forced to — a coercion often justified as "balancing out" the lessons taught by vapid or malevolent games at home.

Now, I could make a snarky list of libertarian ideals I learned from my gaming days, about self-reliant heroes and nosy government officials and rampaging mutant zombies, but that might imply that these boobs have a point. A much better question than "What are they learning?" is the one Professor Rich sneaked past with the first part of his statement: "Do children learn from video games?"

Truth is, Mike, I didn't learn much from video games, and I doubt anyone else did either (except maybe the loser-cum-hero in "The Last Starfighter"). Video games as media are unable to impart lessons that transfer to other situations: while I can develop a strategy for shooting some game's Mafia kingpin, it doesn't mean that I've learned any of the particulars of contract killing. Perhaps it means I've mastered that game, but whatever knowledge I gain is confined to that game alone (or, at most, to that game and other games made by that company). The button-mashing is primary and easily forgotten; what sticks in the mind are the secondary elements of such games: the music, the design,

*For a fine example, see Saki's short story "The Scharz-Metterklume Method."

the atmosphere. Many graphic designers became very wealthy by assuming that bright colors in pixellated arrays would appeal to a generation raised on Nintendo games. Recording artists nabbed sound effects from decades-old games and used them as samples in their songs. Even the military caught on, producing recruitment ads that make service in Iraq look like a tactical strategy game, with a soldier peering down a sniper scope at a machine-gun wielding Arab in a jeep. Video game motifs flooded the American subconscious so completely that they trickled down to the next generation: the influx of Japanese pop culture over the past few years, specifically comics and card games, would have been unthinkable without Nintendo, Sega, and Sony breaking through first.

But new technologies and new fads invite the scrutiny of the professionally concerned, and any combination of the two is sure to set heads talking. "60 Minutes" aired a segment on the "psychology" of the video gamer, seeking to understand why anyone would waste his time on such violent, antisocial fare — sounds familiar, no? Yet this particular segment aired in 1976. They were ruled up about "Death Race," in which the object was to run over as many "gremlins" as possible. With each success came the sound of something approximating a death rattle, and the appearance of a tombstone on the screen.*

The free publicity worked wonders: "Death Race" sold ten times more units than the company had originally forecast. As is often the case, if the game had been ignored, it would quickly have been forgotten. Video gamers are a demanding lot: if a game isn't fun to play, they won't play it, no matter how much sex or violence it promises. Every time a company floats a game to see if people will purchase it for shock value alone, it sinks — unless it is buoyed by press-released outrage from the cultural lifeguards. Apart from the economic incentive created by protest groups who reliably denounce shock-value games, most of those games would not exist. For example, "Custer's Revenge," a game well in the running for most loathsome of all time, was released in 1982 to universally bad reviews. The graphics were poorly done, the character was nearly impossible to control, and the game wasn't any fun whatsoever. But the premise was so horrid that some interest groups couldn't help but protest: the player was expected to maneuver General Custer across the Little Bighorn battlefield, avoiding Indian arrows. Also, Custer was naked — his three-pixel penis proudly erect — and he sought to rape an Indian girl tied to a cactus. Without the copies sold to people who just wanted to see what all the fuss was about, the game would have been a wretched failure; with those sales, the company stayed out of bankruptcy long enough to release

*The game maker had tried to soften the game: "Death Race" was originally called "Pedestrian," and the player was charged with running over humans, not gremlins (though in 1976 they couldn't be made to look much different). In later years, as companies exported games with better special effects to countries without First Amendments, they had to devise odder and odder methods to slip their products past government censors, such as turning all human victims into zombies and making all blood green. I'm not sure what kids are supposed to learn from such substitutions; I presume they're made in deference to important cultural prerogatives.

two more terrible games before mercifully closing up shop.

Occasionally, though, a game hits on exactly the right combination of skilled craftsmanship and adult content, and the resulting crush of media attention makes it an even bigger success. Clearly Congress alone can stop such a juggernaut. In 1993, Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) initiated hearings on video game violence, prompted primarily by *Mortal Kombat*, a one-on-one fighting game packed with impressive depictions of kung fu characters beating ten kinds of hell out of each other. The hearings proceeded with the detached, impartial manner that we've come to expect from our nation's lawmakers. However, the game companies came prepared, demonstrating a new ratings system they had begun to use. These ratings, like those given to movies, attempted to estimate which age groups could han-

Anyone who votes against a "get tough on games" bill invites opponents to characterize him as "pro-child-violence" in the next election.

dle which games, from Everyone to Adults Only. And these ratings, like those given to movies, came to be seen by legislators not as suggestions, but as commandments handed down from on high.

In some states, would-be Solons have been flabbergasted to find that these ratings aren't legally binding. Attempts to etch them in stone, like Gov. Blagojevich's pet bill in Illinois, follow a standard pattern:

- Some horrible tragedy, usually involving a kid and a gun, snags the public's attention.
- An elected official seizes this opportunity to hold a press conference. He declares that video game companies aren't doing enough to keep violent games out of the hands of minors, and makes an unprovable causal link between a game he's never played (though he's been briefed on how bad it is) and the horrible tragedy.
- The official, or one of his henchmen, introduces a "get tough on games" bill in the assembly. Anyone who votes against it risks killing his career, inviting opponents to characterize him as "pro-child-violence" in the next election. The measure passes, after the usual grumbling from "civil libertarians" (as in the stock newspaper phrase "But some civil libertarians fear . . ." floating like an iceberg in the middle of any article on politics).
- The ACLU and pals immediately challenge the law, and it is struck down by an appeals court. This will happen in Illinois, just as it has happened in Indiana, Missouri, and Washington.

Since the hearings in 1993, video game legislation at the federal level has suffered from a lack of horrible tragedies. Since the courts would void any "get tough" bill that Congress spent time passing, most of Capitol Hill's windbags are content to squawk about video game content while pandering at campaign stops. Only lightweight Rep. Joe Baca (D-Calif.) has dropped a bill in the hopper, and his

"Protect Children from Video Game Sex and Violence Act of 2003" died in committee, despite picking up 43 co-sponsors.

This is a shame, at least from the censor's point of view, because a wildly popular scapegoat game already exists: Grand Theft Auto III (GTA), which has received armfuls of awards from every major gaming magazine — partly for its adult themes, but mostly for its open-ended game play. In it, the player controls a hoodlum working his way up through the crime syndicates that control Liberty City. The plot itself is pure pulp, but the game allows you to put off missions and explore the city instead, creating mayhem as you go. Run over a few hookers and the police come after you; start killing the cops, and you'll face SWAT teams, the FBI, and the Army. A separate statistic keeps track of how much attention your crime spree has drawn, from "late-night local news" to "USA Today front page" to "special meeting of the UN" (sadly, the blue-helmeted peacekeepers never pop up to lecture you on the Geneva Conventions while you're blowing up ambulances).

GTA is so perfect a target that truly savvy, dedicated statisticians can't afford to wait for a horrible tragedy; they must prepare as if one is already scheduled. Thus, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) plans to launch a \$90 million investigation to find out how video games affect the "cognitive, social, emotional, and physical" development of children. It should be no surprise that she's already dictated the study's conclusion, referring to GTA as a "silent epidemic of media desensitization that teaches kids it's okay to diss people because they are a woman, because they're a different color, or they're from a different place." Once you're done laughing at her grammar and her painful attempt at slang, consider the implication lurking behind her words: that this "major threat to morality" was made for and marketed to children under 18. But GTA is clearly marked "M" for "Mature," meaning it's not recommended for anyone under

Sen. Hillary Clinton is asking for a study of video games, because these days you can't build a platform without applying a scientific veneer.

17; most retailers not only refuse to sell it to unaccompanied minors, but also attempt to discourage parents from buying the game for children under 16.

Consider too the shift in strategy: Hillary is not asking for regulation of video games. She's asking for a study of them, because these days you can't build a platform without applying a scientific veneer. If the study is funded — and she has enough allies in both parties to pull it off; Sens. Brownback (R-Kan.) and Santorum (R-Pa.) have already declared their support — it will confirm Mrs. Clinton's preliminary findings, and the propaganda ("media sensitization," perhaps?) can begin. TV commercials, movie trailers, even video games themselves will carry melodramatic anti-game messages. Game makers will fight back at first, and

may even escape being forced to advertise against their own products. But they will eventually lose when a horrible tragedy happens, and Mrs. Clinton holds her triumphant "I told you so" press conference.*

Publicly-funded science has become the preferred tool of statisticians for dismantling constitutional protections. Given enough grant money, facts can always be found to support the government's thesis. Peer reviews of such studies are unreliable, because oftentimes the reviewing peers are them-

Game makers will eventually lose when a horrible tragedy happens, and Mrs. Clinton holds her triumphant "I told you so" press conference.

selves dependent on public funding for their own projects. Any scientist who challenges an approved doctrine — on secondhand smoke, perhaps, or medicinal uses of marijuana — risks his career; if he manages to obtain private funding to propagate his research, he is often called a corporate stooge, or even a traitor. This strategy has proven so successful and subsequently pervasive that a state legislator like Illinois Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia can claim with a straight face that empirical evidence from a Harvard University study on post-traumatic video game stress in children "provides the necessary punch needed" to push aside the First Amendment.

The Supreme Court may disagree, but they too are being sidestepped. The Constitution is pesky, at least when the courts bother to defend it, and statisticians have tried audacious methods to brush it aside (like Andrew Jackson's refusal to obey a Supreme Court decision, or FDR's court-packing scheme). But now they realize that the only court that matters is that of public opinion. By controlling scientific research, they control the facts that reach the common man, and the litany of things that "everyone knows" is not subject to constitutional review. Once a fact penetrates the mass mind — the evils of marijuana, for a present example; the supremacy of the Aryan race, from the past — it is very difficult to extract, especially when some or all of the government's power relies on the perpetuation of that fact. If "everyone knows that video games teach kids to kill," and a horrible tragedy happens that seems to confirm that fact, it will be all but ineradicable.

Video game companies can best fight this tactic by learning from the porn industry (the two are becoming more closely

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*Hillary's comments have a more immediate purpose, of course: the day she entered the Senate she sloughed off her strident socialism, and since then she's presented herself as a slippery centrist in preparation for her presidential bid. But every time she's crossed the aisle — most notably in support of the war in Iraq — it's been in favor of stronger government. Her stance here is a sort of political speculation: in the short term, she gains a few votes from gullible mothers; in the long term, she positions herself on a small swell of an issue that could crest in time (the summer of 2008 would be nice).

The Coming War Against Iran

by Alan W. Bock

We absolutely, positively will not invade Iran. Until we do.

During his recent trip to Europe, President Bush said that concern about possible U.S. military action against Iran “is simply ridiculous,” then paused a beat and added, pointedly, that “having said that, all options are on the table.” In mid-2002, many thought that military action against Iraq was virtually inevitable. Barring an Iranian renunciation of any plans, even peaceful, for nuclear power, is military action against them inevitable as well? The parallels in official statements are striking, and there is little doubt that Iran is still on the neoconservative “to do” list. But how the United States ends up “doing” Iran could still depend on real-world realities and contingencies, which could in this case override neocon ambitions.

The invasion of Iraq, or at least neutralization of Iraq’s purported threat to Middle Eastern peace, was a neocon ambition long before the 9/11 attacks. As far back as 1992, Paul Wolfowitz, then under-secretary of defense for policy — who believed that the 1991 war to oust Iraq from Kuwait was ended prematurely — outlined plans for military intervention in Iraq as necessary to ensure “access to vital raw material, primarily to Persian Gulf oil,” and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The document he drafted, which also stated that U.S. policy would aim to prevent any power from challenging U.S. global dominance, was leaked to the New York Times and formally shelved. But it is strikingly similar to the new U.S. National Security Strategy that was promulgated after 9/11.

A similar refrain about the necessity of removing Saddam can be seen in the 1996 document prepared by Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, David Wurmser, et al., for the newly-installed Likud government in Israel headed by Benjamin Netanyahu. In 1998, 18 prominent conservatives

wrote a letter to President Clinton, urging him to “aim at the removal of Saddam Hussein’s regime from power.” Among the signatories were Elliott Abrams, Richard Armitage, John Bolton, Richard Perle, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and others who became Bush administration officials.

Dick Cheney did not sign that 1998 letter; indeed, as president of Halliburton, he argued during much of the 1990s for lifting or easing the sanctions on Iraq imposed after the first Gulf War. Getting him on board the neocon train was a key political development that eased the way toward the U.S. invasion in 2003.

In official meetings immediately following 9/11, Wolfowitz called for an invasion of Iraq, but the president decided to settle matters in Afghanistan first. A campaign to justify such an invasion began quickly. Douglas Feith opened the Office of Special Plans in the Pentagon, which “stovepiped” Iraqi-related intelligence — including dubious material from exile groups like the Iraqi National Congress, free from inconvenient analysis by area experts at the CIA — directly to the White House. Soon the administration was convinced that Saddam’s regime possessed chemical and biological weapons, and had programs to acquire nuclear weapons.

Although administration spokesmen were relatively circumspect about concrete claims, statements like

Condoleezza Rice's hope that we wouldn't wait until the smoking gun appeared in the form of a mushroom cloud reinforced the impression that U.S. officials were convinced that Iraq possessed dangerous weapons and the will to use them against the U.S. and its allies or interests abroad. The CIA prepared a new National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq in October 2002. Without adding much new information about Iraqi plans and intentions, it reinterpreted information in previous estimates — which suggested that the threat from Saddam was largely contained — to present a much more active threat than they had previously reported.

When then-Secretary of State Colin Powell put his credibility on the line in a presentation to the U.N. Security Council in February 2003, advocates of war figured that he had laid the final brick in their wall of justification.

As we know now, however, U.S. intelligence was faulty. No weapons of mass destruction have been found, and every lead touted by anonymous leakers and Fox News (the WMDs had been secreted away in Syria, there were still caches to be found in remote desert regions, etc.) turned out to be a dead end. Likewise, while some of the hints connecting Saddam with al Qaeda may have indicated a desire to establish links with al Qaeda, the evidence to date suggests there was no operational link between the two.

U.S. intelligence about Iraq fell short of being complete and accurate, and current U.S. intelligence on Iran suffers from the same shortcomings. A recent Reuters story quotes former intelligence officers and other area experts to the effect that "they doubt the CIA has been able to recruit agents with access to the small circle of clerics who control the Islamic Republic's national security policy." Former weapons inspector David Kay, who led the Iraq Study Group that was unable to find evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, notes an increasing reliance on dissident exile groups with a strong institutional interest in a policy of regime change in Iran. Information from similar Iraqi groups proved notoriously unreliable.

Nonetheless, many of the same groups that led the bandwagon for war with Iraq are making similar noises about Iran, which has admitted that it has had a nuclear development program, some aspects of which it successfully con-

avoid a military confrontation with the United States, the best bet is to get a nuclear weapon, or a reasonable possibility of having one soon, not a bunch of inflated guesses that informed people suspect are unreliable, as in the case of Saddam's regime. That might suggest that a more accommo-

A major deterrent to overt military action against Iran could be the "catastrophic success" of defeating Saddam's regime.

dating approach — recognizing that the mullahs' regime, while canny, faces significant domestic disillusionment — could at least delay further research, if not convince the regime that — since it is not threatened with invasion — it has no need to pursue nukes.

