

The Anarchist's Library - Robert Anton Wilson Primer

Robert Anton Wilson, et al.

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Anarchism and Crime

Robert Anton Wilson, Robert Shea

1974

Because anarchists aim at the abolition of government, the first question they are usually asked is, "What about murderers, thieves, rapists? The government protects us from them. Would you just let them run wild?"

The answer, first of all, is that government does not protect us. Its claims are a total imposture, like the fraud of a primitive shaman who claims to bring rain and warns everybody, "If you abolish me, it will never rain again." Thus, *the major crimes are all legal*; the thieves who have stolen the land and the natural resources from under our feet operate with a government franchise. These huge banks, corporations and land monopolies finance both political parties, train the corporation lawyers who become Congressmen or Presidents, and can never be successfully resisted in the courts because they own the judges, too.

Second, the next level of crime, the so-called Syndicate or Mafia, is also in cahoots with big government and big business, and only token arrests and light sentences are ever imposed on "gangland leaders" – usually rebels who have become unpopular with the higher-level mobsters. In every big city, the links between the mayor's office and the Mob are well-known and often "exposed" in the press, but no reforms are permanent and never can be under this system. The links between the national Mob and the national government are less well publicized, but books like *The Politics of Opium in Southeast Asia*, the recent Harpers magazine issue on the CIA and heroin, etc., show that the heroin syndicate could not operate without high-level Federal protection.

Finally, the small-time free-lance criminal – the rapist and sneak thief – *can be* arrested and prosecuted in this system; but *is* he, usually? In New York, in 1972, there were 300,000 burglaries but only 20,000 arrests for burglary. The police are too busy protecting the high-level criminals – as we will explain – to have the manpower to really battle the small independents.

Do you deny this? Well, of course, you have been trained by the State-run schools and the mass media to deny it, do you believe your own denial? How safe do you feel in a large American city, especially after dark? Do you honestly think the government can and will protect you?

IS MORE LAW THE ANSWER?

Many admit that they are frightened and appalled by modern American life, but they think the answer is more laws, tougher laws, an evolution toward the total Police State.

This is, of course, the natural direction of government. The more honest (and misguided) a politician happens to be, the more laws he will write – to prove to himself that he is "working" for the people. Obviously, every time the legislature meets, the honest politicians will introduce more laws, to show how hard they're working. Eventually, nothing will remain that is not covered by some law or other. Everything not compulsory will be forbidden, and everything not forbidden will be compulsory.

Stop and ask yourself if you really want that kind of Nazi- or Communist-style tyranny.

Now, even if we (or most of us) do want it – to be protected from criminals – and even if we escalate our progress and pass a billion new laws a year, arriving at Total Law in say five or ten years, what then? How will such a system be enforced? Kinsey estimated that to enforce our sex laws alone, 95 percent of the population would have to become either police or jail-guards – except that they would all be in jail themselves. This is already impossible, but suppose we tried to enforce the anti-drug and anti-gambling laws, also? We would all spend our lives in Federal prisons, spending part of the day guarding others and part of the day being guarded by them.

This is absurd, but within the framework of government and law, how can we stop short of such a total prison-society?

And remember: each step in this direction – each new law, and each new bureaucracy to enforce the new laws – raises your tax burden. Already, you are working from January 1 to May 23 for the Federal

government, to pay your IRS bill for the year. For a few months thereafter, you are working to pay nuisance taxes, state taxes, and various other concealed taxes on every item you buy, every movie you see, every drink you take. Already, it would probably be cheaper to just let yourself be robbed every week by a casual sneak-thief. Government may be more genteel than a mugger (occasionally) but it usually ends up taking more of one's money.

THE FUNCTION OF LAW

There are three kinds of laws on the books today, and to understand them is to understand the State.

The first kind of law declares the State's power over you. It says: we may rob you of this much per year (taxation), we may enslave you for this period of time (the draft), we may do this and that and the other thing to you, and you cannot resist because we are your Masters. This is the earliest kind of law and was originally imposed on conquered people by conquerors. No attempt to justify it has ever been convincing to anyone bold enough to question it in the first place. It is based on mere Force; its only argument is the gun.

The second kind of law is coercive morality. This makes the State into an armed clergyman. It says you can enjoy yourself this way, but not that way; you can smoke this, but not that; you can drink this, but not that. Thou Shalt Not Play Parchesi On The Night of the Full Moon. Thou shalt not gamble on Sunday. Thou shalt not make love to your wife the way you and she both like, but the way the legislators like. Four million arrests a year, and an incredible expenditure of time and manpower and money, go into enforcing these laws.

These are the laws that establish crimes without victims. These are the laws that everybody occasionally violates and some people violate constantly. Their only justification, as with the first type of laws, is sheer brute force. That is, without force, a man who believed in, say, the Seventh Day Adventist vegetarian diet would still obey that diet's rules; with force, the Adventists, if they get into government, can make all of us obey it. The day is not distant when pot-smokers will take over, and if they are vengeful, anti-booze laws will come back on the books. This stupid bullying can go on forever, each group getting its turn to impose its own prejudices on others. Anarchists say: stop it now, get off your neighbor's back, get him off your back, and let everybody enjoy his or her own lifestyle.

Finally, there is the third class of laws – the class that every decent person wishes society would live by. No killing. No stealing. No rape. No fraud. Anarchists, just like you, would like to see these laws really functioning. We just don't believe that government can do that job. We think government is, always has been, and always will be preoccupied with the first two kinds of law. Read on and we will explain this.

THE NATURE OF GOVERNMENT

Government was instituted to guarantee that property would remain stolen. The chief function of every cop, every judge, every bureaucrat is to see that property remains stolen.

The first kings were conquerors. They stole the land by shot and shell, period. Then, they settled down to rob the survivors at a certain rate per year, called taxation. Next, they divided up the land among their relatives or officers in the army, who all became lords-of-the-land, landlords, and were empowered to rob the citizens at a certain other rate per year, called rent. When science and industry appeared, other satraps and sycophants of the royal families received charters to monopolize the resources and means of production, and to rob at a certain rate per year, called capital interest or profit. When banks were formed to circulate the medium of exchange (money), other charters were handed out to others

in the bandit-gang, who became bank directors with a license to rob at another rate per year, called money interest or economic interest.

It soon became evident that those not in the gang, the majority of the population, were inclined to rob back as much as they could. The Robin Hood hero appears in all societies at this point, and most of us still admire him, although shamefacedly, since the schools and mass media tell us not to. (Still, who doesn't heroize Jesse James or John Dillinger a little?)

Anarchists say that the first crime was the crime of the conquerors/governors, who seized a whole land, cut it up among themselves, and proceeded to rob all of us forever by taxation, rent, corporative profit, money interest, and various sub-classes of the same basic fraud. Anarchists say that the Earth belongs to its inhabitants, not to this small "owning" and "governing" class of less than 1 percent of the population.

Anarchists say that the way to stop crime is to stop the primordial crime, the State, and administer the land through voluntary associations (syndicates) of all the people.

Anarchists say that if people could work for themselves – if they received the full product of their labor through a syndicate of fellow-workers – almost all motivation for crime would disappear. If you didn't have to pay taxes and rent, starting tomorrow, your purchasing power would be more than doubled. If other forms of exploitation and robbery, through the financial-interest system, were also abolished, your purchasing power would more than quadruple. How much envy, how much worry about money, how much irrational fear, ulcers, nightmares, headaches and other motivations to cheat a little or steal a little would survive after this simple economic justice was achieved?

THE OTHER CRIMINALS

"But, but – how about the violent criminal types? How about the thrill-killers, the nuts, the psychopaths or sociopaths or sadists? How about those who simply enjoy being evil and destructive?"

We are not evading that question. It is absolutely necessary, however, to put it in perspective by explaining the Major Economic Crime of capitalist government (and feudal and other governments) and how other, lesser crimes mostly derive from that primordial injustice.

Now, after economic justice is achieved and voluntary associations of all sorts (labor unions, credit unions, consumer-owned co-ops, people-owned insurance companies, rural communes, tribes, any type of free human grouping) have taken over the functions of government, *some* persons, due to sickness or perversity or one damn thing or another, will still make trouble. Rape. Pilfering. Attempts to defraud. How will anarchists deal with these remaining no-goodniks?

EDUCATION AND THE FAMILY

The first step in solving any social problem, like any medical problem, is prevention. Other remedies are necessary only when prevention fails.

Anarchists claim that the violent-nut-type of human being is produced by our current methods of child-rearing. This claim is hardly radical or extreme: every psychiatrist, every sociologist, every anthropologist, in one way or another, admits that this grave charge is true. We would not have so many rapists and other violent nuisances if our society were not, in some way, training them from birth onward to behave like that. For instance, Sweden has only a few rapes per year; the United States has one every seven minutes. One rape every seven minutes is not natural male behavior (whatever Womens Lib may say); it is a function of the sexual misery in this society.

Anarchists believe that the repressive, authoritarian, coercive, brutal and degrading practices currently used in the family and the school are only necessary to condition the young human to live in a government-run society. Children must be beaten or otherwise terrorized and bullied in the home and the school in order that they may "adjust" to the terror and brutality of government as they mature. In short, a State-run society must be repressive because repression is the essence of the State.

Libertarian, free-form families and schools – the open family, the Summerhill school, the free association of men, women and children without authoritarian control – will not produce the deformed, mentally twisted, violent and "mean" and "crazy" types so common in our authoritarian society. So anarchists aim, first of all, to prevent violent criminals by changing the child-rearing methods that produce them.

THE DEMONIAK OR MONSTER

There still remains the inexplicable criminal – the guy who enjoys harming others for reasons nobody today can understand. The superstitious say he is possessed by demons; the naturalists imply that maybe he has bad genes or is a throwback to an earlier stage of evolution. Whatever the explanation, he will appear, presumably, in anarchist societies, as he has appeared in all other societies, even after economic injustice and mind-warping education are abolished.

Human-centered societies (as distinguished from governmental or property-centered societies) have dealing with this problem for thousands of years. Tribes, clans, bands, free communes, have existed outside, before and alongside the States which get all the attention from historians. Anthropologists have investigated these free human groupings and have found a variety of methods of dealing with "demoniacs," many of them as good or better than the State's traditional jails, tortures or executions.

Ostracism should not be underestimated. One critic of anarchism, George Orwell, actually complained that ostracism was so cruel that most people would rather fall afoul of government and go to jail than be the sole ostracized person in an anarchist community.

Exile, widely used by governments before jail became popular, is also effective. At least, it solves the problem for the community that uses it (while, alas, passing the problem on to the unlucky community that next gets the offensive nut.)

The Quakers have widely practiced a form of moral forgiveness which sounds impractical to most of us, but which is murderously effective. Bertrand Russell was so impressed with this that he suggested it as a fit punishment for Stalin. Until you have seen a group of Quakers reciting somebody's sins in public, weeping over them loudly, and then forgiving and praying for the culprit, you can't imagine how much psychological impulse-to-change this generates.

Many anarchists believe the private defense groups are legitimate; some even are willing to allow such groups to use traditional Vigilante methods. Clarence Lee Schwartz, an American anarchist who observed this system first-hand in the old West, thought it both more humane and more effective at peace-keeping than the government law system back East. Other anarchists fear this as the possible source of a new State.

Most anarchists believe that criminals should not be caged under any circumstances, due to the overwhelming evidence that every prisoner comes out of a cage worse than he goes into it. Others believe, however, that punishment in a form of indemnification is compatible with libertarian ideas and should be rigorously enforced by anarchist syndicates. Under the indemnity system, every criminal must pay in cash or work or some needed good to compensate his victims (or their survivors). This certainly does the victims more good than having the criminal put in a cage and fed at community expense, to say the least of it; and is probably just as discouraging or more discouraging to every nut with even the remnant of an ability to foresee the probable results of his actions.

Finally, we must mention miscellaneous solutions. Just as crime in an economically just and free community will be freaky and sporadic (rather than the steady hour-after-hour terror that it is in this mad, unequal and unfree society), the remedies will also be individualized and peculiar to each situation. In some cases, undoubtedly, an anarchist community will decide the "criminal" was right and the community was wrong; for this reason, anarchists do not believe in unalterable laws, but only in general policies.

The acme of anarchist theory is the principle of non-invasiveness or non-coercion – Mind Your Own Business – and those found to be violating this will be given, usually, some method of compensating those whose lives they have damaged. If they refuse, methods like the boycott-ostracism-exile or general cold shoulder need not always be deliberately organized against them. The good sense, the social bonds, and the sense of humor of the organic community will find some way to make them known that human tolerance, even under anarchy, is not infinite. In the Old West, men booted through town with a skunk tied around their necks, and then shoved onto the highway, often became valuable, co-operative and productive citizens in the next town, after some time to figure the likelihood of a repetition of that public amusement if they were to try similar modes of behavior again.

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This article ran in Green Egg. I could not find a date, so all I can say is it was in the 1970s. It reads like one of the missing appendices for Illuminatus!, but I can't think of anyone I could ask to test my theory.

Committee for Surrealist Investigation of Claims of the Normal

Robert Anton Wilson

Wilson describes himself as a “guerilla ontologist,” signifying his intent to ATTACK language and knowledge the way terrorists ATTACK their targets: to jump out from the shadows for an unprovoked ATTACK, then slink back and hide behind a hearty belly-laugh.

— Robert Sheaffer, *The Skeptical Inquirer*, Summer 1990

Dublin, 1986.

I had given a talk to the Irish Science-Fiction Society and the question period began.

“Do you believe in UFOs?” somebody asked.

“Yes, of course,” I answered.

The questioner, who looked quite young, then burst into a long speech, “proving” at least to his own satisfaction that all UFOs “really are” sun-dogs or heat inversions. When he finally ran down I simply replied,

“Well, we both agree that UFOs exist. Our only difference is that you think you know what they are and I’m still puzzled.”

An elderly gentleman with blonde-white hair and a florid complexion cried out in great enthusiasm, “By God, sir, you’re right. I myself am still puzzled about everything!”

And thus I met Timothy F.X. Finnegan, Dean of the Royal Sir Myles na gCopaleen Astro-Anomalistic Society, Dalkey, sometime lecturer at Trinity College, Dublin, and founder of the **Committee for Surrealist Investigation of Claims of the Normal**.

In fact, Prof. Finnegan signed me up as a member of CSICON that very night, in the Plough and Stars pub over our ninth or tenth pint of Ireland’s most glorious product, linn dubh, known as Guinness to the ungodly.

Now I hear that Prof. Finnegan has died, or at least they took the liberty of burying him, and I feel that the world has lost a great man.

The Committee for Surrealist Investigation of Claims of the Normal (CSICON), however, lives on and deserves more attention than it has received hitherto. Prof. Finnegan always asserted that the idea for CSICON derived from a remark passed by an old Dalkey character named Sean Murphy, in the Goat and Compasses pub shortly before closing time on 23 July 1973.

Actually, it started with two old codgers named O’Brian and Nolan discussing the weather. “Terrible rain and wind for this time of year,” O’Brian ventured.

“Ah, faith,” Nolan replied, “I do not believe it is this time of year at all, at all.”

At this, Murphy spoke up. “Ah, Jaysus,” he said, “I’ve never seen a boogerin’ normal day.” He paused to set down his pint, then added thoughtfully, “And I never met a fookin’ average man neither”

(About Sean Murphy nothing else appears in the record except a remark gleaned by Prof. LaPuta from one Nora Dolan, a housewife of the vicinity: "Sure, that Murphy lad never did any hard work except for getting up off the floor and navigating himself back onto the bar-stool, after he fell off, and he only did that twice a night.")

But Murphy's simple words lit a fire in the subtle and intricate brain of Timothy F.X. Finnegan, who had just finished his own fourteenth pint (de Selby says his fifteenth pint). The next day the aging Finnegan wrote the first two-page outline of the new science he called patapsychology, a term coined in salute to Alfred Jarry's invention of pataphysics.

Finnegan's paper began with the electrifying sentence, "The average Canadian has one testicle, just like Adolph Hitler — or, more precisely, the average Canadian has 0.96 testicles, an even sadder plight than Hitler's, if the average Anything actually existed." He then went on to demonstrate that the normal or average human lives in substandard housing in Asia, has 1.04 vaginas, cannot read or write, suffers from malnutrition and never heard of Silken Thomas Fitzgerald or Brian Boru. "The normal," he concluded "consists of a null set which nobody and nothing really fits."

Thus began the science of Patapsychology, Prof. Finnegan's most enduring, and endearing, contribution to the world — aside from the computer-enhanced photos of the Face on Mars with which he endeavored to prove that the Face depicted Moishe Horwitz, his lifelong mentor and idol. This, of course, remains highly controversial, especially among disciples of Richard Hoagland, who believe the Face looks more like the Sphinx, those who insist it looks like Elvis to them, and the dullards who only see it as a bunch of rocks.

Nobody should confuse Patapsychology with parapsychology, although this precise misunderstanding evidently inspired the long and venomous diatribes against Finnegan by Prof. Sheissenhosen of Heidelberg. (We need not credit the allegations of Herr Doktor Hamburger that Sheissenhosen also dispatched the three separate letter-bombs sent to Finnegan in 1982, '83 and '87. Even in the most heated academic debate some limits of decorum should remain, one would hope.)

Sheissenhosen evidently believed that "parapsychology" represented an unprovoked attack on his language and thought, and that Finnegan often leaped from shadows; he even suspected the Dalkey sage of slinking and of hiding behind a belly laugh, although the latter seems physiologically impossible. (I tried it once and found it made me more visible, not less.) In fact, Sheissenhosen never did correct his original error of misreading patapsychology as parapsychology. You will find more about the Sheissenhosen-Finnegan-LaPuta-Hamburger controversy in deSelby's *Finnegan: Enigma of the Occident*, *Tourneur's Finnegan: Homme ou Dieu?* and/or Sheissenhosen's own *Finneganismus und Dummheit* (6 volumes).

Patapsychology begins from Murphy's Law, as Finnegan called the First Axiom, adopted from Sean Murphy. This says, and I quote, "The normal does not exist. The average does not exist. We know only a very large but probably finite phalanx of discrete space-time events encountered and endured." In less technical language, the Board of the College of Patapsychology offers one million Irish pounds [around \$700,000 American] to any "normalist" who can exhibit "a normal sunset, an average Beethoven sonata, an ordinary Playmate of the Month, or any thing or event in space-time that qualifies as normal, average or ordinary."

In a world where no two fingerprints appear identical, and no two brains appear identical, and an electron does not even seem identical to itself from one nanosecond to another, patapsychology seems on safe ground here.

No normalist has yet produced even a totally normal dog, an average cat, or even an ordinary chickadee. Attempts to find an average Bird of Paradise, an ordinary haiku or even a normal cardiologist have floundered pathetically. The normal, the average, the ordinary, even the typical, exist only in statistics, i.e. the human mathematical mindscape. They never appear in external space-time, which consists only and always of nonnormal events in nonnormal series.

Thus, unless you're an illiterate and malnourished Asian with exactly 1.04 vaginas and 0.96 testicles, living in substandard housing, you do not qualify as normal but as abnormal, subnormal, supernormal, paranormal or some variety of nonnormal.

The canny will detect here the usual Celtic impulse to make hash out of everything that seems obvious and incontrovertable to Saxons, grocers and other Fundamentalist Materialists. Patapsychology follows in the great tradition of Swift, who once proved with a horoscope that an astrologer named Partridge had died, even though Partridge continued to deny this in print; Bishop Berkeley, who proved that the universe doesn't exist but God has a persistent delusion that it does; William Rowan Hamilton, who invented the noncommutative algebra in which p times q does not equal q times p ; Wilde, who asked if the academic commentators on Hamlet had really gone mad or only pretended to have gone mad; John S. Bell, who proved mathematically that if any universe corresponds to the equations of quantum mathematics that universe must have nonlocal correlations similar to Jungian synchronicities; etc.

In the patapsychological model, the normal having vanished, most generalizations, especially about nonmathematical groups, disappear along with it. The monorchoid Mr. Hitler, for instance, could not generalize about "the Jews" within the patapsychological model, because first he would have to find a normal or average Jew, which appears as intracible to demonstration as exhibiting the Ideal Platonic Jew (or the Ideal Platonic Chicken Farm complete with Ideal Platonic Chickenshit.)

As Korzybski the semanticist said, all we can ever find in space-time consists of Jew_1 , Jew_2 , Jew_3 etc. to Jew_n . (For the nonmathematical, that means a list comprising Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Ruth, Jesus, Woody Allen, Richard Bandler, Felix Mendelsohn, Sigmund Freud, Paulette Goddard, Betty Grable, Noam Chomsky, Bernard Baruch, Paul Newman, the Virgin Mary, Albert Einstein, Lillian Hellman, Baron Rothschild, Ayn Rand, Max Epstein, Emma Goldman, Saul Bellow, etc. etc. etc. to the final enumeration of all Jews alive or dead.) Each of these, on inspection, will have different fingerprints, different brains, different neuro-immunological systems, different eyes, ears, noses etc. different life histories, different conditioning and learning etc. and different personalities, hobbies, passions etc... and none will serve as a norm or Ideal Form for all the others.

To say it otherwise, world Jewish population stood at about 10 million when Hitler formed his generalizations. He could not possibly have known more than at maximum about 500 of them well enough to generalize about them; considering his early prejudices, he probably knew a lot less than that. But taking 500 as a high estimate, we find he generalized about 10 million individual persons on the basis of knowledge limited to around 1/20,000 or 0.00005% of them.

It seems, then, that Naziism could not have existed, if Hitler knew the difference between norms or averages (internal estimates, subject to error due to incomplete research or personal prejudice) and the phalanx of discrete nonnormal events and things (including persons) that we find in the sensory space-time continuum outside.

Similarly, the male human population currently stands at 3 billion 3 million 129 thousand, more or less (3,004,129,976, the last time I checked the World Game Website a while ago). Of these 3 billion+ discrete individuals, Robin Morgan, Andrea Dworkin and other Radical Feminists probably have not known more than about 500 to generalize from. This means that Rad Fem dogma consists of propositions about 3 billion critters based on examination of less than 0.00000001 per cent of them. This amounts to a much more reckless use of generalization than Hitler's thoughts on Judaism. You can no more find the male norm from Gandhi, Gen George Custer, Buddha, Bill Clinton, Louis Pasteur, Kung fu tzu, Bruno, Father Damien, Ted Bundy etc. than you can find the Jewish norm from Emma Goldman, Harpo Marx, Felix Mendelsohn, Spinoza, Barbra Streisand, Nathaniel Branden, Emma Lazarus, Jerry Seinfeld etc.

Now you know how the word "feminazi" got into the language. The two ideologies have a strong isomorphism. They both confuse the theoretical norm with a vast array of different individuals — and

they both have no idea how to create even a tolerably scientific norm (which will still differ in many respects from the actual series of individuals the norm allegedly covers).

CSICON applies the same Deconstructive logic all across the board.

For instance, to return to our starting point, whatever your idea of the “normal” UFO — whether you consider it a spaceship, a secret US government weapon, a hoax, or a hallucination etc. — such a general idea will render you incapable of forming a truly objective view of the next UFO that comes along. The only way to cancel such pre-judgement lies in patapsychology (and in general semantics). You must remember the difference between the individual and unpredictable event that gets called a UFO and your past generalizations about “the UFO” or the “normal” UFO.”

Otherwise you will only note how this UFO fits your Ideal UFO and will unconsciously ignore how it differs therefrom. This mechanical reflex will please your ego, if you like to feel you know more than most people, but it will prove hazardous to your ability to observe and think carefully.

People who think they know all about Jews or males or UFOs never see a real Jew or male or UFO. They see the generalized norm that exists only in their own brains. We never know “all” — we only know what I call sombunall, some-but-not-all. This applies also to dogs (the patapsychologist will not say “I love them,” “I hate them,” “I fear them” etc.), and to plumbers, bosses, right-wingers, left-wingers, cats, lizards, sitcoms, houses, nails, Senators, waterfalls and all other miscellaneous sets or groups.

Personally, I see two or three UFOs every week. This does not astonish me, or convince me of the spaceship theory, because I also see about 2 or 3 **UNFOs** every week — ***Unidentified Non-Flying Objects***. These remain unidentified (by me) because they go by too fast or look so weird that I never know whether to classify them as hedgehogs, hobgoblins or helicopters — or as stars or satellites or spaceships — or as pookahs or pizza-trucks or probability waves. Of course, I also see things that I feel fairly safe in identifying as hedgehogs or stars or pizza trucks, but the world contains more and more events that I cannot identify fully and dogmatically with any norm or generalization. I live in a spectrum of probabilities, uncertainties and wonderments.

Perhaps I got this way by studying Finnegans work. Or maybe I just drank too much linn dubh during my years in Ireland.

O rare, Tim Finnegans!

Don't Be Afraid of Black Magick

Robert Anton Wilson

They're out there, moving stealthily in the darkness. The Black Magicians. The Occult Terrorists. Satanists. Mansonoids. Mindwarppers. Cattle Mutilators. "Night's Black Agents," as the Bard called them.

They're calling down curses on their enemies. Sticking pins in Voodoo dolls. Summoning the mighty devil Choronzon to fall upon the Earth and afflict it with madness. Chanting to invoke the 777 servitors of Beelzebub and Set...

Well, yes. But let's not lose our heads about it.

The first and most important thing to learn about evil is that it generally exists only in your own alarmed imagination. To a considerable portion of our fellow citizens, the acme of evil is pornography: Marilyn Chambers and Linda Lovelace parading their harmless sensuality and hedonistic technology on film.

Pagan readers presumably can see how silly that concept of evil is. It is worth asking how much of your own favorite fears and loathings are equally absurd, reflecting only the prejudices of your culture or subculture.

Virtually every occult lodge or order in the country has the dubious honor of being regarded as a group of crypto-Satanists or clandestine followers of the "forbidden left-hand path" by some other occult lodge or order. Orthodox Christians still dread the "witches" (followers of *wicca*, the cult of the great Mother Goddess). I know hundreds of witches around the country and they're all fine people. The local leader of Crowley's notorious Ordo Templi Orientis (denounced as a group of closet diabolists by scores of Christian occultists) is also a fine man, in my judgment. More than 75 percent of all occult prejudices are as bigoted as mainstream religious or political prejudices.

As P. E. I. Bonewits (the first student to ever graduate from the University of California at Berkeley with a degree in magic), has so wittily and accurately written, "White magic is what my gang does. Black Magic is what the other gang over there does."

Even the terminology of "white" and "black" magic is racist and redolent of bias.

I once read an intelligent Fundamentalist tract. (There are intelligent Fundamentalists, just as there are honest politicians. Every miracle happens at least once!) The author argued that Satanists and black magicians are responsible for spreading the ideas that all humans can learn to develop occult talents, that we can achieve physical immortality and migrate off this planet, and that there is no limit to the expansion of human intelligence. Since I believe all those things, and have devoted much energy to propagandizing for them, I am very definitely a Satan-ist and a black magician, by this gentleman's standards.

It is well to keep in mind, then, that whenever you are horrified by somebody's beliefs or (harmless) practices, you yourself are also a heathen, a wretch, and an infidel, by somebody else's standards.

Evil Defined

For the purpose of this article, *evil* refers to acts which definitely, measureably, harm others, physically or psychically. It doesn't matter what kind of orgies they're having down the street, what blends of dope they're using, what entities they're invoking with their chants or ceremonies. If they're not hurting anybody, they're not *evil*, just different.

The second fact to learn about evil, real evil, is that it is quite stupid, like all fetishes and compulsions.

Dr. Fu Manchu only exists in fiction. It requires no "evil genius" to use fear and threats to intimidate people and create an aura of diabolical power about yourself. Every juvenile hood knows as much about the neuropolitics of fear as Manson or Hitler ever learned.

The "bad" outlaw and the "good" citizen are both robots, as Max Stirner noted over a century ago. The "bad" robots are programmed to be "the baddest outlaw gang in town." The "good" robots are

programmed to be “nice,” “polite” and “reasonable.” There is very seldom anything fit to be called intelligence on either side.

In every cell-block in every penitentiary there, is a “King.” The baddest bad-guy of them all. The Rogue Male. The alpha-baboon. Power in any mammalian pack or human tribe is brokered in systematic ways, according to kinesic signals (body language). To see how robotic this imprinted role is, consider the opposite number. In every horde there is also a *nebbish*. A loser. Low man on the totem pole. While nobody can intimidate the alpha or rogue male, everybody can intimidate the *nebbish*.

These roles are imprinted quite as mechanically as the sex roles are imprinted.

Most of those who have mastered the politics of fear on the “old-brain” circuits (mammalian intimidation) do not bother acquiring much “new-brain” hominid development. Symbolic constructs seem irrelevant to their concern with raw power.

Psychic Assault

The so-called “black magician” is a “new brain” hominid fear-merchant who has somewhere learned that there are more powerful intimidations than *physical* assault. The dimensions of horror, terror and mindwarp are discovered. You can scare more people, and acquire greater power, by the exploitation of *psychic* assault.

When a human’s “mind” or reality-construct is threatened, the person virtually ceases to exist as human, and regresses to the status of a terrorized mammal in a trap.

Just as the physical bully feeds on fear and is thrown off stride by the appearance of real courage, the psychic terrorist feeds on gullibility and is baffled by intelligence.

When the bully confronts true courage, he automatically ceases to attack. Instead, he seeks to make the maverick into an ally, and often offers the position of second-in-command. If that is declined in a respectful (not churlish) manner, he will probably agree to recognize the other as a separate sovereign with a private turf.

The psychic terrorist, similarly, is only accustomed to bamboozling the credulous. Confronted with a self-disciplined independent mind, he hesitates. Eventually, like the physical bully, he laughs and offers comradeship. “You and me, we’re smart. We’re not like these other jerks.” A nudge and a conspiratorial wink.

The Power of Illusion

Jimmy Breslin, a tough Brooklyn boy who does the best Hemingway imitation in town, explains it this way: “[Minority Leader] Tip O’Neill at all times has one great political weapon at his disposal. He understands so well that all political power is an illusion. If people think you have power, then you have power. If people think you have no power, then you have no power... [As Hobbes wrote] ‘The reputation of power is power.’... Illusion. Mirrors and blue smoke, beautiful blue smoke rolling over the surface of highly polished mirrors, first a thin veil of blue smoke, then a thick cloud... If somebody tells you how to look, there can be seen in the smoke great, magnificent shapes, castles and kingdoms...” (From *How the Good Guys Finally Won* by Jimmy Breslin.)

Breslin may not seem to be writing about white and black magic but he is. Consider: there is no such thing as Minority Leader of the House in American law. The office exists only through “mirrors and blue smoke.” The Presidency, on the “other hand, is sealed with seven seals and its incumbent possesses almost royal prerogatives. Breslin’s book demonstrated that while people like Peter Rodino and Judge Sirica and Senator Irwin were making headlines out of the Watergate investigations, “Minority Leader”

Tip O'Neill with his "mirrors and smoke," his casting of spells if you will, convinced everybody in high posts that impeachment was inescapable. *When everybody else in Washington believed it, Nixon believed it, too, and resigned.* The issue never did come to vote. O'Neill's magic chased Tricky Dicky out of town.

If O'Neill had owned the official title of "shaman" instead of "politician," he might have used the same methods to persuade Milhaus that a curse would kill him at 12 midnight on May 23. Nixon would obediently have laid down and died.

Mirrors and blue smoke...

Children play-act, and gradually, inevitably, the play becomes real. The parents call them home and the social reality is re-created. If the children remain in their own play-reality, a psychiatrist should eventually be called. If that fails, call the exorcist and get a good agent to start negotiating the movie rights.

Mirrors and blue smoke...

As Dr. John Lilly says, "In the province of the mind, what is believed true is true or becomes true within limits to be learned by experience and experiment. These limits are further beliefs to be transcended. In the province of the mind there are no limits."

Stupidity of Black Magick

The hoodlum-occultist is "sociopathic" enough to, see through the conventional charade, the social mythology of his species. "They're all sheep," he thinks. "Marks. Suckers. Waiting to be fleeced." He has enough contact with some more-or-less genuine occult tradition to know a few of the gimmicks by which "social consciousness," normally conditioned consciousness, can be suspended. He is thus able to utilize *mental brutality* in place of the simple *physical brutality* of the ordinary hooligan.

He is quite powerless against those who realize that he is actually a stupid liar.

He is stupid because spending your life terrorizing and exploiting your inferiors is a dumb and boring existence for anyone with more than five billion brain cells. Can you imagine Beethoven ignoring the heavenly choirs his right lobe could hear just to pound on the wall and annoy the neighbors? Gödel pushing aside his sublime mathematics to go out and cheat at cards? Van Gogh deserting his easel to scrawl nasty caricatures in the men's toilet? Mental evil is always the stupidest evil because the mind itself is not a weapon but a potential paradise.

Every kind of malice is a stupidity, but occult malice is stupidest of all. To the extent that the mindwarper is not 100 percent charlatan through-and-through (and most of them are), to the extent that he has picked up some real occult lore somewhere, his use of it for malicious purposes is like using Shakespeare's sonnets for toilet tissue or picking up a Picasso miniature to drive nails. Everybody who has advanced beyond the barbarian stage of evolution can see how pre-human such acts are, except the person doing them.

Genuine occult initiation confers "the philosopher's stone," "the gold of the wise" and "the elixir of life," all of which are metaphors for the capacity to greet life with the bravery and love and gusto that it deserves. By throwing this away to indulge in spite, malice and the small pleasure of bullying the credulous, the mindwarper proves himself a fool and a dolt.

And the psychic terrorist, besides being a jerk, is always a liar and a fraud. Healing is easier (and more fun) than cursing, to begin with, and cursing usually backfires or misfires. The mindwarper doesn't want you to know that. He wants you to think he's omnipotent.

The Big Lie

The old theological cliché that the Devil is the “Father of Lies” contains an important neuropolitical truth. Occult knowledge beings with the realization that the ordinary reality of the conditioned citizen is somewhere around 99.97 percent mythology. Mindwarping, brainwashing, demonology, the hurling of curses, etc., begin with the barefaced lie that the mindwarper’s alternate reality is not mythology at all but “really” “real.”

The Satanist’s reality is real. So is Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s. And the nudist reality. The snake-worshiper’s reality. The Methodist reality. The Republican reality. The SLA reality. The Buddhist reality. The vegetarian reality. The scientific reality.

Every one of these realities is “real” to the nervous system programmed to convert all incoming energy-signals into the coding (language categories) of that “reality,” and to exclude as background noise all signals not fitting the code.

The Biggest Lie in the World is the idea that there is one “true” reality. That is the lie which keeps the conditioned citizen trapped in the one static reality imprinted by parents and schools in childhood. It is the lie which the Black Magician exploits in making the demons of *his* reality in *your* reality.

America is the greatest country in the world, to the conditioned American. Fernando Poo is the greatest country in the world, to the conditioned Pooan. Catholicism is the one true religion, to the Catholic. Voodoo is the one true religion, to the Voodooist.

Mirrors and blue smoke.