Instead, recent reports by outfits such as the Iran Policy Committee, headed by former National Security Council staffer Ray Tanter, and a December report from the reconstituted Committee on the Present Danger, while offering a few carrots (increased trade, modification of the economic embargo), emphasize the importance of sticks. The IPC report, for example, discusses military strikes and active efforts to destabilize the government, largely through supporting dissident groups, including the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), which is still on the State Department's list of terrorist groups. The IPC report advocates taking it off the list so it can be openly subsidized and supplied.

The administration has not explicitly denied (although Iran has) what Seymour Hersh and others have alleged: that U.S. Special Forces teams have conducted operations inside Iran, presumably to gather more reliable information about the whereabouts and significance of Iranian nuclear sites. This is hardly surprising. Given that the Iranians have successfully concealed some of their nuclear activities for years, and assuming the truth of reports that U.S. intelligence has not penetrated the upper reaches of the Iranian regime, knowledge about which sites might be capable of producing weapons-grade material is bound to be scant. One can easily imagine a bombing campaign that took out some important sites but left others untouched, leaving in place a regime more angry and determined than intimidated.

That's what David Kay emphasized in his article, "Let's Not Make the Same Mistakes in Iran," in the Feb. 7 Washington Post. Our intelligence services, whether through incompetence or by trying to give policy makers what they believed they wanted, got it wrong in Iraq. There's no evidence that our intelligence on Iran is reliable. Even CIA director Porter Goss, who says he has a plan to improve human intelligence, acknowledges that it could take years to add to what we really know about Iran. Training to be a clandestine officer takes about a year, not including proficiency in languages and customs.

David Kay acknowledges that the IAEA "is not

Iran is a larger country, with terrain less conducive to a swift ground invasion, and a larger and probably more effective military than Saddam's Iraq.

cealed from the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for 18 years. Iran claims its goal is nuclear power strictly for peaceful purposes like generating electricity. Iran floats on a sea of petroleum, so its need for nuclear power to keep the lights on is not immediately apparent.

Few of those promoting regime change in Iran acknowledge that the mullahs' nuclear aspirations are based on the lesson the Iraq war taught the "axis of evil": If you want to

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Save Social Security Now!

by Durk Pearson

Social Security is broken. Neither Bush's nor the Democrats' plans will solve anything. Here's one that will.

If Social Security had been based on personal retirement accounts since 1935, we wouldn't have an actuarially unsound system now. After 70 years of Congress stealing all of the Social Security "trust fund" surpluses and spending them on non-Social Security programs, personal accounts alone cannot make the over-promised system sound. That will require increasing the age of full retirement or direct reductions in benefits, which are not in the short-term interests of workers, and hence are currently politically impossible.

Moreover, even if Social Security taxes were immediately increased or benefits reduced, no real lasting benefit would accrue to either retirees or workers; Congress would simply continue to spend a larger surplus on non-Social Security programs, just as they have done for 70 years.

A simple alteration in how the Social Security surplus is used can alter this calculus of long-term worker and retiree impoverishment: simply return each worker's annual surplus payment in the form of a check marked "for deposit to a Social Security Roth IRA only." If the Social Security surplus is 25% of total Social Security taxes collected that year, and a worker and his employer together paid \$6,000 in Social Security taxes, the worker's Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox check would be \$1,500. The worker's traditional Social Security account would be credited with \$4,500 — his \$6,000 payment less the \$1,500 Roth rebate he receives. The worker's future traditional Social Security payments would be based on the \$4,500 net amount that he paid into the system.

Participation would be voluntary; if a worker returns his Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox check to the Social Security Administration, it will be credited to his traditional Social Security account, and this additional surplus added

proportionally to all other Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox checks.

What do Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockboxes accomplish?

- A typical full-time worker would have over \$10,000 in his Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox by the time the Social Security surplus runs out. A couple, both full-time workers, would have a total of over \$20,000. This is real retirement security, not liberal bullshit.

- The time before Social Security cash flow becomes negative would be extended beyond the current projection of 2017: This is a direct result of the smaller traditional Social Security payouts to participants. The time to trust fund exhaustion would also be extended beyond 2041, though this is really a sham event since the Treasury bonds in the "trust fund" are not net assets; they are really liabilities to all taxpayers.

- Long-term Social Security trust fund liabilities would be immediately reduced by several trillion dollars. The roughly \$1 trillion that would go into Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockboxes between now and 2017 will reduce the 75-year and infinite term Social Security trust fund liabilities by several trillion dollars because traditional Social Security payouts would be based on traditional (now smaller) trust fund accounts, plus the compound increases of wage index-

ing (about 4% per year) up to time of retirement, and cost of living indexing thereafter. These compound benefit increases add up to far more than the Social Security taxes paid in by the employee and employer over the employee's working career. This means that the future income taxes needed to repay the trust fund liabilities and Social Security taxes that will have to be paid by younger workers, our children, grandchildren, and their employers, will be reduced by several trillion dollars by this simple, easily understood change.

This is like paying off a few hundred dollars extra every month on your mortgage; the savings over the next 30 years will far exceed the extra payments.

- It would create incentives and remove disincentives for needed long-term changes to the traditional Social Security benefit formula. When each employee receives his annual Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox check, there would be an accompanying table showing the annual expected Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox check amount (assuming a wage increase of 4% per year) for each year between now and when the Social Security surplus — and further Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox checks — disappear.

That table can also show how potential changes in the Social Security full retirement age would affect the future Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox checks. Social Security cash flow is exquisitely sensitive to full retirement age. Social Security cash flow was about to go negative back in the 1980s until the Greenspan Committee increased the full retirement age from 65 to 66 for those born from 1943 to 1954, and to 67 for those born in 1960 or later. This extended positive cash flow to 2017. For example, if the Social Security full retirement age were increased by one year per decade (much less than life expectancy increase), even exempting those who are currently 55 or older from the new full retirement age increases, the Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox checks would become larger and larger with time, and eventually their total (with accrued investment earnings) would become much larger than the debt in the traditional Social Security "trust fund." Then we would finally have a durable, actuarially sound system. Moreover,

Even if Social Security taxes were immediately increased or benefits reduced, no real lasting benefit would accrue to either retirees or workers.

the continuance of the Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox checks would provide a positive incentive to Social Security taxpaying workers to support increasing the age of full retirement.

The literature accompanying the Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox check should also state the total amounts paid into both the worker's Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox and his traditional Social Security "trust account" to

date. It should also explain that the Supreme Court has held that a worker has no property right to "his" traditional Social Security "trust account," which, unlike his Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox, can have its benefits cut by Congress at any time, as has already occurred.

Is it appropriate to characterize the use of Social Security funds for other purposes as "stealing"?

Unfortunately, yes. For 70 years Congresscritters have spent trillions of Social Security tax dollars on non-Social Security purposes; i.e., buying votes. Hasn't Congress replaced the spent surplus with Treasury bonds backed by the full faith and credit of the United States government? This is a multi-trillion dollar scam. *No one, not even Congress, can spend the same money twice.* Each dollar of Social Security

Simply return each worker's annual surplus payment in the form of a check marked "for deposit to a Social Security Roth IRA only."

"trust fund" assets in Treasury bonds is canceled by a dollar (plus compound interest) in liabilities to taxpayers, the cost of paying off these bonds. *You cannot make yourself into a trillionaire by loaning yourself a trillion dollars.* And it is not the United States government that will be paying off these bonds; governments don't pay taxes — every cent of that will have to be paid by increased taxes on workers, retirees, and employers.

Why a Roth IRA rather than a regular IRA?

The surplus portion of the half of the Social Security taxes paid by the employee has already been subject to income taxes, and thereby meets the Roth requirement. It could be argued that the surplus portion of the employer's half of the Social Security taxes has not been subject to either individual or corporate income taxes and hence should be put into a regular IRA. The amount of income tax revenue forgone by putting the surplus of the employer half of the Social Security taxes into a Roth IRA will be relatively small (about \$10 billion per year, decreasing as the surplus shrinks if age of full retirement is not increased), and this approach has the virtues of simplicity, and the true security of knowing that the Roth part of one's retirement savings cannot be eroded by future tax increases. Remember that for most of Social Security's existence, benefits were not subject to income taxes. The ugly clawback of income taxing Social Security payouts is relatively recent.

Won't Congress just borrow more to replace the Social Security surplus that it now spends, resulting in no net savings?

That would be true if a deficit of about \$550 billion per year had no greater restraint on spending than one of \$400 billion per year. Historically, larger deficits have tended to restrain Congressional spending; if they didn't, both spending and deficits would tend toward infinity, therefore, some increase in net savings can be expected. Honesty and transparency in government is a better policy than continuing to

scam the public about the real size of the general expenditure deficit. The Social Security system is in mid- to long-term trouble because Congress is using it as a cash cow for other programs.

Even more important, the Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox checks will change the incentives for workers to accept rather than (as now) reject a gradual increase in full retirement age. This change can make the reformed Social Security system actuarially sound, something which is otherwise politically impossible.

Should the investment and withdrawal rules for the Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockboxes be the same as for an ordinary Roth IRA?

Arguably not. A foolish investor could invest all of his Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockbox in Enron or Worldcom, and the liberals will use this as a bogeyman. The Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockboxes might be limited to those investments permitted by the Federal Thrift Plan, plus the Wilshire 2,000 and Wilshire 5,000, both of which are even more diversified than the S&P 500. Borrowing against the Social Security Roth IRA before 62 (or perhaps Social Security full retirement age), even for purchasing a home could arguably be prohibited, because home equity can be cashed out with a home loan and the money quickly consumed. The nannies in Congress might even prohibit a lump sum distribution after retirement and insist on converting at least part of the lockbox account to an annuity, or require fractional payouts over the account owner's actuarial life expectancy. Congress is going to decide these details however much we dislike their economically ignorant anti-freedom meddling; the best we can do is try to persuade them to forego their worst ideas.

Nevertheless, the incentive for gradual retirement age increases will be changed from negative to positive, thereby permitting the composite system to be actuarially sound in the long run, and reduce the eventual income taxes and

Long-term Social Security trust fund liabilities would be immediately reduced by several trillion dollars.

Social Security taxes on retirees, workers, and employers — including our children and grandchildren — by several trillion dollars, as well as increasing real savings and investments in the form of Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockboxes. If some Congressmen want to continue buying votes by spending \$550 billion more per year than is collected by non-Social Security taxes, force them to take full credit for their foolish and wasteful actions and the inevitable consequences, but don't let them continue to covertly stick it to retirees, workers, and employers.

Congress's appetite for gargantuan deficit non-Social Security spending should not be stolen from the Social Security taxes of workers or payments to retirees. Once this is fully understood, the transition cost to this composite (traditional Social Security + Social Security surplus Roth IRA

lockboxes) retirement system is zero. The *appearance* of increased deficits from not allowing Congress to continue to steal the Social Security surplus for non-Social Security

For 70 years Congresscritters have spent trillions of Social Security tax dollars on non-Social Security purposes; i.e., buying votes.

spending is not a cost of Social Security; it is a cost of a spendthrift Congress, and the blame should be placed right where it belongs — on those politicians who will not reform.

Won't increasing the full retirement age by one year per decade quickly return us to the situation that we had when the Social Security System was created in 1935, when average life expectancy was less than retirement age?

No. Life expectancy has been increasing by about three months per year for the past 125 years.

Until the 1940s, life expectancy increase was mostly a result of decreased mortality at all ages due to improved sewage disposal, improved water and food supplies, and vaccinations. The development of antibiotics from the 1940s on helped both young and old to live longer, and new vaccinations (e.g., polio vaccine) continued to provide ever more protection.

By about 1970, infant and child mortality in America was already so low that further decreases would have little further effect on life expectancy. The plague of cardiovascular disease that came to public awareness during the 1950s led to the Framingham study and other research that identified modifiable risk factors such as diet, exercise, and smoking. Heart surgeons were working their miracles. Starting with the 1970s, hundreds of billions of dollars of research funds were spent developing specific cardiovascular medicines, first beta blockers, then other drugs for controlling hypertension, then antihypercholesteremics (niacin, then fibrates, now statins) which have actually reduced the death rate from cardiovascular disease, even though the average age of the population is now much older than in the 1950s. Life expectancy continues to increase about three months per year, but now most of the increase is at the older end of the lifespan.

There are ample reasons to expect that life expectancy will continue to increase at its historic rate of about three months per year, 2.5 years per decade, especially with scores of billions of dollars being spent every year on researching first mechanisms, then treatments for the diseases of aging, and even aging itself. The study of aging mechanisms has led to a variety of experimental interventions that have increased the average life expectancy of animal subjects by 20–100%. There is every reason to think that the fundamental mechanisms of aging in animals are conserved, i.e., similar to those in humans, and that this knowledge will be applied to humans within the next 15 to 25 years. Phase 1 clinical trials in humans will be starting soon.

Some scientists claim that, even if cardiovascular disease

and cancer were eliminated tomorrow, life expectancy would increase by less than three years, and that only effective intervention in aging processes can produce further life expectancy increases.* I heard this same claim made 20 years ago at a scientific conference on the biology of aging

Each dollar of Social Security "trust fund" assets in Treasury bonds is canceled by a dollar (plus compound interest) in liabilities to taxpayers.

mechanisms; life expectancy has increased about five years since then, in part because most common types of cardiovascular disease and some cancers have become medically manageable in a manner that yields many additional years of life.

The Social Security actuaries' estimate of a two-year life expectancy increase between 2000 and 2050 is a gross underestimate. "Therefore, it appears that by 2050, the affluent populations of the world will have added almost 50 years of life expectancy since 1900."[†]

A real long-term reform of Social Security must not become actuarially unsound with increasing life expectancy. It is time to dramatically reduce the Social Security trust fund deficit and debt. Stopping the stealing now with Social Security surplus Roth IRA lockboxes for all workers is a politically attainable and effective first step in achieving this long term goal.

Why won't any of the other alternatives work?

1) The alternatives suggested by left liberals of either increasing Social Security tax rates or raising the cap on the wages subject to Social Security taxes would have very serious negative, albeit unintended, consequences. These tax increases would make American workers less competitive globally by two mechanisms: First, the cost of American workers to employers would be further increased, hence importing goods and services from China, India, Ireland, and most of the world would become relatively less expensive and more attractive. Second, a wage cap increase would directly target those who are most likely to invest substantial amounts of their after tax earnings, and it is only through continued investments that improve productivity or create new products or services that American workers can maintain their high pay in a predominantly lower paying world.

2) The alternative suggested by the liberals of means (net worth, savings, investments) testing recipients of Social Security payments would have catastrophic unintended consequences, and is the worst possible way of trying to fix

Social Security. Every worker and retiree has already made plans for retirement that do not include being penalized for saving and investing for future consumption, and do not include being rewarded for being a spendthrift who consumes all his income as quickly as he earns it. The savings rates of Americans are at a historic low because the after-tax incentives to save and invest are already too low. Means testing Social Security would further increase the incentives for current consumption and reduce the incentives for savings and investment for future consumption.

Means testing would also be terribly morally corrosive; every worker would be trapped in a system akin to the liberals' unreformed welfare trap, in that they would face steep marginal losses in Social Security benefits if they were responsible and saved for the future. Unfortunately, the liberals want people to be more dependent on government and less on themselves, for this is their route to power, regardless of the cost to innocent bystanders. Moreover, net worth testing is far more intrusive than a typical income tax audit — just ask any Medicaid recipient.

Finally, *little of the reduction in Social Security expenditures expected under static analysis would materialize*. Do a Web search for "Medicaid" and "spending down"; there is a multibillion dollar per year industry of books and legal services that tell seriously ill people how to legally dispose of their assets so that they can qualify for Medicaid. This process is so effective that Medicaid must now pay most nursing home bills.

3) The alternative suggested by the left liberals of income testing recipients of Social Security payments has most of the disadvantages of the proposed changes described immediately above, though it is less intrusive. It has an additional and very serious unintended consequence, however, of dramatically decreasing the incentive to continue working (or receiving investment income) after attaining Social Security full retirement age. Note that current tax policies already do this, to a lesser extent, by subjecting 85% of Social Security payments to income taxes for a full retirement age couple

Historically, larger deficits have tended to restrain Congressional spending; if they didn't, both spending and deficits would tend toward infinity.

earning over \$44,000 adjusted gross income per year (including half their Social Security payments!). (50% of the benefits are subject to income tax for a couple with an A.G.I. of \$32,000 per year, including half their Social Security payments.)

Income testing greatly reduces the incentive to work full time after reaching Social Security's full retirement age. The standard of living of all Americans depends critically on the ratio of productive workers to those who as retirees are purely consumers of other peoples' tax money. This ratio is already down to 3.3, and is continuing to drop towards 2. This left liberal proposal would further accelerate this drop, whereas the Social Security surplus Roth IRA lock-

*Horrobin, D., J. Royal Soc. Med., 93:341-345 (2000)

[†]Strohmman, R., Nature Biotechnology, 19:195 (2001), see also Horiuchi, S., Nature 405:744-745 (2000), and Tuljapukar, S., Li, N., & Boe, N., Nature 405:789-792 (2000), Mann, C.C., Science 307:1716-1717 (2005), Marris, E., Nature Medicine 11:240 (2005), Preston, S.H., New England Journal of Medicine 352:1135-1137 (2005)

boxes would provide additional incentive to remain economically productive after reaching Social Security's full retirement age.

4) The administration's proposal to allow people to divert a third of their Social Security taxes to voluntary personal accounts is better than the left liberals' alternatives, but that's not saying much. Like the liberals' proposals, it implicitly assumes that all Social Security money belongs to the government, and that those who want some back must pay the government for the privilege. Unfortunately, this proposal provides no incentive whatsoever for increasing the full retirement age, a necessary condition for long-term actuarial soundness of Social Security.

Furthermore, the transition costs are over \$1 trillion, admittedly without doing anything to make Social Security actuarially sound. Democrats are demagoguing about the increased deficit, and even Republicans are saying "no sale."

Moreover, the proposed concomitant traditional Social Security benefit reductions are difficult to understand, and sound like a really bad deal. This is because, unfortunately, they often are a bad deal.

The proposed reductions in traditional benefits would be equal to an assumed real rate of return of 3% on the total amount of payments into the personal account. That means that whenever the real (corrected for inflation) riskless rate of after-tax return is less than 3%, the personal account option is a loser. Right now, in relatively good economic times, the ten-year Treasury bond is yielding about 3.5%, which after income tax at a 15% rate is 2.975% (2.625% for 25% bracket taxpayers). TIPS (Treasury Inflation Protected Securities — inflation indexed Treasury bonds) are yielding about 1.8%, implying market expectations of a 1.7% inflation rate (3.5% Treasury bond yield minus 1.8% TIPS yield) over the next few years. So the after-tax real yield of ten-year Treasury bonds for someone in the 15% tax bracket is 1.275% (3.5% yield on bonds, less .525% for taxes, less 1.7% for inflation) per year, which is a net loss of 1.725% (3% assumed real return minus 1.275% actual real return) compared to traditional Social Security. For those in the 25% income tax bracket, the net loss of the personal account option is worse, 2.075% per year.

What if one accepts greater risk and invests in a common stock index fund? During a bear market, the results of the

A Disclaimer to the Readers of Liberty

The Social Security reform suggestion I have outlined here is not libertarian because it is still a forced retirement savings system, and because it reduces redistribution (a.k.a. plunder) but does not eliminate it. I have suggested it to the Congresscritters because it may be politically feasible and because it is much better than any of the other alternatives swirling around D.C. Social Security is likely to be changed, and Sandy and I would rather it be changed for the better than for the worse. What would be best, political considerations aside, is to liquidate the assets of this bankrupt organization.

As Bastiat said in "The Law," a group of people calling itself government cannot morally do what no individual can morally do. Our preferred solution would be to treat the Social Security Administration of the United States of America as what it is: a retirement organization (run by crooked thugs) which has squandered the retirement assets to entrench and enhance the personal power of the management. The traditional legal solution to this problem is involuntary bankruptcy with liquidation of the organization's remaining assets by public auction, followed by their proportionate distribution to the victims.

What assets? The Treasury bonds in the Social Security "trust fund account" are not assets; they are liabilities the federals enforce on taxpayers.

But the United States government does claim to own about 30% of the land in the U.S. and most of the oil, gas, coal, gold, etc. remaining in the U.S., since most of it is under these nationalized lands. How much? At least a few trillion dollars. Auction it off. Moreover, the

growth of many cities such as Los Angeles and Las Vegas is limited by surrounding lands controlled by the *federals*; Bureau of Land Management-controlled land around Las Vegas is selling at public auctions for \$200,000 per acre. Auction it all off.

In fact, auction off all U.S. Government property except for that explicitly authorized in the U.S. Constitution's Article I, Section 8, Paragraph 17: the

What would be best, political considerations aside, is to liquidate the assets of this bankrupt organization.

District of Columbia and "... places purchased by the consent of the legislature of the State in which the same shall be, for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals, dock-yards, and other needful buildings;" Yes, I know that Paragraph 7 says "To establish post offices and post roads"; but as Sandy Shaw said, "The Constitution isn't perfect, but it's a hell of a lot better than what we've got now."

Even without the Social Security scam, we would be much better off if these nationalized lands were auctioned off. There were no checks and balances put into the Constitution for an unanticipated and unplanned huge federal land estate.

— Durk Pearson

personal account option are much worse. During a sideways market, the results still are worse because there are no capital gains, and dividend yields are much lower than Treasury bond yields (even after considering the 15% dividend income tax rate).

During a bull market, of course, one can do much better with the personal account option, even with the 3% effective tax wedge on personal accounts in the current administration proposal. However, an era of mostly bull markets for the next 30 years or so is not a given. The recent 20-year bull run is an historical anomaly, and one must know what caused it to understand whether it is likely to be repeated. The recent long bull market occurred during an unusual period in history; the demographic bulge of baby boomers were entering their highest earning years, and during the Bush 41 and Clinton 42 tax increases, there was an especially strong motivation to invest in equities in tax deferred 401(k)s and IRAs. At the same time as the huge baby boomer generation was investing in equities, the much smaller retired generation that preceded the boomers was selling their equities for retirement consumption.

This equity supply and demand situation will be reversed during the retirement of the baby boomers, since the post-boomer generation (often called the baby bust generation) that will be reaching their earnings and investing peak years is considerably smaller than the boomer generation. The boomer sales of equities will accelerate as they reach the age of 70 1/2, due to IRS mandatory 401(k) and IRA distribution regulations. This does not foreordain a 20–30 year bear market; it does suggest that the percent of time spent in bull markets during the next 20–30 years will likely be smaller than in the last 20–25 years, and that the overall equity price increases will probably be less. Of course, if a well designed revenue-neutral consumption tax replaced the income tax, there would be an unprecedented economic and equities boom, but nothing being proposed — let alone passed — in Congress resembles such a tax reform.

The administration's 3% deduction proposal is essentially a 3% annually compounded tax on capital diverted to the proposed personal accounts. How many investors

Honesty and transparency in government is a better policy than continuing to scam the public about the real size of the general expenditure deficit.

would buy an index fund with a 3% per year management fee? There will understandably be relatively few takers of this remarkably bad proposal, hence few people will support it, and the trillion-dollar-plus transition cost will motivate a lot of opposition on top of the ideological opposition of liberals and the political opposition of Democrats to any form of personal accounts that even partially replace traditional Social Security.

5) The Pozen progressive indexing proposal would elim-

inate wage indexing but retain price indexing for those earning over \$113,000 per year, retain both wage and price indexing for those earning less than \$25,000 per year, and gradually phase out wage indexing but retain price indexing for those in between.* It would make the already very progressive Social Security benefit formula even more progressive, thereby increasing the effective marginal tax rate on everyone who earns over \$25,000 per year.

Liberals claim that Social Security is a regressive tax because the wages subject to this tax are capped at \$90,000 per year. They ignore the fact that this caps the benefits, too,

Congress is going to decide the details however much we dislike their economically ignorant antifreedom meddling; the best we can do is try to persuade them to forego their worst ideas.

and that the tax payments that count towards one's Social Security benefits can be as little as 15% of the Social Security taxes one actually pays.

Let's look at Social Security Publication No. 05-10070, "How Your Retirement Benefit Is Figured": 90% of the first \$561 of your average wage indexed monthly income counts toward your retirement benefits. Only 32% of your average wage indexed monthly income between \$561 and \$3,381 counts toward your retirement benefits. Only 15% of your averaged wage indexed monthly income over \$3,381 counts toward your retirement benefits. This formula is already very highly progressive with an effective marginal tax rate of up to 85%. (OK, technically it is a progressive marginal decrease in benefits of up to 85%, before progressive income taxes.)

Don't forget that the employee pays Social Security taxes with after (progressive) income tax funds, and that up to 85% of the Social Security benefit is taxed again at progressive income tax rates. Worst of all, all of these progressive taxes are applied by serial multiplication, so that the effective top marginal tax rate on Social Security can already easily be well over 90% for a couple with average incomes. Pozen's liberal nostrum is to make Social Security hyper progressive, instead of merely ultra progressive, as it is now.

Finally, Pozen's progressive indexing would not permanently solve the problem of rapidly and continually increasing life expectancy, which would inevitably result in further demands for even more progressive tax increases or benefit cuts (or both) within the relatively near future. This "problem" of increasing life expectancy (actually a great blessing) can only be permanently solved by continually increasing the age of full retirement, and that will require a change in the incentives.

Politicians who refuse to give every worker their share of the Social Security surplus for deposit in their own personal Roth IRA lockboxes are cheating every worker. □

*Wall Street Journal, Pozen, R.C., CCXLV #51:A20 (15 March 2005)

The Importance of Henry Hazlitt

by Jude Blanchette

Henry Hazlitt introduced millions to the simple logic of economics. And that is just one of his important contributions to the revival of liberty.

In the hall of great libertarians, Henry Hazlitt rightly sits atop a grand pedestal. To Murray Rothbard he was “One of the most distinguished and productive economists, writers, and intellectuals in this country.”¹ Milton Friedman once remarked to Hazlitt that “There are not very many people whose judgment I value as I do yours.”² Marty Zupan went so far as to say, “If any one person can be said to have kept the idea of economic freedom alive in this century, it is Henry Hazlitt.”³

Yet for all the praise heaped upon him, Hazlitt is virtually unknown beyond a small circle of libertarians and conservatives. His relative anonymity exists despite the fact that his books have sold well over a million copies. This is one of the most unfortunate intellectual oversights of the 20th century, for Henry Hazlitt’s influence was profound: it is no exaggeration to say that the libertarian and conservative movements would have been set back decades were it not for his efforts.

Hazlitt’s reputation primarily rests upon his book “Economics in One Lesson.” There is probably no other work which has introduced so many to the idea of free markets. It has been in print continuously since its first publication in 1946 and has been praised by Nobel Laureates and laymen alike for its clarity and profundity. Had this been Hazlitt’s only book — even his only written work — his name would still resonate for libertarians. Thankfully, this is not the case. Hazlitt lived into his 99th year — 77 of these spent writing. By Hazlitt’s own recollection he wrote more than 10,000 “editorials, articles, and columns.”⁴ These, along with his 19 books, make him one of libertarianism’s most prolific writers.

Yet the most striking aspect of Hazlitt’s writings is that

they were produced within the journalistic mainstream. Unlike many libertarians who remained on the periphery of the intellectual community (or at least spent a good portion of their lives in intellectual exile), Hazlitt wrote widely and regularly for mainstream publications. During most of his career, Hazlitt experienced a remarkable resiliency in a milieu that was hostile (to say the least) towards limited government and the market economy.

While neither mainline media nor dominant intellectual opinion were inimical to those notions when he began his career at The Wall Street Journal at age 19, or even during his work at The Nation and his brief editorship at Mencken’s American Mercury, Hazlitt certainly went against established opinion for the twelve years he spent, beginning in 1934, as lead economic editorialist for the New York Times — even at that time the most important newspaper in America.

With the onset of the Great Depression and the New Deal, public acceptance of the market economy had reached its nadir. Belief in the scientific (i.e., political) management of the economy was on the rise. “Planning” was the new euphemism used to describe government’s soft socialization of the entire business sector of the United States. Intellectuals, pundits, columnists, politicians, clergymen — just about all good and honest people — seemed to support

the notion that with enough brains, money, and power, the U.S. government could ensure that the calamity of the business cycle would never again occur.

Hazlitt challenged these assumptions almost every day. In editorials such as "Dangers of 'Planning,'" "The Return to Gold," "The Cult of Planning," and "Monopoly under NIRA," Hazlitt thoroughly and persuasively debunked a plethora of economic schemes that were receiving undue attention during the confused decade of the 1930s. And unlike so many who find themselves working for "respected" publications, Hazlitt refused to soften his message and tone: "If we allow economic freedom and self-reliance to be destroyed, the powers standing for liberty will have lost so much in strength that they will not be able to offer effective resistance to a progressive invasion of the fields of personal liberty and freedom of thought and speech."⁵

While it is difficult to estimate the effect these editorials had on the current of ideas, Hazlitt's editorials criticizing the Bretton Woods agreement almost certainly helped to mitigate its harm. Russell Porter, the journalist assigned to cover the Bretton Woods conference, summarized the effect Hazlitt's editorials had on the delegates in a July 27, 1944 letter to Arthur Sulzberger, owner of the New York Times:

"[The editorials] apparently served to stiffen the backbone of our delegation in negotiating with foreign delegations over controversial issues. It gave our negotiators the opportunity, when hard pressed by other nations and groups of nations with insistent demands for concessions, to point to The Times' editorials and say, 'You can see that there is a very important section of public opinion in the United States that thinks we have already gone too far. If you force us to go any further it is doubtful that we can get enough public support to get this through Congress.'"