There are dozens of meta-programming rituals in occult manuals, showing how to insulate your reality from attacking demonic forces out of some black magician’s separate reality. Some of the best and most commonsensical are in Dion Fortune’s *Psychic Self Defense*.

Personally, I regard such rituals as unnecessary, since they take the terrorist too seriously.

The Power of Love

Preferable is a simple *meditation of forgiveness*. Realize what a fool the mindwarper is to be wasting his time on barbarian terrorism when the occult planes contain so much glory and wonder for those with loving hearts. There are realms comparable to Beethoven’s *Ninth*, and the terrorist is barred from these by his sullen viciousness. Feel sorry for the poor fool, and forgive him.

Blessed Juliana of Norwich, an “illiterate servant girl,” used to get so possessed by the Divine Rapture that she could do no more than giggle and say, “All is well, and all shall be well; and all manner of things shall be well.” This may not have so much to contribute to philosophy as the realms explored by Paracelsus or Aldous Huxley, or as much scientific interest as the sci-fi heavens of Dr. John Lilly and Dr. Timothy Leary, but it shows that even the simplest of us, with love, can enter realities far more amusing and hedonistic than the nasty bog in which the Satanist lives.

The Power of Humor

Second, have a good laugh. I mean this literally. The practice of *lila yoga* is recommended by many Tantrists (and by Alan W. Watts) and is good for all occasions, but especially good for exorcising “bum trips” of all sorts. You form a magic circle with about a half-dozen friends and just laugh for 45 minutes. This is a much happier experience than those dreary Gestalt sessions where you program yourself into rage and spite for 45 minutes, and it is just as easy to induce. (If you have trouble getting started, pass around some magic herb before beginning.) When using this ritual to remove a curse, keep a photo of

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the mindwarper in the middle of the circle and remember that you are laughing *at him*. At the end, tear up the photo and forget about him entirely.

It's that simple. Just as courage protects one from the physical bully, joy and laughter protect one from the psychic bully.

As Meher Baba used to say, "Don't worry. Be happy."

Those four words contain all the wisdom of the ages.

From *Gnostica*

Evading Dogmatic Medicine

Robert Anton Wilson

Everybody has their own special nightmare, their private version of living in a Kafka novel. Some worry that they might fall through a timewarp and land in the hands of the Gestapo or the KGB. Others live in perpetual anxiety about an IRS audit. In New York and New Jersey, most people have an acute terror about accidentally saying or doing something that annoys the Mafia. Californians dread losing their temper and thereby appearing “unmellow,” which they evidently believe might lead to their getting deported back to the U.S. mainland.

I, too, have always had a personal horror: the concept of becoming hospitalized while in the United States and thus falling into the hands of the American Medical Association. Fortunately, at the age of sixty, I have managed to avoid this terrifying experience all my life—and hence really only know about the Horror through the pathetic stories told by friends who have actually spent time in American hospitals. These tales sound much like the stories of others I know, survivors of the Holocaust, with one additional misery often included at the end: after “liberation” and escape back to normal non-nightmare life, the butchers go on pursuing you, until you have lost everything in your savings account and gone through bankruptcy court.

How have I evaded the Dr. A.M.A. House of Blood? I don't know, really. Maybe I just got born with some especially good genes. (Materialists would like that explanation.) Or maybe I have an Ally, an occult or extraterrestrial Protector. (New Agers would love that one.) Personally, I see no special reason to believe either of these charming notions. I tend to suspect that I slid easily through the '40s and '50s—years of prostate cancers, lung cancers, rectum cancers, heart attacks, strokes, and other miscellaneous unpleasantnesses for most males—because I started doing acid (ascorbic acid: megadoses of vitamin C) at around the age of 37. I had heard Dr. Linus Pauling lecture on that marvelous substance, and I figured Dr. Pauling's ideas deserved a fair trial because (1) the A.M.A. immediately denounced vitamin C therapy violently—always a good sign that somebody has discovered something important; and (2) Dr. Pauling already had two Nobel prizes, so I could hardly consider him an idiot.

23 years later, I continue to take megadoses of ascorbic. Despite a number of bad habits during most of those years — including smoking and bad diet — I have not only stayed out of hospitals, but have also never had a cold in all that time, while people all around me often sniff, snivel and slide down the slippery slope from the common cold to the major flu or even pneumonia. I noted this “magical” immunity especially during my six years in Dublin, Ireland, a city located (I must tell you because most Americans don't seem to know) further north than almost all of Canada. Irish wits describe the Celtic climate as “nine months of winter and three months of bloody awful weather.”)

My total freedom from head colds especially impresses me, since almost everybody except us “vitamin nuts” gets a few colds a year. But, of course, one can explain this by invoking the almighty Genes or the occult Allies (or maybe even the marvelous Coincidence, that supernatural entity that always seems to banish or at least disempower all inconvenient data.)

Over the years I have tried to learn more about vitamins, nutrients, and health. Since the federal government currently holds to the view that the First Amendment does not permit controversies in this area, I must write with great caution throughout this article, so I remind you again that you can dismiss everything here by invoking Genes, occult Allies, or maybe good old panchrestomathal Coincidence. I started using Personal Radical Shield and Choline Cooler about six years ago. The PRS contains as much vitamin C as I think I need, plus many other goodies, and the Choline Cooler has ingredients that often have appeared beneficial in laboratory tests (which conservative M.D.s still dispute, of course.)

While living in Los Angeles a few years ago, I went for a medical checkup. The doctor I chose had an orthodox M.D. but also used “alternative,” holistic, and even Chinese medical techniques, whenever they seemed appropriate. At the end of the exam, he asked me what vitamins and minerals I took regularly. I told him, and he had never heard of Personal Radical Shield. He asked to see a bottle, to read the contents, so I came back the next day and left an empty bottle with his nurse. He called me that evening. “That has everything you need,” he said. Well, now, I begin to suspect that not all doctors share the dominant allopathic bias against nutritional and vitamin data. It just seems that way because the allopathic Fundamentalists make a lot a noise and try to pretend they represent the whole medical profession.

He asked me what vitamins and minerals I took regularly. Of course, Personal Radical Shield and Choline Cooler have not helped prevent all health problems. (I never thought they would.) For a while, I had high blood pressure and my Los Angeles doctor put me on heavy doses of allopathic medicines, which he warned me would have some bad side-effects. He also urged several changes in lifestyle, including breaking the smoking addiction, avoiding red meat, and exercising daily, which would help me get back to normal blood pressure without increasing dependence on the medications. Blood pressure dropped slowly back to normal over a period of nearly two years — but meanwhile I suffered various side effects of the drugs, including lethargy, tired eyes, inability to concentrate, decreased work output, and uncharacteristic depression.

Gradually the doctor decreased the heavy allopathic medicines (which lower your blood pressure in much the same way as getting hit on the head and staying in bed does) — and all these distressing symptoms went away. My energy came back, I regularly work a full day again without drowsing, and I feel happy again.

One month ago, in Soquel — a small burg on the Central California coast, where I now live — I again went in for a checkup. As usual, I picked an M.D. with training also in alternative medicine. After the checkup (in which blood pressure and other vital signs appeared normal, as they have all this year), the doctor said, “You ought to take a few vitamins and nutrients, to stay in good shape.” “What do you recommend?” I asked. “For general health, Personal Radical Shield,” he said. And in your case, I think Choline Cooler will prove helpful.”

I have continued the changes in lifestyle (i.e., I still avoid smoking and red meat, and I continue exercising, when I remember that I should) and blood pressure now remains normal without the heavy medications. I suspect the Choline Cooler has helped a good deal in my recovery from the loss of concentration and loss of work energy which the allopathic chemicals induced. My doctor thinks so, too — but then again, such opinions always need a disclaimer in this country, where the First Amendment still remains suspended and no citizen may safely question A.M.A. dogma.

I therefore disclaim my possible errors and heresies one more time: maybe we should attribute all this to Genes, or Occult powers, or Coincidence. Meanwhile, I seem in damned good shape for a man of my age, and not even the most conservative “experts” could seriously argue that my vitamins and nutrients have done me any harm. And I doubt that anyone could claim, with a straight face, that equal doses of allopathic drugs, taken for an equal period of time, would do no harm to mind, memory, sexuality, or general energy.

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illuminating Discord: An interview with Robert Anton Wilson

Various Authors

1976

Robert Anton Wilson, who along with Robert Shea wrote the *Illuminatus* trilogy, is the creator of yet another cult. The really neat part is that this is a cult of hard-core libertarian-anarchist-occult-mind expansionists whose demand for the *Illuminatus* books is making SF retail history. Walk into your corner bookstore and chances are excellent the books have been back-ordered. Borrow a copy or wait in line if you must — it's worth it. The trilogy is truly mind-boggling, outrageous, and curiously familiar. With this in mind we set out to interview one of its authors, Robert Anton Wilson (hereafter R.A.W.)

Interviewing him by mail was an exciting, albeit frustrating job. His provocative answers triggered seemingly never-ending digressions. We had to more or less learn to limit our responses. Several of the questions in the following interview appear to be asked by R.A.W. himself. These are not misprints — he does give himself questions. To give you some insight into Wilson's psyche we offer you this tidbit of data — to wit, his return address rubber stamp has his name misspelled "Robert Antoon Wilson." Make of this what thou wilt. — Jane Talisman and Eric Geislinger (hereafter the CRNLA).

CRNLA: Tell us a little about your background.

RAW: I was born into a working class Irish Catholic family in Brooklyn 44 years ago, at the brutal bottom of the Great Depression. I suppose this early imprinting and conditioning made me a life-long radical. My education was mostly scientific, majoring in electrical engineering and applied math at Brooklyn Tech and Brooklyn Polytech. Those imprints made me a life-long rationalist. I have become increasingly skeptical about, or detached from, the assumption that radicalism and rationalism are the *only* correct perspectives with which to view life, but they remain my *favorite* perspectives.

CRNLA: What are your favorite novels, movies, TV shows and music?

RAW: The novels would be, I suppose, *Ulysses*, *Finnegans Wake*, *The Magus* by Fowles, *The Roots of Heaven* by Gary, *Don Quixote* and anything by Mark Twain. Movies: *Intolerance*, *Broken Blossoms* and everything else by David Mark Griffith, *Citizen Kane*, *The Trial*, *King Kong*, *2001*. TV: *Star Trek* and *Mary Hartman*. Music: Beethoven's Ninth and his late quartets, Bach, Bizet, Carl Orff, Vivaldi, the less popular and more experimental stuff by Stravinsky.

CRNLA: What do you think of M*A*S*H, the Freak Brothers, Bob Dylan?

RAW: I loved Altman's film of *M*A*S*H* but I can't stand the TV series. The Freak Brothers are funny, but I deplore the lifestyle it celebrates. Of course, Einstein and Michelangelo were sloppy, too, but only because they were too busy with real *work* to fix their attention on sartorial status games. Hippies generally aren't busy with anything except feeling sorry for themselves. Dylan seems to me a totally pernicious influence — the nasal whine of death and masochism. Certainly, this would be a more cheerful world if there were no Dylan records in it. But Dylan and his audience mirror each other, and deserve each other; as Marx said, a morbid society creates its own morbid grave-diggers.

CRNLA: How about Anderson, LeGuin and Heinlein?

RAW: I haven't taken Anderson seriously since 1968, when he wrote an account of the police-riot at the Chicago Convention which was totally false, according to my observations on the scene. I decided Poul loved the Vietnam War so much, that he could actually watch a cop hit an old lady and remember it as a young communist hitting the cop. I haven't bothered keeping up with Anderson's hallucinations since then. LeGuin is great already, and getting better book by book. Heinlein has been an idol to me for more than 20 years. He can do no wrong, no matter how much he loves wars and hates pacifists. (I'm the kind of anarchist whose chief objection to the State is that it kills so many people. Government is the epitome of the deathist philosophy I reject.)

CRNLA: Are you a pacifist?

RAW: Hell, no. I *like* pacifists, as a rule, and people who have a heavy emotional identification with deathism and war would probably *call* me a pacifist, but I am a non-invasivist rather than a non-violentist. That is, I believe that an invaded people have the right to defend themselves "by any means necessary" as the expression goes. This includes putting ground glass or poison in the invaders' food, shooting at them from ambush, sabotage, the general strike, armed revolution, all forms of Gandhian civil disobedience, etc. It's up to the invaded to decide which of these techniques they will use. It's not up to some moralist to tell them which techniques are permissible. As Tucker said, "There is nothing sacred in the life of an invader."

CRNLA: What magazines and newspapers do you read?

RAW: I read everything, including the labels on canned food. I'm a hopeless print addict, a condition alleviated only by daily meditation which breaks the linear-Aristotelian trance. (Most rationalistic libertarians would do well to try the same circuit breaker, or LSD.) *National Lampoon*, *Scientific American* and *Green Egg* are what I read most obsessively. I also read at least one periodical every month by a political group I dislike — to keep some sense of balance. The overwhelming stupidity of political movements is caused by the fact that political types never read anything but their own gang's agit-prop.

CRNLA: Any more artistic opinions?

RAW: If I must. James Joyce is more important than Jesus, Buddha and Shakespeare put together. Pound is the greatest poet in English. Thorne Smith should be reprinted immediately, and would be enormously popular with the current generation, I wager. The novels that get praised in the NY Review of Books aren't worth reading. Ninety-seven percent of science fiction is adolescent rubbish, but good science fiction is the best (and only) literature of our times. All of these opinions are pompous and aggressive, of course, but questions like this bring out the worst in me. Artistic judgments are silly if expressed as dogmas, at least until we get an "artometer" which can measure objectively how many micro-michelangelos or kilo-homers of genius a given artifact has in it. Do you know that at UC-Berkeley, Dr. Paul Segall has a lab full of rats who are twice the age at which rats normally die of senility? And these rats are not only alive but still reproducing. This may be the most important fact I know. Dr. Segal hopes to have a life-extension formula for humans ready in the early 1980s.

CRNLA: Has Dr. Segall published any papers on his research? If so, where?

RAW: A good, non-technical article by Dr. Segall on his own work and on other approaches to longevity, is in the new issue of *Spit in the Ocean*, edited by Dr. Timothy Leary and published by Ken Kesey. That issue, incidentally, is also worth reading for Sirag and Sarfatti on quantum consciousness, and Leary himself on higher intelligence.

CRNLA: Speaking of Ken Kesey, What did you think of Cuckoo's Nest, and where can I get a copy of *Spit in the Ocean*?

RAW: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is certainly one of my favorite recent novels, but I like Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion* even better. In fact, a great deal of the structural rhythms of *Illuminatus*, especially the space-time warps, were suggested by Kesey's similar techniques in *Sometimes a Great Notion*. The way the producers of the movie of *Cuckoo's Nest* swindled Kesey is entirely typical of the way producers and publishers rob writers — it's perfectly normal Capitalist ethics and typically mammalian.

The last I heard, Kesey was supposed to have the new *Spit in the Ocean* out by mid-Summer. (Write: 85829 Ridgway Road, Pleasant Hill, OR 97401).

CRNLA: What route did you travel to get to libertarianism?

RAW: Arlen, my wife, discovered Kropotkin's article on anarchism in the *Britannica* and it immediately convinced us both (1961). We were both highly cynical about the alleged values of Capitalism and State Socialism already, and happy to find an alternative.

CRNLA: What is your present involvement in "movement" activities?

RAW: I'm more involved in space migration, intelligence increase and life extension which seems to me more important than any mammalian politics. What energy I have for terrestrial brawling goes into Wavy Gravy's Nobody for President campaign, the Firesign Theatre's Papoon for President campaign, and the Linda Lovelace for President (which I invented myself, since we ought to have a *good-looking* cocksucker in the White House for once.) I think these campaigns have some satirical-educational function, and, at minimum, they relieve the tedium of contemplating the "real" candidates, a more-than-usual uninspiring lot this year. Voting wouldn't excite me unless it included electing the directors of the big banks and corporations, who make the real decisions that affect our lives. It's hard to get excited about the trained seals in Washington. Of course, if voting could change the system, it would be illegal. Teachers would be handling out pamphlets for children to take home proving that voting machines cause chromosome damage, and Art Linkletter would claim that a ballot box drove his daughter to suicide.

CRNLA: There's another Vote for Nobody Campaign being run by Malibu. Have you heard of it? Are you interested in it?

RAW: Glad to hear it. There's a third "Nobody for President" headquarters in Washington, D.C. The more the merrier. One of my friends, the ArchDruid of the Berkeley Grove of the Reformed Druids of North America, is running George III for President — although I admit that the satirical point there is a bit obscure for me. I've also heard, vaguely, about a Who-the-Hell for President campaign. There's

also a Bonzo for President poster going around, Bonzo being a chimpanzee who once co-starred with the egregious Ronald Reagan in a rather dumb movie. The American people, who elected Richard Nixon twice, should not find any of these choices absurd. But before leaving this subject, I should mention the sanest political proposal I've heard in years, the Guns and Dope Party proposed by my good friend, Rev. William Helmer (who, like many of the characters in *Illuminatus*, exists also in so-called consensus reality.) The Guns and Dope Party, as the name suggests, would be based on a platform demanding an end to all government interference with guns and dope. Now, while the gun-nuts tend to be paranoid about the dopers, and *vice versa*, the Guns and Dope Party is a possible libertarian coalition that would constitute a clear majority and could really win an election. All that's needed for success, then, is for the gun-people and the dope-people to understand fully the advantages of affiliating — that is, the very good chance of real success at the polls. Hopefully, this might be enough to persuade them to drop their mutual animosity. If this can be accomplished, we will have the first majoritarian libertarian party in American political history. It certainly seems worth thinking about.

CRNLA: Could you tell us more about your politics — such as how you evolved from Kropotkin to Illuminatus?

RAW: After Prince Peter, I read Tucker, who was being reprinted by Mildred Loomis in a journal called, of all things, *Balanced Living*. (I later became co-editor of that, and changed the name to *Way Out*.) After Tucker, I read all the major anarchists and then began writing anarchist essays myself. I soon discovered that, in addition to the 99.8 percent of the morons who make up any political movement, every gang has its own intellectuals defending it (with every variety of sophistry the Jesuits ever devised.) To defend anarchism more effectively, I had to read Marx and Douglas and Gesell and H. George and William Buckley Jr. and so weirder, on and on into the depths of ideological metaphysics — “the great Serbonian bog where armies whole have sunk,” as Burke (the best conservative) once said. Such omnidirectional reading, alas, tends to produce a certain degree of agnosticism, but my basic axioms have remained that (1) a system which consigned me to poverty at birth and Nelson Godawful Rockefeller to riches, is demonstrably insane, and (2) I will do anything, including highway robbery and murder, to avoid leaving my children in poverty. In that sense, the political thinker I probably agree with most is Bernard Shaw, who presented that position, with equal bluntness, in his *Major Barbara*. I might add, to be even more offensive, that I regard morality and ideology as the chief cause of human misery. I am even more committed to unmitigated skepticism than I am to anarchism — or to life extension, space migration or high intelligence. With doubt all things are possible. Doubt and courage.

CRNLA — Your economic views still seem very much in the Benjamin Tucker tradition (especially on rent and interest.) Have you read any of the “Austrian” economists, such as Von Mises and Rothbard? What do you think of them?

RAW: Tucker is certainly a major influence. My economic ideas are a blend of Tucker, Spooner, Fuller, Pound, Henry George, Rothbard, Douglas, Korzybski, Proudhon and Marx. I always try to be inclusive, rather than exclusive. Read to see what I can learn from every school, rather than condemning any idea in its entirety. “Every man has the right to have his ideas examined one at a time,” as Ez Pound once wrote. Rothbard is, like Marx and Pound, a brilliant closed mind: excellent for stimulation but anybody who gets dragged into a Rothbardian dogmatic trance should take LSD and try looking at the world through another grid. Von Mises is another who is excellent for stimulation, pernicious if erected into dogma. By and large, the Austrians remind me of a parable by Laurance Labadie, in which a certain tribe has the custom of allowing high-caste individuals to kick low-caste individuals in the butt whenever they pass them in the street. A philosophical school, much like the Austrians, naturally arises to prove rationally that the kicking is not only necessary but just, inevitable, beautiful and altogether glorious. If there were big profits in cancer, there'd undoubtedly be an Austrian school of medicine, proving that carcinoma is good for us.

CRNLA: Tucker is one of my favorite people — but one of his views with which I can't agree is that in a free society interest rates and rent would disappear. I think the Austrians have advanced economic knowledge sufficiently since Tucker's day to show why these things exist and how they would come about even in an economy consisting totally of free trade. Your reply?

RAW: You can "prove" anything on the verbal level, just be accepting the necessary axioms at the beginning. Empirically, I don't think they can produce a single case in history where a free people elected landlords to own the land; the land monopoly always starts with conquest. Shot and shell are the coins of purchase, as Herbert Spencer said. Except by force of arms, nobody "owns" the earth, anymore than the moon, the planets, the stars themselves. When did God disinherit the majority of humanity, and turn all space over to the "ownership" of the Rockefellers and their friends? Without armed power threatening us, why would anyone but a fool continue to pay these conquistadores the extortion they demand? And, even if the Austrians could convince me that rent is legitimate, I still wouldn't voluntarily pay it to the present landlord class who remain *receivers of stolen property*. I would pay it to the nearest Indian tribe.

As for interest, I'm not aware of any case in which the credit monopoly has allowed a free currency to compete with them. In fact, every case I know of (e.g. Wörgl in the 1930s), ended when the Capitalists used the armed might of the State to stop the competition. The one laboratory experiment in this field, by Don Werkheiser at Central State University in Ohio, confirmed Tucker and refuted the Austrians. Money, after all, is an *abstract artifact*, like language — merely *symbolized* by the paper or coin or whatever. If you can fully grasp its abstractedness, especially in the computer age, it becomes quite clear that no group can monopolize this abstraction, except through a series of swindle. *The average primate cannot distinguish the symbol from the referent*, the map from the territory, the menu from the meal. If the usurers had been bolder, they might have monopolized language as well as currency, and people would be saying we can't write more books because we don't have enough words, the way they now say we can't build starships, because we don't have enough money. As Bucky Fuller says, you might as well argue we can't build roads because we lack kilometers.

CRNLA: I think our differences in "rent" are basically in "land-rent" — you don't see anything wrong if someone wants to rent out power tools and U-haul trailers — true? Your main argument with land-rent seems to be with the lack of legitimate owners. I'm assuming legitimate (i.e. non-conquistador) owners when I speak of legitimate rent. If two people went to Mars or the bottom of the ocean and one of them spent his time clearing rocks and fertilizing a section of land and the other spent his time assembling a tractor, and they reach an agreement to exchange the use of the land for one season for the use of the tractor for one season — has anyone been harmed or exploited or extorted? Should some third party come onto the scene and say, "Hey stop that, you're committing rent?"

RAW: Land-rent, or ground-rent, is the most illegitimate aspect of the rent con, of course, and the main target of Tucker's criticisms. The whole concept of any rent, however, appears somewhat dubious to me, since it seems to presuppose "the accumulation of property in a few aristocratic heaps, at the expense of a great deal of democratic bare ground in between," as Ezra Heywood said. (Heywood's writings on this subject, and other aspects of libertarianism, are at least as important as Tucker's and Spooner's.) People *rent*, chiefly, when they cannot afford to purchase outright — when ground-rent, interest and other inequalities have already created a master-class of aristocrat-owners and a servile class of peasants or proles. I would expect to see rent wither away as the democratization of credit abolishes poverty.

I fail to see how your hypothetical "legitimate (i.e. non-conquistador) owners" would achieve "ownership." (I also don't see the bearing of such hypothetical, or fictitious, cases on the real issues of the real

world, where all the landlords are conquistadors, or are receivers of stolen property from the original conquistadors, but that is another question.)

Ownership, in the real world, is a social agreement, a social fiction almost, and is produced only by force or by fraud or by contract. In practice, land ownership is produced only by force or fraud.

This may sound polemic, but it is literally true. The Henry George Schools have a book, *Land Title Origins: A Tale of Force and Fraud*, in which you can look up, wherever you live in the United States, exactly the acts of force and fraud (murder and robbery) by which land “ownership” was transferred from the Indian tribes to the current receivers of the stolen property. Now, the third alternative, contract, has never been tried, to the best of my knowledge. The only land contracts which I, or any other Tuckerites or Sternerites, would sign in freedom, without force being used against us, would be to our own interest, not to the interest of the landlords. In other words, we simply would not sign a contract giving up ownership of this planet, or any other, to a small group of the Elite who claim they have some better title to ownership than the rest of us have. If you would sign such a contract, I can only hint gently that you are more easily defrauded than we are.

The barter arrangement in your paradigm has nothing to do with *perpetual tribute*, which is the essence of *rent* — indeed, the factor distinguishing barter from rent.

Of course, since Austrian ideas exist as factors in human behavior, I will admit that some people, hoodwinked by those ideas, will continue to pay rent even in freedom, for a while at least. But I think that, after a time, observing that their Tuckerite neighbors are not submitting to this imposture, they would come to their senses and cease paying tribute to the self-elected “owners” of limitless space, on this and other planets, and in interplanetary communities.

Of course, I myself would not pay rent one day beyond the point at which the police (“hired guns, on guard to see that property remains stolen” as Emma Goldman said) are at hand to collect it via “argument per blunt instrument.”

CRNLA: Regarding interest: again I assume a totally free market, where there are no legal tender laws and anyone is free to mint, mine, print or grow anything that they feel the market will accept for money. I think that under these conditions the interest rate would be dramatically lower than it presently is but that it would not tend toward zero. Money generally performs at least three interrelated functions: (1) indirect exchange media, (2) provides a common “measuring scale,” (3) stores wealth. In the first two money is definitely an “abstract artifact” — a “cashless” society could exist merely using bookkeeping entries. But when it’s used to store wealth it causes trouble as an “abstract” — bank-runs and the like. Wealth isn’t an abstract. It may be subjectively appraised, but it actually exists. When A wants to use B’s wealth for a period of time, B is generally compensated for his loss of its use for that period by A — interest. Among corporations (admittedly, a legal fiction) the issuing of “Tucker-money,” (i.e., stock) is a fairly unfettered means of obtaining credit — but the people who give it to them still expect a return and the corporations still expect to pay it. I’d be interested in seeing the Central State experiment. Usually because of the multiplicity of ever-changing factors involved in the market, it’s difficult if not impossible to ever prove anything empirically.

RAW: Of course, my position is based on the denial that money does store wealth. I think it’s a semantic hallucination, the verbal equivalent of an optical illusion, to speak at all of money containing or storing wealth. Such thinking should have gone out with phlogiston theory. The symbol is not the referent; the map is not the territory. Money symbolizes wealth, as words symbolize things, and that’s all. The delusions that money contains wealth is the mechanism by which the credit monopoly has gained a stranglehold on the entire economy. As Colonel Greene pointed out in *Mutual Banking*, all the money could disappear tomorrow morning and the wealth of the planet would remain the same. However, if the wealth disappeared — if squinks from the Pink Dimension dragged it off to null-space

or something — the money would be worth nothing. You don't need to plow through the dialects of the debate between the Austrians and the free credit people like Tucker and Gesell to see this; any textbook of semantics will make it clear in a few hours of study. Wealth is nature's abundance, freely given, plus the exponential advance of technology via human intelligence, and as Korzybski and Fuller demonstrate, this can only increase at an accelerating rate. Money is just the tickets or symbols to arrange for the distribution — either equitably, in a free money system, or inequitably, as under the tyranny of the present money-cartel. As you realize, a cashless society could exist merely by keeping bookkeeping entries or computer tapes. Money is a primitive form of such computer tapes, serving a feedback function. If we are not to replace the present banking oligopoly with a programmer's oligopoly, in which the interest will be paid to computer technicians, we must realize that this is all a matter of abstract symbolism — that it exists by social agreement and nobody owns it, anymore than Webster owns the language. Why is it, incidentally, that the Austrians don't follow their logic to its natural conclusion and demand that we pay interest to the dictionary publishers every time we speak or write?

You have to watch people playing Monopoly, and see them begin to “identify” the paper markers with real value, to understand how the mass hypnosis of Capitalism works. Fortunately, the Head Revolution is still proceeding and more and more people are waking up to the difference between our economic game-rules and the real existential situation of humanity.

Don Werkheiser might sell you a Xerox of his thesis on the Central State experiment if you write to him c/o General Delivery, Ponca, Arkansas. Similar experiments are recounted in Josiah Warren's *True Civilization*, involving four communes in 19th Century America. Let me conclude this answer by emphasizing that I do not *blame* the money-monopolists for any of their hoarding behavior. I am sure you will find similar absurdities in the primitive stages of anthropoid civilizations on most planets of G-type stars. Mammalian patterns persist in many other aspects of our society, especially in organized religions.

In my experience, I might add, virtually all adherents of the Austrian economic theories are academics who have never had any dealings with Capitalist corporations. The rosy view the Austrians have of these matters, I think, would collapse in two weeks if they had to deal with the damned corporate pirates as an ordinary worker does. When Joyce went into business briefly, he told Italo Svevo after a while, “You know, I think my partners are cheating me.” Svevo answered, “You only *think* your partners are cheating you! Joyce, you are an artist!” Nixon is the typical Capitalist mentality, entirely identical in all aspects with every businessman I have ever encountered; his only real distinction is that he got caught. Of course, I'm not complaining — part of the humor of living on this backward planet is listening to the hominids rationalize their predations.

CRNLA: I don't think that the Austrians have a particularly “rosy” view of business. I know a lot of them (Mises and Rothbard for two) consider a total separation of the economy and the government to be the best means of keeping these clowns from becoming too powerful. Most consider a totally free market to be the ultimate in “consumerism” — not “capitalism” (at least as it's come to be known.)

RAW: Well, there is certainly a kinship between the Austrians and myself on the level of ultimate goals. I merely feel that their views of Capitalism-as-practised-in-the-past-and-present could only be held by college professors. After more than 20 years of working for the corporations in every position from office boy to middle executive, I have not been shocked or surprised in the slightest by the Watergate or post-Watergate scandals.

Austrians believe what they write, they must be somewhat abashed, I should think. For instance, David Friedman has published views about the corporate elite that would be flattering if applied to Jesus and his angels. However, this is turning into a diatribe against the group I find least obnoxious in the whole politico-economic spectrum (because you keep asking me questions that harp on my

differences with them.) The orthodox conservatives and liberals, not to mention nazis and marxists, are really pernicious, and the Austrian libertarians are basically okay.

CRNLA: Regarding our Rent Interest discussion: I think that our differences regarding money stem from a difference in definitions. I would include wealth that is used in certain ways under the heading “money,” while you limit the definition to just its transactional functions. OK, as long as we know where we are. Once we start dealing with this “wealth-money” as wealth (and forget the word “money”), the problem of interest becomes just a special case of rent. Which really brings us back to property and ownership. I’ve never attempted to tie the concept of ownership to the metaphysical framework of the universe. I realize that it’s merely a human invention — much like language (which is not to say that other inhabitants of the planet don’t use it also) that’s purpose is to make the allocation of resources go as smoothly and efficiently and with the least amount of head-cracking as possible. Like the use of language, the use of the concept of “property” doesn’t necessarily have to be enforced. When people discover it they use it because it’s in their long-range self-interest to do so. (This is not to say that particular instances don’t require enforcement — just that the concept is usually retained without it.) The whole system of ownership/division of labor/rent transactions etc. is merely designed to allocate resources so that they maximize the “vector sum” of everyone’s satisfaction — or more accurately, that this system has the potential to maximize. You don’t have to use it. Without this system some alternative method must be found to determine who gets the use of what. LeGuin faced this problem in *The Dispossessed*. She chose to do it collectively. Ultimately, this results in some system of voting or representatives or syndics which bear striking resemblance to governments (in addition to being very inefficient.) So the so-called “anarchy” in *The Dispossessed* is actually a widespread proliferation of governments and poverty. If the determination of the use of resources is placed in the hands of the individual who makes the resources useful (i.e., grows, finds, fertilizes, builds on, digs up, etc.) this provides him with a good deal of independence from the rest of the herd. Seems like a natural for any anarchistic society. This is basically the idea behind my concept of ownership. Could you give a summary of what you consider to be a good method of allocating resources and any concepts similar to ownership that might be contained therein?

RAW: Since ownership is a social fiction, it should obviously be fluid and sensitive to decentralized feedback, to match the evolving needs of the persons involved in whatever social game is being played. In other words, I do not propose one “right way” of doing it; that has to be found pragmatically in each new situation. The traditional feudal-Capitalist system in which one hereditary group of Great Pirates “owns” everything is not acceptable to me, and obviously would not be acceptable to any band of Stirnerite egoists; and, of course, the altruistic forms of socialism and communism are equally unacceptable to me, and I predict they would be equally unacceptable to a band of self-owners in the Stirnite, Tucker or Crowley sense. What would emerge in such a rationalistic-egoistic context would, in a general way, probably follow the guidelines suggested by Stirner, Spooner, Proudhon and Tucker — except that this would only be in a general way, as all of those writers realized. The specific individuals in each situation would define their own demands according to the specific situation always. The only contracts that would be acceptable to them, as Tucker indicated, would be those that require no enforcement — that is, those that are so obviously in the enlightened self-interest of each member that their wording would be accepted with the satisfaction the scientific world feels when a hard question is finally answered. If the proposed contract did not have that self-evident feeling character about it — if it didn’t provoke the general feeling, “This is the answer to our disagreements” — it would not be accepted. I speak with some experience here, being part of an occult order who do indeed govern themselves that way. My only general rules are Crowley’s “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law” and Leary’s

Three Commandments for the Neurological Age, to wit: "Thou shalt not alter the consciousness of thy neighbor, 2. Thou shalt not prevent thy neighbor from altering his or her own consciousness, 3. Thou shalt make no more commandments." The so-called "resources" problem is a terracentric delusion. The Universe is a Big Mother.

CRNLA: To return to life extension, space migration and higher intelligence, I worry about the potential of all that being screwed up by the politicians. How do you feel about that?

RAW: If the oncoming mutation to interstellar immortality is screwed up by the politicians (or the corporations), it will be because those of us who see the opportunities in modern science are not adroit enough to outmaneuver the forces of inertia, stupidity and greed. Well, if we're not intelligent enough to overcome such obstacles, then we don't deserve to carry off the mutation at this stage of evolution. The thing to do, in that case, is to sit down and have a good Taoistic laugh at our own presumption. Meanwhile, until the game is over, I happen to think we're winning. The other side is very, very stupid. Concretely, I say that if we have colonization of L5 by 1990, and longevity at about the same time, I think the game is won; some human seed will become cosmic and immortal. Robert Phedra, M.D., has already predicted life extension to 1,000 years.

CRNLA: A thousand years is OK for a start, but it's not enough. Would you settle for "indefinite life extension" if it means transferring your thoughts to a synthetic storage system?