Porter continues: "At the beginning of the conference, [American] delegates . . . seemed disposed to agree with almost any foreign demand as long as their pet theories seemed untouched, but at the end, under the steady pounding of The Times' editorials . . . these delegates of ours began to talk more and more in terms of sound and conservative policies and protection of American interests."⁶

It was also during Hazlitt's tenure at the Times that he wrote two very important book reviews. The first, on Mises' "Socialism," appeared on Jan. 9, 1938, introducing Amer-

Henry Hazlitt's influence was profound: it is no exaggeration to say that the libertarian and conservative movements would have been set back decades were it not for his efforts.

icans to Mises' devastating critique of socialism. It boosted the book's sales and helped to establish Mises' name in the United States two years before his arrival.

Hazlitt first came across the name of Mises in a footnote appearing in American economist Benjamin Anderson's "Value of Money." As Hazlitt would later recall, "In 1937 I

read a review of 'Socialism' in the London Economist. I think they praised it — not extravagantly, but they praised it. The British publisher sent me a copy and I reviewed it in January of 1938. I was terrifically enthusiastic about it, and I said that Mises had written an economic classic in our time."⁷ Soon after Hazlitt's review, he and Mises struck up a correspondence that developed into a lasting friendship.

Unlike many libertarians who remained on the periphery of the intellectual community (or at least spent a good portion of their lives in intellectual exile), Hazlitt wrote widely and regularly for mainstream publications.

More than that, however, Hazlitt played an important part in securing a future for Mises after his emigration from Switzerland to the United States in 1940. Mises' widow Margit wrote, "Hazlitt was one of the first people [Mises] met in New York and one of the first to take an active interest in getting [Mises] established in America."⁸

Hazlitt's support of Mises continued until Mises' death in 1973. For most of his life in the United States, Mises held an unpaid, untenured position at New York University. Most of his funding was provided by the William Volker Fund. After the Volker Fund ceased its support of Mises in 1964, Hazlitt, Leonard Read, and Lawrence Fertig took it upon themselves to assure the financial security of Mises and his wife. As Fertig later wrote to Foundation for Economic Education president Leonard E. Read, "As you remember, I am sure, when the Volker Fund abandoned its contribution some four years ago we constituted a Committee of you, Henry Hazlitt and me to make certain that von Mises would continue to have a platform and an influence in this country. After all there is no doubt that von Mises is the outstanding figure in the defense of the free market in the entire Western world."⁹ Without Hazlitt's unwavering support, it is doubtful that Mises' 30 years in the United States would have proven so productive.

Hazlitt's other significant New York Times review was of F.A. Hayek's "Road to Serfdom," published on Sept. 24, 1944. Although "The Road to Serfdom" would go on to become one of the most influential books of the 20th century, Hayek initially had difficulty finding an American publisher. As Hayek scholar Bruce Caldwell recently noted, "[Hayek] had a hard time getting an American publisher, but the University of Chicago agreed to bring it out. It was not expected to be a big seller in the U.S. They were figuring that it would maybe sell a couple of thousand copies, but it got very strong write-ups in a couple of the New York newspapers and demand was high for it."¹⁰ While several New York newspapers did review the book, it was Hazlitt's review on the front page of the New York Times book section that catapulted its sales. As Hazlitt remarked in 1977, "Hayek later said to me, 'Your review did more to sell my book than anything else.'"¹¹ There is no need here to detail the importance of this book in the struggle for liberty.

Hazlitt's review of "Road to Serfdom" even had spill-over effects to other countries. The success of Hayek's book spurred a Reader's Digest condensed version. One of the millions who read Reader's Digest was a young Briton named Antony Fisher. Inspired by Hayek's prophetic warning, Fisher visited him at his London School of Economics office where Hayek advised him to create an organization that would appeal to the intellectuals, whom Hayek referred to as the "second-hand dealers in ideas." In 1955, Fisher founded the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA).

One of IEA's first undertakings was the publication of a short monograph by George Winder entitled "The Free Convertibility of Sterling." Fisher was uncertain about the financial prospects of IEA, so the success of the Winder publication was of extreme importance. Hazlitt, who had befriended both Winder and Fisher, decided to review the publication in his Newsweek column, "Business Tides." Fisher's biographer Gerald Frost notes, ". . . partly as a result of a review by the American economist Henry Hazlitt in his Newsweek column, the entire print run of 2,000 copies was sold within three months."¹² Heartened by the monograph's success, Fisher went ahead with his plan to officially create the institute. Given that it is often said that without IEA there would have been no Margaret Thatcher, Hazlitt's role in the formation of IEA was vital for Britain's move away from the soft socialism of the post-World War II Labour government.

A similar storyline could be constructed back in the United States. Hazlitt, along with John Chamberlain and Suzanne Le Follette, founded The Freeman in 1950. Its first issue appeared on Oct. 2, 1950, and for the next four years it exerted a momentous influence on the conservative and

Unlike so many who find themselves working for "respected" publications, Hazlitt refused to soften his message and tone.

libertarian movement. In part, this was because few publications at that time articulated an explicitly classical liberal position. Also, the quality of the articles and authors appearing each issue separated The Freeman from other libertarian publications of that era. After four years of financial loss and internecine feuding between the principal editors, it was purchased by the Foundation for Economic Education and changed to a less timely monthly format.

But the Freeman in its early incarnation had provided several important lessons for future generations of polemic magazines, most importantly National Review. One lesson, as William Rusher concludes in "The Rise of the Right," was "To avoid the fratricidal strife that . . . brought down The Freeman . . . power . . . ought to be vested in a single individual rather than a warring board of directors."¹³ In keeping with that, William F. Buckley was sole editor-in-chief.

The Freeman provided Buckley and National Review with a potent mix of writers to draw from. Many of the names that had appeared in The Freeman also showed up in

National Review, either as contributors or as editors. The Freeman also gave Buckley a style and look that worked. As George H. Nash writes, "[National Review] was strikingly similar in format to the pre-1953 Freeman."¹⁴

It is often said that without National Review, there would have been no Ronald Reagan. Considering the importance The Freeman played in fostering an atmosphere in which National Review could begin and thrive, we see, once again, Hazlitt's role in the formation of the conservative movement.

Hazlitt even significantly influenced the careers of those not particularly friendly to liberty. Paul Samuelson, winner of the 1970 Nobel Prize in economics, credits Hazlitt for his entrance to the field. In a 1966 letter to Hazlitt, he wrote, "A writer never knows what his impacts have been. I can say that one of the reasons I decided to go into economics was reading [one of your articles]." Considering the corrosive effect Samuelson's textbook "Economics" has had on generations of students, this is not the happiest chapter in Hazlitt's life story.

Fortunately, one could go on at some length about Hazlitt's influence on the libertarian and conservative movements. He was a founding member of the Mont Pelerin Society, founding trustee of the Foundation for Economic Education, an instrumental figure in the creation of the American Enterprise Association (now the American Enterprise Institute), friend or mentor to Rand, Rothbard, Mises, Frank Chodorov, F.A. "Baldy" Harper, Milton Friedman, John Chamberlain, H.L. Mencken, Hayek, Ronald Reagan, Barry Goldwater, and Robert Taft, among others.

If his life and writings are taken as a whole, Henry Hazlitt deserves far more credit than he has received. While it is promising that his book, "Economics in One Lesson," has never been out of print, Hazlitt will never be fully appreciated until the importance of his entire life is established. Let us hope this situation is soon rectified. □

Notes

1. Murray Rothbard, "Henry Hazlitt Celebrates 80th Birthday," Human Events, 12/30/1974.
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3. Marty Zupan, "Henry Hazlitt: Reason Interview," Reason, December 1984, p. 36.
4. Henry Hazlitt, "The Wisdom of Henry Hazlitt," (Foundation for Economic Education, 1993), pp. 45-46.
5. "Dangers of 'Planning'," New York Times, 8/12/1934, E4.
6. Letter to Arthur Sulzberger, dated 7/27/1944.
7. Zupan, p. 38.
8. Margit von Mises, "My Years with Ludwig von Mises," (Arlington House, 1976), p. 99.
9. Letter to Leonard E. Read, dated 10/4/1967.
10. Nick Gillespie, "Hayek for the 21st Century," Reason, January 2005. Available online at (<http://www.reason.com/0501/fe.ng.hayek.shtml>)
11. Bettina B. Greaves, "Persona Grata: An Interview with Henry Hazlitt," World Research INK, 11/1977.
12. Gerald Frost, "Antony Fisher: Champion of Liberty," (Profile Books Ltd, 2002), pp. 62-63.
13. William Rusher, "The Rise of the Right," (William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1984), p. 37.
14. George Nash, "The Conservative Intellectual Movement: 1945-Present," (Basic Books, Inc., 1976), p. 148.

Regulating Video Games, *from page 28*

related, as seen in the "Adults Only" rating given to games including nudity and sex). Every time there is legislation pending that would restrict the distribution of their products, pornographers launch a comprehensive public relations campaign: They remind everyone that porn is protected speech; they note that, while they produce adult content,

Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia claims with a straight face that a Harvard University study "provides the necessary punch needed" to push aside the First Amendment.

they intend for it to be bought only by adults; they point out that they aren't forcing anyone to buy any of their products; they outline the options available to parents to protect their children from objectionable content; in short, they say whatever they have to in order to ensure that everyone doesn't "know" that pornography is bad. It may be self-serving, as critics claim, for smut peddlers to wrap themselves in the First Amendment, but porn hawks know that if they don't serve themselves, no one else will.

To this point, game makers have relied on the courts to protect them, but the final decision will be made by the public, and that is the venue in which game makers must fight. As cynical as it may sound, video game companies must prepare for a horrible tragedy, because their opponents are surely preparing to exploit one. At every opportunity, they must trumpet everything they have volunteered to do to keep adult games in adult hands, such as their age-check agreements with all retailers and built-in content filters on all hardware. Above all, they must emphasize that parents, not game makers, are responsible for their kids' "cognitive, social, emotional, and physical" development. If parents can't get kids to read a book, talk to others, express their feelings, or go outside, how can they expect video game companies to do it for them? It is the parents' responsibility to determine what is appropriate for their children, and make sure that they hold their children to the standards they have set.

I realize that, to some extent, this involves an implicit acceptance of the notion that the depiction of an act causes imitation of that act — a notion which those who hate censorship must firmly resist in courts of law. But after a horrible tragedy the kangaroo court of the common man will accept that notion explicitly. The question then will not be "How could this have happened?" but "How could you game makers let this happen?" □

Coming War in Iran, *from page 30*

equipped to uncover clandestine weapons programs," but believes it can do useful work that makes a clandestine program less likely. At this point, however, "What is in doubt is the ability of the U.S. government to honestly assess Iran's nuclear status and to craft a set of measures that will cope with that threat [Iranian nukes] short of military action by the United States or Israel."

A major deterrent to overt military action against Iran could be the "catastrophic success" of defeating Saddam's regime. Many of the troops that might be useful in Iran are tied up in Iraq just now. And Iran is a larger country, with terrain less conducive to a swift ground invasion, and a larger and probably more effective military than Saddam's Iraq.

That could be part of the reason that neocon armchair strategists emphasize Special Forces, "pinpoint" bombing, support of antiregime dissidents, and covert subversion of the regime rather than an outright military invasion. The use of such tools just might destabilize the mullahs' authority.

And if it doesn't, some will say that the case has thus been made that more peaceful options didn't work and it's time for an invasion, perhaps using troops that, in an optimistic scenario, have been freed from constabulary duties by an Iraqi government that can by then handle security problems on its own.

There's little question that Iran, no less than Iraq and perhaps with more justification from an imperial perspective, has been a neoconservative target at least since Paul Wolfowitz's 1992 draft paper, both because of the anti-American nature of the regime and its importance to the Wilsonian neocon dream of transforming the Middle East states into democracies. What is in question is whether circumstances and (lack of) resources will force the administration to stick to encouraging change quietly, seeing whether students and others reform the theocracy or overthrow it from within, or whether the United States, despite a woeful lack of reliable intelligence, gets committed to another military adventure. □

Letters, *from page 4*

adherents of non-libertarian ideologies that control it.

The task for the LP is therefore to convince the voters that the society they so desperately long for and which is being withheld from them can be achieved through mass uprising. To

advocate anything less would therefore not accommodate the voters, but rather betray them.

It was impossible for most LP members to accept that the voters prefer big, authoritarian government. It was also impossible for most LP members to

understand that the average voter fears rapid change, even those voters who sympathize with many libertarian ideas. That is why Harry Browne looked puzzled when David Brin questioned him.

David Hoscheidt
Bloomington, Ill.

Anarchist Socialism

by J. Wm (John William) Lloyd

The years after the Great War were lean ones for liberty. As Progressives tightened the government's grip on citizens' lives, those who should have fought the federal stranglehold fought each other instead.

But some, like John William Lloyd, still believed that all radicals should work together towards freedom. The following is a previously unpublished essay by Lloyd — one of the preeminent anarchists of the early 20th century — edited and introduced by Wendy McElroy.

John William Lloyd was a frequent contributor to Benjamin Tucker's Individualist Anarchist periodical *Liberty* (1881–1908) through most of its lifespan.

After coming into possession of Lloyd's papers, I transcribed several essays written by him, essays that — as far as I know — have never been previously published. (Lloyd's papers have been donated to the Mises Institute as a contribution to its library.) The following essay "Anarchist Socialism" is undated, but it seems to have been written during 1914–8. The piece is unedited except for the deletion of passages with material that would confuse the reader: for example, the mention of Lloyd's obscure acquaintances. The punctuation and grammar is sometimes antiquated and remains so due to my reluctance to edit the work of someone deceased.

Despite the word "Socialism" in its title, the essay should be of interest to libertarians. First, it includes a retrospective of Lloyd's own experiences with the 19th century Anarchist movement, including memories of Tucker and commentary on luminaries such as Josiah Warren. Second, Lloyd was the author of several works, mostly of poetry, that were heavily promoted by *Liberty*; they included "The Anarchists' March," "The Dwellers in Vale Sunrise," and "The Red Heart in a White World." To the extent that there is a poet laureate of Individualist Anarchism, it is surely John William Lloyd.

Third, the term "socialism" as used by the 19th century individualist radicals differed in meaning as dramatically as the word "liberal" today differs from its 18th century usage. As used by Lloyd and his contemporaries, socialism per se — as opposed to State Socialism — did not negate private property or the primacy of the individual but referred more to voluntary, cooperative ventures through which a just society could be achieved. Thus, many of the voluntary communities of early libertarianism could be viewed through either a socialist or individualist lens. To the extent that Individualist Anarchists who sometimes used the label "socialist" had a point of overlap with collectivist-socialists, it is: they agreed with the labor theory of value. Since Individualist Anarchists also insisted on the pri-

macy of contract, however, their position devolved to the statement: interest and rent are invalid practices, nevertheless everyone has the right to make a foolish contract, and no third party has the right to interfere.



As many of you, my comrades, may know me only as a Socialist, and may doubt my qualifications to explain Anarchism, I will say that for some 20 years or more I was a professed and active Anarchist, a constant contributor to Anarchist periodicals, and the personal friend and correspondent of many of the Anarchist leaders of the time. In 1884, when I first publicly announced myself a philosophical Anarchist, Liberty was the leading Anarchist paper in the United States and certainly the ablest one in the world and I became a steady contributor to its columns and the close friend of its editor and owner, Benj. R. Tucker. Mr. Tucker now lives in Europe, but his wife was one of the most intimate friends of my family and his only child is named Oriole, after my daughter. At one time I was the literary editor of Liberty. At another I myself edited an Anarchist periodical, The Free Comrade, which was suspended for a while, and then revived for a short time by Leonard Abbott and myself, as an advocate of the juncture of the Anarchist and Socialist forces. I also wrote and published an Anarchist booklet, "The Red Heard in a White World," and became the leader of an Anarchist group, which was known as "The Comradeship of Free Socialists," and at one time had quite a membership, scattered all over the world. My books, "The Natural Man" and "Vale Sunrise," were Anarchistic. During these years, tho I

Anarchism originated in the United States before the rest of the world had it, and is a logical consequence of fundamental American principles.

avoided the platform, I was almost constantly engaged in debate, defending and explaining the philosophy of Anarchism thru the press. I even wrote an "Anarchist's March," which was set to music. I mention all this simply to show you that when I speak of Anarchism, I am somewhat prepared to explain it and do it justice.

First, then, what is Anarchism? It is logical human liberty. It is the ideal of human life without a master. Tucker defined it as "Equal Liberty." Another definition is, "Do as you please at your own expense"; another, "Mind your own business and let your neighbor's alone." The name was first used and applied by Pierre J. Proudhon,* the French philos-

opher, who derived it from the Greek *an*, privitive, and *archos*, ruler, meaning life without a ruler or government. On this basis the Anarchist founds a whole system of ethics and politics. He identifies crime and government as the same in logical essence, for both are impositions of one man's will on another without his consent. All Anarchists say that liberty and Anarchism are synonyms.

It was a common charge a few years ago, and probably still is, that Anarchism is an imported foreign product and un-American. On the contrary, Anarchism originated in the United States before the rest of the world had it, and is a logical consequence of fundamental American principles; also many prominent Americans have been Anarchists.

Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, was so nearly an Anarchist that he uttered the famous aphorism, "The best government is that which governs the least." The Declaration is so nearly an Anarchist document that there is probably not an Anarchist in the world, except the few Nietzscheans, who would reject its fundamental logic. For example: That all men are equal in rights to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness; That governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed; That whenever any government becomes destructive to the above rights, it is the right and duty of those who have formed it, the people, to take whatever measures may be necessary to secure their own safety and happiness, even to its complete abolition. In other words, the logic of the Declaration is that the individual is sovereign and supreme where he has his true rights, and the government only his tool, which he has made and has a right, therefore, to unmake at his pleasure.

"Individual Sovereignty" was one of the fundamental American watchwords and the whole of Anarchism is logically included in it. So too, all Anarchism is logically contained in the doctrine that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. No Anarchist has any logical objection to a government to which all its members consent; only he carries the logic one step further and says that if the individual withdraws his consent, in that moment the just power of the government over him ceases. So too, all Anarchism is logically contained in the statement that the right of every man to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, in his own inoffensive way, is rightfully inalienable. Therefore the American principles are profoundly Anarchistic and the logic of Anarchism is absolutely American.

But the matter was not left simply to logic and doctrinaire deductions. Josiah Warren, direct descendant of that famous General Warren who fell at Bunker Hill, was the real founder of Anarchism and the first Anarchist author. In his work "True Civilization," published, I believe in the thirties [1830s], he took the American principle of Individual Sovereignty and worked it out to its logical ultimates, making the first clear and definite presentation of Anarchist principles the world had ever seen. He also established the first Anarchist group at his colony of "Modern Times" on Long Island. However he did not use the word "Anarchism," which had not then been adopted. At that time many prominent Americans accepted these ideas, either wholly or in part. Ralph Waldo Emerson was the

*Editor's note: The term *anarchy* first appeared in medieval Latin; it was used to mean *chaos*. In the 16th century, French and English superseded Latin, and political philosophers in each country adopted the term directly. William Godwin was perhaps the first to use the term as anything other than an insult, and Proudhon the first to wear it with pride.

most shining example. His writings are full of Anarchist statements of great force, much quoted by Anarchists to this day. His friend, Henry David Thoreau, was a scarcely less illustrious and more militant Anarchist. He went to jail rather than pay a poll-tax to a government that supported slavery. When Emerson heard of it and came to pay his tax to get him out, he said to Thoreau, in his cell, "What Henry, you here!" and Thoreau sarcastically replied, with his quaint Yankee humor, "What, Waldo, and you not here!" implying that to be consistent Emerson would have done the same. And a New England woman, who knew him, told me two summers ago, that his townspeople actually never afterwards asked him to pay a tax. Most of the New England Transcendentalists were more or less Anarchist and so were all Abolitionists, some of whom were radically so, particularly William Lloyd Garrison and Stephen Pearl Andrews. It is noteworthy that the Civil War was more or less avowedly fought over two Anarchist principles, wrested from their context. Thus the North, so far as intentionally Abolitionist, was fighting for the restoration of individuality to the black man, and the South was fighting for the Anarchist principle of Free Secession from an undesired Union.

Warren's most brilliant and influential disciple was Benj. R. Tucker, a man of old New England stock. He was at one time city editor of the Boston Globe. As a translator of French books, he translated some of the most important of Proudhon's works and adopted Proudhon's name, Anarchism, for the philosophy. Proudhon had developed his Anarchism separately, with no knowledge of Warren but probably derived it from the logic of the French Revolutionary slogan of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity," which perhaps the French had largely derived from the principles of the American Revolution with its Declaration of Independence. At any rate its logic was identical. But somewhere near this time, also independently, a Russian form of Anarchism was originated by Bakounine.

Now developed the first split in the Anarchist movement, which since then has broken up fundamentally into many sects and schools. Warren and Proudhon were intensely individualistic, and Proudhon and Tucker especially detested and fought communism, while the Russians made communism their main principle. Bakounine, Kropotkin, and Emma Goldman, all Russians, have been the great leaders of Communistic-Anarchism, which now has largely outgrown the Individualistic-Anarchistic division in numbers and political importance.

Another split grew up over the question of violence. The Individualist-Anarchists have always stood for an intellectual propaganda and for passive resistance, reserving violence only as a weapon of last and desperate resort.

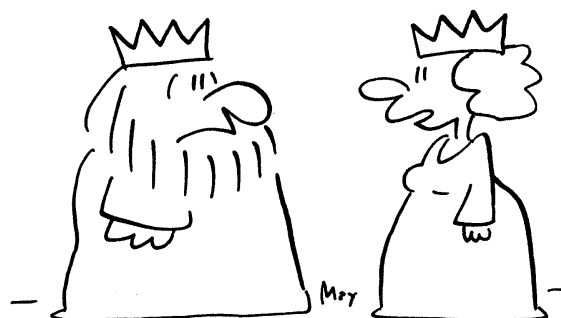
The Russians have largely advocated, encouraged and winked at terrorism as a means of revolution — "propaganda by deed" they called it. A small group of Americans and foreigners combined, in Chicago, at one time and adopted the Russian communistic and terroristic principles, leading to the calamitous "Haymarket Riot," and the hanging of several of their leaders. Among these was Samuel Parsons, also an American of Revolutionary ancestry. On the other hand, among the Russians, Tolstoy developed an entirely new variant of Anarchism — a Christian and non-

resistant form, but still communistic. He declared all violence, even in self-defense, a violation of liberty; even to defend liberty, it was a violation of liberty.

Now another split came among the individualists. These had largely adopted the philosophy of Egoism of the German, Max Stirner, who declared all human life was moved simply by self-interest. Still the Americans did not think this conflicted with their principle of equal liberty, which they declared an enlightened egoism would make every man maintain for his own benefit. But Stirner's most brilliant disciple was the German, Nietzsche, who declared that the law of Nature was that might was right, and that the true Anarchist was the individual who cared consciously only for himself and exploited the world to feed his own individuality who pleased himself and had no law or limit but his own powers. Thru his brilliant and paradoxical genius, Nietzsche exerted a tremendously active influence in the German universities and over the dominating spirits of the world. Theodore Roosevelt is commonly considered among his disciples. So is the German Kaiser and the whole military caste of Germany, and the initiation of the present war is often laid to his door. Napoleon and John Pierpont Morgan could have called themselves Nietzschean Anarchists; or any other utterly unscrupulous exploiter and tyrant might have taken the name.

There was also a small American school whose watchword was "Do as you please and take the consequences!" which they said contained all of Anarchism.

So now Anarchism, today, is curiously broken up into utterly opposing and contradictory schools. This arises from their failure to agree on a definition of liberty. Anarchism, they all say, is liberty, but what liberty is and how best to secure it are the points on which they divide. The Americans and French say that the liberty of the individual is only logically secured by equal liberty of each to be sovereign only over his own. The Russians say that equal liberty can only be secured by the equal sharing of communism the individualists retorting that communism swallows up the individual and digests him into the community. Tolstoy says if you adopt altruism as your method and let your brother do what he pleases without resistance, he will let you do what you please and so equal liberty and harmony will come by the law of Christ. Nietzsche says he is Anti-Christ, ridicules and denounces Christianity, altruism, Socialism, equality, communism and social rights, as all



"How can you blame the media? The country is 98% illiterate!"

equally the inventions of the weak to cheat the strong, declares there is no logical liberty but that of the individual to assert himself thru that struggle for existence and survival of the fittest which is Nature's law, and everything but the law of might will fail.

I, in my writings, did not agree with any of these exactly, but endeavored to effect a reconciliation a working combination of individualism and communism the individual to possess and be master of his own personal belongings, but communistic in the larger and social relations.

Again the Anarchists split on the question of property in land. The Individualists held that the only valid title to anything was a labor-title, and as nobody's labor had made the

Tolstoy declared all violence, even in self-defense, a violation of liberty; even to defend liberty, it was a violation of liberty.

land, therefore it belonged to nobody, but would become the property of whoever occupied and used it just so long as he occupied and used it and no longer. The Communists held that everything belonged to all men equally, the land included. My own proposition was that each man should have a small piece of land, not larger than he could personally occupy and cultivate or use, and a communal right, with all others, in all land not thus individually occupied and used. The Single-Taxers, who, by the way, are largely Anarchistic in theory, agreed with the communists and offered the Single Tax as the best way of equalizing land values and opportunities.

Despite its differences, Anarchism has had a profound and far-reaching influence on human thought. For personal liberty appeals to every brave and original mind. It is to be noted that Anarchists, just as strongly as Marxians, claim to be scientific. Nay, they claim to be more scientific, because they say they would cut away all artificial supports and privileges and leave man absolutely to the natural laws on which alone science bases itself. All governments, they say, are artificial and interfere with Nature. It must be remembered that in their younger days Proudhon and Karl Marx were friends and agreed up to a certain point, where Marx declared the remedy to be to put all social functions under the government, and Proudhon affirmed that government itself, with its privileges and monopolies and invasions of liberty, was the enemy. In those days both called themselves socialists and Marx called himself a Communist, as witness his famous "Manifesto." Indeed Anarchists still claim to be socialists, a name which the Social-Democrats have no right, they say, to monopolize. All men are socialists, they claim, who are working for the world as it should be, against those who are contented or are contending for the world as it is. They call themselves, sometimes, Free-Socialists, as opposed to what they call State-Socialists that is, those who would create socialism thru political action.

Now for a little personal history. Our secretary [of a local

radical organization], Comrade Zeitelhack will remember that when I offered to join the Westfield Branch, I wrote him I was an Anarchist but as there was no Anarchist Group of Single-Tax party here, and as I believed in radicals working together, I wanted to help the Socialists. He met me on the street and told me he did not think there was much difference in the ultimate aims of Anarchism and Socialism and that he would be glad to have me join, and it was on these terms that I was admitted. I had no thought of becoming a real Socialist, but I studied the thought and the literature and in time came to feel that the Socialists had the best of the argument. Anarchist theories were fine and fascinating, but, as most Anarchists rejected voting, majority rule and even suspicion organization, they were powerless against the growing evils of capitalism. They refused the ballot because they said the bullet was behind it, but as most of them justified the bullet, at least as a last resort, why not use the ballot? I came to see that government was a tool without which, in some form, cooperative action was impossible. Voting and majority rule were natural necessities of collective functioning, and men could act in no other way if they acted together, and I now saw why, in the twenty years I had been with them, the Anarchists had accomplished nothing except to modify the thought of some of the higher minds. I came to think too that there might be times and places where the rights or necessities of the collectivity might be greater than those of the individual. So I ceased to be an orthodox Anarchist. Nevertheless I have never lost my thirst for personal liberty, only I believe now, that if the Social-Democracy can win, it will give to all men greater practical equal-liberty and security than the vague faiths and method, or no-methods of the Anarchists could achieve.

But I believe that Anarchism and Socialism are both needed in human society that they represent two strong trends in human psychology the trend toward liberty and individual variation, and the trend toward cooperation, sympathy and solidarity, and that therefore they should work together. Socialism greatly needs Anarchism as a critic and to keep it from sacrificing the individual and his originality to the domination of the mass. And I have tried, tho I confess with no appreciable success, to effect a compromise, which would permit the essential Anarchist principles of

Anarchism, today, is curiously broken up into utterly opposing and contradictory schools. This arises from their failure to agree on a definition of liberty.

Individual Secession and Autonomy of the Group to be guaranteed under Socialism, claiming that if this were done in the Socialistic Constitution and Platforms, the Anarchists would have no logical ground for keeping out of the Party, which would thus gain a multitude of votes without sacrificing its own principles. Simply an alliance to win, with division of territory and autonomy of method after the conquest of government and the capitalist defeat. □

Reviews

"Sin City," directed by Robert Rodriguez and Frank Miller. Dimension Films, 2005, 124 minutes.

The New Noir

Todd Skousen

Take the dark worlds of Mickey Spillane, Ed McBain, or even Raymond Chandler and let them simmer for 40 years in their own depravity and you might end up with the yin to the Galt's Gulch yang. A place filled with low-lives, corrupt politicians, city districts ruled by ultra-violent prostitutes, clergymen who condone cannibalism, and a few heroes and anti-heroes alike. This isn't Spiderman, Superman, or even Hellboy. This is the world of Sin City. Welcome to the last exit before hell.

With the recent advances of computer graphics, Hollywood has finally been able to cash in on the creative superpowers of comic book heroes. Unfortunately, many fans found the tone and artwork of the pulp comics replaced rather than enhanced by big-budget Hollywood effects. For this reason, Frank Miller resisted the big money offered him for the rights to his award-winning "Sin City." It wasn't until filmmaker Robert Rodriguez, known for his action films "Desperado," "From Dusk Till Dawn," and "Once Upon a Time in Mexico," as well as family films like the "Spy Kids" trilogy, approached Miller with a

sequence showing his version of Sin City — one that stayed true to the world, artwork, and creator of the comics — that Miller acquiesced. Miller came on the film as a co-director, which forced Rodriguez to quit the Directors Guild due to bylaws prohibiting such a combination on a film of this size. The result is a movie that is the closest adaptation of a comic yet, but is still a mix of successes and failures.