RAW: I'd consider it, but temperamentally I'd rather blast off for the stars when lifespan reaches about 400 years. I think in a 400 year cruise around the galaxy we'd contact races who have immortality already and we might arrange a trade for the technology of it. (Maybe they'd want an unexpurgated *Illuminatus*. I'm for space, actually, whether there are immortals out there or not. Aside from that bias, I'd support life extension by whatever means, from cryonic suspension to cyborgism to coding ourselves into our computers or whatever. Contrary to the last 2,500 years of "philosophy" among the domesticated and neurotic carnivore species we adorn, there is nothing noble or beautiful or dignified about dying. Like poverty, it is ugly, nasty, brutal and primitive. The function of intelligence is to do better than those mammalian norms.

CRNLA: Could you give us a bibliography on everything you've had published and who published it and if it's still in print?

RAW: Hell, no. I've got about 1,000 articles in print and I can't remember where most of them were printed and don't really care to. The things I'm willing to stand by, in addition to *Illuminatus*, are the essays being collected in *Prometheus Rising: Sex and Drugs*, a Playboy Press paperback; my piece on "The Future in Sex" in *Oui*, November 1975; the article on brainwashing by Leary and me in *Oui* for June 1976, (which I especially commend to those who thought the consciousness-warps, ego-fissions, reality-mutations and sex-role roulette in *Illuminatus* were "fantasy"); "Scientific and Experimental Magic" in *Gnostica*, January 1975; and two pieces on Caryl Chessman and the Marquis de Sade in *The Realist*, dates unknown. Most of what I wrote before last week bores me.

CRNLA: What kind of stuff was the 500 pages that got edited out of *Illuminatus*?

RAW: It was sacrilegious, blasphemous, obscene, subversive, funny, surrealistic, trippy and much like what did get published. The portion of hard anarchist propaganda in what got cut is perhaps somewhat greater than in what got printed, but I do not attribute that to a government conspiracy. Editors always amputate the brain first and preserve a good-looking corpse. I knew that, and told Shea they'd do it, so we put in so damned much anarchist material that a lot would be left even after the ceremonial castration.

CRNLA: Is Bob Shea a hard-core libertarian?

RAW: More or less. I really don't want to categorize Shea, who can certainly speak (eloquently) for himself.

CRNLA: Who wrote the *Atlas Shrugged* parody in *Illuminatus*? Who wrote the appendices?

RAW: I wrote the *Telemachus Sneezed* section — which is not just another kick at poor old Rand, but also a self-parody of *Illuminatus*, and of *Moby Dick*, and of my arcane Joycean use of *Moby Dick* parallels in *Illuminatus*. Unfortunately, that section was particularly mauled and truncated by the editors. Originally, it was trans-Melvillian satire on all ideology and morality, including my own lapses into ethical thinking. I also wrote the Appendices on various occasions when very stoned as a parody on my style in my more academic essays.

CRNLA: What was Hagbard doing in a government printing office?

RAW: Hagbard was visiting the Discordian agents who have infiltrated the government and sneaked parodies into the bureaucratic forms: SMI2LE = infinity. (Space Migration plus Intelligence Increase plus Life Extension = cosmic consciousness.

CRNLA: Any word on how sales are doing?

RAW: Fine. I might not have to take up highway robbery and murder to get rich after all.

CRNLA: That's good. Who is Tarantella Serpentine and why is she working for Limit newsletter?

RAW: The Discordian conspiracy has been radically decentralized from the beginning, in accordance with Malaclypse the Younger's principle that "We Discordians must stick apart." The last I heard, Tarantella was a fictional character, working in a San Francisco massage parlor (in my other novel, *The Sex Magicians*.) It doesn't surprise that she has a life of her own, outside my imagination. *Illuminatus* is only part of a total art work, or "happening" known as Operation Mindfuck. A group of New York Discordians, for instance, celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Illuminati with a public reading of Principia Discordia (which also exists) outside the UN building on May 1 this year. A lodge of Crowleyan magicians in Texas has officially changed their name from the Temple of the Hidden God to the Ancient Illuminated Good Old Boys of Houston. Emperor Norton posters, endorsed by the Illuminati, are for sale through Solidarity Books in Chicago. Everything the Birchers ever claimed about the Illuminati is gradually coming true.

CRNLA: Do you feel frustration living in the "real" world? After reading *Illuminatus* it's a downer to get back to reality — even my usual escapist literature is depressing. How do you feel about that?

RAW: Every nervous system creates its own "reality," minute by minute — or, in the language of Don Juan Matus, we live inside a "bubble" of neural abstractions which we identify with reality. In metaprogramming systems like Tibetan Tantra, Crowleyanity, or Leary's Exo-Psychology, you can make this neurological fact into conscious experience, and you will never be bored or depressed again. Just reading the scientific evidence that this is true, in social psychology or general semantics or neurology or whatever, will not liberate you; one needs actual re-training, in Tantra or Crowley or Leary, to experience what I'm talking about here. It is a great privilege to be conscious in this universe. Those who understand, shine like stars.

CRNLA: I was just speaking in relative terms. Actually, I'm quite excited about reality — it's probably my favorite thing. I was just wondering if sometimes all the fnords tend to get you a little pissed-off.

RAW: Never. As Tim Leary says, the universe is an intelligence test. The things that hinder me are opportunities to learn more and develop further. That's where amoral thinking is distinctly superior to moral thinking. If you recognize that your latest problem is totally without moral significance — for instance, you have a disease which you can't, by the wildest stretch of imagination, *blame* on anybody — then it's just a question of coping with the situation as best you can. When you realize that people are just as automated as bacteria or wild animals, then you deal with hostile humans the same way you deal with infections or predators — rationally, without claiming you're "right" or they're "wrong."

Then you begin to understand Crowley's great Law of Thelema (Do What Thou Wilt) and you're free, really free, instead of being an actor in a soap opera written by the superstitious shamans who created morality 30,000 years ago. You are also free of anger, hatred and resentment, which are great burdens to drop. They live happiest, my friend, who have understood and forgiven all.

CRNLA: Are there real people, alive or in history, who resemble any of your characters (Hagbard in particular)?

RAW: Absolutely. There are hundreds of thousands of Hagbards around, and all the sleep-walkers are potential Hagbards. They only need to be shaken a bit and awakened. As Jesus said, "Ye are all gods, ye are all children of the Most High."

CRNLA: Have you ever walked into some public place like a shopping center and said to yourself something like, "Christ, it's solid earthlings! You'd think there'd be at least a couple of aliens strolling around looking at the shops, etc." ?

RAW: Curiously, I belong to a loose association of skeptical Contactees — people who have had a Contact experience but are too skeptical to take it literally. There are over a hundred of us in the U.S. alone, most scientists, and I think that the gradual surfacing of this story will be one of the major cultural shocks of our time. Right now, Martin Gardner has already registered his viewpoint and I trust that MIT will have the courtesy to print Dr. Sarfatti's rebuttal. I must add that most of us who are involved in this have grown extremely doubtful about the now-conventional extraterrestrial explanation and are trying out various explanatory models that are even more mind-blowing. Those who are interested in this subject might look up my article, "The Starseed Signals," in *Gnostica* for June 1975, and Dr. Jacques Vallee's book, *The Invisible College*. As the divine Mullah Nasruddin said, "If you haven't seen me before, how do you know it is me?"

CRNLA: What are your plans for future books?

RAW: *Prometheus Rising* will be published by Llewellyn next year. It's a collection of my essays on space age occultism and post-LSD consciousness. I hope it will knock holes in the Christian revival, the Hindu revival, the Buddhist revival and all the other neolithic metaphysics going around these days. A book on immortality research, possibly entitled *Death Shall Have No Dominion*, is going around New York seeking a publisher. A book on Dr. Timothy Leary, and a new novel called *Schrödinger's Cat*, about quantum paradoxes and parapsychology, are also in the works. Leary and I are working on a collaborative venture called *The Game of Life* which started out as one volume and became three. It modestly attempts to deduce the next four billion years of evolution from the data of Leary's brain-change research.

CRNLA: Who did you know in the old Berkeley crowd such as Danny Rosenthal, Sharon Presley, Tom McGivern? How about Kerry Thornley?

RAW: I never heard of any of those people except Kerry Thornley and Sharon Presley. Kerry is one of the co-creators of Discordian atheology, which is why volume one of *Illuminatus* is co-dedicated to him. Sharon is a fine person who I've only met twice but liked vastly. I'm sure all those others are excellent people, too, but I've never met them.

CRNLA: The editor of *New Libertarian Weekly*, SEK3, would like you to write for them — "... we're a hell of a lot better than SRAF and can even pay a token amount, and can run stuff he can't get past *Playboy* and *Oui*."

RAW: I'd be delighted.

CRNLA: Do you have any concluding thoughts for our readers?

RAW: Absolutely not. As Korzybski said, nothing is conclusive, and every sentence should end with an *et cetera*. Or perhaps Woody Allen said it better: "Not only is there no God, but you can't even get a plumber on weekends." The answer to that, of course, is to become your own god and your own plumber. That may be the fundamental secret of the Illuminati.

The Anarchist's Library - Robert Anton Wilson Primer

Retrieved on 15 April 2011 from clevelandokie.blogspot.com

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In Doubt We Trust: Cults, religions, and BS in general

Robert Anton Wilson

1999

Can we actually "know" the universe? My God, it's hard enough finding your way around in Chinatown.

Woody Allen

Last week, I happened to see two TV shows about "cults" — "Scientology" and "Heaven's Gate" on A&E's *Investigative Reports* — and they got me thinking. Each show had at least one galoot remarking that the line between "cult" and "religion" seems fuzzy at best, but each show also had a majority of folks who were quite sure they could distinguish a "cult" from a "religion" by the institution's degree of "mind control" or "brainwashing." I think both groups were confused.

There are two clear-cut and empirical lines between a "cult" and a "religion": [a] membership (voters) and [b] bank account, [b] being a function of [a]. If a group has enough members to influence elections, it will also have a large bank account, and these two factors will guarantee that the politicians, the cops and the corporate media will treat it with respect, as a "religion." With few members and little money, the same group could be called a "cult" and treated accordingly, even to the extent of toasting, roasting and charbroiling, as in Waco.

This line remains obvious and visible to all observers. The only problems arise when people try to draw a less "materialistic," more metaphysical distinction between one gang of True Believers and another. Materialistic questions can be answered, e.g., "Does that matchbox have any matches left in it?" Metaphysical questions about "mind control" or any other immeasurable "entity" or "essence" cannot be answered, and the best that can be said is that arguing about them has provided a certain amount of intellectual entertainment, or combat, for a few thousand years. At least for those who enjoy that kind of pastime. Sort of like chess, you know.

I have no commitment to materialism as a philosophy that explains everything, since no correlation of words can ever do that, and a philosophy is never more than a correlation of words. But restricting myself to the "materialistic"/scientific *method* of asking questions that have definite experiential answers, I observe no difference in operation between "cults" and "religions." Catholic nuns and priests vowing celibacy seem no more or less weird than Heaven's Gate members who also make that choice. Mormon extraterrestrial cosmology seems as goofy as Scientology, etc. Religions and cults all use the same techniques of brain damage, or "mind control," i.e. they all instill BS — Belief Systems.

BS contradicts both science and ordinary "common sense." It contradicts science because it claims certitude and science can never achieve certitude: After all, science can only say, "This model — or

theory, or interpretation of the data — fits more of the facts known at this date than any rival model.” We can never know if the model will fit the facts that might come to light in the next millennium or even in the next week.

But BS has an even more total incompatibility with what I loosely called “common sense.” Except when we get dragged into a metaphysical, or ideological, argument, we all know damn well how fallible we are. We know that our sense impressions can mislead us, for instance. If we see somebody who looks like Joe across the street, we are aware that it may be Joe or it may be some ginkus who looks a lot like Joe. We examine him empirically lest we classify him too quickly as Joe or not-Joe. We have learned that slow, tentative judgements are safer than rapid certitudes.

After all, the Earth *looks* flat. Worse yet, if ten witnesses at an accident are questioned, ten slightly different stories always emerge — and sometimes the differences are huge, not slight.

I have performed the following experiment in workshops for nearly 40 years now: Everybody in the class is asked to describe the hall they passed through to get to the classroom. I must have tried this several hundred times by now, and I have never encountered two people who agreed totally about what was or was not in the hall, the color of the walls, or any similar data. We do not walk through the “same” hall: we walk through a reality-tunnel constructed by our imprinted, conditioned and learned brain circuits.

The same experiment works with hearing, and other senses, as well as with vision and memory. Try it with a half-dozen friends. Let somebody with a watch say “Go!” and then all of you be silent and listen for one full minute — 60 surprisingly long seconds. You will all hear some sounds nobody else hears and miss some sounds everybody else caught.

Human brains are as individualized and unique as human fingerprints. We all live in different sensory universes, and nobody has a guarantee that his/her universe corresponds more exactly to the alleged “real universe” than anybody else’s.

But if our perceptions are somewhat uncertain, then all of our ideas, which are deductions or inferences from perception, must also remain somewhat uncertain.

The late, great Dr. Timothy Leary used to put this in terms of a baseball metaphor: the best batters all had a lifetime batting average below .333. That means they missed more than two out of three times they swung. Now, maybe you are vain enough to think you are more than twice as good at philosophy as Ted Williams was at baseball, but even then you’d only have an average around .600. To assume an average of 1.000 is to assert that you are more than three times as smart with words as Babe Ruth was with baseballs — rather a conceited view, *nu?* — and yet that’s what every Belief System (BS) claims.

The function of religions and cults, including the political or ideological ones, is to short-circuit the normal “common sense” process of doubt, investigation, further doubt, further investigation, further doubt, etc. The person with BS knows the “right answer” at all times and knows it *immediately*. This makes them very happy, and very annoying since most of their “right answers” don’t make sense to the rest of us.

Common sense and/or science require investigation and revision, etc. BS only requires a Rule Book — sacred scripture, *Das Kapital* or whatever — and a good *memory*.

People with “faith” represent mental health problem #1, because memorizing rule books cuts you off from sensory involvement with the existential world. It also creates the kind of intolerance that produces witch hunts, Inquisitions, purges, Holocausts etc.

Belief Systems, “faith,” certitudes of all sorts, result from deliberately forgetting the fallibility of human brains, especially the brains of those who wrote your particular rule book. Paradoxically, this leads to a rejection of the best functions of the brain — namely, its ability to rethink, revise and correct itself. It also physically exhausts you, as Ezra Pound noted in Canto 85:

Awareness restful & fake is fatiguing

The Anarchist's Library - Robert Anton Wilson Primer

If the world seems to be full of stupid, crazy and half-asleep people, that is because it is still dominated by Belief Systems. Whether this BS operates under the label of religion or cult or Political Correctness, it shuts off all brain functions except memorization and represents the suicide of intelligence.

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Is Capitalism a Revealed Religion?

Robert Anton Wilson

1961

...so sore mennes eyes were blinded
Where covetousnesse of filthie gaine is more than reason minded. — Ovid's *Metamorphoses*
(Golding translation)

A friend of mine told me a story recently that makes a good introduction to a column about economics. It seems that my friend was in the men's room at his place of business, voiding his bladder energetically, when the President of his firm walked in and took a stance at the next urinal. A strange thing thereupon happened to my friend: his urine ceased spurting, even though he could still feel the pressure of an incompletely emptied bladder.

The reader may want to accuse me of surrealist symbolism, a dirty mind or a perverted sense of humor, but I can think of no better place to begin an examination of Capitalism than the lavatory. We are all aware by now, or should be aware, that Protestantism has played a large part in creating and maintaining the Capitalist ideology, and Protestantism itself began in a privy.

This little-known fact is worth stressing, in the light of psychoanalytical theory. Luther's own words are: "But once when in this tower I was meditating on those words, 'the just lives by faith,' 'justice of God.' I soon had the thought whether we ought to live justified by faith [*the central doctrine of Protestantism* — R.A.W.]. This knowledge the Holy Spirit gave me on the privy in the tower" (quoted in *Luther* by H. Grisar).

All Protestant theology begins from, and pays tribute to, this "experience in the tower" — *Thurmerlehnis*, as it is called. That this experience could hardly have happened anywhere else but in a toilet is well documented by the anal and excremental style of Luther's fantasy: at least twice he had visions of the devil in which that Evil Spirit assaulted him by the time-honored gesture of contempt — "showing him his posterior," in Grisar's words.

More: this anal preoccupation colors Luther's entire sensibility. The Pope and his Bishops are, Luther says, "urine, excrement and filth... the filth of squiredom, dung splattered on the sleeve," etc. The devil wants to "stink us and stab us with his dung." As for mankind, "we are but worms in ordure and filth." Such quotes could be multiplied almost *ad infinitum*, certainly *ad nauseam*. Alfred North Whitehead was being accurate, not polemical, when he compared Luther's rhetoric to Hitler's, and said that Luther was "more foul-mouthed." Even facing death Luther could think in no other imagery: "I am the ripe shard," he said, "and the world is the gaping anus."

It was, I believe, Erich Fromm who first explained the connection between the Protestant ethic and the rise of Capitalism — a connection long noted and well documented by such sociologists as Tawney and Weber — by pointing out that both Protestantism and Capitalism are creations of what Freud

called “anal personalites.” Fromm, of course, has to dilute and obfuscate the basic Freudian insight in order to get it in line with his sociologicalization of psychology.

This dilution and obfuscation is what Fromm and other neo-Freudians celebrate as their “advance” over Freud’s “biological orientation.” What is primary to Fromm is not body-sensations but “attitudes toward the world” occasionally expressed “in the language of the body.” (I am paraphrasing and condensing from his *Escape from Freedom*.) Thus Freud’s clear and eminently scientific conception of the “anal personality” becomes vulgarized into the foggy and uselessly vague notion of the “authoritarian personality.”

I leave this de-materialized psychology to those professors who, finding it useful in mixed classrooms and inoffensive to the public at large, have embraced it. I take it that I have a body, and my reader has a body, and that we both had them long before we began developing “attitudes toward the world,” and that any psychology worth elbow-room at the counter of scientific consideration will have to be centered on these facts and on the pulsating rhythms of the living flesh.

Freud, like Marx — and, in a different way, like Cezanne — was gifted with a special kind of stupidity; a kind of stupidity which (I flatter myself) often appears in this column to the irritation of its readers. I mean the kind of stupidity that the little boy had in Anderson’s legend when he refused to see the Emperor’s new clothes. Marx was just dumb enough to ignore, or disbelieve, all the cultural prejudices of his infamous century and see with his own eyes that the relation of boss and worker is chiefly a physical relationship, an energy relationship, in which part of the worker’s energy is drained off much in the manner that a vampire’s victim has his blood sucked.

All ideological super-structure is built upon this simple energy process, and Marx was right in refusing to let any other fact or set of facts distract him from his unblinking examination of this central circumstance of our economic system. When the “natural sciences” and the “social sciences” are finally synthesized, this basic energy process will be their chief link, and will be formulated. I am convinced, in a Third Law of Thermodynamics.

Freud’s stupidity was of an equally brilliant kind: he was the first psychologist really to understand the implications for psychology of the simple fact that people have bodies. (Cezanne’s stupidity, similarly, was to look at the world as a child does and not as an art teacher tells one to.)

“...refresh my bowels in The Lord.”
St. Paul, Philemon 1:20

But to return to my friend, standing there at the urinal in the grip of an unusual variety of impotence.

Readers are beginning to write in accusing me of being a Reichian. and I don’t want to lend support to so terrible an accusation, but I also don’t see, and can’t see, how we can account for what happened here except by saying, in Reich’s terms, that the presence of the President of the firm created an anxiety — and anxiety, to Dr. Reich, meant simply, physically, the withdrawal of life-energy from the periphery of the body to its core: a contraction. My friend’s genital-urinary apparatus went dead as the energy flowed back into his center.

(For some interesting data tending to indicate the increasing prevalence of this anxious energy-contraction in American culture, see Lawrence Barth’s column in the October 1960 *Realist*.)

An experience of my own comes to mind here. Recently, a guy I know got so damned mad at me that he refused to speak to me anymore. Readers of this column may figure he had good justification — and I would be the last one in the world to deny that, intent as I am on becoming known as the meanest literary bastard since Brann the Iconoclast — but the point is that my offense, in this case, was merely *speaking against the Capitalist system*. Being sent to Coventry for this, by a cat who has been only mildly peeved by my sexual and religious heresies, is what prompted the question asked in the title of this column: “Is Capitalism a Revealed Religion?” Has it now become so sacred that questioning it is more dangerous than, let us say, asking if Jesus ever pulled his pudding as a boy?

I am going to come on so strong as to say that, in a Freudian sense, Capitalism always has been a revealed religion. ("Religion," old Papa Sigmund once succinctly said, "is a public neurosis; neurosis is a private religion.") *Capitalism, I would in all seriousness suggest, can best be understood as a public neurosis characteristic of societies in which the life energy has been driven out of the genital area into the anal area.* Being a public neurosis, it is institutionalized, ritualized and mystified with all the pomp and folderol of any other religion.

Let us look into the age that gave birth to Capitalism. The Late Middle Ages were a time of hysteria (always a result of prolonged anxiety states) and of witch-hunting (a symptom of hysteria) — and, finally, of impotence. The whole style of the age, as Spengler would call it, is well illustrated by *Rull Summa desiderantes* issued by Pope Innocent VIII:

"It has indeed lately come to Our ears," wrote His Holiness, "that in some parts of Northern Germany... many persons of both sexes... have abandoned themselves to devils... and by their incantations, spells and conjurations... have slain infants yet in their mother's womb, as also the offspring of cattle... These wretches further afflict and torment men and women... with terrible piteous pains and sore diseases; they hinder men from performing the sexual act and women from conceiving, whence husbands cannot know their wives, or wives receive their husbands..."

It seems evident that, as G. Rattray Taylor notes in his brilliant *Sex in History*, Innocent was concerned "solely with certain pathological sexual phenomena... particularly psychic impotence and frigidity." Taylor produces considerable evidence that such Papal fears were well-grounded because the dictatorship of the Medieval Church was indeed so thoroughly destroying the normal sexual functioning of men and women as to create widespread impotence and infertility.

The witch-hunts of the period were almost all, Taylor demonstrates, brought on by people who, finding themselves impotent, accused some neighbor of "bewitching" them. The infamous *Malleus Malificarum*, the handbook used for centuries by witch-hunters and Inquisitors, reads like nothing so much as a modern textbook of sexual pathology.

It was out of the maelstrom that Protestantism and Capitalism emerged. As the genitals of the Western World died, its anus, so to speak, came to be its central living preoccupation — inspired and guided by the hysterical vision of one neurotic monk sitting on a john.

The psychoanalytical insight that money represents to the anal personality — the feces which it covets — is not really new or novel. Have we not always spoken of "filthy lucre?" Doesn't Dante put the usurers and the buggers in one pocket of hell because both are "against natural increase?" Five hundred years after Dante, didn't another great poet, who is markedly hostile to Freudian theory, intuitively make the same discovery:

Usury kills the child in the womb
And breaks short the young man's courting
Usury brings age into youth; it lies between the
bride and the bridegroom
Usury is against Nature's increase.

Yes, that is Ezra Pound, in his Canto 51. Elsewhere, Pound has indicated the same awareness of the pro-anal, anti-genital direction of the Capitalist (or, as he calls it, Usurocratic) temperament:

his condom full of black beetles, tattoo marks round the anus,
and a circle of lady golfers about him.

the courageous violent
slashing themselves with knives the cowardly inciters to violence...
the beast with a hundred legs, USURIA and the swill full of respectors
bowing to the lords of the place, explaining its advantages,
and the laudatores temporis acti claiming that the shit used to be blacker and richer
(Canto 15)

At the end of Arthur Miller's novel. *The Misfits*, the hero curses, not "money," but, significantly, "shit, and money." Another artistic expression of the anal orientation of the modern world occurs in Norman Mailer's "The Time of Her Time," in which the protagonist, trying to cure his girl of frigidity, finds he can bring her to orgasm by entering *per anum*.

Actually, the psychoanalytical theory of money as a symbolic turd is already implicit in the Judeo-Christian myth of work as Adam's Curse. Dr. Karl Menninger's *The Human Mind* recounts a case-history of a millionaire who was compulsively busy to escape anxieties connected with infantile anal guilts. Similar cases appear in the works of Freud, Ferenczi and Jones, among others. Abraham describes in his *Selected Papers on Psychoanalysis* a patient whose anxieties centered around the idea of being forced to eat excrement as a punishment for sin: the theme of two or three of the most popular jokes in capitalist society.

"Work," says Durkheim briefly, "is still for most men a punishment and a scourge." Freud, perhaps, put it even more simply, in his study of Dostoevski, saying that Dostoevski was under a compulsion to make his burden of guilt take tangible form as a burden of debt. Norman Brown's brilliant *Life Against Death* (to which I am greatly indebted) sums it all up thusly: "Money is human guilt with the dross refined away till it is a pure crystal of self-punishment, but it remains filthy because it remains guilt."

It may seem almost too pat if we now remind ourselves that the congenital problem of Capitalism, never yet solved, is the problem of *dumping the surplus*.

The psycho-dynamics of Capitalism, in short, seem to consist of what cyberneticists call a *circular-causal* process. Born of neurotic anxiety and desensitization (contraction of the life energies), it constantly generates more anxiety through its unpredictable boom-and-bust cycles and the wars incident upon its imperialistic necessity to dump the surplus. But this second-order anxiety (which afflicts the boss as well as the worker, for he, too, is the victim of the cycle) breeds that "busy-busy-busy" compensating activity which drives the whole system ever onward into contradictions, crashes and further anxieties.

Dr. Wilhelm Reich's theory was that cancer is caused, partially, by the contraction of life energies, i.e., *anxiety*. (And anybody who doubts Reich's theory of anxiety only needs to observe himself in a moment of stress to be convinced that Reich was absolutely right. Improper breathing and what A. S. Neill calls "the stiff stomach danger" make up the feeling we call "anxiety" or "tension," and both are symptomatic of muscular contraction, such as we see on a very gross level in an infant *cringing* with fear.)

Consider, in the context of Reich's idea, the following words of one of the most enthusiastic defenders of modern American Capitalism, Dr. Ernest Dichter, President of The Institute of Motivational Research: "Possibly more than half of all human diseases are psychogenic." says Dr. Dichter in *The Strategy of Desire*; "worry, maladjustment and other emotional disturbances can be responsible for almost anything from heart attack to cancer." Dr. Dichter's job, as high-priest of Motivational Research, is using this "worry, maladjustment and other emotional disturbances" to influence people to allow themselves to be exploited still further by the Power Elite of Capitalism.

According to the University of California's recent symposium on psychological factors in cancer, all the women with cancer of the breast examined by Dr. Franz Alexander in one study showed severe

psychiatric disturbances, generally with some degree of sexual malfunctioning; another study, of women with cancer of the uterus, showed even more conspicuous sexual disturbances, especially of the sort called “frigidity” (*Psychological Variables in Human Cancer*, University of California Press).

Vihjalmur Stefansson's *Cancer: Disease of Civilization* points out that this pathology is rare, or non-existent, among primitive tribes. Need we add to this that the physical bearing of primitive peoples is so different from that of our so-called “civilization” that almost every explorer on record comes back with bemused comments on the subject? Primitive man, free of the anxieties and armors-against-anxiety characteristic of our culture, stands and walks and sits as a human being should, gracefully and naturally. Look around you and notice how much *visible* tension you can see in people's postures; and you will know why Dr. Reich called cancer a *shrinking biopathy*.

Our kindly editor has asked me to stop using the example of the guy walking into the park with a radio in his hand every time I want to say that people are dead in modern America. Okay. I will use another example. I once said to a young lady (who happened to be the wife of the guy who stopped talking to me when he found out I'm a socialist), “Dig that tree there — wow!” She replied, icily, “I *dug* it,” putting me down for being so corny as to talk that way. The point was that she *hadn't* dug it; she had hardly glanced at it. Basho could flip over a sight as simple as a tom cat with the Yen, and write a poem about it:

Yawning. Then, fully awake,
the cat goes out
to a night of poontang.

This is not just “the poet's eye”; Cezanne had it. Nor is it the “artist's eye”; Darwin had it when he looked at the iguana and intuited the law of evolution. It is the special kind of stupidity I was talking about earlier in this column. It is the innocent childish eye of a man who is not completely blinded by the organized bullshit and desensitization of an unjust social system. It is obvious, or should be, that the prejudiced white never “sees” a Negro; he sees the social lies, stereotypes, in his own mind. (This is the point of the best novel ever written about the Negro in America, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*.)

It should be equally obvious that, in a social system motivated by anxiety and a deadening of life energy, nobody even sees the street on which he lives anymore. We are walking dead men, as Lawrence tried so hard to show us in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, that great and mostly unread novel in which average readers hop around looking for symbolic sexual gratification and skipping the passages which give the book half its meaning — the passages about how Clifford's impotence and paralysis drove him to becoming a successful businessman.

The whole world has been stunned for 17 years now by the opening, in 1944, of the Nazi annihilation camps. We still don't know how to explain such things, how they could be possible. Let me bring this column toward a conclusion with a set of facts that may throw some light on what happened in Germany — and *is happening* here — facts which are all explained by my hypothesis that Capitalism derives from deadening of the genitals and centering of the interest in the anus, but which cannot be explained, so far as I know, by any other hypothesis.

1. The English of Shakespeare's day were a bawdy, sexy, uninhibited bunch of hipsters. As Capitalism grew in England, this national character changed markedly, so much so that it is difficult for us to imagine Falstaff and his friends as truly English. The modern post-Capitalist Englishman is the epitome of the armored individual, rigid, compulsively “moral,” utterly lacking in spontaneity. Simultaneously, England was the first nation *consciously* to idealize the completely frigid woman.
2. Capitalism was born in Germany, chiefly, and chiefly in the age of Luther.

3. Calvin's fanatically anti-sexual regime in Geneva was also one of the primary creators of the Capitalist spirit. Raleigh, observing the deadness of the Genevese, remarked that they had "nothing left but their usury."
4. As Capitalism came to dominance in Germany, the German national character became more and more rigid, armored, "closed" and secretive, lacking in play and spontaneity, etc. Out of this came the automaton who is a living caricature of humanity, the goose-stepping tin soldier known as the Nazi.
5. America, the only surviving 100% Capitalist nation, is the most Puritanical nation in the world. It is the only nation, indeed, which has executed a man in the 20th Century, not for murder, but (in effect) for a Sexual offense.
6. Desensitization in America is growing more appalling all the time. Lawrence Barth recounted in the *Realist* a few months ago an incident at a racetrack in Illinois where a section of the grandstand collapsed, killing and injuring a great number of people; the people in the uncollapsed part of the grandstand were completely unmoved, according to reports — even those sitting only a few feet from the groaning bodies of the victims. It is this country also which twice dropped atomic bombs on two cities full of men, women and children, and which poured burning napalm on its enemies in Korea.
7. Recently, in Harmony, North Carolina, the American Legion staged a little rabbit hunt — for charitable purposes, of course. The rabbits were beaten to death with baseball bats.
8. The mysteries of Capitalist economics are held to be as sacred as those of any other religion — i.e., every other organized social neurosis. Only the "experts" are supposed to be able to understand "the rate of interest," "the price of money," the "dangers" of "inflation," etc. The whole system — "the black magic of money," as Pound once called it — simply rests upon *breeding* money as if it were alive. ("Is your gold ewes and rams?" — Shakespeare.) Or, as Paterson, the founder of the Bank of England, put it, "the bank hath interest on all moneys it creates out of nothing." This creation out of nothing is just what the infant wants to do with its feces, according to Freud, Jones, Ferenczi, Abraham, Menninger and other psychoanalysts. (Rexroth once paraphrased Dante's analysis of this system by saying that, to Dante, the usurer is a pederast who wants to make his turds his heirs.)

I could go on, but what's the use? Those who have had a little experience in psychiatry will know what I'm getting at: others will just laugh, as they've been laughing since Freud published his first case histories. I ask only one thing of skeptics: don't bring up Soviet Russia, please. That horrible example of State Capitalism has nothing to do with what I, and other libertarian socialists, would offer as an alternative to the present system.

Dante said of the damned in hell that they were persons who had lost *il ben del' intelletto*, which I don't think it's at all extravagant to translate as: their ability to *dig* things. This is not a Marxist kind of social criticism I have been presenting in this column, but just a way of saying that there's something pathological, literally so, about a system which increasingly blinds people to the joys of the senses and ties them down to a narrow groove of profit-seeking.

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Left and Right: A Non-Euclidean Perspective

Robert Anton Wilson

1988

Our esteemed editor, Bob Banner, has invited me to contribute an article on whether my politics are “left” or “right,” evidently because some flatlanders insist on classifying me as Leftist and others, equally Euclidean, argue that I am obviously some variety of Rightist.

Naturally, this debate intrigues me. The Poet prayed that some power “would the giftie gie us to see ourselves as others see us”; but every published writer has that dubious privilege. I have been called a “sexist” (by Arlene Meyers) and a “male feminist ... a simpering pussy-whipped wimp” (by L.A. Rollins), “one of the major thinkers of the modern age” (by Barbara Marx Hubbard) and “stupid” (by Andrea Chaffin Antonoff), a “genius” (by SOUNDS, London) and “mentally deranged” (by Charles Platt), a “mystic” and “charlatan” (by the Bay Area Skeptics) and a “materialist” (by an anonymous gent in Seattle who also hit me with a pie); one of my books has even been called “the most scientific of all science-fiction novels” (by *New Scientist* physics editor John Gribbon) and “ranting and raving” (by Neal Wilgus). I am also frequently called a “Satanist” in some amusing, illiterate and usually anonymous crank letters from Protestant Fundamentalists.

I can only conclude that I am indeed like a visitor from non-Euclidean dimensions whose outlines are perplexing to the Euclidean inhabitants of various dogmatic Flatlands. Or else, Lichtenstein was right when he said a book “is a mirror. When a monkey looks in, no philosopher looks out.” Of course, we are living in curved space (as noted by Einstein); that should warn us that Euclidean metaphors are always misleading. Science has also discovered that the Universe can count above two, which should make us leery of either/or choices. There are eight — count ‘em, eight — theories or models in quantum mechanics, all of which use the same equations but have radically different philosophical meanings; physicists have accepted the multi-model approach (or “model agnosticism”) for over 60 years now. In modern mathematics and logic, in addition to the two-valued (yes/no) logic of Aristotle and Boole, there are several three-valued logics (e.g. the yes, no and maybe Quantum Logic of von Neumann; the yes, no and po of psychologist Edward de Bono; etc.), at least one four-valued logic (the true, false, indeterminate and meaningless of Rapoport), and an infinite-valued logic (Korzybski). I myself have presented a multi-valued logic in my neuroscience seminars; the bare bones of this system will be found in my book, *The New Inquisition*. Two-valued Euclidean choices — left or right of an imaginary line — do not seem very “real” to me, in comparison to the versatility of modern science and mathematics.

Actually, it was once easy to classify me in simple Euclidean topology. To paraphrase a recent article by the brilliant Michael Hoy [*Critique* #19/ 20], I had a Correct Answer Machine installed in my brain when I was quite young. It was a right-wing Correct Answer Machine in general and Roman Catholic in

particular. It was installed by nuns who were very good at creating such machines and implanting them in helpless children. By the time I got out of grammar school, in 1945, I had the Correct Answer for everything, and it was the Correct Answer that you will nowadays still hear from, say, William Buckley, Jr.

When I moved on to Brooklyn Technical High School, I encountered many bright, likable kids who were not Catholics and not at all right-wing in any respect. They naturally angered me at first. (That is the function of Correct Answer Machines: to make you have an adrenaline rush, instead of a new thought, when confronted with different opinions.) But these bright, non-Catholic kids — Protestants, Jews, agnostics, even atheists — fascinated me in some ways. The result was that I started reading all the authors the nuns had warned me against — especially Darwin, Tom Paine, Ingersoll, Mencken and Nietzsche.

I found myself floating in a void of incertitude, a sensation that was unfamiliar and therefore uncomfortable. I retreated back to robotism by electing to install a new Correct Answer Machine in my brain. This happened to be a Trotskyist Correct Answer Machine, provided by the International Socialist Youth Party. I picked this Machine, I think, because the alternative Correct Answer Machines then available were less “Papist” (authoritarian) and therefore less comfortable to my adolescent mind, still bent out of shape by the good nuns.

(Why was I immune to Stalinism — an equally Papist secular religion? I think the answer was my youth. The only Stalinists left in the U.S. by the late '40s were all middle-aged and “crystallized” as Gurdjieff would say. Those of us who were younger could clearly see that Stalinism was not much different from Hitlerism. The Trotskyist alternative allowed me to feel “radical” and modern, without becoming an idiot by denying the totalitarianism of the USSR, and it let me have a martyred redeemer again as I had in my Catholic childhood.)

After about a year, the Trotskyist Correct Answer Machine began to seem a nuisance. I started to suspect that the Trotskyists were some secular clone of the Vatican, whether they knew it or not, and that the dogma of Papal infallibility was no whit more absurd than the Trotskyist submission to the Central Committee. I decided that I had left one dogmatic Church and joined another. I even suspected that if Trotsky had managed to hold on to power, he might have been as dictatorial as Stalin.

Actually, what irritated me most about the Trots (and now seems most amusing) is that I already had some tendency toward individualism, or crankiness, or Heresy; I sometimes disputed the Party Line. This always resulted in my being denounced for “bourgeoisie tendencies.” That was irritating then and amusing now because I was actually the only member of that Trot cell who did not come from a middle-class background. I came from a working class family and was the only genuine “proletarian” in the whole Marxist *kaffeklatch*.

At the age of 18, then, I returned to the void of incertitude. It began to seem almost comfortable there, and I began to rejoice in my agnosticism. It made me feel superior to the dogmatists of all types, and adolescents love to feel superior to everybody (especially their parents — or have you noticed that?). Around the same time as my Trotskyist period, I began to read the first Revisionist historians, whom I had been warned about by my high school social science teachers, in grave and awful tones, as if these men had killed a cat in the sacristy. My teachers were too Liberal to tell me I would go to Hell for reading such books (as the nuns had told me about Darwin, for instance), but they made it clear that the Revisionists were Evil, Awful, Unspeakable and probably some form of Pawns of the Devil.

I recognized the technique of thought control again, so I read all the Revisionists I could find. They convinced me that the New Deal Liberals had deliberately lied and manipulated the U.S. into World War II and were still lying about what they did after the war was over. (In fact, they are still lying about it today.)

The Revisionist who impressed me most was Harry Elmer Barnes, a classic Liberal who was a bit of a Marxist (in methodology) — i.e., in his way of looking for economic factors behind political actions. I

was amused and disgusted by the attempt of the New Deal gang to smear Professor Barnes as a right-wing reactionary. Barnes, in fact, was an advocate of progressive ideas in education, economics, politics, criminology, sociology and anthropology all his life but the New Deal Party Line had smeared him so thoroughly that some people have heard of him only as some cranky critic of Roosevelt and assume he was a Taft Republican or even a pro-Nazi. In fact Barnes supported most of the New Deal's domestic policies, and dissented from Liberal Dogma only in opposing the spread of American adventurism and militarism all over the world.

Charles Beard, another great historian of classic Liberal principles, agreed that Roosevelt deliberately lied to us in World War II and was smeared in the same way as Professor Barnes. This did not encourage me to have Faith in any Party Line, even if it called itself the modern, liberal, enlightened Party Line.

(I have never been convinced by the Holocaust Revisionists, however, simply because I have met a great many Holocaust eye-witnesses, or alleged eyewitnesses, in the past 40 years. Most of these people I seemingly met by accident, in both Europe and America. A conspiracy that has that many liars planted in that many places — or has always paid such special attention to me that it placed these liars where I would meet them — is a conspiracy too omnipotent and omnipresent, and therefore too metaphysical, for me to take seriously. A conspiracy so Godlike in its powers could, in principle, deceive us about anything and everything, and I wonder why the Holocaust Revisionists still believe that World War II occurred, or that any of past history ever happened.)

I reached 20 and became an employee (i.e. a robot) in the McCarthy Era and the Eisenhower years; my agnosticism became more total and so did my suspicion that politics is a carnival or buncombe (as Mencken once said). It seemed obvious to me that, while Senator Joe was a liar of stellar magnitude, a lot of the Liberals were lying their heads off, too, in attempts to hide their previous fondness for Stalinism. That was something I, as a former Trotskyist, knew about by experience. In *bon ton* East Coast intellectual circles, before McCarthy, Stalinism was much more “permissible” than Trotskyism; it was almost chic. If I still regard the McCarthy witch-hunt of the 1950s as abominable, I also remember that some of the victims had engaged in similar witch-hunts against the Trotskyists in the early 1940s.

It is probably impossible for a social mammal to be totally “apolitical.” Even if I was allergic to Correct Answer Machines, my mind kept searching for some general social ideas that I could take more or less seriously. For a while I dropped in and out of colleges and in and out of jobs and searched earnestly for some pragmatic mock-up of “truth” without a Correct Answer Machine attached. And yet both Left and Right continued to appear intellectually bankrupt to me.

* * *

Coming from a working class family, I could never have much sympathy for the kind of Conservatism you find in America in this century. (I do have a certain fondness for the classic Liberal Conservatives of the 18th Century, especially Edmund Burke and John Adams.) After I married and had children to support, the abominations of the Capitalist system and the wormlike ignominy of the employee role began to seem like prisons to me; I was a poor candidate for the Conservative cause. On the other hand, the FDR Liberals, I was convinced, had lied about World War II; they first smeared and then blacklisted the historians who told the truth; and they had jumped on the Cold War bandwagon with ghoulish glees.

I was anti-war by “temperament” (whatever that means — early imprints or conditioning? Genes? I don't know the exact cause of such a deep-seated and life-long bias). Marxist dogma seemed as stupid to me as Catholic dogma and as murderous as Hitlerism. I now thought of myself as an agnostic on principle. I was not going to join any more “churches” or submit to anybody's damned Party Line.

My agnosticism was also intensified by such influences as further reading of Nietzsche; existentialism; phenomenology; General Semantics; and operational logic. There have remained major influences on me and I want to say a few words about each.

Nietzsche's philosophy of the Superman did not turn me on in youth; coming from the proletarian, I could not see myself as one of his aristocratic *Übermenschen*. On the other hand, his criticism of language, and of the metaphysical implications within languages, made a powerful impression on me; I still re-read one or two of his books every year, and get new semantic insights of them. He is, as he bragged, a hard nut to digest all at once.

Existentialism did not convert me back to Marxism (as it did to Sartre); it merely magnified my Nietzschean distrust of capitalized nouns and other abstractions, and strengthened my preferences for sensory-sensual ("existential") — modes of perception-conception. The phenomenologists — especially Husserl and the wild man of the bunch, Charles Fort — encouraged my tendency to suspect all general theories (religious, philosophical, even scientific) and to regard human sense experience as the primary datum.

My polemics against Materialist Fundamentalism in *The New Inquisition* and the Aristotelian mystique of "natural law" (shared by Thomists and some Libertarians) in my *Natural Law; or, Don't Put a Rubber On Your Willy* are both based on this existentialist-phenomenologist choice that I will "believe" in human experience, with all its muddle and uncertainty, more than I will ever "believe" in capitalized Abstractions and "general principles."

General Semantics, as formulated by Korzybski, increased this anti-metaphysical bias in me. Korzybski also stressed that the best sensory data (as revealed by instruments that refine the senses) indicates that we live in a non-Aristotelian, non-Euclidean and non-Newtonian continuum. I have practiced for 30 years the exercises Korzybski recommends to break down Aristotelian-Euclidean-Newtonian ideas buried in our daily speech and retrain myself to perceive in ways compatible with what our instruments indicate about actuality.

Due to Korzybski's neurolinguistic training devices, it is now "natural" for me to think beyond either/or logic, to perceive the unity of observer/observed, to regard "objects" as human inventions abstracted from a holistic continuum. Many physicists think I have studied more physics than I actually have; I merely neurologically internalized the physics that I do know.

Operational logic (as formulated by the American physicist Percy Bridgman and recreated by the Danish physicist Neils Bohr as the Copenhagen Interpretation of science) was the approach to modern science that appealed to me in the context of the above working principles. The Bridgman-Bohr approach rejects as "meaningless" any statements that do not refer to concrete experiences of human beings. (Bridgman was influenced by Pragmatism, Bohr by Existentialism.) Operationalism also regards all proposed "laws" only as maps or models that are useful for a certain time. Thus, Operationalism is the one "philosophy of science" that warns us, like Nietzsche and Husserl, only to use models where they're useful and never to elevate them into Idols or dogmas.

Although I dislike labels, if I had to label my attitude I would accordingly settle for existentialist-phenomenologist-operationalist, as long as no one of those three terms is given more prominence than the other two.

In the late '50s, I began to read widely in economic "science" (or speculation) again, a subject that had bored the bejesus out of me since I overthrew the Marxist Machine in my brain ten years earlier. I became fascinated with a number of alternatives — or "excluded middles" — that transcend the hackneyed debate between monopoly Capitalism and totalitarian Socialism. My favorite among these alternatives was, and to some extent still is, the individualist-mutualist anarchism of Proudhon, Josiah Warren, S.P. Andrews, Lysander Spooner and Benjamin Tucker. I do not have a real Faith that this system would work out as well in practice as it sounds in theory, but as theory it still seems to me one of the best ideas I ever encountered.

This form of anarchism is called "individualist" because it regards the absolute liberty of the individual as a supreme goal to be attained; it is called "mutualist" because it believes such liberty can only be attained by a system of mutual consent, based on contracts that are to the advantage of all. In this

Utopia, free competition and free cooperation are both encouraged; it is assumed persons and groups will decide to compete or to cooperate based on the concrete specifics of each case. (This appeals to my “existentialism” again, you see.)

Land monopolies are discouraged in individualist-mutualist anarchism by abolishing State laws granting ownership to those who neither occupy nor use the land; “ownership,” it is predicted, will then only be contractually recognized where the “owner” actually occupies and used the land, but not where he charges “rent” to occupy or use it. The monopoly on currency, granted by the State, is also abolished, and any commune, group, syndicate, etc., can issue its own competing currency; it is claimed that this will drive interest down to approximately zero. With rent at zero and interest near zero, it is argued that the alleged goal of socialism (abolition of exploitation) will be achieved by free contract, without coercion or totalitarian Statism. That is, the individualist-mutualist model argues that the land and money monopolies are the “bugger factors” that prevent Free Enterprise from producing the marvelous results expected by Adam Smith. With land and money monopolies abolished, it is predicted that competition (where there is no existential motive for cooperation) and cooperation (where this is recognized as being to the advantage of all) will prevent other monopolies from arising.

Since monopolized police forces are notoriously graft-ridden and underlie the power of the state to bully and coerce, competing protection systems will be available in an individualist-mutualist system. You won't have to pay “taxes” to support a Protection Racket that is actually oppressing rather than protecting you. You will only pay dues, where you think it prudent, to protection agencies that actually perform a service you want and need. In general, every commune or syndicate will make its own rules of the game, but the mutualist-individualist tradition holds that, by experience, most communes will choose the systems that maximize liberty and minimize coercion.

Being wary of Correct Answer Machines, I also studied and have given much serious consideration to other “Utopian” socio-economic theories. I am still fond of the system of Henry George (in which no rent is allowed, but free enterprise is otherwise preserved); but I also like the ideas of Silvio Gesell (who would also abolish rent and all taxes but one — a demurrage tax on currency, which should theoretically abolish interest by a different gimmick than the competing currencies of the mutualists.)

I also see possible merit in the economics of C.H. Douglas, who invented the National Dividend — lately re-emergent, somewhat mutated, as Theobald's Guaranteed Annual Wage and/or Friedman's Negative Income Tax. And I am intrigued by the proposal of Pope Leo XIII that workers should own the majority of stock in their companies.

Most interesting of recent Utopias to me is that of Buckminster Fuller in which money is abolished, and computers manage the economy, programmed with a prime directive to advantage all without disadvantaging any — the same goal sought by the mutualist system of basing society entirely on negotiated contract.

Since I don't have the Correct Answer, I don't know which of these systems would work best in practice. I would like to see them all tried in different places, just to see what would happen. (This multiple Utopia system was also suggested by Silvio Gesell, who was not convinced he had a Correct Answer Machine; that's another reason I like Gesell.) My own bias or hope or prejudice is that individualist-mutualist anarchism with some help from Bucky Fuller's computers would work best of all, but I still lack the Faith to proclaim that as dogma.

There is one principle (or prejudice) which makes anarchist and libertarian alternatives attractive to me where State Socialism is totally repugnant to my genes-or-imprints. I am committed to the maximization of the freedom of the individual and the minimization of coercion. I do not claim this goal is demanded by some ghostly or metaphysical “Natural Law,” but merely that it is the goal that I, personally, have *chosen* — in the Existentialist sense of choice. (In more occult language, such a goal is my True Will.) Everything I write, in one way or another, is intended to undermine the metaphysical

and linguistic systems which seem to justify some Authorities in limiting the freedom of the human mind or in initiating coercion against the non-coercive.

...and then came what Charles Slack calls “the madness of the sixties.” I was an early, and enthusiastic, experimenter with LSD, peyote, magic mushrooms and any other compound that mutated consciousness. The result was that I became even more agnostic but less superior about it. What psychedelics taught me was that, just as theories and ideologies (maps and models) are human creations, not divine revelations, every perceptual grid or existential reality-tunnel is also a human creation — a work of art, consciously or unconsciously edited and organized by the individual brain.

I began serious study of other consciousness-altering systems, including techniques of yoga, Zen, Sufism and Cabala. I, alas, became a “mystic” of some sort, although still within the framework of existentialism-phenomenology-operationalism. But, then, Buddhism — the organized mystic movement I find least objectionable — is also existentialist, phenomenologist and operationalist...

Nietzsche's concept of the Superhuman has at last become meaningful for me, although not in the elitist form in which he left it. I now think evolution is continuing and even accelerating: the human brain is evolving to a state that seems Superhuman compared to our previous history of domesticated primateness. My favorite science is neuroscience, and I am endlessly fascinated by every new tool or technique that breaks down robot circuits in our brains (Correct Answer Machines) and spurs creativity, higher intelligence, expanded consciousness, and, above all, broader compassion.

I see no reason to believe that only an elite is capable of this evolutionary leap forward, especially as the new tools and training techniques are becoming more simple. In neuroscience as in all technology, we seem to follow Bucky Fuller's rule that each breakthrough allows us to do more work with less effort and to create more wealth out of less raw matter.

Once I broke loose from the employee role and became self-supporting as a writer, the “horrors of capitalism” seemed less ghoulish to me, since I no longer had to face them every day. I became philosophical, like all persons free of acute suffering. I prefer to live in Europe rather than pay taxes to build more of Mr. Reagan's goddam nuclear missiles, but I enjoy visiting the U.S. regularly for intellectual stimulation...

I agree passionately with Maurice Nicoll (a physician who mastered both Jungian and Gurdjieffian systems) who wrote that the major purpose of “work on consciousness” is to “decrease the amount of violence in the world.” The main difference between our world and Swift's is that while we have stopped killing each other over religious differences (outside the Near East and Northern Ireland), we have developed an insane passion for killing each other over ideological differences. I regard Organized Ideology with the same horror that Voltaire had for Organized Religion.

Concretely, I am indeed a Male Feminist, as L.A. Rollins claimed (although seeing myself often on TV, I deny that I simper; I don't even swish); like all libertarians, I oppose victimless crime laws, all drug control laws, and all forms of censorship (whether by outright reactionaries or Revolutionary Committees or Radical Feminists).

I passionately hate violence, but am not a Dogmatic Pacifist, since I don't have Joan Baez's Correct Answer Machine in my head. I know I would kill an armed aggressor, in a concrete crisis situation where that was the only defense of the specific lives of specific individuals I love, although I would never kill a person or employ even minor violence, or physical coercion, on behalf of capitalized Abstractions or Governments (who are all damned liars.) All these are matters of Existential Choice on my part, and not dogmas revealed to me by some god or some philosopher-priest of Natural Law.

I prefer the various Utopian systems I have mentioned to the Conservative position that humanity is incorrigible and I also think that if none of these Utopian scenarios are workable, some system will eventually arrive better than any we have ever known. I share the Jeffersonian (“Liberal”?) vision that the human mind can exceed all previous limits in a society where freedom of thought is the norm rather than a rare exception.

The Anarchist's Library - Robert Anton Wilson Primer

Does all of this make me a Leftist or a Rightist? I leave that for the Euclideans to decide. If I had to summarize my social credo in the briefest possible space, I would quote Alexander Pope's *Essay On Man*:

For forms of Government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administered is best:
For modes of Faith let graceless zealots fight;
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

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From *Critique #27*

Natural Law, or Don't Put a Rubber on Your Willy

Robert Anton Wilson

1986

*The laws of God, the laws of Man,
He may keep who will, and can;
Not I: let God and man decree
Laws for themselves and not for me.*

— A.E. Housman

Political Myth and Self-Hypnosis

*A rose by any other name
Would never, never smell the same
And cunning is the nose that knows
An onion that's been called a rose.*

— Wendell Johnson, *Your Most Enchanted Listener*

Nobody ever wins a debate with an editor in his own magazine, for the same reason that nobody has ever persuaded the Pope of his own fallibility.

Three years ago, Loompanics published *The Myth of Natural Rights* by L.A. Rollins. In 1985, the *New Libertarian* magazine (1515 W. MacArthur Blvd, #19, Costa Mesa, CA 92626) published extensive debate on the very interesting issues Rollins raised. I participated in that debate, and the experience was enlightening, although not in the Zen Buddhist sense. Briefly, the editor, Samuel Edward Konkin III, did not print my article as I wrote it; instead he printed the article intercut with a running commentary by himself, in the form of numerous footnotes attempting to rebut all my major points.

In the ordinary civilized decorum of debate, a gentleman is expected to wait until his opponent's time is up before replying. Interrupting your opponent continually is called "heckling" and is regarded as boorish and uncivil. I could not regard Konkin's interpolations in my article as anything else but literary heckling, and I was curious. Ordinarily, Konkin seems a civilized person. I wondered about the psychology of the heckler and why it can afflict even the educated person if his or her prejudices are sufficiently affronted.

Basically, I think, the heckler fears his opponent. He thinks that the opponent's ideas are a "clear and present danger", as it were, and that they must be drowned out before they seduce anyone. You generally know when you have trodden upon somebody's deepest prejudices because their civility deserts them and they begin interrupting excitedly and adopting the "heckler" persona.

In thinking this over, and considering also the emotional and almost hysterical nature of other responses during the debate on Natural Law sparked by Rollins, I have realized that there seem to be deep religious passions involved in this issue, and that my article in *New Libertarian* only scratched the surface of the psychology and neurology of the Natural Law cult. I have therefore decided to rewrite my thoughts in more depth and publish them where the Natural Law cultists can only denounce them *after* they have been read and cannot heckle and distract the reader *while* they are being read.

Curiously, while the Natural Law debate was going forth in the *New Libertarian* in the United States, I was involved in two other debates on Natural Law in Ireland, where I live. Dail Eireann, the Irish parliament, had voted to submit to the people a referendum which would have allowed civil divorce if approved by a majority; you will not be surprised to learn that the proposed legislation was violently opposed by the Roman Catholic hierarchy on the grounds that divorce "is" against "Natural Law". At the same time, a neo-pagan Dublin magazine, *Ancient Ways*, was running two debates on whether machinery "was" or "was not" against Natural Law and on whether anti-aging research "is" or "is not" against Natural Law. I participated in both of these debates also, and it became quite clear to me that the Natural Law mystique, in Catholic, libertarian or neo-pagan forms, remains basically a set

of rhetorical strategies to *hypnotize* others into the state which Bernard Shaw called “barbarism” and defined as “the belief that the laws of one’s own tribe are the laws of the universe.”

The word “hypnotize” is not used lightly in the above sentence.

I shall endeavor to show, in these pages, that the Natural Law metaphysics can accurately be described as a verbal construct that, like a hypnotist’s commands, creates a trance state in which experience is edited out and the verbally-induced hypnotic reverie becomes more “real” than sensory-sensual stimuli. In other words, Natural Law appears to be a map that does not correspond to any real territory, but like other Idols it becomes almost “real” when the worshipper stares at it long enough with passionate adoration. Like Catholic statues of Mary, it will even seem to “move” or “come alive.”

I shall also attempt to show that this kind of trance should be considered statistically “normal” because most people most of the time are similarly entranced by word-and-symbol hypnosis and self-hypnosis. We appear to be a race, as Max Stirner said, with “spooks in the head.”

This claim is not intended as polemic, but as sober diagnosis. I shall demonstrate as we proceed that hypnosis occurs quite ordinarily in human affairs and is easily induced by the repetition of metaphysical chants and other meaningless verbalisms.

A hypnotist tells you that now you are going away from this room, far away, and now you are in a lovely green field, and it is a warm sunny day, and the sun is all over your body...you can feel the warm sun all over your body, and it is very relaxing...very relaxing...and now you hear the sound of a very beautiful bird call...

And, of course, if the hypnosis works, you *do* hear the bird call.

Similarly, the Natural Law theorist (or any other metaphysician) tells you about abstractions with capital letters, and he talks about these marvelously transcendental entities, and he talks, and he talks...and if the hypnosis works, the abstractions suddenly seem as “real” as, *or even more “real” than*, a ham sandwich and a cup of coffee. The process of going away from the sensory-sensual experience into verbally-induced fantasy works the same way in both forms of hypnosis, as we shall see.

The Wrath of Rothbard

Truth! Truth! Truth! crieth the Lord of the Abyss of Hallucinations

— Aleister Crowley, *The Book of Lies*

In *New Libertarian*, Vol. 4, No. 13, Prof. Murray Rothbard published an article called “On the Duty of Natural Outlaws to Shut Up.” In it, Rothbard “replied” to Rollins’s *The Myth of Natural Rights*, more or less, although he did not answer any of the very telling criticisms Rollins had leveled against his (Rothbard’s) claim that some sort of metaphysical entity called a “right” resides in a human being like a “ghost” residing in a haunted house. Nevertheless, Rothbard’s article seemed to me a very forceful polemic and had the same emotional power, and indeed the same logical structure, as a marvelous sentence attributed to Ring Lardner:

“Shut up,” he explained.

The persuasiveness of such “explanations” can be considerable, especially if they are delivered in a loud voice and accompanied by a threatening gesture with a baseball bat. In Rothbard’s article, however, they are accompanied only by the literary equivalent of such noise and threat, i.e., by what semanticists call “snarl words” — words which express mammalian rage but do not contain information.

It seems part of our glorious primate heritage that such noise and threat is often mistaken for argument, even though it should more properly be called quarrel. Politicians, advertisers and, above all, the

rev. clergy have been very industrious in spreading the notion that there is no difference between noise and information and that the loud noise is itself informative. It is no surprise, in this mammalian context, that Rothbard actually includes in his piece the helpful suggestion that the appropriate response to certain annoying questions is to hit the questioner with a chair.

As I say, I do not deny the vigor of such rhetoric, but I find it lacking in intellectual coherence. I do discern a kind of a trace of an adumbration of a hint of an argument in the midst of Rothbard's territorial howls, but I cannot be perfectly sure I have grasped it, since the noise of Rothbard's rage tends to drown out the content of whatever he is trying to say.

I have given you the date and place of Rothbard's publication of his thesis; you can look it up for yourself to see if there is more content in it than I have found. Meanwhile, it seems to me that his major assertion is that stupidity is the best and quickest way to political success, and that those who are not really stupid should at least pretend to be stupid, since dishonesty is almost as good as stupidity if you practice it long enough and hard enough. Now I do not disagree with this at all; indeed, my own analysis of politics and political Ideologies appears to be exactly the same. The only difference seems to be that I have just stated it as bluntly and cynically as possible, whereas Rothbard states it with a great deal of unction or lubricating oil, to make it go down more smoothly.

What Rothbard actually says (in part) is "What moves men and women and changes history is ideology, moral values, deep beliefs and principles" and "moral passions and ideology *work* and pragmatism doesn't," and that one who is not a moralist in this sense should "pretend to be a moralist" since this is good Public Relations. I do not think my sarcastic paraphrase above was unjustified. Some of us, however, agree with John Adams that Ideology should more properly be called idiocy: we harbour the suspicion that the "deep beliefs" and "moral passions" associated with Ideologies tend to make people behave like lunatics (or like badly-wired robots) and that strong doses of skepticism and down-to-earth pragmatism appear to be the only factors that have ever produced any relative sanity or relative peace anywhere. We agree that passionate ideology and "deep" belief (i.e. deliberate blindness) indeed makes for political success and has created history as we know it, *but that is precisely why we find politics and history so terrible to contemplate.*

John Adams, looking at the effects of Ideology, said he could not consider history without either laughing or weeping. Most of us, these days (except the Ideologists), feel that way; like James Joyce, we regard history as a nightmare from which we are trying to wake. Like Joyce, we have learned to "fear those big words that make us so unhappy." We have looked at the victims of "moral passion" and "deep belief" (which we are more likely to call fanaticism) and we have become agnostic, somewhat cynical and very, very cautious about that kind of passion and that kind of belief.

So, then, if I were interested in entering ordinary politics, in the framework of the rules of ordinary history, I would follow Rothbard's advice, "shut up" (as he urges) about my philosophical doubts, and pretend to the kind of passion and dogmatic belief that historically always leads to political success. In my view, however, such passionate dogmatism usually makes people stupid — Koestler called it "deliberate stupidity" — and it often makes them blindly cruel. It even appears to some of us that *passionate belief* can justly be called the principle reason politics remains such a depressing, paleolithic and murderous spectacle. That is why I am not interested in *entering* politics at all, but only in satirizing and undermining it, so that others may see it as I do, come to their senses, and grow reasonably pragmatic, a bit more skeptical and relatively sane and peaceful; hence, I will *not* shut up. Sorry, Professor Rothbard.

Of course, Prof. Rothbard has written elsewhere, e.g. in his *For a New Liberty*, a detailed argument for Natural Law in the moral sense. Rollins pointed out severe flaws in that argument — and it is odd that Rothbard does not offer a rebuttal of any kind, except to urge Rollins and people like him to shut up — but I think something of Rothbard's case is worth mentioning here. Basically, Rothbard argues that each "entity" in the world has a "distinct nature" and that the "nature" of each "entity"

can be “investigated by reason.” He then “investigates” the nature of “man” by reasoning from abstract definitions and determines what “man’s nature” “is” — nothing is specifically said about “woman” — and this, of course, is the basis for “Natural Law” in the moral sense.

While Rollins has made hash of the logical connections in Rothbard’s argument, I wish to point out merely that Rothbard bases himself entirely on the categories of medieval (pre-scientific) philosophy. Aristotle originated and Thomas Aquinas developed the idea of the world made up of “entities” each possessing and indwelling “nature,” which can be known by abstract reasoning from abstract definitions. This survives in the Cartesian philosophy of “the ghost in the machine,” because Descartes assumed block-like mechanisms, instead of block-like entities. but left them still haunted by spiritual essences. We shall return to this point in detail, but for now it is enough to mention that science has not employed this Aristotelian-Thomist-Cartesian model for over 300 years. Science does not assume “natures” spookily indwelling “within” things, at all, at all. Science posits functional relations between “things” or events. These functional relations can also be called patterned coherencies or, in Bucky Fuller’s terminology, “knots” — energy patterns and interferences between energies. All scientific models describe such energy “knots” *between* “things” and not spookily indwelling “within” “things.” Science also increasingly doubts the existence of “things” in the Thomist sense and speaks more of relations between *space-time events*. I am not asserting that science has “refuted” the Aristotelian-Thomist model, but just that science has found that model useless in discussing the sensory-sensual world of space-time. In other words, even if the Aristotelian-Thomist model refers to something, it does not refer usefully to our existential experience and experiments in space-time. The Aristotelian-Thomist model, as we shall see, refers to some ghostly realm “above” or outside of space-time.

Science, incidentally, not only ignores the question of indwelling “essences” by looking instead at measurable relationships, but science also does not agree that knowledge is obtained through Rothbard’s medieval “investigation by reason,” i.e., by *inventing* definitions and then deducing what your definitions implicitly assumed. Science investigates by *experiment*. We shall see shortly what a major difference that makes. For now it is sufficient to note that the multiplicity of geometrical and logical systems produced by mathematicians in the last 100 years indicates that you can arrive at any conclusion imaginable by *inventing* definitions that tacitly imply that conclusion: but only experiment gives any indication whether such systems connect at any point with our experiences in space-time. We shall return to this point frequently. Meanwhile, I want to emphasize that, just as the terminology of “Natural Law” derives from medieval Catholicism, Rothbard’s defense of this metaphysical doctrine derives also from the medieval Catholic philosophy of indwelling essences. His entire system seems curiously innocent of any taint of the scientific revolution that has occurred since Galileo.

Of course, if you want to engage in abstract metaphysical reasoning about Platonic or Aristotelian realms, where spooks like “Natural Law” may dwell, then you probably have to employ some form of medieval model containing ghostly realms beyond space-time *created by definition and/or axiom*. I am arguing only that if we want to consider our actual situation within space-time, it seems wiser to investigate by experiment those concrete events that can be observed and studied within space-time.

Smith *Ex Cathedra*

Convictions cause convicts.

— Malaclypse the Younger, *Principia Discordia*

George H. Smith, in “Roughing Up Rights” (also in *New Libertarian*, Vol. 4, No. 13) has another go at demolishing relativism and skeptical heresy. He presents a set of assertions, uttered *ex cathedra* as it were, and cites Aristotle and Aquinas as if he were addressing an audience of the 13th Century monks

and those Mighty Names would settle the issue once and for all. Nowhere does he offer us an argument — although he assures us that he will present arguments later, if anybody wants to debate with him.

I will return to Smith's sketch of a possible argument as we proceed: here I will comment only that Rothbard and Smith in tandem make an egregious combination. Rothbard says we doubters should shut up and Smith warns that he is getting his intellectual ammunition in readiness to blast us utterly if we *don't* shut up, and to anybody impressed by resonant rhetoric it probably looks as if they have driven the unbelievers from the field by uttering fierce war-whoops and waving wooden swords. Sure, such nefarious noises would scare the lice off a Viking, as the Irish say.

However, as those archetypal experts on “moral passion” and “deep belief,” the rev. gentlemen of the Holy Inquisition, learned eventually, we heretics can be stubborn bastards. I refuse to retire from the field. I will now offer some war-whoops of my own; I hope the judicious will find them to contain more common sense and less noise than the fulminations of Rothbard and Smith.

“Law” in Science and Theology

Insofar as the laws of mathematics are certain, they do not refer to reality, and insofar as they refer to reality, they are not certain.

— Albert Einstein, quoted by Korzybski in *Science and Sanity*

To begin with, since I am not as clever as Rothbard and Smith, I am not as certain as they are.

I offer my opinions *as opinions*, not as dogmas, and I do not claim to refute absolutely the particular deity (or idol) called Natural Law that Rothbard, Smith and kindred intellects are offering for our worship. I am agnostic about that god, as about all gods, but I am not smart enough to be an atheist, as Smith is, or thinks he is. (I suspect, and will argue here, that Smith has merely replaced one Idol with another.) I remain open to the possibility that the divinity called Natural Law exists somewhere, in some sense, as the other idols offered by other theologians may exist somewhere, in some sense. Since I lack precognition, I cannot know what might be discovered tomorrow, or in a hundred years, or in a millennium. All I can say is that, for a slow learner like me, the question of gods and other metaphysical entities including “Natural Law” remains still open at present even if some devoutly insist that it is closed; and that arguments like “Shut up” and “I'll prove it later” only add to my doubts and suspicions.

“Natural Law” in the sense of ideologists or idolators seems quite distinct from “Natural Law” in the sense of the physical sciences. A so-called natural law in the physical sciences is not a law in the legal sense at all, but a statistical or mathematical generalization from which predictions are deduced that can be, in principle, *refuted* by experiment. No experiments can ever *prove* the generalizations of science, *because we do not know and cannot know what surprises future experiments may hold*; but a generalization of science gets to be called a “law” — carelessly and inaccurately, many scientists now feel — when it has survived a great deal of experimental testing over a long period of time. In common sense, such generalizations certainly appear relatively safe and relatively probable; but because we do not know the results of future experiments, generalizations from the past are never *certain*. On the other hand, experiments may *refute* a scientific generalization, which is why the *possibility of refutation* is considered part of the criteria of “meaning” in science. This point is discussed further in the works of Wittgenstein, P.W. Bridgman and Karl Popper, among others, and those seeking further detail are there referred; for now, it is enough to emphasize that the propositions of theology are not considered scientifically “meaningful” because they are so defined as to negate the possibility of refutation — to evade experimental testing entirely.

For instance, the Roman Catholic dogma of trans-substantiation holds that, once blessed by an “ordained priest,” a piece of bread becomes *in essence* the body and blood of a Jew who died 2000

years ago. While Rationalists laugh and Catholics grow defensive, the modern scientist pronounces the case “meaningless” because it never can be tested or refuted. The expression “in essence” indeed appears to have been invented to evade experiments. In Thomist theology, the “essence” of a “thing” is by definition not to be known by the senses or by instruments; everything that can be known by the senses or instruments is only “accident,” not “essence” in this word-game. From the instrumental or scientific point of view, then, it makes no difference if the “essence” is said to be the body and blood of Christ, or the hide of the Easter Bunny, or the skeleton of The Dong With The Luminous Nose, or all three at once. Since such ghostly or spooky “essences” may theoretically exist or at least may be *asserted* to exist where our instruments only detect *bread*, any number of such theoretical “essences” may be there, even an infinite number, or no “essence” may be there at all. Since there is no scientific way of measuring that which has been defined as immeasurable, there is no scientific meaning in saying either that one “essence” exists in the bread or that a million exist or that none exist at all.

The same criticism applies, of course, to the indwelling “natures” posited by medieval theologians and still posited today by Professor Rothbard. We cannot meaningfully say that they exist or that they do not exist. All we can say is that they lack meaning in science, since they do not refer to sensory-sensual events observable in space-time.