The most striking element of the film is its adherence to the artwork of the books, especially its use of color. Rodriguez shot the entire movie against green screens and then reduced it to the black and white world created by Miller, leaving color intact only to emphasize a particular aspect of the film: a woman's bright red dress and lipstick, a prostitute's golden hair, an evil character's yellow skin. The film opens with an assassin (Josh Hartnett) lighting the cigarette of a woman he has been sent to kill. The fire ignites in an explosion of color, but once it enters the world of Sin City on the end of her cigarette, the color quickly dissipates into black and white. When Marv (Mickey Rourke) thinks he sees his love Goldie (Jaime King), the woman he'd kill anyone to avenge, she appears in radiant light

with bright gold hair and a red dress. But as soon as he realizes the girl is actually Goldie's sister Wendy (also played by Jaime King) the color disappears and she fades back into the dark society Marv inhabits. Likewise, when Hartigan (Bruce Willis) sees a girl he once protected (before his eight-year stint in prison) dancing seductively on stage in a local bar, she lights up in saturated color because she was the one thing that kept him going in the joint. This use of color is taken directly from the comics and is one of the film's resounding successes. Never before has a comic-based movie been rendered so closely to its original source material.

The dialogue also reinforces the comic book roots of the movie. In comic books (or graphic novels, as the genre is called), the action is suspended, with a single drawing representing the ongoing action. Dialogue spoken between characters is found in "thought bubbles," often revealing the characters' inner thoughts. The film brings this sensation to the screen by using voice-overs of the thoughts of the characters as they interact. When the over-the-hill honest cop, Hartigan, experiences chest pains while chasing a band of kidnappers, we hear his every thought as he musters his will to

save young Nancy (Jessica Alba) from her captors. At times, the dialogue and voice-overs seem over the top. But the film slowly eases into the new approach, bringing the audience into the comic book world where we are privy to things both spoken and thought. A few of the performances suffer from campy delivery of the clichéd dialogue, especially Michael Madsen's as Hartigan's partner, and perhaps also from the strains of acting in a blank room with green walls where the sets are added later. Though it takes some adjustment, the constant

Rodriguez leaves color intact only to emphasize a particular aspect of the film: a woman's bright red dress and lipstick, a prostitute's golden hair, an evil character's yellow skin.

voice-overs add a nice layer to the film and enhance our understanding of the characters living in Sin City.

The other notable element of the film is the outrageous violence which dominates it. In changing media from comic book to full-action film, Rodriguez and Miller portray the brutal reality of what is merely suggested in the drawings. Rodriguez is already known for the violent deaths in his action movies, but this movie makes those gun fights in Mexico seem quite tame by comparison. Miller's graphic novels include dismemberment, cannibalism, beheadings, misogynistic beatings of women, and castrations, and these scenes become more gruesome when shown on film. When Marv finds Goldie victim to the cannibal Kevin (Elijah Wood), he goes on a streak of vengeance that makes Beatrix, the blood-soaked heroine of "Kill Bill," look weak-hearted. As he dismembers and tortures his victims, some with a saw and rubber tubing for tourniquets, he states, "Hell will feel like heaven after what I've done to them." We witness Miho (Devon Aoki), a prostitute and assassin, cut off arms, stab assailants through eyes, and chop off skulls

with her samurai sword in order to protect prostitute gang turf. If there is any saving grace to all the bloodshed, perhaps it is that the level of violence is not like the brutality of a Tarantino film, because we are always aware that we are watching a comic book world; the color of the blood is not red, the characters are superhuman, and anyone can be brought back from the brink of death and restored. After being hit by a car three times, Marv needs only a beer and about 50 ridiculous white patches to ready himself to kill again. The stinking "Yellow Bastard" (Nick Stahl) is mostly restored after having part of his face, his arm, and even his genitalia shot off. The violence falls in line with the rest of the film as purposely over the top and, well, comical.

While "Sin City" succeeds brilliantly in its style and artistic approach, it fails to create a dynamic and intriguing plot. This is because the directors chose to tell the stories from three of the first four Frank Miller books, which are simply three episodes from the same world, not three stories where the characters interrelate. The stories are put together in a "Pulp Fiction" format with the story being

told in a non-linear fashion. The audience expects to discover how the characters relate to one another, but is disappointed when the stories touch each other only in passing. This disappointment

"Sin City" shows us what the future can hold for cinematic adaptations of comic books.

ment is especially felt with Marv, the superhuman, ruthless avenger — the character is played brilliantly by Mickey Rourke, but appears only in the first episode. Because all the characters are given such short scenes, we don't have time to connect with their struggles.

Aside from its few shortcomings however, Rodriguez and Miller's new film shows us what the future can hold for cinematic adaptations of comic books. This movie, for the first time, didn't adapt a comic book to a movie, but instead brought the comic to life. Hopefully, Miller and Rodriguez will do the same for the last three books of the "Sin City" series. □

"Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault," by Stephen R.C. Hicks. Scholargy Publishing, 2004, 214 pages.

Socialism's Last Bastion

Gary Jason

Over the last 20 years or so the philosophical orientation known as "postmodernism" (or "po-mo," to the cognoscenti) has become the dominant mindset in many humanities departments in American universities, especially in English departments. To the

extent that professors in, say, science and engineering departments have heard of postmodernism, it seems mystifying. They see colleagues in humanities departments delivering papers filled with incomprehensible prose, making outré claims (such as that there is no correct interpretation of any text), and offering bizarre courses (such as

the history of comic books). Stephen Hicks, a professor of philosophy at Rockford College, has produced a clearly written, concise book explaining just what postmodern philosophy is and how it arose, and he has done so in an admirable way.

Hicks begins by sketching out in broad terms what modernism is. Modernism is the worldview produced by the Enlightenment over the last four centuries. Roughly characterized, modernism involves naturalism in metaphysics, with the confidence that modern science is capable of, and is actually succeeding in, giving us an understanding of the physical universe. Modernism involves what he calls objectivism in epistemology, meaning the view that experience and reason are capable of gaining real knowledge, although modernist philosophers have hotly contested the specifics of this (with Rationalism, Empiricism, and Pragmatism being the most historically active epistemological schools). Modernism involves individualism in ethics, and a commitment to human rights, religious toleration, and democracy in political theory. Modernism also involves the acceptance of free-market economics and the technological revolution that it has spawned. In sum, modernism is the mindset that is common to the West, the laborious product of many great minds — Bacon, Locke, Descartes, Smith, Hobbes, Spinoza, Galileo, Newton, and Hume, among others. Most of us view this as a considerable leap forward from the Medieval period of supernaturalism, mysticism, excessive reliance on faith, and feudalist political and economic systems.

In the last 30 years or so, however, a group of thinkers have set themselves in opposition to the whole Enlightenment project. These soi-disant postmodernists reject the Enlightenment root and branch. Chief among the postmodern thinkers are Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-Francois Lyotard and (amazingly, an American) Richard Rorty. These thinkers, together with a host of smaller fry (such as Stanley Fish, Jacques Lacan, Andreas Huyssen, Frank Lentricchia and others), have developed a large following in the humanities — especially literature, less so in philosophy

— and in the social sciences. They have developed virtually no following in science, math, computer science, and engineering for reasons that will become clear below.

The postmodern mindset views the whole Enlightenment project as a failure. The po-mo view is metaphysically anti-realist and anti-naturalist, holding that the physical universe is not ultimately describable in final terms. It is socially subjectivist in epistemology, holding that the “world” is what we socially construct, and each “group” (racial, gender, linguistic, ethnic, national or what have you) constructs the world according to its group identity. Postmodernists are egalitarian and collectivist in matters ethical and political. (If there are any postmodern libertarians or conservatives, I have yet to hear of them.)

Postmodernism has had a powerful impact on a number of areas of academic study. In literary theory, it has rejected the notion that literary texts have objective meanings open to better or worse interpretation, in favor of the notion that the text is simply a vehicle for the critic to exercise wordplay upon, or to deconstruct and thus expose the racial, class, or gender biases of the author. In law, postmodernists known as Critical Legal Theorists reject the notion of universally valid legal principles and objective legal reasoning, essentially viewing legal reasoning as subjective plumping for one’s race, class, gender, or political preferences. In education theory, postmodernism junks the notion that education should develop a child’s cognitive abilities and impart factual knowledge to enable her to function as a productive member of our free-market democracy. Instead, the postmodernist believes education should mold a student’s racial, class, and gender identity. Postmodernists try to focus on the achievements of women, non-whites, and the poor, exposing the history of American democracy as a history of oppression, and denying the

existence of any objective scientific method. For this reason, natural scientists and engineers find postmodernism silly — try convincing engineers who have successfully sent a robotic probe to the surface of Mars that objectively true scientific laws don’t exist. Also, most modern philosophers, who since Descartes have concentrated on epistemology, have tended to view nat-

The failure of socialism, both empirically and theoretically, brought about a crisis of faith among socialists, and postmodernism is their response.

ural science as the most successful knowledge-generating human enterprise, and thus are not inclined to dismiss it lightly.

In short, postmodernism is relativism run riot, skepticism on stilts. In terms of the culture wars, it informs the arguments of those who think that American society is inferior to others and on the decline, that there are no “Great Books” of a higher order of merit than others, that science and technology are socially constructed and are not making genuine progress, and that modern free-market economics has lowered living standards. As Hicks notes, there is a contradictory tone to all this — all cultures are equal, but ours stinks; all truth is relative, except the unquestionable po-mo truth; no race, class or gender is super-



“You never drag me anywhere anymore!”

ior, but middle class white males are clearly inferior; and no books are superior, except, of course, those by third-world authors. Where does this farrago of resentment come from?

Hicks rightly views postmodernist philosophy as the most recent manifestation of the reaction against the Enlightenment, what we might call the Counter-Enlightenment. The Counter-Enlightenment in Hicks' view goes back at least to the work of Kant and Rousseau in the 18th century. The epistemological and metaphysical side of the Counter-Enlightenment Hicks traces back to Kant. Kant, Hicks claims, should not be considered an Enlightenment advocate of reason, for he held that we can know only the phenomenal realm, i.e., the realm of what we directly experience via the senses, while the noumenal realm — the "world-in-itself" — is beyond our knowledge. The mind has built-in organizing features (causality, temporality, and so on) which it imposes upon the raw input of the senses to construct the world of experience.

Kant begot Hegel, who sought to fuse the phenomenal and the noumenal realms — viewing reality as being ultimately all mental or spiritual (metaphysical idealism). Hegel's ideas certainly informed Marx's philosophy, contributing to the rise of collectivism. But Kant also begot the strain of irrationalist philosophers, most importantly Schleiermacher, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard. This strand of thought attempts to get around the Kantian problem of reason's inability to apprehend the noumenal world directly by thinking that intuition or other non-rational approaches (leaps of faith or superhuman acts of will) will bridge the gap.

Hicks focuses upon two strands of 20th century metaphysics and epistemology as direct precursors of postmodernism. He discusses Heidegger in some detail, appropriately, given that Derrida and Foucault describe themselves as followers of Heidegger. Heidegger grounded his philosophy in phenomenology, the close examina-

tion of the given field of immediate experience. He came to the view that logic and reason are impotent in answering ultimate metaphysical questions, leaving dark emotions such as boredom, guilt, and dread as the only tools, and reaching a metaphysical nihilism in which pure Being and pure Nothing are one and the same. Heidegger thus provides the postmodernists with some of their core beliefs: that reason and logic are subjective and metaphysically sterile; that words and concepts are obstacles to be destroyed or unmasked; that feelings are a more reliable tool than logic and scientific method; and that the Western philosophic tradition (based upon the law of non-contradiction and the subject-object distinction) is something that needs to be overcome. As Hicks notes:

The postmodernists will effect a compromise between Heidegger and Nietzsche. Common to Heidegger and Nietzsche epistemologically is a contemptuous rejection of reason. Metaphysically, though, the postmodernists will drop the remnants of Heidegger's metaphysical quest for Being, and put Nietzschean power struggles at the core of our being. And especially in the cases of Foucault and Derrida, most major postmodernists will abandon Nietzsche's sense of the exalted potential of man and embrace Heidegger's anti-humanism. (p. 67)

The question arises, then, how can a philosophic trend so rooted (or mired) in the Continental tradition of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Heidegger come to be so attractive to the American academy — indeed, apparently now more the stronghold of postmodernism than Europe, its birthplace — given the Anglo-American tradition of Enlightenment empiricism? Hicks rightly puts the focus on the collapse of the logical empiricist project. Hicks briefly surveys the rise of logical empiricism from its early sources in the advances in modern logic by Frege and Russell,



Jolie, Barbra, even Sammy, Leo, and Liz

"Almost every Jew in America owes his life to laissez faire capitalism. It was relatively laissez faire America that welcomed Jews in unlimited numbers and *progressive*, New Deal America that turned them away by the boatload, and back to Auschwitz... For Jews especially: God Bless America should be God Bless laissez faire capitalism."

For *The Jewish Debt to the Right*, the New Mises Seminars, an Open Forum of the Right, and new ideas that the old libertarians don't want you to know about

see [Intellectually Incorrect](http://IntellectuallyIncorrect.at.intinc.org) at intinc.org

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and the work of the Vienna Circle, to its demise at the hands of Hanson, Feyerabend, Quine, and Kuhn. The logical positivists had attempted to rigorously analyze scientific method

All cultures are equal, but ours stinks; no race, class or gender is superior, but middle class white males are clearly inferior; and no books are superior, except, of course, those by third-world authors.

and the structure of knowledge using the tools provided by modern symbolic logic, but their program was demolished in the 1950s and 1960s. This left a vacuum which attracted skepticism. That vacuum, together with the work of Kuhn and Quine — which gave perspectivalism a rebirth in an analytic context — provided the soil for anti-Enlightenment epistemology to flourish.

Turning from metaphysics and epistemology to politics, Hicks notes that postmodernists aren't just skeptics who vary in their political beliefs. No, postmodernists are all committed leftists. The fact that postmodernists are uniformly drawn to collectivism is even more puzzling, given that socialists have traditionally, à la Marx, argued that socialism is scientific, while postmodernists view science with contempt, and worship subjectivity and irrationality. Hicks explains this in detail over several chapters by exploring an external factor, namely, the collapse of socialism in theory and practice. Postmodernism is a fusion between Leftist politics and skepticism. But the dream of socialism died in the latter half of the 20th century. Socialism was tried in a variety of forms, from Leninism to National Socialism to Maoism and so on, with the clear result that, far from being superior to capitalism, it is completely inferior. Socialism promised to free workers from capitalist bondage, but it chained them to the means of production they purportedly owned. It promised to outproduce capitalism, but the

prosperity achieved by capitalist economies totally eclipsed the poverty wrought by socialism. Socialism promised to usher in an era of peace and humane values, but it delivered decades of police states and gulags. Free-market democracy, i.e., classical liberalism, won decisively in the developed world, and is rapidly transforming the rest of the planet as well.