Thus, one may fill a page with propositions like “All round squares are essentially divine,” “All colorless green ideas are essentially diabolical,” “All gremlins eat invisible cabbage,” etc. and some may find, or think they find, as much comfort and spiritual nourishment in this as Catholics find in the “invisible essence of Christness” in something that looks and tastes like any other piece of bread, or that Prof. Rothbard finds in his indwelling “natures” within “entities.” But all such propositions, since they cannot be tested, remain strictly meaningless according to the rules of the science game.

A scientifically meaningful generalization deals with events that can be observed by humans, even if it requires special instruments to observe them. Things that can never be observationally detected even in principle, do not have any scientific meaning.

What of things that can be observed in principle someday, but cannot be observed today? That is, what of statements like “There is a planet with humanoid intelligences in the system of the double star Sirius”? This is not scientifically meaningful today, but it is not meaningless either, since we can in principle visit Sirius in the future and investigate the matter. The modern tendency in science is to class such propositions, not yet meaningful but not forever meaningless, as *indeterminate* statements. Only those statements which even in principle can never be tested are considered totally meaningless — such as our examples of bread that appears to be bread but isn’t *essentially* bread, or round squares, or colorless green ideas, or indwelling “natures.”

Some claim — indeed Samuel Edward Konkin III claimed in his footnotes to my original article on this subject — that there are scientific propositions that are not instrumental or observational in this sense. Specifically, Konkin cites the propositions of praxeology, such as “Causality exists.” This, however, should be considered a proposition in philosophy, not in science; and the main stream of modern science regards praxeology as being as meaningless as theology. Amusingly, the very word “praxeology” comes from *praxis*, which in Latin designated the *customary* way of doing things, i.e., the tribal game-rules. The search for causality once was a rule of the science game, in early times, when it was thought that scientific generalizations must be stated as cause-and-effect mechanisms; but we know now that science can function with or without the causality rule. Some models are stated in causal language, and some are not, and that is all modern science can say about causality. That “causality exists” — in itself and not as a rule of the Classical Physics game — is not a scientific statement, but a game-rule of Aristotelian logic; and, in the most advanced part of modern physics — quantum mechanics — it is generally assumed that causality does *not* exist on the deeper levels of the energy systems that make up an atom. (We will return to this point.) A scientific generalization or *model* may or may not happen

to be in causal language, but the model itself is not regarded as absolute or divine: it is regarded as a useful tool *at present*, and it is assumed that it will be replaced by a more useful model in the future.

In summation, scientific models consist of mathematical generalizations that presently appear useful. The habit of calling these models “laws” in increasingly falling into disfavor, and the working philosophy of most scientists is frankly called “model agnosticism.” This attitude is that our models can be considered good, relatively, if they have survived many tests, but none are *certain* or *sacred*, and all will be replaced by better models eventually. Models that cannot be tested at all, even in principle, are regarded as meaningless, or as the Logical Positivists used to say, “abuse of language.”

“Natural Law” in the scientific sense is, thus, an old-fashioned concept, and one seldom hears working scientists talking about “natural laws” anymore. In fact, what they are inclined to say is more like “This is the model that makes most sense to me right now.” Physicists, especially of the Copenhagen philosophy, regard “law” as an unfortunate term in itself, redolent of theology, and consciously banish the word from their vocabulary.

A scientific “law” — when the word is still used — does not imply a law-giver and has nothing in common with “law” in ordinary speech or Statute Law.

“Natural Law” in the moral and theological sense appears shockingly different from this scientific philosophy in every respect.

To take a typical example which has aroused considerable hilarity in this century, the theological “Natural Law” that most astounds us skeptics is that Roman Catholic statute which the Monty Python group has succinctly and colloquially stated as “Don’t put a rubber on your willy.” In the more resonant and stentorian language the Vatican prefers, this is more usually stated as “Contraception is against Natural Law.” One immediately sees that this has nothing in common with those statistical generalizations *metaphorically called “laws”* in science. The Vatican “law” is not subject to experiment; experiment, and refutation by experiment, are simply not relevant to it. The Pope knows, as well as you or I know, that many human males do, in fact, often put rubbers on their willies. That doesn’t matter. This kind of “law” does not refer to physical, palpable events.

Ohm’s “law” (so-called) holds that $E=IR$ or voltage equals current times resistance. This must be considered a statistical statement, and I came to understand that very keenly while working for five years as a technical laboratory aide in an engineering firm. According to Ohm’s law, if current is 2 amperes and resistance is 5 ohms, then voltage will be 2×5 or 10 volts. It seldom is, *exactly*. More often it is something like 9.9 volts or 10.1 volts, but I have seen it wander as far as 10.8 volts. The explanations are “instrument error,” “human error” and the fact that conditions in a real laboratory are never those of the Ideal (Platonic) Laboratory, just as a real chair is never exactly the Ideal Platonic chair and real horseshit isn’t Ideal Platonic Horseshit. (For those who did not have the dubious benefit of education in classical philosophy, it should be explained that, according to Plato, every chair we encounter in sensory-sensual experience “is” an imperfect copy of the Ideal Chair somewhere outside space-time. From this I long ago deduced that every horse encountered and endured in space-time is also an imperfect copy of the Ideal Platonic Horse and all the horseshit I have ever stepped in is just an imperfect copy of Ideal Platonic Horseshit. I’m sure some Platonists have thought of this before me, and not only believe in the Ideal Platonic Horseshit but have religious ecstasies in which they can actually smell it. We will return to this subject when we revert to hypnosis-by-words at the end.)

Nonetheless, although engineers will agree with what I have just written — the only things most engineers believe in are Murphy’s Law (“if anything can go wrong with a machine, it will”) and Heinlein’s Law (“Murphy was an optimist — things go wrong even when they *can’t*”) — nobody wants to give up Ohm’s “law,” which remains still a safe statistical generalization, which is all a reasonable person expects in this chaotic universe. If “law” in scientific sense was like “Natural Law” in the theological sense, one would find the meters reading anything from one volt to a million volts in the above case, and I would be as skeptical about science as I am about theology. But as long as the meters only wobble a little, and

Ohm's generalization remains statistically approximately on target, we vulgar pragmatists will accept Ohm's "law," if not as an Eternal Metaphysical Epiphany, then as a useful intellectual tool, or model, and that is good enough for unmetaphysical lowlifes like us.

To turn the comparison around for greater clarity, if theological "Natural Law" was remotely like scientific "law," one would not find millions and millions of men every year successfully yanking condoms over their phallos; one would find instead a minor wobble only — a few men here and there who *almost but not quite* get the damned rubber over their willies. And if theological "Natural Law" were subject to refutation by experiment, like scientific models mis-called "laws" are, then this Catholic "law" would have been refuted when the first man anywhere succeeded in getting a rubber all the way over his dingus, just as Simon Newcome's proposed "law" that no craft heavier than air can fly was refuted when Orville Wright got his airplane off the ground for a few seconds at Kill Devils Hill, Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

Scientific models refer to experience and can be refuted by experience. Theological dogma does not refer to experience, and is still a mystery to many of us what it *does* refer to, if it refers to anything.

We will see as we continue that Natural Law in the theological-moral sense, not observable or measurable in space-time, exists in or refers to the same ghostly or extramundane plane where some people go in verbal trance or hypnosis and where there is Ideal Platonic Horseshit in abundant supply.

Faith and Deep Belief

Doubt everything. Find your own light.

— Last words of Gotama Buddha, in Theravada tradition

All of this has been kindergarten stuff really, but the proponents of T.G.G.N.L. (The Great God Natural Law) all attempt to confuse scientific "laws" or models in the statistical and instrumental sense with theological "laws" as the legislations of some Idol or other, and I am trying to deconfuse and differentiate them.

The basic difference between science and theology has not been stated yet. "Don't put a rubber on your willy" should not really be considered an attempt to approximate a scientific "law." It should be called a law in the legal sense. Just as "55 miles per hour speed limit" on a road sign does not mean that it is impossible to go faster than 55 miles per hour, but rather that the highway patrol will arrest you if they catch you exceeding 55 mph, "Contraception is against Natural Law," or "Don't put a rubber on your willy," does not mean *actually* that condoms will not fit over the human penis, but rather that the Roman Catholic "god" will be extremely pissed off at you if he catches you disobeying his rules. In both these cases — speed limits and contraception — *law* means simply the enactment of a law-maker.

In the case of speed limits, it is prudent to obey, since there is no doubt whatever that the highway patrol appears recurrently in sensory-sensual "reality" or ordinary experience, which is the only "reality" most of us know anything about, and observation and experience strongly support the impression that they love to arrest people. In the case of contraception, it would also be prudent to obey if one was first convinced of the existence in sensory-sensual "reality" or normal space-time of the Catholic "god" and second of the notion that this "god," for some divinely inscrutable reason, has a paranoid obsession with the details of the erotic behavior of domesticated primates; but it makes little sense at all if one is not convinced of the existence in spatio-temporal experience of such a bizarre and sex-obsessed divinity.

Thus, from a skeptical and agnostic (not dogmatically atheistic) point of view, the Catholic doctrine of "Natural Law" seems to be an abstraction and reification of Statute Law *based on sheer bluff*. We can see and observe the highway patrol, and we know something about what happens to people hauled into court by them, but nobody has ever seen the Catholic "god" and the claim that he has a kind of super-jail, worse than any human prison and called "Hell," where he tortures those who rouse his

ire, has simply not been proven. Of course, one cannot *disprove* the existence of this “god” and his torture chamber — like the “essences” involved in transubstantiation, they have been defined so as to be incapable of proof or disproof — but whether or not one is going to be frightened by such bogeys depends on one’s willingness to buy a pig in a poke. Since theological propositions are scientifically meaningless, those of us of pragmatic disposition simply won’t buy such dubious merchandise. We cannot prove with certitude that those who do buy are being swindled, but we also cannot prove with certitude that something that looks and tastes like bread has miraculously become human flesh either. We reserve judgment, and smile cynically at those who rush forward to invest in such notions. Maybe — remotely — there might something in such promotions, as there might be something in the talking dogs and the stocks in Arabian tapioca mines that W.C. Fields once sold in his comedies, but we suspect that we recognize a con game in operation. At least, we want to hear the dog talk or see the tapioca ore before we buy into such deals.

At this point, of course, the theologian invokes the virtue of “faith” and Prof. Rothbard will again raise his voice in hymns to the value of “deep belief.”

In fact, despite my aggravated case of agnosticism, I am willing to grant the value of “faith” in certain specific cases and within specific contexts. For instance, a great deal of human behavior contains what are called *self-fulfilling prophecies*. If you “believe in yourself” as the books on positive thinking recommend, you will often achieve more than those obsessed with a sense of guilt and inadequacy. Those who study for the exams will probably get above-average marks, while those who “know” they can’t pass will not bother to cram and will certainly fail. The good job may or may not go to the best candidate, but it never goes to the person who is so sure of failure that he/she doesn’t apply for an interview. I even think that I have observed that Christian Scientists (who believe a happy mind makes a healthy body) tend to live longer and look younger than those with gloomy and pessimistic philosophies.

However, as W.C. Fields — that great Authority on faith and gullibility — once said, “If at first you don’t succeed, try and try again. Then give up. No sense being a damned fool about it.”

Aristotelian either/or logic appears inadequate and misleading today, because the universe apparently can count above two. In the present case, the habit of arguing “for” or “against” faith appears to be simply Aristotelian dualism carried to absurdity. In common sense, if not hypnotized by a logician, everybody realizes that faith may be a gamble that is worth taking in many cases, but, as Fields says, there is no sense in being a damned fool about it. When psychologists or other counsellors suggest that we might be happier and more successful if we tried, experimentally, to be less pessimistic and have more faith in ourselves and others, that is usually a gamble worth taking. When we are asked to have faith in the Easter Bunny or in a perpetual motion machine sold in a back alley, the rules of ordinary prudence suggest that somebody thinks we are damned fools and is trying to cash in on our folly.

It also needs to be emphasized that all forms of “faith” that remain relatively same are *limited by time and context*. I will believe for a given time that “the check is in the mail” or that megadoses of a new vitaminic compound are doing me some good; I will believe, in a given context, that optimism works better than pessimism and that if you treat people nicely most of them will be nice in return. In all such acts of faith, one is conscious of taking a gamble. The kind of “faith” demanded by theology and metaphysics is of a different order entirely, because to have “faith” in a system of ideas — any system — demands that one stop thinking entirely, and if the system is especially baroque (e.g. Soviet communism, Roman Catholicism) is also demands that eventually one stop seeing, hearing, smelling or in any way sensing what is actually happening around one.

It cannot be an accident that such “faith,” quite properly called “blind faith” in ordinary speech, is only praised as a virtue by those who profit from it.

So, then: for all I know the Catholic “god” may exist somewhere in some form, but the rhetoric of his worshippers arouses dark suspicions. I therefore return the traditional Scots jury verdict: Not Proven. (I believe that verdict was generally employed had dark suspicions but not total certitude.) I decline

Pascal's Wager (a more elegant form of Rothbard's notion that we should pretend a belief if we have it not) because I am not clever enough to understand such abstrusities and when I am uncertain it seems to me the simple, honest thing to *say* frankly that I am uncertain.

And I don't see any need to *seek* certitude or even *pretend* it, when in experience most of what happens to us is uncertain and/or unpredictable, from remembering what we had for dinner last Wednesday to guessing whether or not our flight will leave the airport on schedule or even to intuiting what the hell our best friends are thinking when they put down the whiskey and stare out the window.

The search for certitude — like the pretence or moral righteousness — appears to me as a medieval habit that should have vanished long ago. None of us knows enough to be certain about anything, usually, and none of us are nearly as “moral” as we feel obliged to pretend we are in order to be acceptable in “Decent” Society. If we are not totally stupid and blindly selfish on all possible occasions, we are about as bright and ethical as anybody in history has ever been. The greatest batters in the history of baseball all had batting averages well below 0.500, which means they missed more than half the time they swung. Medieval morality and theology have left us with the hypocritical habit or pretending batting averages close to 0.999 in both knowledge and ethics. (The Absolutists go around talking and acting as if their averages were actually 1.000 or sheer perfection.) On average, I think I score under Babe Ruth, and I suspect you do, too. There thus appears to be a great deal of conceit and self-deception in the habitual poses of intellectual certitude and ethical perfection among the educated classes. It would appear more in keeping with honesty, I think, to recognize, as analogous to Murphy's Law, the unscientific but useful generalization I call the Cosmic Schmuck Principle. The Cosmic Schmuck Principle holds that if you don't wake up, once a month at least, and realize that you have recently been acting like a Cosmic Schmuck again then you will probably go on acting like a Cosmic Schmuck forever; but if you do, occasionally, recognize your Cosmic Schmuckiness, you might begin to become a little less Schmucky that the general human average at this primitive stage of terrestrial evolution.

So, I do not claim to be either as bright or as “moral” as the authorities on Natural Law. As some variety of Cosmic Schmuck, the best I can claim is that I have developed, over the years, some sense of the difference between real horseshit that you can step in and Ideal Platonic Horseshit that exists, evidently, only in the contemplation of those who worship such abstractions: and I continue to notice that Natural Law bears an uncanny resemblance to Ideal Platonic Horseshit.

Metaphysics Without “God”

I fear we have not gotten rid of “God” because we still have faith in grammar.

— Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom*

Turn we now to the Gentiles. The modern form of the “Natural Law” mystique is unlike the Catholic dogma in not invoking “God” *very* explicitly and in becoming civilized enough not to threaten us with roasting or toasting or barbecuing or charbroiling if we are heretics. It remains like the Catholic dogma in attempting to tell us what we *should* and *should not* do: it wishes to legislate for us, according to its own Procrustean abstract principles, and it regards us as scoundrels if we will not obey its dictates. It does not think that we could or should judge individual cases for ourselves, and it does not suspect that we might be obliged to do so if we are not to be total zombies or robots programmed by its Platonic or extramundane Rule Book.

However, if the Catholic form of “Natural Law” dogma seems to be based on sheer bluff (on propositions that can neither be verified nor refuted), the modern version of the cult seems to be based on total confusion. One knows what the Catholics mean, even if one doesn't believe a word of it, but it is nearly impossible to decide if the modern “Natural Law” mystique means *anything*.

The problem is this: if “Natural Law” in the prescriptive sense (as distinguished from the descriptive models of science) does not derive from some “gaseous vertebrate of astronomical heft” called “God” or “Jehovah” or “Allah” or “Wog the Almighty” or something like that, I cannot imagine what the deuce it does derive from. At this point I can only stand around with my bare face hanging out and make my ignorance public by asking annoying questions, like Socrates, even if this makes Prof. Rothbard want to hit me with a chair.

For instance, “Don’t put a rubber on your willy, because God will boil you or broil you for it later” makes perfect sense to me, even if I don’t believe it, because it is a law in the normal form of the Statute Laws that we encounter every day. That is, it has the same ideational structure as “Don’t smoke pot, because we’ll throw your ass in jail for twenty years if we catch you” or “Give us 20 per cent of your income or we’ll throw your ass in jail for 30 years if we catch you” or zillions of other brilliant notions Statute Law-makers have created. Both of these typical Statute Laws make sense to me, because I understand what they mean. They mean that some people in a government office want to control my behavior and purloin my assets and are *threatening* me, and control by threat remains as basic to Government as to Theology. I may or may not obey a give statute law, depending on whether it seems reasonable to me or not, whether it makes so much sense that I would do it anyway (with or without a Law), what chance I think the authorities actually have of catching me if I prefer to follow my own judgment, how much of a nuisance it is to obey the more idiotic and impertinent of such laws, etc., but I know who is threatening me and what they are threatening me with.

But if the “Natural Law” cultist *does not explicitly invoke “God” and explicitly threaten me with the super-jail called “Hell,” and is not a representative of some Government or other threatening me with the more limited Hells that humans invent and call “jails,”* I fail to make any sense whatsoever out of the statement that something you or I or the bloke leaning against the lamppost want to do is “against the law,” or that something none of us want to do and find repugnant is made obligatory by law. *Whose law?* If such a “law” is not explicitly attributed to a *specific* “God” or a specific “Government,” then it is not a law in the punitive sense at all. And we have already seen that it is not a law in the metaphoric sense in which the predictions statistically derived from scientific models are loosely called “laws.” So what kind of law is it? And why should we regard it with the *spooky and clearly religious* emotions of “deep belief” and “passion” that Rothbard urges on us?

George H. Smith, to give him credit, does attempt, in his sketch of a possible future argument, to suggest some kind of meaning for such an abstract and unenforceable “law.” His sketch of an argument, alas, rests on rather Aristotelian notions of causality in which predictions are either true or false. That is, a “natural law” in Smith’s sense would be akin to an absolutely Newtonian scientific prediction and would be equivalent to a kind of practical science, like saying, “if you jump off a tall building without a parachute, you will get hurt.”

One trouble with this unexpected and incongruous intrusion of pragmatism into metaphysics, as I see it, is that it takes the spooky religiosity out of Natural Law, opens the matter to debate and discussion, examination of real details of actual cases, how to gauge probable outcomes, etc., and thus approaches real science, almost. This tendency seems to me a step in the right direction, but it relinquishes the metaphysical Absolute Truth that people like Rothbard and Konkin and other metaphysicians are seeking. That which is placed in a practical sensory-sensual space-time context is no longer absolute, but becomes a matter of pragmatic choice, tactics, strategy and the relativity that obtains in all empirical judgments. Briefly: there is no need for “passion” and “deep belief” when confronted with the probable results of jumping off tall buildings; common sense is sufficient. But such cases are extreme, not typical. The typical human choice remains ambiguous — and even its first result does not “justify” or “condemn” it, since its later results remain to be learned. It only takes common sense, not a three-year course in Existentialism, to understand this.

In other words, Smith's Aristotelian either/or logic does not cover most of the issues which Natural Law cultists are eager to legislate upon, since most choices in the real world do not reduce to Absolute Aristotelian true-or-false verdicts but are probabilistic. Most choices in sensory-sensual space-time or ordinary "reality" are not like jumping off tall buildings, but more like deciding between taking a bus or driving in your car; Rothbard's "passions" and "deep beliefs" rather heavily distort your ability to judge the probabilities pragmatically in such daily affairs, and Smith would be better advised to judge them in probabilistic terms than in metaphysical Aristotelian absolutes. A "passionate" belief that it is always better to drive your car than to take a bus can get you in trouble when the car needs repairs. In short, any attempt to introduce a scientific meaning or quasi-scientific meaning into the metaphysics of Natural Law runs aground on the fact that we do not know the definite or final results of most human actions but only their probable and short-term results. It is, for instance, highly improbable that the police will arrest the majority of pot-smokers in any given city on any given day. The attempt to produce a Natural Law on the basis of such probabilities leads to the conclusion (which most young people have already deduced) that you are fairly safe smoking the weed even if there is a law against it. That is hardly the sort of result Smith is looking for, but it is the sort of result one gets if one does try to think scientifically of the statistics of what behaviors lead to what results. In general, most criminals think, within the limits of their intelligence and imagination, of the probable results of their crimes, and the professionals among them, especially in the Mafia and the multi-national corporations, commit their crimes only after they and their lawyers have arrived at the informed opinion that they will evade successful prosecution. Again, that's the real logic of the space-time world of ordinary events that we usually call the real world, but it is not quite what Smith is looking for.

What Smith would like to find, I think, is a pre-quantum Aristotelian world, unconnected with either science or daily life, in which "cause" and "effect" are metaphysical absolutes and one has 100-percent accuracy in predicting from any cause an inevitable single effect, with no later side-effects. But one only has that in rare and extreme cases, like my example of jumping off a high building. In most of science and most of social life, one only has various probabilities and nobody can ever guess the probabilities correctly all the time.

Here I cannot resist quoting another of the footnotes with which Samuel Edward Konkin III decorated the shorter version of this essay. On the above remarks on probability, he wrote:

Wilson does tread dangerously close to sloppy science here; measurements in the micro-level require such probabilistic formulation but scientific laws remain as Absolute as ever — including the Laws of Quantum Mechanics!

This assertion deserves more than the one meager exclamation point Konkin gave it. I would have given it at least six or seven. Aside from that, I do not see any need for lengthy comment on this religious outburst. The basic papers in the history of quantum mechanics are collected in Mehra's and Rechenberg's *The Historical Development of Quantum Theory*, of which 4 out of the projected 9 volumes are already in print and cover the period 1900–1926 in which the notion of Absolute Law broke down irrevocably. The reader who thinks that Konkin might possibly know what he is talking about can consult the record and learn what has actually happened, namely that the concept of statistical laws, as I have explained it, replaced the Aristotelian myth of absolutes. It sometimes seems that the modern Natural Law cultists have more in common with their medieval Catholic forerunners than is obvious on the surface. They not only want their *tabus* to be Absolute but they also want science to be Absolute again even when it isn't. As for my remarks about the human world: small businesses all seem to know they have to follow "hunches" in gauging probabilities, while major corporations employ computers to estimate the probabilities mathematically, since Konkin's capitalized Absolutes are not to be found normally in sensory-sensual space-time experience, which usually appears a rather muddled and

uncertain realm where two-valued Aristotelian choices do not appear with anything like the regularity with which they are produced in the abstract imaginations of Logicians.

But to return to Smith's attempt at Natural Laws based on pragmatic results of actual acts: my objection has been that even if blurry fields like sociology could someday be made as rigorous as mathematical quantum mechanics, it would still yield only probabilities, not the Absolutes (with a capital A) that metaphysical minds like Konkin desire; but in any case the predictions of such a mathematical sociology (with whatever degree of accuracy) about what will happen or will probably happen, are still in an entirely different area of discourse than *tabus* or Divine Commandments about what *should* happen. As Rothbard would quickly tell Smith, any practical (sensory-sensual, space-time world) considerations — e.g. Mr. A decides that in a given town it is not safe to “live in sin” openly, so he and his lover take separate lodgings — amounts to “mere” pragmatism and are not and never can be metaphysical Absolutes. In a bigger town 100 miles away, Mr. A and his lover can live together openly, and in most big towns they can do so even if the lover is the same sex as Mr. A.

It still seems to me that Natural Law in the moral sense means something concrete (if dubious) when a “god” is asserted and a priest-caste are located who can interpret the “will” of that “god,” but without such a “god” and such a priest-caste as interpreters, Natural Law becomes a floating abstraction, without content, without threat, without teeth to bite or solid ground to stand on. All the arguments in modern Natural Law theory would immediately make some kind of sense if one inserted the word “God” in them at blurry and meaningless places in the jargon. It seems that the word is left out because the Natural Law cultists do not want it obvious that they are setting up shop as priests; they want us to consider them philosophers.

In sum, I would follow the “laws” of any “god” if I believed that “god” existed and could punish me for dissent, and in prudence I obey the laws of governments when I think they can catch me, or when these laws are not too grossly repugnant to my sense and sensibilities; but when a choice between the “Natural Laws” of our latter-day prophets and my own judgment, I will follow my own judgment. I trust myself more than I trust them, and, besides, they can do nothing concrete to enforce their dogmas. They are still waving wooden swords to frighten boobs.

Natural Law as Ventriloquism

Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!

— Oz the Omnipotent

According to George Smith's neo-Aristotelian sketch of an argument, from scientific predictions about what *will* happen, we can so act that we will obtain “desirable” goals, and that is “Natural Law.” Of course, as we have argued, it is impossible to make scientific predictions about most daily-life events, and scientific predictions are not Aristotelian absolutes but only probabilities, and furthermore Mr. Smith has not bothered to define “desirable,” so, to be true to the “real” (sensory-sensual, space-time) world, his idea would more reasonably have to be stated as: from attempts at scientific method, we can make guesses about what probably might happen, and can so act that — except for Murphy's Law — we might if we are lucky obtain goals that seem desirable *to us*. There is no guarantee that such goals would seem desirable to anyone else. Leaving that conundrum aside for the moment, it seems to me that in any such chain of reasoning as we advance from scientific predictions to tactical considerations we pass through areas of increasing uncertainty and ambiguity.

It seems that, in honesty, increasing *doubt* should assail us at each step on that path.

It also seems to me that, in honesty, such doubt must be faced squarely and that the “passion” and “deep belief” urged by Rothbard should be discarded as nefarious self-deception. Only if all doubts, uncer-

tainties and ambiguities are honestly faced, and beliefs are prevented from over-ruling our perceptions of what is happening in space-time, can we have any ground to hope that with each step away from the mathematical theorems where we began we are not wandering further and further into self-delusion. I may appear too cynical, but my hunch is that, in any such moral calculus, each step away from statistical mathematics is a point of vulnerability where we might succumb to *guesses, hunches, wishful thinking* and downright *prejudice*. The only grounds for “deep belief” in such an existential (non-theoretical) context seems to be a deep emotional *need* for belief.

To be clearer: the main reason scientific predictions (miscalled “laws”) are so often marvelously useful appears to be precisely that there is no religious attitude of “moral passion” and “deep belief” connected with them in the minds of researchers. They are, on the contrary, regarded pragmatically, tentatively and with cautious skepticism. It is worth considering that this may be the very reason why scientists so often *accomplish what they set out to do*, for good or ill, whereas Ideologists and Idolators of all persuasions spend most of their time doing nothing but engaging in childish arguments or quarrels with other Ideologists who happen to worship other Idols. (I speak here only of the majority of Ideologists in any generation, who never achieve governmental power. What Ideologists do when they do happen to become governments is the principle reason why I agree with John Adam about the close link between Ideology and Idiocy.)

...and at this point in my original article, editor Konkin inserted another footnote, alleging that “faithful ideologists” have never attained power anywhere. That is so wonderful that I almost hate to spoil its beauty by comment; but it has that same structure as the Christian argument that “true Christians” have never done cruel, murderous things like the *alleged* Christians who were responsible for the Crusades, the Holy Inquisition, the witch-hunts, the continued Catholic-Protestant terrorism in Northern Ireland, etc. This appears to be, again, the essential argument: what you see only looks like bread, but “in essence” it is the body of Christ. What you see are not true Christians or faithful ideologists, either. True Christians, faithful ideologists and other Aristotelian essences do not exist in this space-time universe, so, of course, I can neither prove nor disprove anything said about them. They remain outside space-time experience, like the Ideal Platonic Horseshit which lacks all the temporal qualities of actual horseshit. I know nothing at all, at all, about such Platonic Horseshit or such Aristotelian essences. When I refer to Ideologists, I mean those who have appeared in this space-time world, such as Cromwell and Robespierre and Lenin, and when I refer to Christians I mean the ones in 2000 years of history and Northern Ireland today, because I am writing only about the world of human experience. I leave the metaphysical universes entirely to Konkin, Rothbard and others who are at home in those phantasmal realms. But to return to the main theme:

Let us assume that I am a brighter guy than I think I am, and that my agnosticism is just the result of pathological modesty; I know that seems absurd, but let us follow it for a moment as a *gedankenexperiment*. Let us say that after many decades of arduous study and research, I might actually find what *seems to me* to be a set of rules about the consequences of human actions, not just in the statistical sense of mass consequences (that would be called mere sociology) but, more wonderfully, *Absolute Aristotelian certainties about individual consequences* (that approaches “morality” or at least the Buddhist morality of *karma*). I admit that I would be rather proud of such a job of work, if I accomplished it, but I would still be uneasy about calling my results “Natural Law” and I would not *demand* that people should believe in my work “deeply” and “passionately.” I might call my correlations Wilson’s Theory (that’s as far as my vanity goes) — I would secretly fear that said correlations might rather be remembered as Wilson’s Folly — and I would ask other social scientists to take enough interest in my findings to try to confirm or refute my data. I can’t understand why the Natural Law theorists — if they really think they have knowledge in the scientific sense, and are not just rationalizing their prejudices — don’t take that modern, scientific and modest attitude. I don’t know why they want to hit us with chairs if we question their dogmas.

Even in psychology, barely a science at all, there can be found a few statistical generalizations — “laws” of a sort — that have been found consistent by repeated tests in different universities on various continents. These generalizations have been tested because they are written in scientific language, or close enough to scientific language that they can be understood as predicting certain events which can be observed in a laboratory setting. The “Natural Law” theorists never publish any such scientific reports subject to testing and refutation. Like theologians, they seem almost deliberately to avoid any statement concrete enough to be subject to such testing.

At this point I begin to feel a certain sympathy for the most nefarious of all skeptics, the infamous Max Stirner. Whatever else he proves or fails to prove in the long, turgid, sometimes brilliant, sometimes silly text of *The Ego and His Own*, Stirner at least posed a very interesting challenge in asking how much disguised metaphysics appears in philosophers who avoid being explicitly metaphysical. As I have said, “God told me to tell you not to put a rubber on your willy” might be a Natural Law, if such a “god” exists and is not just a hallucination of some kooky celibates, but “My study of the sociological consequences of individual acts demonstrates that you should not put a rubber on your willy” looks, on the face of it, like a theory, a hypothesis, a matter for debate, maybe even an opinion or a prejudice — one has learned to suspect such “sociology” — and it’s hard to avoid the Stirnerite suspicion that calling it, or ideas like it, *Natural Law* may represent only an attempt, conscious or unconscious, to elevate a *theory or hypothesis or opinion or prejudice* to some metaphysical level where nobody will dare criticize it, or even think about it.

Here I recall a familiar ritual: the ventriloquist and his dummy. The dummy seems to talk, but we know that the ventriloquist is doing the talking for him. It is amusing to note that many humans achieve a certain dignity or authority (at least in their own minds, and sometimes in the minds of the gullible) by pretending to be something akin to such dummies. The judge, for instance, acts and behaves to give the impression, “It is not I who speak here; it is the Law speaking through me.” The priest similarly claims that it is not he who speaks but “god” who speaks through him. Marxists have become very clever at such dummy-logic and seem often to believe genuinely that they do not act themselves but only serve as vehicles through which History acts. Of course, such dummy metaphysics is often very comforting, especially if you have to do something disagreeable or revolting to common human feelings: it must be a great relief to say that it is not your choice but God or History or Natural Law working through you.

Thus, Natural Law seems like a spook in Stirner’s sense, a disguised metaphysics in which people can claim they are not rationalizing personal prejudice or doing what they want but are only dummies through which the Great God Natural Law is speaking and acting.

“I want it this way” — “I prefer it this way” — “I damned well insist on having it this way” — all these appear to me as normal human (or mammalian) reflexes, but we have been brainwashed for centuries with the idea that we have no right to want what we want. Even if we rebel against that masochistic Judeo-Christian heritage, it does not seem wise or politic to admit that we want what we want. It seems more impressive and a lot more polite to do the dummy act. It is not that I want what I want, we then say; rather it is that God or History or Natural Law or some other abstraction *demands* that you give me what I want, or at least get out of my way while I go after it.

Politics, as I now see it, consists of normal human and mammalian demands disguised and artificially rationalized by pseudo-philosophy (Ideology). The disguise and rationalization *always* seems insincere when the other guys do it, but, due to self-hypnosis, becomes hallucinatorily “real” when one’s own gang does it. I think at this stage of history, the disguise has become obsolete and counterproductive. *Make your demands explicit* (and leave out Natural Law and all Ideal Platonic Horseshit), and then you and the other guy can negotiate meaningfully. As long as both sides are talking metaphysics, each is convinced the other are hypocrites or “damned eejits.”

On Sodomizing Camels

What is strong wins: that is the universal law. If only it were not so often what is stupid and evil!

— Nietzsche, *Notes* (1873)

The suspicion that what is called “Natural Law” may consist of personal prejudice with an inflated metaphysical label pinned on it grows more insidious as one contemplates the fantastic amount of disagreement about virtually everything among the various advocates of “Natural Law.”

Prof. Rothbard tells us that this means nothing, because there are disagreements among physicists, too; but I find this totally unconvincing. The area of physics where there is, and have been for three generations, the greatest amount of disagreement is, I believe, quantum mechanics, but the disagreement there appears totally different in kind from the Marx Brothers chaos among Natural Law ideologists. For one thing, the disagreements in quantum mechanics are all about non-physical, almost metaphysical matters. *There is no disagreement about how to “do” quantum mechanics* — that is, what equations to use in making predictions in given situations. The disagreements are all about what the equations “mean” or what verbal forms (philosophies) are most isomorphic with the mathematics of the equations. This is a question that cannot be answered by experiment or observation, and the Copenhagenists (disciples of Bohr) therefore regard it as meaningless, and, as Gribbin points out in his amusing popularization, *In Search of Schroedinger's Cat*, most working physicists, in fact, use quantum math every day without bothering to ask what the equations “mean.” The important point, I think, remains, that even if nobody in physics knows how to answer those philosophical or metaphysical questions about “meaning,” everybody agrees on *how to ask the questions that physics can answer*.

In the area of Natural Law and metaphysical “morality” in general, there is no shred of such agreement about how to ask meaningful questions (questions that can be experimentally or experientially answered) or even about what form a meaningful (answerable) question would have to take. There is no pragmatic agreement about how to get the results you want. There is no agreement about what models contain information and what models contain only empty verbalism. There is, above all, no agreement about what can be known specifically and what can only be guessed at or left unanswered.

The Ayatollah Khoumeni, for instance, has written an authoritative guide to Natural Law according to “Allah,” with whom he is allegedly on intimate terms. In this tome, Khoumeni says that a woman may not get a divorce just because her husband is in the habit of sodomizing camels: “Allah” does not permit divorce for such trivialities and, in fact, frowns on divorce in almost all cases. However, later on Khoumeni allows that a woman may get a divorce if her husband is in the habit of sodomizing her brother. Now, I don't know whether this is a Natural Law, or just represents Khoumeni's personal opinions or prejudices, and I don't know of any test or experiment that can determine if it “is” a Natural Law or “is” just the old duffer's private notion, and nothing in Natural Law theory that I have ever read helps me to decide if this doctrine “is” “really” a Natural Law or just Khoumeni's own way of evaluating the relative merits (or demerits) in sodomizing camels as against sodomizing brothers-in-law.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Pontiff in the Vatican, where they gave us that gem about not putting rubbers on our willies, declares that divorce is against “Natural Law” in all cases. It appears quite clear that when the Vatican says “all cases” they mean “all cases.” We had a referendum about that in Ireland, where I live, recently, and the Pope's spokesentities (I am trying to avoid the human chauvinism of writing “spokespersons”) made abundantly clear that a man could come home drunk every night, beat up on his wife, seduce and sexually abuse their children, give his wife syphilis, and commit any abomination in the pages of de Sade and the Catholic “god” was still against giving the poor woman a divorce. “All cases,” to Aristotelians, means “all cases,” and thus it includes not only the guy who sodomizes camels but the guy who buggers his brother-in-law as well. Leaving aside the thought that the Ayatollah begins

to seem a relative Liberal compared with the Pope, I still don't have a clue as to a scientific test to determine which of these vehement and dogmatic old men might actually know what Natural Law is, or how to be sure they aren't just calling their own prejudices Natural Law.

The Mormon pipeline to "god" brought back the news, when it ran through Joseph Smith, that polygamy is OK; later, the Mormons found a new pipeline, Brigham Young, who brought back the news that polygamy is not-OK. The Arabs haven't heard that news and imagine that polygamy is still OK, while the Vatican's infallible authority insists that monogamy is the only sexual pattern in accord with God's Will and Natural Law. Do any of these people know a damned thing about "Natural Law," at all, at all, or are they just rationalizing their own prejudices?

In California, the majority of the population practice serial polygamy, or one marriage at a time, and most of them think this is in accord with Natural Law or at least with "Nature," except for those who don't get married at all and just live together because that seems even more "natural" to them — after all, in the "state of nature" animals do not hunt up a "priest" to bless them before mating. California "Natural Law" at least resembles nature to that extent.

A prominent American guru, Da Free John, who claims that he not only knows "god" personally but *is* "god," agrees with the Pope in insisting on monogamy among his followers, but says frankly that he (god) doesn't care whether these monogamous couplings are heterosexual or homosexual. The Pope insists that god wants both monogamy and heterosexuality.

The Aztecs, Mayans, Carthaginians and various others sacrificed members of their own community, even of their own family, to the gods. The Druids "only" sacrificed prisoners of war. Hitler sacrificed Jews and gypsies. Almost all governments still insist on the right to sacrifice young males in battle, and it is against the law to run away or resist the draft. Some states and nations believe in capital punishment; others do not. Pacifists are against killing anybody, but not all pacifists are vegetarians. Some quasi-vegetarians will not eat the higher mammals but will eat fish. Pure vegetarians kill vegetables to eat. And so on. And so on.

To compare this ontological spaghetti with the highly technical disagreements in physics seems to me like comparing ten drunks smashing each other in a saloon with the difference in tempo and mood between ten conductors of a Beethoven symphony. Worse: it seems like comparing the aleatoric contents of a junkyard with the occasional disagreement among librarians about where a given book should be classified in the Dewey Decimal System.

But let's hear from Konkin again. In rebuttal to the above he claims that C.S. Lewis demonstrated an "amazing amount of agreement" among various moral codes. This assertion is not an argument, of course, and I invite the reader to investigate Mr. Lewis's books, especially *The Case for Christianity*, in which this point is labored at length. In my impression, Lewis demonstrated only that you can find an amazing amount of similarity between camels and peanuts if you emphasize only the contours of their backs and ignore everything else. In any event, my examples above are not contradicted; and any study of anthropology will bear out the popular impression that just about the only rule all tribes agree on is the one that says people who criticize the rules should be burned, toasted, boiled in oil or otherwise discouraged from such heresy.

Konkin then proclaims, and you have to read this slowly, "Since Wilson does not acknowledge the possibility (!) that Natural Law is simply conceptualization of the objective workings of human action, he cannot consider the possibility that these various religious leaders are *violators* of Natural Law by their subjective impositions." The bracketed exclamation mark is mine; the rest, in all its beauty, is Konkin's. We now see Natural Law as resting on a *possibility*, rather than on the Absolute certitude which Konkin usually claims; but that seems to be a temporary and inadvertent lapse. Of course, I do not deny that *possibility* and very scrupulously did not deny it even in the first draft of this which Konkin published — all I am asking is that somebody should make the possibility into a *probability* (I don't demand certitude in this murky area) by producing a shred or a hint of an adumbration of

a shadow of a ghost of something like scientific or experimental evidence in place of the metaphysical, and meaningless, verbalisms Natural Law cultists habitually use. Until they produce some such sensory-sensual space-time evidence, I still say: *not proven*. Their case is logically *possible*, as all metaphysical propositions are possible, in some sense, in some Platonic realm, but they haven't made it at all probable or plausible that these abstractions function in normal space-time, and they certainly haven't produced any evidence to justify the pontifical certitude they always seem to profess.

As for the rest of Konkin's sentence, claiming that all those who have different ideas of Natural Law from his own are "subjective" and thus "violators" of Natural Law, that, again, seems to be mere assertion, not argument. Of course, all the rival Natural Law cultists will say that Konkin is violating Natural Law as *they* understand it, and since there is no experiential-experimental way to judge among any of them, the matter is on all fours with TV commercials where everybody asserts his/her brand is best and all the others are inferior imitations. For those who believe everything they're told, such assertions may be convincing, but I speak for the skeptics and philosophers, who want convincing reasons before they put any credence in a doctrine.

I have certain goals or values; and I admit, frankly, that these goals or values were chosen by me. The Ayatollah and the Pope and the Mormons and Da Free John and Konkin and Rothbard et. al. have their own, different goals and values, but they all assert that these goals are not chosen freely but are dictated by a Higher Power known as either "God" or "Natural Law" or both in tandem. The consequences of this difference seems to be that you can decide for yourself, without fear or intimidation, whether you like my goals or not, but in the case of those who claim to be ventriloquist's dummies for Higher Power, you are subtly discouraged from choice. You *must* agree with them and accept their goals or you are in a state of "sin" or in "violation" of Natural Law and thus you are being browbeaten by guilt into not thinking for yourself and letting these "experts" tell you what is right or wrong for you. (Of course, none of them understand, or can understand, the concrete specifics of a single hour of your life, but they still think they know what you should do in that hour.)

The most astonishing feature of this ventriloquist act — "I am only speaking for some metaphysical entity *above* you" — remains the historical oddity that some who take on this air of Papal Infallibility call themselves libertarians.

What is "Against Nature"?

One is necessary, one is part of Fate, one belongs to the whole, one is in the whole; there is nothing which could judge, measure, compare or sentence our being, for that would mean judging, measuring, comparing, sentencing the whole. But there is nothing beyond the whole.

— Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*

Even when some Natural Law theorists, like Smith, admit the vast gulf between scientific (instrumental) generalizations and their alleged "Natural Laws" or *tabus*, they still habitually use *language and metaphor that blurs this distinction* and creates a semantic atmosphere in which they *seem* to be discussing "law" in the scientific sense. I do not want to be uncharitable and accuse such writers of dishonesty, but it certainly appears that their language habits create confusion, and I suspect that the Natural Law theorists confuse themselves even more that they confuse their readers.

The worst source of this semantic chaos appears to me to be the phrase, "Natural Law," itself, since it is rather grossly obvious that nothing can ever happen that truly violates nature, at least as the word "nature" is used in science and, I daresay, 99 percent of the time in ordinary speech.

As I mentioned earlier, while I was involved in the "Natural Law" debate in America via *New Libertarian*, I was involved in two similar debates in Ireland. In the first debate, the Catholic Church, through

every pulpit in the land, was denouncing the government's attempt to legalize divorce as "against Nature" and in the second debate, less nationally publicized, some witches and Druids and neo-pagans were debating with one another, in a magazine called *Ancient Ways*, about whether machinery and anti-aging research "were" or "were not" against "nature." I created considerable confusion, hostility and incredulity, in both the Catholic and pagan camps, by simply insisting that nothing that happens in nature can be meaningfully said to be "against" nature. It seems to be very hard for Natural Law cultists of all stripes to understand this.

For instance, one shadowy philosopher writing under the name "Peter Z." — and I don't blame him for his near-anonymity; it can be dangerous to be associated publicly with paganism in Holy Catholic Ireland — replied to each of my attempts to explain that nothing in nature "is" unnatural by compiling angry lists of things and events which *seemed to him* "unnatural;" of course, like most persons innocent of neurological science, Peter Z. assumed that whatever seems unnatural to him "really" "is" unnatural. (Natural Law cultists of all stripes share that pre-scientific framework, I think.) The "really" "unnatural" for Peter Z. ranged from cosmetic surgery to television and included most of what has happened since about 1750 C.E. In general, to Peter Z. nature was natural before industrialism and democracy appeared in the Occident but has become unnatural since then. In short, everything he disliked was "unnatural" and "it is unnatural" was in his vocabulary equivalent to "I don't like it."

To say that nothing in nature "is" unnatural is simply to say that nothing in existence is non-existent. Both of these propositions — nature does not include the unnatural, existence does not include the non-existent — are only tautologies, of course, and I do not reify them as Ayn Rand, for instance, habitually reified "existence." I am not saying anything "profound" here; I am merely saying something about semantics and communication. I am asserting that it is impossible to say anything meaningful in a language structure based on fundamental self-contradictions. This is not meant to be a scientific "law" and certainly not a "Natural Law" (whatever that is); it merely appears to be a necessary game-rule of logic and semantics.

The familiar pagan and romantic idea that machines "are" unnatural, for instance, cannot be admitted into logical discourse because it creates total chaos, i.e., destroys the logic game itself. This becomes clear when one tries to think about it, instead of just reciting it as a banishing ritual, as most pagans and romantics do. How does one define "machine" to avoid pronouncing such design-science devices as the spider's web, the termite city, the beaver dam, etc., "unnatural?" Is a chimpanzee "unnatural" in using a *tool* such as a dead branch to knock fruit from a high tree? Was the first stone axe "unnatural?" Are the bridges in Dublin, which the pagans use along with the Christians every day, "unnatural?" When one starts dividing "nature" or existence into two parts, the "natural" and "unnatural," can any line be drawn at all that is not obviously arbitrary and prejudicial? The atom bomb fills pagans (and most of us) with horror, but could it exist if nuclear fission was not a perfectly natural phenomenon?

It seems that when romantics speak of nature, they mean those parts of the universe they like, and when they speak of the unnatural, they mean those parts of the universe they don't like, but there is no possibility of logical or semantic coherence in such an arbitrarily subjective language.

This cannot be called a Logical Positivist or 20th Century view; in the 18th Century already, Burke had enough logical clarity to point out, in his polemic against Rousseau, that the Apollo of Belvedere is as much a part of nature as any tribal totem pole. Since classical art is not as well-known today as it was then, Burke's point can be restated thusly: Marilyn Monroe with all her make-up on, the Empire State Building, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Hitler's terrible death camps, the moon rockets, Punk hair styles, the pollution of coal-burning furnaces, the lack of pollution in solar power collectors, and anything else humans have invented, whether we find such inventions wonderful or repulsive, must be in accord with the laws of nature in a scientific sense or they could not exist at all. The only things that can be meaningfully said to be unnatural are impossible things, such as drawing a round square or feeding your dog on moonbeams.

It would be clearer if Natural Law cultists gave up on the oxymoronic concept of “*Natural Laws*” that *can be violated in nature*. The rules they wish to enforce on us do not appear to be laws of nature — which *cannot* be violated and therefore do not need to be enforced — but rather appear to be “moral laws.” It makes sense to say “Don’t put a rubber on your willy because that’s against moral law” (again: whether one agrees with it or not) but one cannot say “Don’t put a rubber on your willy because that’s against natural law” without getting involved in endless metaphysical confusions and self-contradictions — “the great Serbonian bog where armies whole have sunk,” to quote Burke again — webs of words that connect at no point with sensory-sensual space-time experience.

It appears that the reason that the term “Natural Law” is preferred to “Moral Law” may be that many writers do not want to make it obvious that they speak as priests or theologians and would rather have us think of them as philosophers. But it still seems to me that their dogmas only make sense as religious or moral exhortation and do not make sense in any way if one tries to analyze them as either scientific or philosophic propositions.

It proved as hard to communicate this natural science point of view to editor Konkin as it was to communicate it to Peter Z. In his footnote of rebuttal at this point, Konkin instances examples of alleged “Natural Laws” and then engages in some guilt-by-association. He does not attempt at all to reply to my argument itself — that nothing in nature can be called unnatural for the same reason nothing in existence can be called non-existent. As one natural law, Konkin suggests that a society is impossible when no one produces and all consume. I reply that, if true, this would indeed be a natural law in the science of economics but it would have no more *moral* implications than the law of gravity, and that the way to demonstrate it would be to perform experiments, as was done to confirm the relative (statistical) accuracy of first Newton’s and then Einstein’s formulae for gravity, in contrast to the method of Natural Law cultists, which is to compose verbal (metaphysical) abstractions. However, I doubt very much that this “law” is valid, since a totally automated society seems theoretically possible and might be one in which nobody produces (the machines will do that) and yet everybody consumes. Konkin’s second “natural law” is Heinlein’s famous “There ain’t no such thing as a free lunch” from the sci-fi novel, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. I think that should be considered a kind of proverb rather than a “law” and one should not use such a metaphor too literally. For instance, all the cultural heritage — what Korzybski called the time-binding activity of past generations — gives us an abundance of metaphorical “free lunches” in the form of roads, bridges, plants in operation, scientific knowledge, existing technology, music, folklore, languages, discoveries of resources, arts, books, etc., etc. If this cultural heritage of “free lunches” did not exist, each generation would start out as poor and ignorant as a Stone Age tribe.

Konkin’s attempt at guilt-by-association seems even more amusing to me than his attempt at suggesting scientific laws of sociology. He writes, “I think it only fair to point out that Wilson certainly hangs around mystics a lot more than, say, professional atheist Smith.” I will not comment on the similarity to the “logic” of the late Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy (R-Wis.) and I will not even remark that it is news to me that Konkin keeps me under such close surveillance that he knows how much time I spend in the company of “mystics.” I will only say the man sounds rather desperate here. Perhaps he was very tired when he wrote that. In fact, I do share space-time with mystics on occasion, and also with occultists and even witches, and also with physicists, mathematicians, biologists, anthropologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, writers, actors, nudists, vegetarians, plumbers, grocers, bartenders, homosexuals, left-handed people, atheists, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Freemasons and I don’t know who all. I travel a lot and talk to anybody who might be interesting. If Konkin means to imply that I have contracted some dread mental illness (a metaphysical AIDS perhaps) by not being a philosophical segregationist and only talking to people who already agree with me, I can merely reply that the only way to learn anything, for a person of limited intelligence like me, is to listen to as many diverse views as possible. Metaphysical wizards like Konkin and Rothbard may discover everything knowable about everything imaginable by sitting in their armchairs and “investigating by reason” the ghostly inner “natures” or

“essences” of things, but a person of lower intelligence like me only learns a few things in one lifetime and only manages that much by meeting as many people as possible and asking questions of all those broad-minded enough not to hit me with a chair for such inquisitiveness.

To conclude this part of my thesis, if it were possible to violate nature — to perform an act “against nature” — that would be marvelous, and would undoubtedly be a turning point in evolution. It would certainly seem an exciting show to watch, and I would buy tickets to see it. So far, however, everything that has happened on this planet has been in accord with natural laws of physics, chemistry, etc., which have no moral implications and do not need to be enforced or even preached about.

Why Not “Violate” Nature?

I pick the goddam terror of the gods out of my nose!

— J.R. “Bob” Dobbs

Basically, I am skeptical and extremely dubious (not dogmatically denying) about “Natural Law” because I do not possess the *religious* attitude toward nature (with a small *n*, please). An old joke tells of a preacher saying to a farmer, “God has been good to your field.” “Maybe so,” says the farmer, “but you shoulda seen the place when He had it to Himself.” Like the farmer, I am often more impressed by human creative work than by what this planet was like when “God” had it to himself.

Although I do not agree with the almost Manichean attitude of critic Arthur Hlavaty, who regards nature as a combination of slaughterhouse and madhouse *against which*, by great effort, a few human beings have created a few enclaves of reason and decency, I do agree with, e.g., Nietzsche, Lao-Tse and the authors of the *Upanishads*, all of whom held that nature or existence combines so many diverse elements that we cannot judge or measure or compare it with anything, and cannot describe it as a whole except in contradictions. That is, I can only judge *parts* of nature to “be” by my standards “good” or “evil” or “beautiful” or “ugly” etc.; when attempting to contemplate the whole, I can only see good-evil, heat-cold, day-night, beauty-ugliness, wet-dry, light-dark, wisdom-stupidity, creativity-mechanism, organic-inorganic, life-death, etc. — all possible opposites in continuous interaction. Thus, I neither worship nature (existence) pantheistically nor despise it Manicheanistically, but, seeing myself as part of it, claim the same “right” (in quotes, with no metaphysics implied) as any other part of it to make the best of it that I can. In short, I claim the same “right” as a cockroach, a redwood tree, a rat or a whale to adjust and alter the rest of nature (existence) to make it more comfortable for myself, as far as I can do so without becoming so obnoxious to my neighbors that they conspire to repress me.

I think it rather curious, and a variety of metaphysical madness, that the efforts of humans to so alter and adjust existence are denounced as “unnatural” by ecological mystics who never complain that the rat’s efforts to better its lot “are” “unnatural.” Since neither humans nor rats can actually do anything unnatural, this popular mysticism seems to signify only that some people like rats better than they like humans.

Of course, that’s okay with me, too, as somebody’s personal prejudice or preference; I am writing in defense of personal choice here (if you haven’t guessed that already); I merely object to having personal choices proclaimed as new religious revelations which we all must share or be damned. Personally, I find the anti-rat bias of most people as absurd as the anti-human bias of ecology cultists. The common domestic rat, *mus rattus Norwegicus*, has outsmarted humans for so long, and survived so many human attempts to get rid of her, that I regard this rodent with profound respect, since I’m not sure *I* could survive the combined efforts of so many clever people trying to get rid of me. That’s one reason I try to be polite and agreeable to everybody, most of the time, when I’m not at the word processor and carried away by my own rhetoric.

One of the funniest things I ever saw, it seems to me, was a sign on the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, on the cage of the Great Horned Owl. This sign proclaimed that the Great Horned Owl should be considered “a desirable bird” because she eats various critters that are annoying to farmers. I regard this as a hilarious example of unconscious human chauvinism in its assumption that “the desirable” is that which is desirable “to us.” One look at the Great Horned Owl was enough to convince me that she would consider herself a desirable bird whether humans think so or not. She has that charming look of total guiltlessness and shamelessness that makes animals so attractive, because nobody has ever convinced them they are sinners and politically incorrect or that their reflexes or whims are against natural law.

On the other hand, the critters who get eaten regularly by the Great Horned Owl will probably never agree that she is a desirable bird. They almost certainly regard her as actively nefarious.

What I am saying here is that nature-or-existence — the sum total of events in sensory-sensual space-time — cannot be judged or evaluated meaningfully. Parts of it can be, and have to be, judged, as one encounters and endures them, and our hard-wired genetic reflexes tell us *most of the time but not infallibly all the time* “Is this good for me or bad for me?” Beyond that reflex level, we have intuitions and reason and feeling, all equally fallible, and nobody I ever met seemed smart enough to know what’s good or bad for the life-forms in one county of one state, much less what’s best for the universe as a whole. We judge as we choose between alternatives, but all such judgments are limited by the fact that *all would-be judges are involved in the contest*. To be specific, I “judge” the Norway rat as nefarious when it invades my house and I will be severe, even murderous, in my attempts to expel it, but I do not attempt to judge the Norway rat as a species, and I have the suspicion the Norway rat has its own rather strong views about wise guys who stuff brillo in rat-holes, as William Burroughs once noted.

In this evolutionary perspective, which seems to me the necessary view of one who honestly wants to think scientifically, I see no cause to panic at the thought of “violating” nature. Since it is impossible to escape natural law, any alleged violation must be a discovery of a new natural law or a new aspect of and old law. It is in this context that I have often expressed strong agreement with physicist Freeman Dyson’s view that we should not accept the deduction from the Second Law of Thermodynamics which tells us the universe is “running down” and that life someday may be impossible. As Dyson says, the only way to find out if that prediction is true is to *try* to refute it, i.e., to seek for ways that might “rewind” the universe to work toward a greater order rather than toward greater entropy. Since we have billions of years to work on this problem, before the alleged “heat death of the universe” is expected to occur, despair about the matter seems decidedly premature. To be stopped by the notion that such a project is “against nature” seems to me as superstitious as the views of those who told the Wright Brothers that their airplane was “against nature.”

It is for the same reason that I support anti-aging research and the search for longevity, even though many people tell me this is “against nature.” Human lifespan was less than 30 years before the Industrial Revolution, and not just due to “high infant mortality.” Death was common, not only between birth and 10 years, but between 10 years and 20, and between 20 and 30: if the pox didn’t get you, the plague generally would. For the working class, lifespan was still only around 37 years when Engels wrote *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. It was 50 for all classes in the Western democracies by 1900. It now hovers around 73 years, and is increasing. (A 1976 British study found 300 people over 100 years old in the United Kingdom; a 1986 study found the number had increased to 3000.) Each of these quantum leaps in lifespan, since modern technological medicine began, could be denounced as “against nature” just as plausibly as modern longevity research can be so denounced. My view is that if further extension of lifespan does “violate” nature, we can’t achieve it, and people don’t need to preach against it; but if it does not violate nature, we can achieve it, and I would find it most amusing and entertaining to live 300 or 400 years, or longer. (In that time, I might get smart enough to figure out what the hell is right or wrong for me most of the time, but I think it would take milleniums at least to figure out what the Ideologists all claim to know already, namely what is right and wrong for everybody.) Those

who find this appalling to their religious prejudices will forever retain the option of “suicide” (refusal of life-supporting technology) at whatever age seems “natural” to them — at 30 if they think we have only become “unnatural” since the French Revolution, at 50 if they think we only became “unnatural” in this century, etc.

In general — although I love animals and often go into raptures over the singing of birds, and even have a kind of reverence for species who are judged “ugly” and offensive by human chauvinism but still go on living and seemingly enjoying life despite that burden — a great deal of what I admire and appreciate in existence has been the result of human invention and ingenuity, such as pure mathematics and certain music and a few dozen paintings and poems and “cold inhuman technology” (as ecology mystics call it) that abolished bubonic plague in the last century and allowed me to walk again after I had polio twice and recently (in 1976) abolished smallpox and has made everybody in the Western democracies (even the folks on Welfare) much healthier and more comfortable than most of the people in most of past human history. I, personally, enjoy a good sunset better when I am simultaneously listening to Beethoven or *Carmina Burma* or maybe Vivaldi on that marvelous product of applied quantum mechanics, the modern stereo. Thus, the notion that morality has been, like most of what I love, *invented* by human wit and wisdom does not horrify me, as it appears to terrify Natural Law cultists; it merely adds to my esteem for human beings and the wonderful creativity of the human brain.

At this point editor Konkin added another footnote, which says, in full, “I take no backseat to Bob in cheering sooty smokestacks and their polyvinyl byproducts. Nature-without-(Wo)Man is the ultimate genocide. But that’s not why Lawmen oppose the “human invention” of Natural Law, Natural Rights and morality. One is not ruled by non-contradiction (another statement of Natural Law), one simply must deal with it in order to express one’s Will. Make no mistake, if morality is a human invention, *some humans will be enslaved to others*. And that heresy is what we rightly fear.” Here Konkin scores a victory, since I certainly cannot rebut this; but that is only because I cannot understand a word of it. I am flattered to be called a heretic, however. Making a wild guess, I hazard that Konkin’s first sentence means that the logical law of non-contradiction is a “natural law” rather than a game-rule; in company with most modern logicians, I dissent. Von Neumann’s quantum logic seems as valid a game as Aristotelian logic, even though it lacks the non-contradiction rule, and in “natural law” or at least in natural science, this modern 3-valued logic fits atomic physics better than Aristotelian two-valued logic does.

(In fact, as I pointed out earlier, even those unaware of quantum mechanics and von Neumann’s math intuitively use a version of his quantum logic in everyday affairs, recognizing that if some predictions appear reliable, and others appear totally unreliable, most events remain in the “maybe” category until we encounter and endure them. We only forget this three-valued (yes, no, maybe) logic when hypnotized by Aristotelian metaphysics, and the fact that von Neumann’s math, based on three yes-no-maybe truth-values, came as a shock in the 1930s merely indicates that Academia has indeed been hypnotized by Aristotle for over two millenia. No practical person ever believed that daily-life choices could be reduced to Absolute either/or dichotomies.)

How one gets from such technical points in logic theory to Konkin’s conclusion that if (and only if?) morality was invented like science and philosophy then slavery can (or must) exist, is a mystery beyond my powers of comprehension. I am a slow learner, as I have admitted. It is my impression that slavery has existed in most pre-industrial societies, was “justified” by whatever philosophy or pseudo-philosophy was handy at the time, and resulted from the lust for profit rather than from philosophical speculation. It is also my impression that the majority of Natural Law theorists in the 18th Century found slavery quite compatible with their ideas of Natural Law, simply by assuming that black people had a ghostly indwelling “nature” or “essence” different from those of white people. Since, like all metaphysics about indwelling spooks or essences, this cannot be proven or disproven experimentally, slavery was only abolished when it became economically less profitable than industrial “free” labour.

I can't resist adding that the word "heresy" is appropriate for Konkin to use in castigating me. The word "heresy" is not only redolent of the medievalism that infests Natural Law theory, but is singularly appropriate for them to use as a cuss-word. It comes from the Greek, *hairesis*, to choose; and that is what this debate is all about. The Natural Law philosophy arose among Christian dogmatists, and those who insisted on their right to choose for themselves instead of accepting "revealed dogma were naturally called *choosers* or heretics; after nearly 2000 years, the debate still reduces to Natural Law cultists trying to tell the rest of us what is right and proper, and some of us still *choosing* to think for ourselves. (Finally, I do not admire sooty smokestacks; I admire the creative intelligence that has produced non-polluting technologies even though Capital has not yet invested in them.)

Basically, the idea that something is devalued or degraded if it is shown to be a human invention sounds rather medieval and theological to me, and again incites Stirnerite suspicions about the unconscious metaphysical baggage still lurking in the heads of self-proclaimed Rationalists. If Bach invented his music instead of "receiving it from some trans-mundane or metaphysical source, that does not lessen my love for the music; it merely increases my esteem for Johann Sebastian himself. If Newton and Einstein invented their gravitational models rather than "discovering" them — the Copenhagen view, which is admirably popularized by Bronowski in *Science and Human Values* — that does not decrease the practicality of these mathematical inventions but does increase my awe for the brain-power of Isaac and Albert. And if Jesus invented the admirable remark in *John 8:7* — which ought to be burned into the backside or every moralist, with a branding iron, since it is the one "moral" idea in human history that they most frequently forget — that does not decrease the wisdom of the saying but adds much to my admiration of Jesus; it still makes sense if he thought of it himself instead of receiving it by psychic pipeline from Papa Tetragrammaton. And, for that matter, if the pyramids were created by people, and not by extraterrestrials as von Daniken would have us believe, that does not change my evaluation of the pyramids but adds further to my esteem for my fellow humans. In short, I do not think things have to be inhuman to be wonderful, and I do not believe that because something has been produced by humans it is therefore contemptible. Both of these ideas, I suggest, look suspiciously like hangovers from the masochism of medieval monkery.

Before closing this section, it seems necessary to point out the outstanding error of Max Stirner, the first philosopher to realize fully that, while modern Natural Law theory pretends to be rational, it actually comes its medieval metaphysics hidden in blurry metaphors. Stirner proceeded from this discovery, which he documents beautifully and sometimes hilariously, to a rather extreme *non sequitur*, and claims (or in the heat of his rhetoric seems to be claiming) that, if morality is a human invention, morality is somehow absurd. At this point I suspect Stirner also was not free of medieval anti-humanism. I would rather say that because morality appears to be a human invention, we should esteem it as we esteem such inventions as language, art and science. This esteem, readers of this essay will realize by now, does not mean uncritical adulation. Rather the reverse: I believe we express our esteem for the great moralists, poets, artists and scientists of the past by imitating their creativity rather than parroting their ideas, and by *creating* our own unique voices and visions and contributions to humanity's accumulated wisdom and folly. (I always hope to add to our wisdom, but realize that the probabilities are that I am, just as often, adding to our folly.)

It hardly seems necessary to add, at this point, that Hitler thought he was following "Natural Law" when he invaded smaller countries, and although his scientific error can easily be refuted, he seems, in some ways, more realistic and less medieval than most Natural Law mystics. In brief, Hitler thought, as the Social Darwinists of the previous century also thought, that the "cruelty" and "inhumanity" of the animal world means that to be "natural" or to act in accord with "natural law" means to act as mercilessly as a predator stalking and devouring its prey. Since this theory is based on actual observation of actual animals, it sounds more like scientific "natural law" than the metaphysics we have been criticizing.

I do not believe in this form of “natural law” any more than I believe in the others, because “nature” is too complicated and diverse, as I have already pointed out, for any “moral” generalizations to be drawn on it. *Sometimes* evolution rewards the behavior that seems “immoral” to civilized people, as in the predator example, but, just as often, evolution rewards “altruistic” or “moral” behavior: the social animals have survived because their cooperative behavior gives them an advantage. The statement that there “is” no moral law in nature could better be stated as: there is no *one* moral law in nature. Animal behavior includes every possible “moral” and “immoral” law.

More concretely, the predators are indeed part of nature, but they are only *part*. The prey is part of “nature,” too, and it is amusing that no Ideologist on record has ever set out to become the prey on the grounds that such is “nature’s way.” It seems that like Peter Z., the pagan philosopher, most theoreticians pick what they want out of “nature” and call that part the whole. Nature, moreover, offers us many other models besides predator and prey. There is the parenting relationship, in which analogs and perhaps more than analogs of human love are found. There is the “courage” of the baboon pack leader who will throw himself between attacking leopards and the herd he dominates and protects; there is the “cowardice” of the average mammal who will normally run away from any fight that can be avoided. There are parasites and symbiotes, social animals and isolates, cooperative species and competitive species, and even vegetarians and monogamists.

Nature, in short, exhibits endless variety; but human morality was invented, and is re-invented daily, by people making choices. Since heretics are, etymologically, “those who choose,” as pointed out earlier, it should be no surprise that we owe most of our evolutionary recent “moral” ideas to persons who were considered terrible heretics in their own time. It is no accident that the major refrain in the New Testament is the voice of lonely individual judgement set against abstract Rule Books: “It was written in old times...but I say unto you...”

Or as the old hymn says,

Jesus walked this lonesome valley
He had to walk there by himself
Nobody else could do it for him
He had to do it all alone.

The Individual vs. the Abstract

The deviants, who are so frequently the inventive and creative spirits, shall no longer be sacrificed; it shall not be considered infamous to deviate from conventional morality; numerous experiments in life and society shall be made; a tremendous amount of bad conscience shall be lifted from the world.

— Nietzsche, *The Dawn*

I have been arguing that if morality derives, as its etymology suggests — *mores*: the customs of a people — from human creativity or inventiveness or imagination, that is no reason to despise it. (Blake, indeed, thought “imagination” was another name for “god” and many have felt the same way about creativity.)

All products of creativity and imagination are open to criticism, revision, improvement and continued progress. That has been true in every art and science, and it has even been true for morality itself in relatively open societies, despite the fulminations of Natural Law cultists. *No generation knows enough to legislate for all time to come.* Unless we remain open to the process or criticism, correction, revision and improvement, we become, whether we intend it or not, actively reactionary, and our role then becomes that of opposing creativity and the improvement of the human condition.

The attempt to remove moral choice from the realm of humanity and place it in a “spooky” or Platonic superhuman realm, thus, has historically usually been allied with political conservatism and reaction; libertarians who espouse this mysticism should be aware they are using the ammunition of the enemy, which may blow their heads off someday. Since Platonic realms cannot be investigated by sensory-sensual-scientific means, no experiment can refute any doctrine offered about them. The experimentalist can only say, as I do, *unproven*, and perhaps add a few remarks about the “meaningless” nature of propositions that can neither be proven nor refuted. Those attracted to “superhuman” or “transmundane” morality or “Natural Law” or similar metaphysical speculation, therefore, will be drawn chiefly from the ranks of those temperamentally averse to the experimental method, to science, and to “revisionism” in general: those who are seeking an artificial stasis in an otherwise evolving and ever-changing universe. Climbing into bed with a metaphysician means climbing into bed with a reactionary also.

I cannot stress too strongly that, since Platonic realms cannot be investigated by experiment, they are beyond the most powerful critical instrument we possess: a morality so located is beyond normal philosophical analysis or criticism, and akin to the *tabu* systems of savages and organized religion. And, since Platonic realms are usually considered “eternal” or “timeless” or in some way beyond change, adopting this Platonic stance tends to imply that we should go back to the medieval practice of *memorizing* some form of Holy Writ rather than continuing the modern practice of *analyzing* experience itself: this seems psitticine to me.

Finally, since such Platonic realms are alleged to be Absolute, inaccessible and timeless or “eternal” all at once, the kind of “morality” derived, or allegedly derived, from such realms will be *mechanical* and therefore heartless and mindless: the Rule Book tells you what to do. Think of the old farmer throwing Lillian Gish and her baby out in the snowstorm in *Way Down East* and you will have a vivid image of what kind of mechanical morality has generally meant, why Joyce “feared those big words that make us so unhappy,” and why educated people these days almost visibly *cringe*, or at least shrink with “fear and loathing” at the very mention of the word “morality.” To be blunt, it stinks of Falwell and Reagan. If libertarianism means anything, it certainly should mean progress, not stasis; change, not medieval dogma; a liberation of energies, not a new cage.