The failure of socialism, both empirically and theoretically (once Mises demolished socialist theory with his publication of "Socialism" in 1920), brought about a crisis of faith among socialists, and postmodernism is their response. Hicks puts it well:

Postmodernism is born of the marriage of Left politics and skeptical epistemology. As socialist political thought was reaching a crisis in the 1950s, academic epistemology had, in Europe, come to take seriously Nietzsche and Heidegger and, in the Anglo-American world, it had seen the decline of Logical Positivism into Quine and Kuhn. The dominance of subjectivist and relativist epistemologies in academic philosophy thus provided the academic Left with a new tactic. Confronted by harsh evidence and ruthless logic, the far Left had a reply: That is only logic and evidence; logic and evidence are subjective; you cannot really prove anything; feelings are deeper than logic; and our feelings say socialism. . . . Postmodernism is a response to the crisis in faith of the academic far Left. Its epistemology justifies the leap of faith necessary to continue believing in socialism, and the same epistemology justifies using language not as a vehicle for seeking truth but as a rhetorical weapon in the continuing battle against capitalism. (90)

I have a few slight quibbles with Hicks' book. First, he has a tendency to blur the distinction between a skeptic, accurately so called, and a failed anti-skeptic. The difference is important in historical exegesis. Descartes tried mightily to devise a theory of knowledge that would do justice to the rapidly rising scientific revolution of his time — a revolution to which he himself was a tremendous contributor. But his program — pure Rationalism, at least as it's coquettishly flaunted in the "Meditations" — clearly failed. Locke, following Bacon and Hobbes, tried to devise an Empiricist episte-

mology that would do justice to the scientific revolution — an epistemology that ultimately failed to refute skepticism, as Hume so deftly demonstrated. Locke and Descartes failed to refute the skeptic — but not for lack of sincere effort. It is with this understanding that we need to look at Kant. Kant was no anti-objectivist cryptoskeptic. He truly was challenged by Hume's devastating skepticism (which roused him from his dogmatic slumbers, as he put it). His epistemology was a brilliant attempt to answer Humean skepticism. That later philosophers, most notoriously Nietzsche, used it to devise a perspectivist skepticism shouldn't lead one to think that Kant would have been at all sympathetic to it.

Second, Hicks might have looked a bit more at the pragmatic tradition. This epistemology reached its apogee

Natural scientists and engineers find postmodernism silly — try convincing engineers who have successfully sent a robotic probe to the surface of Mars that objectively true scientific laws don't exist.

in the work of C. S. Peirce, who called himself a pragmatist to distinguish his thought from people such as James and Dewey.

Pragmatism is a very novel and reasonable stab at combating skepticism, with a more realistic approach to scientific enterprise. Unlike Rationalism, Empiricism, and even Kantian Perspectivalism, Peirce (a prolific polymath who actually did scientific research) gave up the idea of founding knowledge on certainty. Instead, he noted that knowledge, while real, is inherently fallible. Pragmatism of

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Peirce's sort is absolutely unsympathetic to the po-mo pragmatism of Rorty.

Third, Hicks leaves things hanging, epistemologically speaking. Yeah, okay, the cheap, trendy collectivist skepticism of postmodernism is silly, in the face of the continuing global advance of scientific knowledge, new technology, free-market economics, and political democracy. But does anyone yet have an adequate account of the nature of knowledge and scientific

method that Hicks can recommend?

But I ought not wax churlish. Hicks has written a lucid and readable book explaining an influential, albeit puzzling, intellectual phenomenon. He has a balanced internalist and externalist approach, discussing the narrow evolution of ideas within philosophy and the wider influence of political and economic trends on the evolution of those ideas. His book deserves a wide audience. □

"The Golden Age," by John C. Wright. Tor Books, 2002, 304 pages.

"The Phoenix Exultant," by John C. Wright. Tor Books, 2003, 304 pages.

"The Golden Transcendence," by John C. Wright. Tor Books, 2003, 352 pages.

Freedom's Farthest Future

Mark Rand

John C. Wright's trilogy beginning with "The Golden Age" is a space opera set in a distant, almost utopian future. In the first book, Phaethon of Radamanthus House discovers that his memory has been partially erased, and sets off to find the cause. Ultimately he is drawn into a battle over the fate of the entire solar system.

Why on earth does this merit a review in the pages of *Liberty*?

First (and not yet answering that question), the books are ripping good reads, despite the fact that the plot — like the plot of most novels — can be reduced to a stock formula that has been used before and will be used again. Wright creates a rich and fascinating universe, filled with a dizzying array of technological marvels, but manages to keep the setting subservient to the story. The characterization is solid, the pace brisk, and the plot twists both plentiful and fair (no deus

ex machina here).

Second, and more to the point, the books are written "... as a rebuke to 'Last and First Men' by Olaf Stapledon," according to Wright,* because "[a]s much as I admire him, Mr. Stapledon and I are philosophical foes. At the zenith of his human evolution ... [is] a communist utopia with no private property; at the zenith of my human evolution ... is a libertarian utopia with no public property." This complete absence of public property has obvious ramifications and implications, which play important roles in the development of the story.

"The Golden Age" wastes no time easing the reader into the setting. The level of technology that exists, and its ubiquity, is illustrated by simple observations of Phaethon's daily activ-

ities. It has become common practice to augment one's intelligence through a computer interface so seamless that it is indistinguishable from one's own mind; also, many people have elected to genetically engineer themselves in ways limited only by their finances, their imaginations, and the laws of physics. Humans being what they are, the results are sometimes very alien, although it is noteworthy that this series has no actual aliens.

Phaethon, a wealthy planetary engineer, is attending a party when he encounters someone who identifies himself as an old friend. Phaethon doesn't recognize this person, and thinks the man's claim that Phaethon's memories have been altered is ludicrous. After all, one of the benefits of his computer augmentation is a regular backup of his entire mind. It's simple enough to verify his memories. Still, the very ease of refuting the claim gives Phaethon pause — why, he wonders, would anyone try to deceive him in such a foolish manner? He is amazed to discover not only that his memory has been altered, but that he has consented to the alteration. Furthermore, he learns he is not the wealthy pillar of society, but a pariah, living on the dole of his father, and only tolerated by his peers as part of some inexplicable plea bargain. If he restores his lost memories, he will be exiled.

Fortunately for Phaethon, he lives in a society ruled by law, not by men. The terms of his Faustian plea bargain are contained entirely in the contract he signed, and they do not preclude him trying to reconstruct his memories the old-fashioned way. The governing body (I use the term loosely) wants Phaethon to avoid the whole subject, but its power is strictly limited to enforcement of contract.

The frustration and impotence of the council members (major monopoly holders collectively known as the Seven Peers) can hardly fail to warm a freedom lover's heart. Wright uses this opportunity to describe the law of the land, which boils down to absolute property rights, including the freedom to enter into any contract, under any terms to which the parties agree.

Wright avoids the trap of decreeing his preferred system of government a

*All quotations attributed to Wright in this review are taken from an interview available at <http://www.sfsite.com/05a/jcw127.htm>

panacea for all the evils of the world. It is a serious literary failure to ignore man's natural tendency to attempt to shape his environment to his benefit. For example, we repeatedly see socialist utopias where everyone cheerfully does his best to contribute to the common good, and the only rational behavior in the book is exhibited by the villain. Wright gives us a world where it is quite clear that people behave like people, i.e., pursue their own interests. Thus we have monopolies, fraud, deceit, espionage, sabotage, attempts to increase the scope and power of government — in short, realism in a fantastic setting.

Phaethon discovers after many twists and turns that his "crime" was his intent to explore interstellar space, and his creation of a ship with which to do so. The Peers claimed this could upset the stability of civilization, but what they actually feared was that Phaethon's venture would imperil their economic dominance. Phaethon still cannot fathom why he agreed to have his memories erased, and the first book ends with him preparing for exile and restoring his full memory.

Wright creates a rich and fascinating universe, filled with a dizzying array of technological marvels, but manages to keep the setting subservient to the story.

Like Ayn Rand's Howard Roark, Phaethon will have his goal or nothing at all.

The second book of the trilogy, "The Phoenix Exultant," covers Phaethon's quest to get his ship back. This is made problematic by his physical and economic exile, the form of which is logically connected with the structure of the society. The Peers monopolize the supply of essential commodities, including food and energy, and through various contractual agreements including restrictions on resale, they make it impossible for Phaethon to procure any of their products.

In order to survive and continue his quest, Phaethon must descend into what might be described as a sub-society — those who found unacceptable even the minimal level of government that Phaethon lived with, as well as other exiles. Once again, there is a realistic economy extant, and Phaethon must barter his knowledge and skills for the supplies he requires.

Phaethon comes to suspect that someone or something is actively trying to destroy him. While trying to pin down his suspicions, he meets Atkins, who is the military. Not a member of the military — Atkins is the entire military. The military is largely viewed as

a symbolic gesture, a remnant from the ancient past, and many doubt that it really exists. From whom would an army defend? Atkins does exist, and he has access to the best weaponry available. Atkins' arrival suggests that he also suspects a foreign agent. Atkins and Phaethon form something of an anti-team, cooperating though working towards different goals. Phaethon wants his ship, and wants to know why he seems to be in someone's cross hairs. Atkins wants to identify what seems to be a threat to the society he serves, and neutralize it.

Phaethon's wife, Daphne, also plays an important role in this book

Notes on Contributors

Baloo is a *nom de plume* of Rex F. May, the world's greatest cartoonist.

Jude Blanchette is the Henry Hazlitt Scholar at FEE and is at work on Hazlitt's biography.

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and the next. Some reviewers have criticized the relatively Victorian relationship between Phaethon and Daphne, and what they regard as the excessive influence of our era on the structure of theirs. It's a reasonable criticism, I suppose, but in designing a new world it also seems reasonable to keep nonessential elements familiar rather than introducing endless explanations of new social conventions. And in Wright's words, "I find it frankly ridiculous to read SF tales where no one seems to know about World War II, not to mention the Crusades or the Peloponnesian Wars. These are going to be our children. Will we truly teach them nothing at all? (Public school teachers need not answer the question; I am familiar with your work.)"

The third and final book, "The Golden Transcendence," reveals who is hunting Phaethon, and why. Phaethon's enemy, Xenophon — the agent of a group that left Earth ages ago — plans to use Phaethon's ship to attack Earth at its most vulnerable moment. We all know (or think we

The society Phaethon is trying to save has exiled him for exercising the freedom it supposedly cherishes.

know) the end result, but to his credit, Wright comes up with surprising twists, and manages to maintain suspense. Xenophon argues that Phaethon is on the wrong side — after all, the society Phaethon is trying to save has exiled him for exercising the freedom it supposedly cherishes. Xenophon claims he is trying to liberate a society enslaved and brainwashed by the Seven Peers, and offers to prove this to Phaethon. At this

point, the reader is subjected to a battle of polemics on the nature of freedom and society. The arguments are interesting, but they seem artificial, and slow the story considerably.

But this is a minor complaint, and should not take away from what

Wright has accomplished: an absorbing blend of philosophical discourse and fictional narrative that can be read either for enjoyment of the story, or contemplation of the future of libertarianism. I enthusiastically recommend this trilogy. □

"Melinda and Melinda," directed by Woody Allen. 20th Century Fox, 2005, 100 minutes.

It's the Outcome, Stupid!

Jo Ann Skousen

What is the difference between comedy and tragedy? Woody Allen explores this question in his latest film, "Melinda and Melinda." The premise, at least, is promising: half a dozen friends are enjoying dinner together (in Manhattan, of course) when two of them, one a writer of comedies and the other a writer of dramas, hypothesize how they might turn the anecdote just told by a third diner, about a girl who showed up unexpectedly at a dinner party, into two different scripts. From this premise the film moves fluidly between the story as it might appear in a tragedy, and the story as it might appear in a comedy, with occasional interruptions as the dinner guests discuss the writers' unfolding storylines.

This self-conscious look at the writer-in-progress is artistically intriguing, but the resulting film is dramatically unsatisfying. Its constant reminder that this is only fiction prevents audiences from becoming emotionally engaged in either plot. Perhaps it is because we don't really see the stories unfold; we just hear the characters talk about them. Creative writing teachers constantly remind us, "Show, don't tell," but Allen tends to have his characters talk about their lives, instead of

letting us experience those lives along with them. Moreover, genuine tragedy is not merely dead bodies at the end, or pity over love's labors lost, but a sense of a great person having fallen through missteps and bad choices. But Allen's characters lack the stature to inhabit true tragedy, or the zany misunderstanding of good comedy. Thus the audience experiences neither a joyful sense of triumph at the conclusion of the comedic version, nor a painful catharsis at the conclusion of the tragic one. Perhaps the one indirect tragedy of the film overall is watching Will Ferrell play the part that Allen clearly wrote for himself. Ferrell does an adequate job as the bumbling comedic protagonist, but it's almost disconcerting to hear him speak the words that should be coming from that meek, owl-eyed face. Woody Allen fans can't help but think, "if only!" "If only" carries the plot of great tragedy and the inexorability of aging may be the truest tragedy highlighted by this film. "We laugh because it masks our terror about mortality," one of the characters says, and this seems to be true for Allen.

The interior storylines of the film are lightweight and fluffy, hardly memorable after one leaves the theater, but the concept of those twin

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masks, tragedy and comedy, is intriguing. "The essence of life is comic, tragic, or absurd," one dinner guest opines, placing the writer just a little below the gods in cosmic importance. Another suggests that the difference between the two is, ironically, "tragically comforts, comedy escapes." "Are those tears of sorrow or tears of joy?" one character asks, and the other responds, "Aren't those the same tears?" Aristotle would probably agree. In the earliest form of drama, the difference between comedy and tragedy was "outcome, purely outcome," as one of my literature professors used to say. Comedy and tragedy both rely on similar plot devices of mistaken identity, misunderstood actions, and partially overheard conversations. In a comedy we laugh at the foibles and misfortunes of the main characters because we know that it will all turn out right in the end, and everyone will find true love. In a tragedy, we weep at the "if only's" that prevent a happy ending. If only Romeo had waited for Juliet to awaken, we sigh; if only Macbeth had not listened to his wife; if only Othello had realized that Cassio was speaking of Bianca, not Desdemona. But we laugh heartily when Lucy thinks Desi bought pearls for another woman,

Comedy and tragedy both rely on similar plot devices of mistaken identity, misunderstood actions, and partially overheard conversations.

when Chrissy thinks Jack is getting a vasectomy, or when Costello thinks Abbott is hiding in the bear skin, because we know it will all turn out fine in the end.