Of course, there is an opinion broad in the land that libertarianism does mean a mindless, heartless and mechanical system of medieval dogma. I don’t know how this impression came about, although it probably has something to do with Randroids and other robot Ideologists who occasionally infest libertarian groups. Frankly, I have always loathed being associated with such types and devoutly wish libertarianism could be sharply distinguished from Idolatry and fetishism of all sorts. If liberty does not mean that we can all be more free, not less free, then I need to find a better word than “liberty” to describe my aspirations; and if we are to be governed by a Natural Law Rule Book of extramundane authority, we can scarcely claim to have advanced beyond the dark ages and might as well make our submission to the Pope again. (He’s funnier than Ayn Rand, anyway.)

I do not see this dispute, then, as merely philosophical hair-splitting, and I would hate to see it degenerate into Ideology. I am not claiming to offer Eternal Truth here (I don’t know where such a commodity is to be found) but only stating an attitude. If Ideologists ever convince me that this pragmatic, individualistic, scientific attitude is incompatible with libertarianism, then I will find some other name for myself and not use the word “libertarian” anymore. I am not interested in Ideologies and don’t give a damn about labels at all, at all. I am interested only in what makes the world a little more reasonable, a little less violent and somewhat more free and tolerant than it has been in the past.

What I am writing about, might better be called *life-styles* than politics. As Tim Leary once said, the only intelligent way to discuss politics is on all fours, since it all comes down to territorial brawling in the end. The questions that I pose are basically matters of lifestyle and almost of *taste*: are we to be self-governors or are we to be ruled by ghostly abstractions from other worlds? Do we dare to trust our own judgments, fallible though they may be, or do we look for super-sensory Authority to decide hard

cases for us? Are we willing to learn from others, and from the unique experience of each day, or do we have an abstract blueprint that we never revise? We all have brains which use rational programs to decide cases that can be decided that way, and which also use other circuits loosely called feeling and intuition and memory, and all of these, including reason, can be self-deceptive at times, but if we have a sense of humor and lack a sense of Papal Infallibility, we don't make too many gross errors (most of the time); we will use that bundle of cells in our skull, or will we mechanically look up the answer in the rule book? Are we going to be individualists eventually, or must we always rely on metaphysical abstractions that look suspiciously like theological *tabus* in disguise?

As I say, these are questions of attitude and life-style, not of party politics and Ideology. But they all resolve to the one basic question that separates the sheep from the goats in every generation: are we learning and growing every hour, or are we still enthralled by verbal abstraction, by Ideal Platonic Horseshit that never changes?

Toward a Conclusion Almost

It used to be thought that physics describes the universe, but now we know physics only describes what we can say about the universe.

— Niels Bohr, quoted in Paigels, *The Cosmic Code*

It seems to me that the most important discovery of modern science and modern philosophy is contained in Bohr's distinction (above) between "the universe" and "what we can say about the universe." Bluntly, "the universe" must always be considered somewhat unknown and uncertain, consisting in a sense of two parts:

I. What we can meaningfully say about "the universe" at this date — the results of all human experience and experiment that has been so often repeated that we feel safe in regarding it as not totally hallucinatory.

II. All the rest of existence which has not yet been encountered and endured by humans.

From this "modern" or post-quantum point of view, it now seems clear that the attempt to talk meaningfully about both class I and class II can never succeed; to endeavor to do it all, as Heisenberg said, is like relapsing into medieval debate about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. Scientifically meaningful speech deals with class I, what has been repeatedly encountered in human experience. Speech about class II does not contain scientific meaning, and it is hard to see what kind of meaning it does contain.

It is often said that post-Bohr physicists "deny reality," and this leads to the impression that they have become solipsists or radical subjectivists. Editor Konkin's footnotes (not all of which I have bothered to rebut, since some appear meaningless to me) contain a strong conviction that my own post-quantum views "are" subjectivist. This seems to derive from another over-simplified Aristotelian dualism — one is *either* objectivist *or* one is subjectivist. Some of us, however, can count beyond two, and see many alternatives where Aristotelians see only digital either/ors.

The post-quantum view is often called *transactional* or *holistic*; either of those labels seems more appropriate than "subjectivist" which chooses one side of an artificial Aristotelian dualism. The transactional view does not require extensive immersion in quantum math; it has appeared independently in psychology and neurology and, especially, perception science. As I continue to point out, most ordinary people, when not hypnotized by a logician or a demagogue, intuitively employ the post-quantum and transactional point of view in daily life.

For instance, we all *hallucinate* occasionally, although we do not think of it that way and generally do not worry about our "mental health" or rush off to a psychiatrist when it happens. I refer to simple

incidents like this, which happen every day to most of us: You are walking down the street, and you see an old friend approaching. You are astonished and delighted, because you thought he had moved to another city. Then the figure comes closer, and you realize that your *perception-gamble* (as transactionalists call it) had been in error: the person, as he passes, is clearly registered as a stranger.

This does not alarm you, because it happens to everybody, and daily “common sense,” without using the technical terms of quantum physics and transactional psychology, recognizes that perception and inference are probabilistic transactions between brain and incoming signals. Every perception is a gamble, in which we see part, not all, (to see all requires omniscience) and “fill in” or project a convincing hologram out of minimal clues. We all intuitively know the obvious and correct answer to the Zen *koan*,

Who is the Master who makes the grass green?

Perception, as a transaction between brain and signals, contains the same ambiguities as quantum mechanics, we are arguing, because scientific instruments only magnify and make more inescapable the recognition of the transactional nature of knowledge. The laboratory conditions of brain + instruments + signals just makes more inescapable the transactional character of the daily-life experience of brain + signals. We never know “the universe” — a reified abstraction. What we do know, because it is as intimate as our jugular vein, is our transactions involving brain + signals or brain + instruments + signals. This makes the total of “what we can meaningfully say” — namely reports on our transactions with those energies who have tentatively decoded and thus converted into signals.

All such decodings remain tentative, not certain, because we cannot predict future experience and experiment.

The “modern” quantum-psychology view, then, is not subjective or objective, but holistic (including “observer” and “observed” as one synergetic *gestalt*); and it does not “abandon reality” in some mad surrealist excess of solipsism but, more concretely and specifically, redefines “reality,” not as a block-like entity “outside” is in Euclidean space — we now know Euclidean space itself is only one model among many — but as an ongoing transaction in which we are involved as intimately as in sexual intercourse.

The intimate involvement may or may not be a scientific equivalent of the Oriental “dance of Shiva,” as some popularizers claim, but it smashes down what Dr. J.A. Wheeler calls “the glass wall” which Aristotelian logic tacitly assumes between “me” and “the universe.” As Dr. David Bohm points out in *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, leaving “me” out of the “universe” never corresponded to experience, even when it was a fashionable form of thought, because experience consists of whole transactions (synergies) which, in experience, are never broken but form a seamless unity. My *experience* is *my* experience.

Absolutists of all sorts — not just the Natural Law theorists — have always wanted to abolish disagreements by finding “one truth” valid for all participants in the life experience. Because each brain makes its own transactions with energy, turning energy into such “signals” as it can decode in its habitual grid, this totalitarian dream of uniformity seems neurologically impossible. Each of us “is” the Master who makes the grass green, and each of us makes it brighter or duller green depending on how awake we are or how deeply we are hypnotized or depressed. The case for individualism rests entirely on the fact that, each individual being neurologically-experimentally unique, each individual, however “queer” or “perverse” or “alien” they may seem to local prejudice, probably knows something that no other individual has ever noticed. We all have something to learn from one another, if we stop trying to ram our dogmas down everybody else’s throat and listen to one another occasionally.

“Subjectivism,” then, applies more to the Absolutists than to modern post-relativity and post-quantum thinkers. The Absolutist has found one way of organizing energy into signals — one model — which has become his or her favorite brain program. This model, being a brain product, retains autobiographical (subjective) elements, and the Absolutist is deluded in projecting it outward and calling it “reality.” The

“modern” view seems more “objective” in saying, at each point, “Well, that model may have some value, but let’s look back at the energy continuum and see if we can decode more signals, and make a bigger or better model.” The Absolutist, insisting that his/her current model contains all truth, appears not only more subjective, but unconscious of his/her subjectivity, and thus “bewitched” or hypnotized by the model. In insisting that his “one true model” or Idol should be satisfactory to all other brains, and especially in the favorite Absolutist error of assuming that all other brains which do not accept this “one true model” as the only possible model must be illogical or dishonest and somehow nasty, the Absolutist always tends toward totalitarianism, even in sailing under the flag of libertarianism.

Blake said, “One Law for the Lion and Ox is tyranny.” But even more, one “truth” for the Lion and Ox is impossible. There will always be different lanes for different brains, different scenes for different genes, different strokes for different folks.

We can negotiate meaningfully when we understand those neurological facts. When we think we have the “one true model,” we cannot negotiate but only quarrel, and, in politics, usually we fight and kill.

Sleep-Walking and Hypnotism

All that we are is the result of all that we have thought. It is founded on thought. It is created by thought.

— Gotama Buddha, *The Dhammapadam*

I stated at the beginning that this booklet concerns hypnosis and self-hypnosis; I shall now explicate that remark.

If you are arguing for racial equality with a man who keeps using the word “nigger,” you will eventually discover that you are making no headway and that some barrier prevents clear communication. If you are discussing censorship laws with a lady who keeps using the word “smut,” you will experience that same sense of banging your head against a brick wall. If you attempt to reason with a Marxist, the word “bourgeoisie” will eventually be invoked to banish any coherence or logic in what you have been saying.

It is a truism in social science that human beings can be defined as the language-using class of life. Buddhists, semanticists and hypnotists know that we not only *use* words but are also easily mesmerized by them. Hypnotists in real life seldom have to use glittering jewels or shining mirrors as they do in films; the ordinary domesticated primate can be hypnotized quite quickly and easily with *words* alone, spoken in proper cadence and with abundant repetition. Advertisers try to hypnotize us all the time, and judging by the fees they collect from satisfied clients, they are doing very well at it. Having used hypnosis in my psychological seminars for nearly 20 years now, I am quite prepared to agree with G.I. Gurdjieff and Colin Wilson that most people can be said to be hypnotized most of the time, and that the professional hypnotist only switches them from their habitual trance to a different trance.

In fact, when I first started using hypnotism I was astounded that so many people went into deep trance quickly when I was only attempting to induce light trance. It was many years before I understood fully Gurdjieff’s insistence that most people are sleep-walking in a deep trance state most of their lives. Now I am only astonished that many people actually come out of their trance often enough to remember, occasionally, what they intended to buy at the supermarket.

If you have to deal with neurotics regularly, you will eventually observe that most of them say *aloud* once or twice a week something to the effect, “They won’t give us a chance,” “You can’t win,” “The smart boys have it all sewed up,” etc. The odds are that such a neurotic is silently repeating these sentences sub-vocally — in the “interior monologue” of ordinary consciousness — many, many times a day. This form of self-hypnosis is known as a *Loser Script* in the language of Transactional Analysis.

Other people hypnotize themselves into other reality-tunnels by endless repetition of such *mantras* as “I like everybody, and everybody likes me” (the successful Salesman script), “All niggers are treacherous” (the Racist script), “All men are bastards” (the reverse sexist or Radical Lesbian script), “I *deserve* a drink after a morning like that” (the apprentice Alcoholic script), “I can’t control my temper” (the Go Directly to Jail Do Not Collect \$200 script), “Cancer is only mortal mind. Divine mind has no cancer. I am Divine Mind” (the Christian Science script), etc.

Self-hypnosis need not be destructive, obviously. Like “faith,” it can be a releaser of energy, a spur to creativity and a tool of self-improvement (metaprogramming the human biocomputer) — as long as you’re not a damned fool about it, to quote the immortal W.C. Fields again.

Uncovering the sentences that perpetuate self-hypnosis is a major goal in some forms of psychotherapy — such as Rational-Emotional Therapy, Reality Therapy and Transactional Analysis — and is acknowledged as important in most other forms of psychotherapy. Many accelerated forms of therapy now in vogue rely largely on teaching people to abandon *negative self-hypnosis* and begin using the powers of *positive self-hypnosis*.

Count Korzybski, the pioneer semanticist, said that humans are the symbol-using species and therefore those who control symbols control human destiny. Stokely Carmichael, a Black civil rights leader of the 1960s, said it this way: “The power to define is the power to control.”

Hypnotism can induce people to shut off pain at the synapse, and surgeons can operate on them as if they were anesthetized. Hypnotism can stop bleeding. Hypnotism can even induce hallucinations: “In five minutes,” the hypnotist says, “you will see a clown stick his head in the window.” In five minutes, the subject looks startled and giggles, then reports that he saw a clown at the window. Advertisers have learned this trick, also. Most men have a favorite brand of beer which they insist tastes better than others, but when blindfolded, as Packard documented in *The Hidden Persuaders*, these men cannot identify their favorite brand from a selection of five. The superior taste they ordinarily experience must be considered a hypnotically induced hallucination.

I have always dreaded both Ideology and Theology, because they make people cruel. It now appears to me that ordinary men — and occasionally ordinary women — do monstrous things for their Ideologies and Theologies only because politics and religion function largely, like advertising, through hypnotism and self-hypnotism. This is the opinion also of Colin Wilson in his extraordinary and terrifying *Criminal History of Mankind*. Examining the blood-curdling acts of both those who have always been called criminals (the free-lance marauders) and those government officials who have only been identified as criminals (that is, as “war criminals”) in the last generation, Colin Wilson concludes that in each case there is abundant evidence that the perpetrators of atrocities were, not metaphorically but literally, hypnotized or self-hypnotized. That is, they had learned how to make hypnotic words and sentences more real to their brains than the ordinary testimony of the senses and feelings.

This seems hard to believe at first, as it is hard to believe that most people are hypnotized most of the time. But consider two of the outstanding forms of Ideology in the world — racism and sexism. If you have observed a racist or sexist in action, you will note that they do not see or observe the concrete human being before them; they “see” only the hallucination triggered by the hypnotic words of their internal racist or sexist script, which they have been repeating, both aloud and sub-vocally, for many, many years. This, of course, is easiest to observe when you are the victim of racism or sexism, but, fortunately for our specie’s education there is enough reverse racism and reverse sexism around these days that I can confidently expect all readers have had a few experiences with deeply hypnotized subjects of the type I am describing. Even if you are white, you have encountered black racism and observed that it doesn’t react to your sensory-sensual activity in space-time at all: it is a robot program that reacts only to your skin color. You might have learned from that what it is like for black people to try to deal with thoroughly hypnotized white racists. And if you are male, you have undoubtedly met a

few deeply hypnotized Radical Feminists by now, and have some clue as to how women feel in dealing with male sexism.

Every Theology and every Ideology, it seems to me, is an endeavor in hypnotism and self-hypnotism. If there is one thing that everybody knows in common sense — when they are in “their right minds” and not hypnotized — it is that “all generalizations are hazardous” and that individual cases are each unique. The function of Theological and Ideological hypnosis is to forget the common sense and follow the robot-program that evades the responsibility of thinking and feeling anew in each unique situation. It is not just the other gang’s Theology or Ideology that is nefarious: all Theology and Ideology is nefarious. It is a form of sleep-walking in which we can do monstrous things because we are not alive, awake and aware of who we are, where we are and what is going on around us.

In hypnosis, we “live in our heads” — i.e., in the “magic” verbalisms that induce and perpetuate our trance. In hypnotism, if we believe pain does not exist, pain goes away, and if we believe a disciplined German officer should not have normal human feelings, normal human feelings go away and we can perform atrocities. In hypnotism, any verbal formula can become as “real” as or even more “real” than the sensory-sensual manifold of space-time. In hypnosis, a verbal abstraction such as Racial Purity or Class War or God’s Will becomes more “real” and more “important” to the brain than the sense-data reporting a bottle of beer and a ham sandwich on the table or a bleeding victim of the Ideology lying in the street.

The Ideology of Natural Law, I submit, must be classed as a form of self-hypnosis. I have argued, throughout, that the Platonic world of Natural Law and other abstractions does not interface at any point with the space-time continuum of ordinary sensual-sensory experience, the bottle of beer or the victim’s body. For this reason, which they how, the more intelligent Natural Law theorists attribute Natural Law to some other, allegedly “higher” world. I suggest that where Natural Law exists — where gods and demons and faery-folk and *pookahs* exist — is in the hypnotized brains of those who have invoked these ghostly entities by repeating hypnotic chants to themselves, over and over, until this made-up world is more real to them than the world of experience.

That the Ideologist “lives in the head” is familiar folk wisdom, but it contains terrifying implications.

I have argued that morality derives from human experience, human reason, human feeling, human intuition and human creative energy generally. Other animals do not have “morality” for the same reason they do not have art or science: their brains do not abstract higher-order information from sensory information, as ours do, and hence they do not perform creative acts with information. If this analysis has any truth, then morality, like art and science, is *not a finished product* but almost an *evolving* organism, to which each of us can contribute if we “live with integrity” in Bucky Fuller’s sense of that phrase — namely, if we come out of our heads, out of our abstractions, and look concretely at our concrete *individual* experiences in space-time as processed by our *individual* reason and feelings and intuitions. Living with integrity in that sense was once defined by Confucius as “respecting one’s own nose.” To me, this is what individualism and libertarianism are all about. “*Smash, smash, smash the old tablets of law and wake from the myths that all generations have believed!*”

If we do not wake up in that concrete sense — if we are still hypnotized by spooks and abstractions — no manner of talk and chatter about individualism and liberty has any concrete existential meaning, because we are still walking around in a trance: zombies programmed by whatever verbalism in our head stands between us and the thunderous astonishment of every unpredictable moment in waking life.

These ideas can be made more concrete with a parable, which I borrow from John Fowles’s wonderful novel, *The Magus*.

Conchis, the principle character in the novel, finds himself Mayor of his home town in Greece when the Nazi occupation begins. One day, three Communist partisans who recently killed some German soldiers are caught. The Nazi commandant gives Conchis, as Mayor, a choice — either Conchis will

execute the three partisans himself to set an example of loyalty to the new regime, or the Nazis will execute every male in the town.

Should Conchis act as a collaborator with the Nazis and take on himself the direct guilt of killing three men? Or should he refuse and, by default, be responsible for the killing of over 300 men?

I often use this moral riddle to determine the degree to which people are hypnotized by Ideology. The totally hypnotized, of course, have an answer at once; they *know beyond doubt what is correct, because they have memorized the Rule Book. It doesn't matter whose Rule Book they rely on — Ayn Rand's or Joan Baez's or the Pope's or Lenin's or Elephant Doody Comix* — the hypnosis is indicated by lack of pause for thought, feeling and evaluation. The response is immediate because mechanical. Those who are not totally hypnotized — those who have some awareness of concrete events of sensory space-time, outside their heads — find the problem terrible and terrifying and admit they don't know any "correct" answer.

I don't know the "correct" answer either, and I doubt that there is one. The universe may not contain "right" and "wrong" answers to *everything* just because Ideologists want to have "right" and "wrong" answers in all cases, anymore than it provides hot and cold running water before humans start tinkering with it. I feel sure that, for those awakened from hypnosis, every hour of every day presents choices that are just as puzzling (although fortunately not as monstrous) as this parable. That is why it appears a terrible burden to be aware of who you are, where you are, and what is going on around you, and why most people would prefer to retreat into Ideology, abstraction, myth and self-hypnosis.

To come out of our heads, then, also means to come to our senses, literally — to live with awareness of the bottle of beer on the table and the bleeding body in the street. Without polemic intent, I think this involves waking from hypnosis in a very literal sense. Only one individual can do it at a time, and nobody else can do it for you. You have to do it all alone.

Neurological Relativism

Robert Anton Wilson

1978

In my previous two columns, I have presented the case for the ultimate skepticism (i.e. solipsism) as strongly as I could, indicated that it not only can be defended on rigidly logical grounds (cf. Hume, David, works of), but also that is seemingly confirmed empirically by the practice of silent-level meditation.

Of course, I am not a solipsist. Having fathered four children in this highly competitive society, I have had to confront the nitty-gritty gut-level reality of the iron laws of economics in a manner and with a persistence that makes me as much of a believer in “external reality” as any Marxist or Objectivist could wish.

I have even been on Welfare twice in my 45 years, for over a year each time. (It is a most educational experience and every libertarian ought to go through it, just as every Marxist ought to have the experience of running a business and meeting a payroll.) Nobody who has gone through the rituals of social degregation involved in falling from Associate Editor of *Playboy* to Welfare “case” (*Americanus nondesirabilis*) can be a solipsist. To get off Welfare and become affluent again, as I have also done, is an even better cure for solipsism; if I hadn’t figured out some of the laws of that part of the “external world” known as publishing, I would still be on Welfare.

Nonetheless, my skepticism does verge very close to the solipsistic extreme, and Mr. John Walker had ample excuse to wonder, as he did in *NLW 93*, how somebody as close to solipsism as I am does manage to deal with the external, sensory-sensual, existential world at all.

The answer is the same as Godzilla gave on *Saturday Night Live* when Baba Wawa asked him, “How do you and Mrs. Godzilla *do it?*”

“Very carefully,” said Godzilla. And that’s how I deal with “reality.”

As the result of the yogic and alchemical disciplines I have practiced during the last 15 years, I know that the solipsist position is the minimal truth, i.e., that all we really know is a stream of sensation. The common sense hypothesis that there is an Ego (“me”) observing/experiencing this stream, are unprovable, but denying them seems to lead to worse confusion than (tentatively) accepting them.

But I also know that everything I think I know about the Ego (“me”) and the External World (“it”) is woefully little, and very misleading (more “untrue” than “true”) because it is such a microscopic fragment of what the total Me and the total Universe must be. Blake said, wisely, that “Every thing Capable of being Believed is an Image of the Truth;” but it is also true, as Blake no doubt realized, that Every thing Capable of being Believed is Self-Hypnosis.

It is empirically known to me, through neurological experiment, that every time I manage to change to focus of my nervous system, a new Me appears, and a new External Reality, and that these mingle in curious ways, and each grows steadily bigger, weirder, more mysterious and more humorous as my researches proceed.

Artemus Ward put it this way: "The trouble with most folks is not that they don't know enough but that they know so much that ain't true." Or, in the more slashing style of Nietzsche's soaring sarcasm, "We are all much greater artists than we realize." Whatever we know of Me and The Universe through the filter of our nervous system is much more of a record of the structural functioning of the nervous system itself than it is of the enormous mysteries of the real Me and real Universe.

That is why Discordianism is such a jolly flavor of nihilism. There is joy ineffable in freedom from fixed ideas, even if those trapped in fixed ideas cannot imagine such a state and dread it "as the devil dreads holy water." Since I am mildly puzzled all the time, I am continuously curious and hence passionately involved. I deal with the world "very carefully" because I respect its mystery, whereas those who hold fixed ideas deal with the world (and each other) in blind and brutal ways that each of them can see how mad all the others are but none can see that his/her own fixed ideas are equally mad.

As Timothy Leary and I write in *Neuropolitics* (Peace Press, Los Angeles, 1977), "It is the function of the nervous system to focus, select, narrow down; to choose from an infinity of possibilities the biochemical imprints which determining the tactics and strategies of survival in *one* place, status in *one* tribe. The infant is genetically prepared to learn any language, master any skill, play any sex role; in a very short time, however, he becomes rigidly fixated to accept, follow and mimic the limited offerings of his social and cultural environment..."

"Because we are all imprinted with our own social bubbles, it isn't generally recognized that each reality map held by humans — however eccentric and paranoid — makes nearly as much sense as any other. People are vegetarians or nudists or Communists or snake worshippers for the same reasons that other people are Catholics or Republicans or liberals or Nazis."

This neurological relativism is not incompatible with adopting a belief-system involving predictions, assumed regularities or "laws," valuations and ethical judgements, etc. But one recognizes each belief system as a gamble, "my latest best guess," and does not confuse it with Truth, Reality or any other variety of eternal verity. Each belief-system, or reality-tunnel, is temporary — one except to replace it with a better system, more inclusive, more flexible, more amusing and more precise, if not by next Tuesday after lunch, certainly by the middle of next Winter.

All around one the True Believers trudge by, mouths grim, brows furrowed, ulcers and worse eating at their innards. This "desperate company of oddfellows" (Thoreau) live in what psychologists call "cognitive dissonance." Because their reality-maps are, one and all, too small to cover the vast, eerie, amusing world in which we live, they are perpetually frustrated: the world does not live up to their fixed beliefs. They are all convinced that there is something radically wrong with the universe itself, or with the rest of humanity, and they never suspect that the real trouble is in their own rigid and robotic nervous systems.

Thus I "believe" in libertarianism, in strict scientific method (the objective yoga of the West), in yoga (the neuroscience of the East), in Space Migration, in Life Extension, and in dozens of other things. But I can suspend any of these beliefs at will, or all of them, and look impassively into the Buddhist void, or switch around to other beliefs temporarily, to check out how the world looks to those who hold those beliefs.

Yea, brethern and sistren, now abideth doubt, hope and charity; these three; and the greatest of these is doubt. For doubt puffeth not itself up into pomposity; doubt suffereth long, and is kind. With doubt all things are possible.

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The Religion of Kerista and Its 69 Positions

Robert Anton Wilson

1965

Beatniks, swingers, and hippies all over the world are banding together to create a society where anything — but *anything* goes.

Eight years ago, an ex-Air Force officer named John Presmont was sitting in his room on East 31st Street in New York City when a voice spoke to him and told him he would be the founder of the next great world religion. Presmont, after leaving the Air Force with an honorable discharge, had become, by the age of 38, what nice people call a ‘bohemian’ or ‘beatnik’. At the time the Voice spoke to him, he had been reading the Koran and smoking marijuana rather heavily for 6 weeks. For several months before that, he had been laboriously plowing through all the scriptures of the great religions — Hindu, Confucian, Buddhist, Taoist, and so forth. Earlier still, he had chewed and digested a great deal of modern psychology and sociology. Like most of us, he was concerned with the growing horror of this age and, like a few of us, he had felt this concern grow within him until it overmastered and all but obliterated all his other interests. Nonetheless, he was abashed by the Voice.

“Why does it have to be *me*?” he cried.

“Because you’re so gullible,” the Voice answered solemnly.

“But what should I do?” Presmont continued to object. “I don’t know anything about founding a religion.”

“People will come to give you strength,” said the Voice unperturbed. “There is nothing you can do to prevent this thing from happening. Have a ball, enjoy yourself to the utmost. Find the mountain beside the sea. The Pied Piper will pull out the Swinging People.”

Today, a chubby and cherubic 44, John Presmont has become Jud the Prophet to a few thousand followers scattered in such odd places as London, Berlin, Tangier, New York City, San Francisco, and Passaic, New Jersey. For the first 5 years, his religion was called ‘our thing’ by its adherents because the Voice had said that ‘There is nothing you can do to prevent this thing from happening.’ Three years ago, however, the word got out that the Mafia is called ‘our thing’ (*cosa nostra*) by *its* members, and Jud soon had another vision, seeing a colony of Buddhas (Enlightened Ones) living on an island with a huge mountain by the sea., and it was revealed to him that the island would be called Kerista (derivation unknown). His followers now call themselves Keristans, and the religion is called Kerista.

The rule of the religion of Kerista is the rule of Rabelais’s abbey of Theleme: Do What You Will. Kerista is a religion of joy and freedom, a religion without dogma or restriction, and a religion of ecstasy, for the Voice had told Jud the Prophet, ‘Have a ball, enjoy yourself to the utmost.’ The Keristans uninhibitedly follow this injunction, and Kerista is, therefore, utterly unlike the dominant

forms of religion in Judeo-Christian cultures. The New York Police have been harassing the New York Keristans for quite a while, and on October 16, 1964, they arrested Jud the Prophet and 11 others for possession of marijuana. The police, obviously, didn't believe that anybody who is having a ball is really religious. Jud the Prophet, like Jesus and Mohammed before him, will have to endure the persecution of the infidels.

A few weeks ago, I journeyed down the the eastern part of Greenwich Village — where the bohemians now hang out — to meet nine members of Kerista and learn the essence of the faith. Do you know the East Village? You can walk for 10 blocks and never see a building that doesn't look as if it should have been condemned during the reign of Warren Gamaliel Harding. Puerto Rican kids, sleepy from marijuana, lounge in the windows watching you with insect eyes of indifference or brush past you angrily on the sidewalk and the message *Screw white America* comes off them like garlic from an Italian kitchen. Negroes loiter about with no more hope of the future or despair for the present than a rock has. The smell of poverty comes back to you, and if you haven't smelled it in 20 years you still recognize it — it is a blend of of cooking that is too spicy (to hide the fact that the food is too little) and the reek of dying bodies of old men who have known despair for too many years and the odor from the always-slightly-plugged-up hall toilets — and you see teams of cops pacing nervously around and they look at you with mean cop eyes wondering if you've got \$100,000 worth of Heroin in your attache case and what you are doing here in your uptown clothes anyway. Yes, this is a good place for a religion to be born, in such squat hutches Peter and Paul and Matthew must have preached.

My appointment was with a 24-year-old C.C.N.Y graduate who called himself Dau. When I found his apartment, a good-looking brunette who said her name was Tre let me in and said Dau would be back shortly. (Most of the Keristans eventually take these new names, which, like the Black Muslim 'X' or the Catholic confirmation name, symbolize a new identity) The apartment consisted of just two rooms. A monument-sized American flag acted as a room divider; another American flag hung over the window in lieu of curtains. There were no lights.

Dau suddenly charged in behind me, a hyperactive boy with a short, neat beard, and announced that the 'vibrations' were better in the 'nursery,' so we would conduct the interview there. We tramped down the stairs into the building next door and went to another apartment where seven other members of Kerista were waiting.

"I'm E.Z.," said a giant of a man who reminded me vaguely of illustrations to Paul Bunyan stories. He was wearing trousers, but nothing above the waist and no shoes or socks. His thick black hair hadn't been inside a barber shop for at least a year and his curly black beard was as wild as Rex Barney's pitching the season the Dodgers retired him. Three naked babies, all less than a year old, were playing on the floor. (The Keristans share everything, including care of the babies.) A blonde young lady wearing nothing but a pair of black panties came out of the kitchen, nodded at me, and went into another room, from which she soon emerged in a bathrobe and joined the discussion.

"You see?" Dau said. "Aren't the vibrations better here?" Everybody agreed that the vibrations were better.

I asked if Jud was present, and it turned out that he wasn't. "But I wanted to speak to the leader," I complained. A 22-year-old boy named Good quickly explained, "No, no man, you don't get it. Kerista has no *leader*. Jud is the *prophet*. Kerista doesn't need leaders, or teachings, or theories, or stipulations, or restrictions. Kerista is *freedom*."

"Kerista is freedom and *love*," E.Z. corrected.

What I heard about town was that Keristans were all bisexual, promiscuous, and 99% of the time zonked out of their skulls on marijuana, peyote, LSD-25, or some other psychedelic drug. As delicately as I could, I inquired about this aspect of their freedom.

"Well, first of all," Good said, "we're not trying to enforce anything on anybody. That goes against freedom, and freedom is our law. People can keep any hang-up they've got, as long as they want to

keep it. Of course, if they want to get over their hang-ups, we'll help them. But we don't try to pressure anybody to try anything that they're still square about. We have one member who's still a virgin."

It developed that this apartment — which belonged to E.Z. and Marquel, the blonde girl who greeted me in her panties — was the 'nursery' only today. The three babies belong to all of this Kerista cell, and whichever apartment they are in for the day is the 'nursery' for that day. All in all, there are 10 such apartments in the East Village now.

The interview proceeded:

Q: Well, what happened after Jud heard the Voice?

A: [By Good] Nothing. He had to wait for the people to come, like the Voice said. One by one, over the years, we've found him.

Q: Do you take these odd names when you join Kerista?

A: [by Dau] Well, first you got to get in contact with your pure self, through Buddhho, the art of no-defense. That means not defending the social self with all the usual hang-ups and bullshit. When you find the pure self, you take a new name.

Q: How do you get new names?

A: [by Dau] From a Ouija board.

Q: I see. What is Buddhho, the art of no-defense?

A: [by Dau] You get rid of bullshit. You stop defending yourself. Dig? You don't put up a front. You admit who you are. You don't play-act, you don't put people on.

Q: But how do you learn Buddhho?

A: [By Good] We teach it. You name the price, half-price for the first lesson. You start with conversation and learn how to stop defending yourself on that level. Then you move in and get rid of more subtle defenses.

Q: Did Jud invent Buddhho?

A: [By Tre] Dau invented Buddhho. It's a contraction of Buddha and judo. We've all added something to Kerista. There's no one truth.

Q: Now, about this voice that spoke to Jud. Do you believe it was the Voice of God?

A: [By E.Z.] If you want to call it that. You could call it Jung's 'collective unconscious' or the Zen 'not-self' if you wanted. We're not particular. The important thing is not theories. The important thing is living according to the pure self, not full of a lot of bullshit.

When you ask the Keristans about the 'vibrations,' they are rather vague. "You know, man, the vibrations." When you ask if they mean the hypothetical 'orgone energy ocean' suggested by Freudian heretic Wilhelm Reich, they disagree. Some think Reich's orgone energy is the vibrations, some doubt it. Reich and Freud, chiefly, they blame for the conservatism of modern psychiatry, and recently they sent out advertisements to all the psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, and psychotherapists in New York City offering to help them. "Let us solve your problems," the ad said, "We have none of our own. Learn Buddhho, the art of no-defense. You name the price. First visit half-price." There have been no takers.

Ther Keristans I interviewed came from a variety of backgrounds and it was hard to find a common denominator among them. E.Z. is 28 and grew up in the slums of the lower East Side, not far from where Kerista now flourishes. Although he was born of poor Russian immigrants and didn't finish junior high school, E.Z. acquired an education in the Air Force and worked for the Federal Aviation Agency after his discharge. "I was a good, middle-class square for 5 whole years," he says of his period with the F.A.A. His salary finally reached \$10,500 and he acquired a wife and a home in a fashionable Long Island suburb. But all the time he was "reading, reading, reading" and brooding over the meaninglessness of his job and his life. One day, he says, "The bullshit got to be too much for me. I just said to myself, 'This is no way for people to live.'" He quit his job, left his wife, and moved to the East Village and "became a beatnik," in his own words. Two years later he met John Presmont and was convinced that Kerista was the proper way for people to live. "Our society is all warped and fucked-up," he says.

Onn, a divorced 22-year-old with one child, was born in Alaska. Her parents were both teachers. Onn attended Northeastern University before making the East Village scene. She was converted to Kerista after her first LSD session with Keristans because "they looked so beautiful and everyone else looked so ugly."

Fly, an intense, highly-charged girl, is also 22 and has a B.A. in philosophy from Brooklyn College. Before becoming involved with Kerista, she was a member of the Committee for Non-Violent Action, an uncompromising pacifist group that practices hard-core Gandhian civil disobedience and is always going to jail for it. Fly is convinced that Kerista will be "the next great world religion." Self-consciously hip, Fly told me that she has sampled "pot, hashish, and Heroin," quickly amending the last to "uh, I mean junk."

Dom, 21, a bearded giant, comes from a Ukrainian farm family in Pennsylvania, "real European peasants," he says. He attended the University of Pennsylvania and later lived for a while in the Glen Gardner community in New Jersey, a religious (mostly Roman Catholic) anarchist group.