A perfect example of genre being controlled entirely by the ending is Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations." Like many Victorian novels, Dickens' masterpiece was written and published in 18 fortnightly installments, as a continuing serial in the magazine *All the Year Round*. Dickens intended for this autobiographical

work to end tragically (and realistically), with Pip missing out on the opportunity to marry his one true love, Becky. He travels the world a sad and lonely man, never to marry again. This was an apt punishment for making the mistake of marrying the wrong woman, even though Pip's wife, "Dumb Dora," was conveniently killed off midway through the story. Publishers knew, however, that their Victorian audiences did not care a whit about realism, and they had not been waiting nine months to be let down; they demanded a happy ending. Dickens wasn't happy about it but he complied, writing a final chapter for the magazine that found Pip and Becky living blissfully ever after, and voila! tragedy becomes comedy. (Several modern editions include the original ending as an appendix.)

Shakespeare is probably a more apt model than Dickens for Allen's muse in "Melinda and Melinda," where the stories unfold quite differently. Indeed, Allen alludes to "King Lear" and "Richard III" in several instances, perhaps in a deliberate attempt to elevate himself to the same bookshelf. Allen's twin plots are only thematically alike, in that both begin with a girl arriving unexpectedly at a dinner party (Melinda, played by Radha Mitchell); both Melindas are running away from bad relationships; both dinner-party hostesses set Melinda up with a blind date; and both couples become entwined in Melinda's love life. But the story lines veer in different directions. Similarly, Shakespeare often reworked familiar storylines, exploring themes in opposing ways in his parallel plays "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Romeo and Juliet", and "Measure for Measure" and "Othello," for example.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Romeo and Juliet" are both based on the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe, in which two young lovers are forbidden to marry because of family differences (in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" a group of traveling actors actually produces Pyramus and Thisbe as a play within the play, creating a deliberate allusion to the myth). In "Romeo and Juliet," nothing works out, and as the "if only's" mount up, the "star-crossed lovers" die tragically. The characters in

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"Midsummer Night's Dream" are also forbidden by their parents to marry, and like Romeo and Juliet they steal away to marry secretly. But through a series of comical misidentifications and farcical "if only's," a little bit of magic and woodland nature ultimately bring the lovers together, with their parents' blessings. Three weddings occur in the end, and another couple kiss and make up. Is it any wonder that this is one of Shakespeare's most often produced plays?

Similarly, "Othello" and "Measure for Measure" both deal with rumors of infidelity, both plots are manipulated by an evil mastermind, and both plays are populated by prostitutes and nobility whose lives intertwine. Othello, the

tragic hero, is presented with numerous opportunities to open his eyes, recognize Desdemona's virtue, and reject the lies with which Iago poisons his mind, but each time he yields to the evil manipulator. By contrast, Isabella is able to turn the tables on the vile Angelo, retain both her virtue and her reputation, save Claudio, and marry the man she loves (in fact, everyone marries someone, even the prostitute). "Measure for Measure" is a dark comedy, not raucous and frolicking like "Midsummer Night's Dream" or "Merry Wives of Windsor," and its themes are often troubling, especially for modern audiences. But it is technically a comedy because the "if only's" turn into "thank goodnesses," no one

dies, and everyone gets married in the end.

Ultimately, the "tragedy" of "Melinda and Melinda" is that, like so many of Woody Allen's later works, it is neither tragedy nor comedy, but another failed attempt to regain his former glory. Allen holds an important place in the Cinema Hall of Fame, but tragically his best work seems to be behind him. His last several films simply aren't worth the time to see them, except in talking about what they might have been, and remembering what he used to do ("Annie Hall," "Sleeper," "Bananas," etc.). In that sense, I guess, we see a fallen hero, brought down by his own reluctance to leave the stage. □

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cashmere, she is still a statuesque Barbie doll. Between the creamy white spandex, blue eyes sparkling against lavender cashmere, she is still a statuesque Barbie doll. Between the lines she is telling us: don't envy me because I'm beautiful, I have bulimia.

Aghast at video footage of herself acting like an ass on a North Vietnamese anti-aircraft gun, she comes off lame, blaming it on the mean media who showed up that day. She says when she saw them all there that day, she should have known they were there to ruin her life. She mumbled something about being "set up there on that anti-aircraft gun." When she talks about that incident, she speaks in the passive voice. In truth, those of us who saw Fonda's speeches back then know that she was an incredibly strong and powerful woman who was quite articulate in her anti-war views, which at times bordered on being pro-communist. She should be forgiven, I think, for her days as Hanoi Jane, due to her tender age and inexperience, and because her foolishness was overshadowed by the sins of the men who ran the war. Insane actions led to extreme reactions, and she really was caught up in a cultural riot.

What Fonda shouldn't be excused from is her continuing insincerity. She still blames the men in her life for everything that has ever happened to her — including going out on her own and procuring women to surprise Roger Vadim for the threesomes she brought to the marriage bed. "Did you enjoy it?" asked Paula Zahn. Oh, I don't know, Jane said. "I was numb. I would drink first." Is she lying to us or to herself, I wondered. Us, I decided.

Fonda never really did anything, meant anything, believed anything, enjoyed anything — everything just sort of happened to her. Her political radicalism? Tom Hayden's fault. Her sexual adventurousness? Roger and Ted. The only thing she did totally of her own volition was become a good girl, a closet Christian. If Ted had known, she explains, he would have talked her out of it. The poor thing is just putty in the hands of any man who happens by.

Insincerity rains down as she speaks of herself as an old

jalopy that's losing fenders, and about how she wishes she had just lived a life where she had been with the same husband for 40 or 50 years in the same interview as she relishes dishing about the ongoing adventures of Ted and Jane. Yes, she still sees Ted Turner, she giggles. She has lunch with his new "first girlfriend," and they exchange owner's manuals and laugh. She wants to be a bad girl who led a wild and exciting life full of drama and adventures — political, sexual and spiritual. She wants to please us. No one ever said she wasn't a great actress.

Maybe next time around Jane will get real.

— Sarah McCarthy

Federalism, when we feel like it — Was anyone else bothered by the intellectual inconsistency of Terry Schiavo's "let the parents decide" advocates? Many have called them hypocrites, on the basis that Schiavo parental decision advocates were attempting to exploit a situation for political benefit. That is not the point here.

Rather, it is that social conservatives could well argue that opposing the decision of Mrs. Schiavo's husband to discontinue intravenous feeding was the "liberal" (in a 20th century sense) course of action.

The question was not whether she was brain dead enough to allow discontinuation of intravenous feeding. This had long been established. Our society is reasonably tolerant of individuals' families making the decision on when to terminate life support. The question was who should make this decision — the husband or the parents? Until now, social conservatives would almost always support the husband's decision.

With respect to the larger issue of abortion — for which the Schiavo matter was undoubtedly a proxy — social conservatives usually support states deciding their own policies. *Roe v. Wade*, they argue, takes power away from the states in violation of the 10th Amendment. But nationalizing the Schiavo decision to let her parents decide would have struck a grave blow against states' rights, and undermined conservatives' hopes of seeing *Roe* overturned. — Alan Ebenstein

Troy, Ohio

A variety of innovations in the war against civil nuisances, from the *Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch*:

Ohio police took Haley Dawson's identity, driver's license, and Social Security Number, and gave them to Michelle Szuhay, a criminal-justice student recruited to work undercover as a nude dancer.

For three months, Szuhay received \$100 a night to strip at Total Xposure while liquor-control agents drank beer and watched from the audience. Other officers watched her strip on the Internet, using an account created under the identity of a dead man.

Miami County Prosecutor Gary Nasal pointed to a change in Ohio law used to fight identity theft and credit card fraud, claiming it allows police to assume anyone's identity as long as it's for an investigation.

Brooklyn

The thin blue line that separates society from chaos, as reported by *The New York Post*:

On March 8, a police officer emerging from an unmarked car shouted at Howard Lewis "Get over here! Take your hands out of your pockets!" Lewis, who was helping his daughter Grace Marie sell Girl Scout cookies, fearing that the officer was an impostor, ordered his daughter into his van where his multiple sclerosis stricken wife was sitting, and went over to the police officer, who slapped him with a summons, which read, in part, "Defendant observed offering for sale cookies w/o being properly licensed." In response to press inquiries, "police sources" said that officer had not wanted to ticket Lewis, but "was strong-armed by his superior."

London

Progress in the War on Incivility, from *The Herald (U.K.)*:

Former Sex Pistols bass-player Glen Matlock has called for restricting swearing on television. Matlock had become famous for repeatedly using the word "fuck" on British television nearly 30 years ago as a publicity-seeking bass-player for the rock group "The Sex Pistols."

Ocala, Fla.

Society is served and protected yet again, from a report in the estimable *Gainesville Sun*:

Two boys drew primitive stick figure scenes on scrap paper that showed a 10-year-old classmate being stabbed and hung, police said. The boys, aged 9 and 10, were arrested and taken away from school in handcuffs. They were charged with making a written threat to kill or harm another person, a second-degree felony.

Lynnwood, Wash.

The perils of suburban pet ownership, from the *Snohomish County Times* bureau:

Deborah Linnell was sentenced to three days in jail, as punishment for a misdemeanor "animal-at-large" citation for allowing her dog to escape from her back yard.

Vermillion, S.D.

Advance in olfactory aspects of religious practice, witnessed by the *Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan*:

You can find candles with just about every fragrance imaginable, from blueberry to ocean mist to hot apple pie. Now there's a candle that lets you experience the scent of Jesus.

Light up the candle called "His Essence" and its makers say you'll experience the fragrance of Christ. Bob Tosterud and wife Karen say the formula is all spelled out in Psalm 45.

"You can't see him and you can't touch him," says Bob Tosterud. "This is a situation where you may be able to sense him by smelling. And it provides a really new dimension to one's experience with Jesus."

Los Angeles

Setback in the War on Terror, from the *Los Angeles Times*:

Officers from the Los Angeles Police Department's K-9 explosive detection unit left a bag containing explosive powder unattended at Los Angeles International Airport after a training exercise. A bomb-sniffing dog failed to detect the explosives and an airport police officer opened the bag in the presence of passengers, prompting officials to clear the area.

"It was unfortunate that this happened, and there will be an investigation to figure out who was responsible for what," said John Miller, chief of the LAPD's counterterrorism bureau.

Snohomish, Wash.

Victory in the fight against clothing harassment, from the *Seattle Times*:

When Justin Patrick wore his "SNOHOS" T-shirt to school, he was suspended for sexual harassment. School officials said "Snohos" contained a slang term for prostitutes and was derogatory towards women.

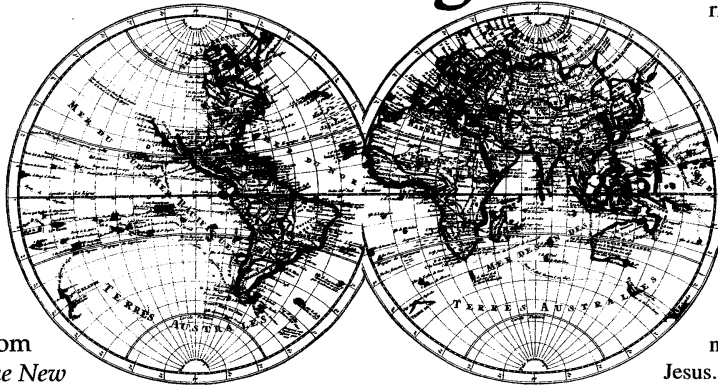
The Snohomish School District website refers to the football team's "SnoHo" traditions, and the school's yearbook depicts "Snoho Mojo."

Imperial, Pa.

Innovation in defense technique, from the *New Pittsburgh Courier*:

Former Chief of Police Darryl Briston tried to eat a piece of evidence — a receipt — at a court hearing here. A state trooper intervened to prevent the destruction of evidence. Briston was later charged with aggravated assault and tampering with evidence.

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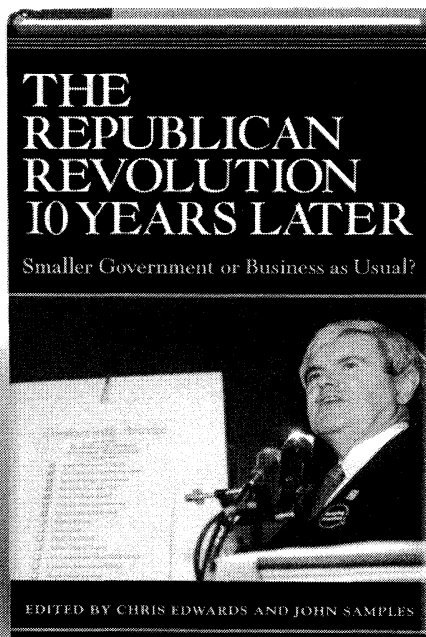
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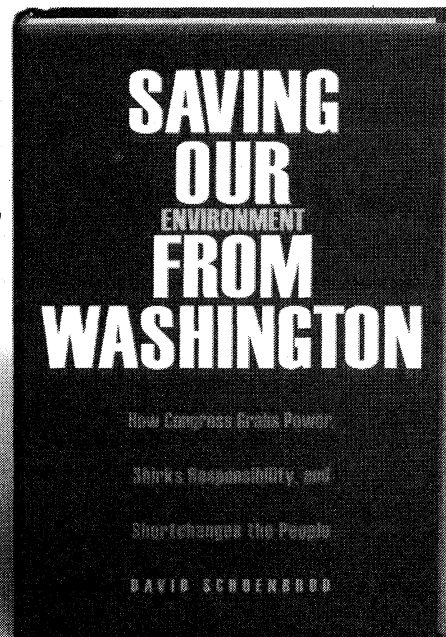
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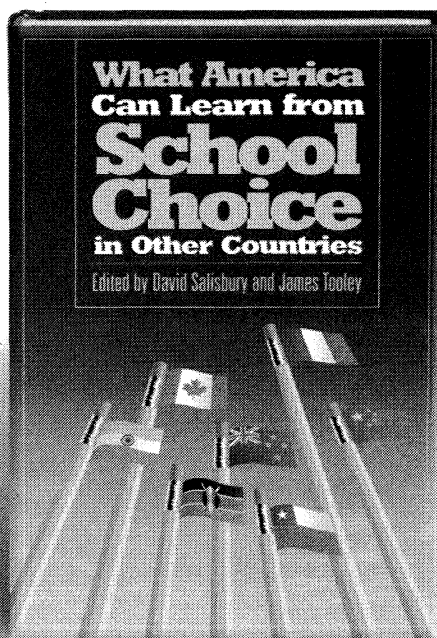
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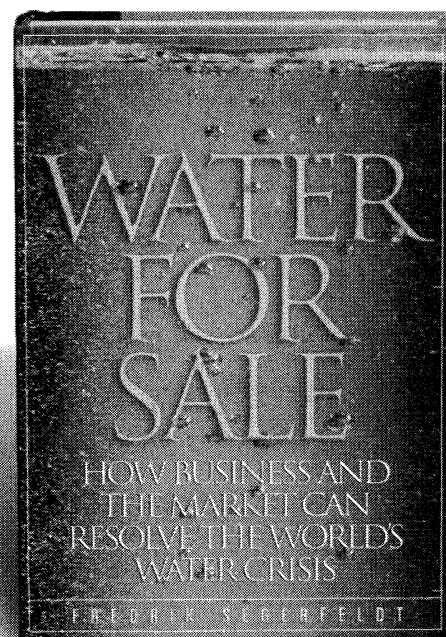
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