Good, 22, comes from a lower-class Hungarian-American family and summed up Kerista for me by quoting a line of poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti's: "Everybody has his own hole to climb out of." He has attended C.C.N.Y. and joined Kerista as soon as he heard about it. "Like as soon as it came along it was the thing to do," he says.

Marquel is an attractive 29-year-old blonde who was born of a middle-class Irish-American family and attended Bennington. She worked as a researcher for a leading advertising firm for 3 years, then, in disgust, went on unemployment "while I tried to find myself." When unemployment ran out, she waited on tables and posed for artists. Later she went to Paris and lived on a houseboat on the Seine for a year. She has two children, by natural childbirth, and has never married. Along with standard psychedelic drugs, she has also tried belladonna, an unpleasant experience which she finds impossible to talk about.

Tre comes from a middle-class German family in Pennsylvania and is 23. She attended Maryville College and now lives with Dau, who is 24. "The first time I was turned on to LSD," Tre told me, "I wanted to see Dau, so I picked up his vibrations and followed them. I went right into a park, following the vibrations, and there he was."

All of these Keristans were either born into the middle-class, or, like E.Z., achieved middle-class status through their own talents, and all have rejected it. They have turned their backs on the Affluent Society and now squat in the slums of the East Village convinced that they have liberated themselves from a living death. Their poverty does not bother them much, except to the extent that it handicaps them in fending off the police, who are taking an increasing, and unwelcome, interest in Kerista.

All that is central to Kerista, as it was explained to me, is Buddho, the art of no-defense: there are no regulations or stipulations. Buddho, it seems, is a technique, invented by Dau, for escape from other-directedness. It begins with watching yourself in ordinary conversation and observing how often you are 'defending' against implicit (or projected) criticism from the other party. More advanced Buddho includes the conquest of greed, sexual jealousy, and other "hang-ups." "We're trying to live according to the pure self, not full of bullshit," E.Z. says. When asked how Kerista differs from the many other swinging, free-living people in the East Village, San Fran, and other pockets of bohemia, E.Z. answers, "No difference. Except we have purpose, direction, goals, and love."

The economics of Keristans, I learned, are as strange as their religion and their sexual practices. At present, in the East Village group, four are working, four are receiving compensation from the Department of Welfare, and 18 are living hand-to-mouth. In practice, the eight are supporting the other 18 — or, if you prefer, the four who are working and the State of New York are supporting the 18. (Whenever anyone is in danger of eviction, for example, the group raises the money for that month's rent on that apartment.) What keeps this from being pure parasitism is that the ones who are working and the ones who are sponging are continually changing places, and that the ones not working are providing services for the entire group, such as baby-sitting or shopping or carrying clothes to the

laundermat. When money gets especially short, a few members will return to their parent's home to live for a while. (The groups in Passiac and Paterson each have a high-salaried executive in them, and the group in Las Vegas are all said to be comfortable.) John Presmont's Air Force pension guarantees that the New York group will always have an apartment on which the rent is paid up to date.

It was getting late, and Dom was eager to brew up some peyote tea, so I left, after making an appointment to meet Jud the Prophet.

Two days later, I went up to the Radio City office of a man named Desmond Slattery to meet Jud the Prophet. I found Jud to be a large, amiable, bearlike man with a shock of white hair that made him look more elderly and patriarchial than his 44 years. I started by asking him about the Keristan philosophy of sexual freedom. "We believe in love," he said. "People shouldn't be like balloons, ready to explode if they are touched. We believe in total sharing, and that means sharing love and affection as well as property. In Kerista, the only standard of a sexual relationship is mutual consent, by the two or three or four or however many parties are involved. We only have one fulltime homosexual member that I am aware of, but most of us are bisexual. People either dig that this is a natural, decent, loving way to behave, or they don't. I won't give you a lot of details for pornographic readers to drool over.

"Look," Jud said, "my work is over, in a way. I had the vision and communicated it, and now I'm finished. It's up to Des here to take the next step. You should interview him. Des is the most important man right now, because the most important part of Kerista right now is building an island colony, and that's his territory."

Desmond Slattery, a man of 50 with a short gray beard that made him look like Walter Huston playing Satan in *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, took the ball immediately. "Get this clear," he said, "I'm not religious. I abominate all religions, without exception. To me, Kerista is a social movement, and Jud knows how I feel."

"I don't care whether people call it a religion or social movement," Jud said. "The important thing is that they act naturally and decently."

Desmond Slattery began to explain the island colony to me. He had voluminous papers, maps, booklets, charts, and other paraphernalia to illustrate everything he said. A graduate of sociology from the University of Wichita, Slattery went into the jungles of British Honduras 5 years ago and created a new industry — the breeding of bees in a new environment and the extraction from them of a special honey obtainable only from bees fed on jungle vegetation — and his success was written up enthusiastically in an article in *Bee World*, the beekeeper's journal. Slattery sold the business as soon as he proved it could be done, for profit-making is the least of his interests. He has been a merchant seaman, a pilot for Pan Am, and Air Force officer, a hobo, a movie actor, and a TV producer, but most of the time he has preferred agricultural work in such odd corners as Tahiti, Japan, and South America. His real love is ecology, the science of biological balances that reveals the interdependence of all living beings. "That's my religion," he says. "Ecology." The Kerista island colony is to him a scientific experiment. "We'll put Jud's ideas to work in a natural environment and find out what they can do," he says. All the laws relating to agricultural cooperatives in British possessions are before him on his desk, together with maps of several possible islands; you believe, suddenly, that he will do what he says he will do. He may well be the Pied Piper who will pull out the Swinging People.

But a doubt remains. "How do you get the money to start?" I asked.

Slattery hauls out a piece of paper. "Here's four plans," he says. "I'm cooking up a few others if these all fall through." He has set a goal at \$50,000 and each plan seems like a fairly possible approach. One plan starts with 200 members, and another with 100 members. "If we can't get all the bread we really need," he says, "I go in with only 14 people, hire a few Indians, and start clearing the jungle with machetes." He means it. He has done it before. "Of course," he adds, and his eyes twinkle, "I'll pick these 14 damned carefully."

After the island is founded, Slattery plans to make it a tourist attraction for hipsters. "Kerista will become the hip San Juan," he says enthusiastically. "We'll keep our rates low, so people without a lot of bread can afford to come. There'll be thousands every year. Instead of living in a hotel with a lot of rich squares for three days, they can be happy with other swingers for a whole month. Every hippie in the States will eventually come down to make the scene with us." He is expecting to charge \$120 for a year on the island of Kerista, payable at \$10 per month for the previous year. (Further details about the island colony can be found in Keristan Flyer, 25 cents from Box 557, Radio City Station, New York.)

A friend of mine asked Jud, 4 years ago, why he founded Kerista, and Jud had answered, "I don't want to work for a living." I asked him about that, and he answered, "That's right. When we get the colony going, nobody will *work*. When you are doing what you want to do, it isn't *work*, it's *play*. One cat is raising rabbits, another is raising chickens, somebody's growing vegetables, they're all having a ball, is that *work*? Work is when you are taking orders from someone you hate."

"How would you sum up Kerista?," I asked.

"Total sharing," he said. "Getting rid of masochism *and* sadism, inferiority *and* superiority. Being yourself."

"Kerista is the essence of hip," Jud went on. "There are millions of hipsters all over the world who have a part of it. They're looking for Kerista without knowing it. Norman Mailer said that hip was going to give birth to the next religion. He was right and we're it."

When I had entered Slattery's office, I had been introduced to a young Negro girl, Joy, who then proceeded to sleep through most of the interview. Just before I left, I asked Jud if Keristans objected to monogamy — I was thinking of the Oneida colony in 19th century New York which regarded monogamy as antisocial selfishness, — and he said, "You still don't understand. Kerista is freedom. People can have one partner, if that's what they really want. I'm married to Joy. We were married 7 weeks ago."

Joy, who is 19 and came up from Alabama a year ago, told me how she got into Kerista. "I was taking around a petition to ask the city to keep the Mobilization for Youth open, and I met Jud in a bar and asked him to sign. 'Sure.' he said 'I sign everything.' Then he started telling me about Buddho, and I agreed to come to a Kerista meeting. After I heard them all I said, 'You people are crazy.' But I thought it over. Two days later, I joined up."

About a week afterward, at my invitation, Jud and Joy came out to spend a weekend with my family in our home high in the mountains of Sussex County, New Jersey. Unlike many hipsters we have had over, Jud and Joy were excellent guests, and my four children quickly fell in love with Joy. After the first meal, Jud insisted on washing the dishes. Joy cooked the big meal on Sunday, Jud also forced us to let him pay for some of the food for the weekend.

In the relaxed atmosphere of my own living room, I probed Jud for some information about the unconventional sexual practices of the Keristans. I soon learned, for one thing, that it is not at all unusual for two or three Keristans to be engaged in sexual hi-jinks on a couch while others carry on a conversation in the next room. I then inquired about the problem of contraception.

"Most of the Keristan men detest condoms," Jud said, "so it's up to the girls to protect themselves. They use the usual things, diaphragms and coils and pills."

This is protection against unwanted births, but it seems to leave the venereal disease problem unchecked. I asked about the rumor that Kerista had suffered a gonorrhoea epidemic a few months ago.

"Yeah," he said morosely, "That was Dau's fault. He went balling with outside chicks and brought back a beautiful case of the clap. It spread to nine of the downtown Keristans in a week. But then we caught it and everybody went down to the Public Health Service and had shots. It's all cleared up now. On the island, we'll take precautions and make visitors submit to a medical before mixing with the community."

None of the unmarried Keristan girls has yet to become pregnant through Keristan group-sex, Jud said. "At least," he added, "not in the New York groups." The three babies I had seen were all born before the mothers joined Kerista.

Feeling the lack of a definitive summary of Kerista, Jud had been working on a kind of statement of principles. Since Moses had his 10 Commandments, Luther his 95 Theses, and Anglo-Catholics their 39 Articles, Jud has decided to have 69 Positions. "This is just tentative, though," he said. "You don't have to agree with all of it to be a Keristan." He has written 25 of the 69 Positions and showed them to me:

Legalize group marriage. Legalize indecent exposure. Legalize trial marriage. Legalize abortion. Legalize miscegenation. Legalize religious intermarriage. Legalize marijuana. Legalize narcotics. Legalize cunnilinctus (sic). Legalize transvestitism. Legalize pornography. Legalize obscene language. Legalize sexual intercourse. Legalize group sex. Legalize sodomy. Legalize fellatio. Legalize prostitution. Legalize incest. Legalize birth control. Legalize Lesbianism. Legalize polygamy. Legalize polyandry. Legalize polygyny. Legalize homosexuality. Legalize voluntary flagellation.

"You see," he said, "it's all common sense. Almost all intelligent people are Keristans already, without knowing it." He has a half-formed plan to amalgamate Kerista with LEMAR (the League for Legalized Marijuana) and form a new political party with the 69 Positions as its platform. "We've still got a secret ballot," he said, "and people who are afraid to stick their necks out in public could go into the voting booth and, for once, stand up for what they really believed. I bet we'd get a lot of votes and scare the pants off the squares."

Later, Jud was reminiscing about the loft in which 22 Keristans had lived together for a while last year. "It was groovy," he said. "The rent came to \$10 a month for each person." It had its drawbacks, though: Dau brought in some really weird types. "There was one guy who showed up, balled 20 girls in a week, and never came back or paid for anything.. And there was one girl who was pretty far out, all she ever said was the word 'fuck'." Jud is trying to persuade other Keristans to screen out "the wrong types."

Joy is pregnant and Jud is shortly coming up for trial on a marijuana charge, but his spirits remain high. "Kerista can't fail," he says, "because people *need* it. We're all isolated in modern society. Isolation makes men paranoid: They've proved that in the laboratory. Cut a man off from all human contact and he starts going mad in about 6 hours. We're all too isolated and cut-off since the old religions died and commercialism began. We need a new religion — Bernard Shaw said it. Koestler said it, every intelligent man has said it. Kerista is the new religion. Nothing can stop Kerista. Nothing."

The Voice that spoke to Jud 8 years ago had more humor than the Voices that have spoken to the other visionaries in the past, and Kerista may seem, to the skeptical, a satire on religion. But there could be no doubt of the fervor, and the sincerity, of Jud when he said, "Nothing can stop Kerista." Kerista might very well become, like Zen in Japan, the church of the intellectual and artistic minority. There is certainly a market waiting for Jud's product. Three-quarters, at the very least, of the creative people I have met have been living as if they were members of Kerista without knowing it.

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The Semantics of “Good” & “Evil”

Robert Anton Wilson

1988

The late Laurance Labadie once told me a parable about a king who decided that everytime he met somebody he would kick them in the butt, just to emphasize his power. My memory may have elaborated this yarn a bit over the years, but basically it continues as follows: since this maniac wore a crown and had an army, people soon learned to tolerate being kicked fairly often, and even began to accept it philosophically or stoically, as they accept taxation and other impositions of kings and governors. They even learned to bend over as soon as they saw the king coming.

Eventually, the king died and his successor naturally continued the tradition and kicked anybody **he** chanced to meet. Centuries passed, and, in the usual course of things, the nobility as a whole had demanded, and acquired, the same “right” as the king: any baron could kick anybody of lesser rank, and the knights could kick anybody except the barons or the royal family, etc. A large part of the population spent most of its waking hours facing a wall, crouched over, waiting for the next boot in the bottom.

The coming of democracy, in that amazing parallel universe, could only be understood according to the traditional thought-forms or acquired mental habits of the strange people there. Democracy therefore meant to those peculiar folks that **anybody** could kick **anybody else** as long as the kicker could prove that he (or she) had a bigger bank balance than the person receiving the boot in the rump. Within the context of the gloss or grid or reality-tunnel in that world, “democracy” could not have any other **thinkable** meaning. (See Berger and Luckman’s *The Social Creation of Reality* if this sounds fantastic to you.)

Of course, at first everybody rejoiced in the Constitution of the new democracy, for now “justice” (as they understood it) had been achieved: if you had good health and good luck, you could eventually accumulate enough money in a bank to have the “right” to kick as many people as had the “right” to kick you, and if you were especially shrewd or especially lucky, you could rise to the level where you could kick almost everybody and nobody whoso ever could kick you.

Of course, eventually Heretics appeared in that world, as in ours. These people wanted kicking abolished entirely, and they refused to admit that this constituted a “wild and radical idea.” They said it just seemed like “common sense” and “common decency” to them. Naturally, no sane, sound person would take such loonies seriously for a moment. In order to avoid thinking about the arguments of the Heretics, the sane, sound citizens developed a vocabulary to dehumanize and discredit them. Anybody who objected to being kicked regularly was called a “whiner,” a “malcontent,” a “coward,” a “queer,” a “gutless Liberal,” a “loser,” a “defective,” a “deviant,” a “nut,” a “bum” etc.

You see, the people in that world had been conditioned to believe that if you pinned such labels on Heretics, then it was not necessary to think about any of their arguments. (I will pass over in silence the creepy possibility that certain contributors to *Critique* seem to have arrived from that goofy

alternative reality with their ideas of what constitutes reasonable debate unchanged during spatio-temporal transformation.)

Larry Labadie had his own point to make in creating that parable: as an anarchist, he believed the State Socialists were carrying over the worst features of Capitalism in their proposed Utopia. To me, however, the parable has a more general meaning, which I would state as follows: If people have lived with something every day of their lives, and especially if they know it has continued for many centuries, it becomes almost impossible to question it without sounding like some kind of pervert or eccentric, or, at best, like an intellectual wiseacre who can be suspected of just playing head-games or merely “toying with ideas.” At worst, the sane, sound domesticated people will decide you want to destroy the world or overthrow the deity or intend some atrocity equally drastic, and they will conspire to silence you.

To illustrate: after two centuries, most educated people can understand the philosophy of Deism as expounded by Voltaire. Historical research makes abundantly clear, however, that most of Voltaire's contemporaries did not understand Deism at all; references to him as an “atheist” can be found continually, not just in writers with polemical intent, but also in many who evidently thought they were writing objective expository prose. It seemed impossible at that time for most persons to comprehend that denying the Christian God (G_c , for convenience) did not mean denying any and all possible Gods (G_x).

Midway between Voltaire's time and our own, Theodore Roosevelt, in a celebrated speech, referred to Thomas Paine as a “dirty little atheist.” Contemporary accounts describe Paine as clean and tall, and his own writings express a Deist, not Atheist, philosophy. It seems that c. 1900 many still found it hard to recognize that between Christian Orthodoxy and Atheism many other possible philosophical positions — Aristotelian “excluded middles” — can be found by the independent enquiring mind. To proceed from philosophical kindergarten to graduate school in one step, consider this more advanced illustration: between 1900 and c. 1926, quantum physicists discovered that certain Aristotelian “laws of thought” simply do not apply to the sub-atomic level. Specifically, one cannot meaningfully speak of a sub-atomic “particle” as a thing-in-itself possessing indwelling “properties” apart from the observer and the observational apparatus. Worse: a sub-atomic “particle” cannot even be called a “particle” without the quotation marks, since it acts like a wave as often as it acts like a particle.

As I say, this sub-atomic non-Aristotelianism emerged from experiments and analysis in the first quarter of this century. The subsequent half a century has confirmed that the sub-atomic world acts in an even more non-Aristotelian fashion than appeared at first, and no attempt to hammer the data into an Aristotelian framework has succeeded.

What has emerged as the consequence of this? As Labadie's parable of the alternative world indicates, the consequence seems to be that quantum mathematics not only seems weird to laypersons but even to the leading physicists themselves, who have trouble understanding each other. If a scientific system cannot be stated in Aristotelian terms, nobody in our society is quite sure how it *can* be stated. To return to our metaphor, quantum philosophers seem to be trying to think of a world without arse-kicking while their minds are subtly programmed by a world in which such arse-kicking remains a predominant feature.

Thus, the famous or infamous “Copenhagen Interpretation” of Neils Bohr and his students (c. 1926–28) seems to me to mean that we cannot talk meaningfully about any absolute Aristotelian “reality” apart from us, but only about the relative “realities” we existentially-experimentally encounter and/or measure — but that Interpretation of the Copenhagen Interpretation must be described as only the way it *seems* to me. According to Dr. Nick Herbert of UC-Santa Cruz, the Copenhagen Interpretation means that no such animal as “reality” can ever be found at all, at all. I do not mean to exaggerate: in *Quantum Reality*, Dr. Herbert actually states the Copenhagen view as “There is no deep reality.” But, then, he dislikes the Copenhagen view, and has called it “the Christian Science school of physics.” Prof. Mermin of Columbia, defending the Copenhagen Interpretation, does sound as radical as Dr. Herbert,

attacking it; Mermin says bluntly that “the moon is demonstrably not there when nobody is looking at it.”

John Gribbin, physics editor of *New Scientist*, also actually writes bluntly that the Copenhagen view means “nothing is real” on one page of his book, *In Search of Schrödinger's Cat*, but more restrainedly he says later that “‘reality’ in the everyday sense” appears not **useful** in physics. Nobel laureate Eugene Wiegner, meanwhile, says that the Copenhagen position proves that we create the manifestations we observe in a laboratory (by designing the experiments that produce those manifestations) and therefore cannot apprehend anything as itself but only as it appears to us. Or, rather, I *think* that describes what Wiegner says. Wiegner's critics claim that he says we create “reality” by thinking about it, which makes the old man sound like he has overdosed on acid or too many Shirley MacLaine TV specials.

John von Neumann, meanwhile, suggested in 1933 that quantum systems should be mathematically considered as having three possible states (yes, no and maybe, in nonmathematical language) in contrast to the two states of Aristotelian logic (yes and no.) Prof. David Finkelstein still argues that this makes more sense than any other way of talking about the sub-atomic world, but the majority of physicists think von Neumann merely performed a mathematical “stunt” with no physical significance.

The dominance of kicking in the thoughts of Labadie's alternative world, and of Aristotelian logic in our world, indicates the difficulty humans experience in trying to perceive, or communicate their perceptions, outside the grid or gloss of the conditioned reality-tunnel of their “tribe” or society.

For instance, we often hear, and perhaps ourselves say, “It is raining.” Such a sentence illustrates what Bertrand Russell called the domination of subject-predicate grammar over Western “thought” or philosophy (or perception?). “It” seems to appear in that sentence only because subject-predicate grammar demands a subject for the verb-form “is raining.” If you ask yourself what that mysterious “it” denotes, you will find the question rather puzzling (unless you believe in a primitive rain-god like Zeus or Jehovah...) The same subject-predicate structure underlies most pseudo-scientific thinking, such as that of Moliere's physician who said opium makes one sleepy because it contains a “sleep-producing property.” Most folk-explanations of human behavior notoriously fall into this category — e.g. a woman does not work because she has a “laziness-producing demon” in her or “is” “lazy,” where a functional analysis would seek a crisper, less demonological explanation in a depressed economy, in nutritional or endocrine imbalances, or, most likely, in some synergetic combination of social and internal dynamics.

In general, traditional Western thought, especially on the folklore level, posits indwelling Aristotelian “essences” (or spooks) to explain virtually everything, where science — and, curiously, Eastern philosophy tend to find explanations in functional relationships described phenomenologically in terms of observed interactions. This may explain why science and Eastern philosophy appear equally absurd (or equally nefarious) to those raised in the traditional Western Christian reality-tunnel.

Specifically, we in our Western world have been conditioned and/or brainwashed by 2000 years of Christian metaphysics about “Good” and “Evil,” and to question that system of thought or reality-tunnel — or to offer a phenomenological alternative — creates a high probability (of about 99.97%, I estimate) that nobody will understand what one wishes to communicate. Nonetheless, I intend to take that risk here. I will experience great surprise and no small delight if any of the negative comments this elicits show any comprehension of my actual meanings.

To begin with, it seems to me that, as Nietzsche said, naive or intuitive concepts of “good” and “bad” have a different history than, and can otherwise be distinguished from, hypothetical indwelling spooks like “Good” and “Evil.” As probably used by our earliest ancestors, and as used by most people today, “good” and “bad” have the same meanings as they have for any other animals: “good” means “good for me” and “bad” means “bad for me.” Thus, a dog “knows” somehow that foul-smelling food should be considered “bad for me;” an educated human knows further that some sweet-smelling food may act “bad for me” also. All animals, including humans, “know” at birth, and continue to “know” — unless (in the

case of humans) counter-conditioned or brainwashed — that hugging, cuddling, petting and oral and/or genital embrace definitely act upon the organism in ways “good for me.”

From this pre-metaphysical or phenomenological or operational point of view, I quite readily and easily identify many events or “things” in space-time that appear “good for me” (e.g. tasty food, freedom of the press, clever comedy, great painting, love-making, Beethoven, my word processor, money arriving regularly in large doses, certain drugs and vitamins, the above mentioned hugging-petting-fusion etc., etc.). I also observe easily many “things” or events in space-time that appear “bad for me” (e.g. Fundamentalist Christianity, Communism, Naziism, all other attempts to interfere with my liberty, toxic food, toxic waste, horror movies, certain drugs etc., etc.). I also observe that many things that seem “bad for me” seem “good” or harmless for others.

Continuing on this existential-phenomenological basis, it next appears to me that “good for me” and “bad for me” must be considered relative functions, in several senses. What appears “good for me” often appears “bad” for somebody else; or what appears “good for me” may sooner or later have consequences “bad for me;” or what appears “good for me” when age 20 may no longer appear “good for me” at age 50; and some recreations I judge “good for me” may later clearly appear “bad for me.” In general, “good for me” always remains relative to my knowledge or ignorance at the time I make the judgement, and I know from experience that I judge wrongly at times. (Notably, although hugging, cuddling etc. always appear “good for me,” the consequences of picking the wrong partner or the wrong time may clearly emerge later as unequivocally “bad for me.” This probably underlies most sexual superstitions, phobias and fixations.)

Some animals seem at times genetically programmed to recognize, some of the time, “good for my pack” or even “good for my species,” as documented in e.g. E. Wilson’s *Sociobiology*, Dawkin’s *The Selfish Gene* and similar works. With or without such genetic programming as hidden agenda, many humans clearly show the capacity to think about, and aim for, that which appears “good for my species” or even (recently) “good for the biosphere as a whole.” Such judgements still remain relative to the general welfare of the judger, relative to location and history in space-time (what appears good for the foxes will probably appear bad for the chickens) and, even in the case of “good for the biosphere” relative to the knowledge or ignorance of the judger.

Before proceeding, I beg the reader to notice that if human semantics had remained on this primitive phenomenological level, and the relativity of judgement remained obvious to all, negotiation and compromise would perforce play a larger role in history than they have hitherto, and violent “crusades” and religious/ideological wars would have played a comparatively smaller role. It always appears possible to negotiate about what appears good and bad to us in concrete situations; but it becomes increasingly impossible to negotiate successfully when metaphysical “Good” and “Evil” enter the universe of discourse. The tendency becomes then to fight, and to fight as violently as possible, as the blood-curdling history of Christian dogmatism clearly shows, and as such secular religions as Naziism and Communism have proven again in our own century.

By comparison, the Confucian ethic remains phenomenological; Confucius explicitly said that his system “was not against human nature” and compared it to “loving a beautiful flower or hating a bad smell, also called “respecting one’s own nose.” Taoism and Buddhism differ from Confucius chiefly in greater awareness of the relativity of judgements (and the possibility of trans-ego perception or detached-from-ego perception); but neither contains anything like the Occidental metaphysical concept of “Good” and “Evil.” Indeed, some of the most famous passages in Taoist and Buddhist scripture hurl ridicule at any metaphysical notions of nonrelative “Good” and “Evil” — notions which apparently emerged occasionally in the Orient, among eccentrics, as Oriental pantheism occasionally appears in the Occident, among eccentrics.

Nietzsche, as most people know, believed that metaphysical “Good” and “Evil” not only contradict most intuitive organismic evaluations of “good for me” and “bad for me” but appear to have been devised

with the intent of contradicting (and confusing) such naive or “natural” reactions. (Most priestly notions of sexual “Good” and “Evil,” notoriously contradict and confuse naive or natural organismic evaluations, for instance.) In other words, Nietzsche claimed that priests invented “Good” and “Evil” to obtain *power over others* — to persuade people not to trust their own evaluations; to place all trust, instead, on the priests themselves as alleged representatives of a hypothetical gaseous vertebrate of astronomical heft and mass called “God.” It appears to have been Nietzsche’s opinion that since this hypothetical gaseous vertebrate could not be located in normal sensory-sensual (existential) space-time, the priests, in effect, intended to teach people, “Don’t trust yourself; trust us” or, more bluntly still, “Don’t think; we’ll do the thinking for you.”

According to this analysis, political tyrants, who only control our bodies and actions, exhibit less raw “lust for power” than Popes or Ayatollahs or other priests who try to control our thoughts and judgements, i.e. to invade our inmost sanctuary. (See Nietzsche’s *Will to Power* for an extensive analysis of this phenomenon.)

Whatever one thinks about this Nietzschean attempt to psychoanalyze the motives of the ancient priestcraft, it appears historically that the “Good” and “Evil” metaphysics, as distinguished again from simple organismic judgements of “good for me” and “bad for me,” has functioned to give power, and always more power, in horse doctor’s doses, to priests and preachers of all hues and persuasions. (It seems easy to think of a Buddhist or Taoist monk or Confucian gentleman-scholar as possibly living in isolation, but a Christian clergyperson, by definition, seems to be somebody who tells *other people* what to think and what to do., i.e. has *power* over them usually based on raw fear and threat, e.g. “You will go to Hell if you doubt me.”) After 2000 years of Christianity, most people accept being told what “is” “Good” and “Evil” by an alleged expert just as automatically as the people Labadie’s parable accepted being kicked.

Does history tend to justify Nietzsche’s view that this system of otherworldly metaphysics (interpreted by alleged experts on that alleged other world) leads to “degeneracy,” “decadence,” “sickness,” “neuroses,” “lunacy,” “epilepsy” etc.? Well, I don’t know about epilepsy (which now appears organic or genetic rather than sociological) but Nietzsche’s other terms all refer to the prevalence in Christian society of what he called “resentment” and “revenge” — envy or rage against those who live without Christian metaphysics, coupled with ferocious desire to punish or destroy such people. It seems impossible to read a page of St. Paul without encountering this kind of resentment-and-revenge compulsion almost immediately, and you can hear it on TV any night by turning the dial to the Fundamentalist channels in the high 40s, where the leading evangelists will usually be found fomenting hatred against non-Christians (when not tearfully confessing whatever personal sins or crimes have previously been unearthed and well-publicized by the pagan media). The Christian theologian, historically, seems a person intent on terrorizing others into doing what he wants them to do and thinking what he wants them to think, or killing them if they will not submit.

The animal, the child, the pre-literate society, the Confucian, the Buddhist, the Taoist, and most of the world live in reality-tunnels in which “good” and “bad” remain demarked by organismic evaluations of “good for me/good for my tribe” and “bad for me/bad for my tribe.” Only the Christian sects — and such secular religions as Naziism and Communism which may be considered, as the historian Toynbee considered them, late Christian heresies — contain the idea of absolute “Good” and “Evil” and the **encitement to violence** implied in such a concept.

It appears to me, then, that by “turning everything upside down” (Nietzsche’s phrase) — i.e. by denying organismic and relative evaluations of “good” and “bad” and replacing them with **definitions** of “Good” and “Evil” decided by some priestcraft or some Central Committee — we have strayed far from sanity and into the realm of fantasy and madness. Concretely, when I decide to class something as “good” or “bad,” I remember that I have done the classifying, and also that I have no overwhelming evidence of personal infallibility; I take **responsibility** for the judgement, in the Existentialist sense,

and I remain open to learning, and to changing my mind, if new data indicates that I should revise my evaluation. But if I classify something as “Good” or “Evil” in the metaphysical sense, defined by some priesthood or Party Line, I do not “take responsibility,” I become virtually a ventriloquist’s dummy through which the priests or ideologists speak and act, and I abdicate all possibility of learning more or revising my mistakes. It does not seem terribly exaggerated when Nietzsche calls this “turning everything upside down” because in submitting to such an abstract system and denying my own perceptions, I have reversed evolution and “resigned” as it were from the human race. I could easily be replaced by a robot or servo-mechanism at that point. Humans generally do not behave like robots unless they have been indoctrinated with some metaphysical system like Christianity or its close relatives, Judaism and Islam, or its late heresies, Nazism and Communism.

If this essay can escape being regarded as intemperate polemic or wild exaggeration, I must explain in more detail the concrete functional difference between organismic “good” and “bad” evaluations — “respecting one’s own nose” in the Confucian sense — and metaphysical “Good” and “Evil.” Then my point will perhaps appear clear, even to those who most vehemently reject it.

I propose that the organismic, intuitive, primitive, “naive” evaluations of “good for me or my gene pool” and “bad for me or my gene pool” — even when condensed into the simpler “good” and “bad” — reflect our actual situation as bodies moving in space-time. Evolution has given surviving species an assortment of genetic programs that roughly inform each individual organism about “good for me” and “bad for me.” These genes do not appear infallible — as witness the dog who drank spilled paint because paint smells more like good food than like bad food. These genetic programs may tolerate modification by learning experience, in dogs, cats and other higher mammals, including some (non-dogmatic) human beings. Empirical learning itself may be modified by careful reasoning from inferences, etc. All of these (genetic programs, learning, reasoning) reflect an endeavor to gather the data for an accurate map of our position in space-time and of what profits or harms us or our tribe or species. On the other hand, the metaphysical doctrines of absolute “Good” and “Evil” do not reflect our trajectories as bodies in space-time in any respect. Metaphysics and its language structure reflect rather a fantasy-world or world-created-by-definitions which does not meaningfully refer to our concrete existential history in space-time at all. If this point appears as recondite or hermetic as the most inscrutable pages of Heidegger, I will try to make it more simple with the following two columns of examples.

I	II
The electron is a wave.	The electron appears as a wave when recorded by this instrument.
The first man stabbed the second man with a knife.	The first man appeared to stab the second man with what appeared to be to be a knife.
The car involved in the hit-and-run accident was a blue Ford.	In memory, I think I recall the car involved in the hit-and-run accident as a blue Ford.
This is a fascist idea.	This seems like a fascist idea to me.
Beethoven was better than Mozart.	I enjoy Beethoven more than Mozart.
This is a sexist movie.	This seems like a sexist movie to me.

The first column consists of statements in ordinary English, as heard in common usage at this primitive if of evolution. I believe this column contains the same structural implications as Aristotelian logic and the Christian metaphysics of “Good” and “Evil.” I also believe this column reflects a fantastic view of the world in which we assume ourselves not “personally” involved in the act of evaluation but paradoxically able to discern the spooky, indwelling “essences” of things.

The second column consists of parallel statements rewritten in **E-prime**, or English-prime, a language proposed for scientific usage by such authors as Alfred Korzybski, D. David Bourland and E.W. Kellogg

III. E-prime contains much the same vocabulary as standard English but has been made isomorphic to quantum physics and modern science generally) by abolishing the Aristotelian “is” of identity and reformulating each statement phenomenologically in terms of signals received and interpreted by a body (or instrument) in space-time. In short, believe that E-prime contains the same structural implications as science, radical Buddhism (Zen, Mahayana) the naive evaluations of “good” and “bad” that seem natural to most people who have not been indoctrinated by Christianity or its totalitarian modern derivatives.

Concretely, “The electron is a wave” employs the Aristotelian “is” of identity and thereby introduces the false-to-experience notion that we can know the indwelling Aristotelian “essence” of the electron. “The electron appears as a wave when recorded with this instrument reformulates the English sentence into English-prime, abolishes the “is” of identity and returns us to an accurate report of what actually transpired in space-time, namely that the electron was constrained by a certain instrument to appear a certain way.

In English we talk blithely about things or entities that may or may not exist, and often about things that a never be proven to exist or to not exist; in E-prime we can only talk about what has actually been experienced and by what method it has been experienced. Aristotelian English encourages our tendency to wander off into worlds of fantasy; E-prime brings us back to concrete phenomenological recording of what we actually experienced in space-time.

Similarly, “The first man stabbed the second man with a knife,” even though lacking the formal “is” of identity appears Aristotelian English to me, because it assumes the non-involvement of the observer and of the observer’s nervous system. The proposed E-prime translation, “The first man seemed to me to stab the second man with what seemed to be a knife,” scientifically includes the **instrument** (the speaker’s nervous system) in the report, recognizes phenomenology, and, incidentally, often happens to accord with brute fact. (This example refers to a well-known experiment in General Psychology, in which a banana in the first man’s hand performs the “stabbing” but most students, conditioned by Aristotelian habits, nonetheless “see” the knife they expect to see. This experiment dramatizes the fact that hallucinations can be created without hypnosis or drugs, merely by taking advantage of our habit of thinking we see “things” when we only see our brain’s **images** of things.)

“The car involved in the hit-and-run accident was a blue Ford” again contains Aristotelian absolutism and ignores the instrument used — the brain. The E-prime translation reminds us that the brain often “remembers” incorrectly.

“This is a fascist idea” contains the Aristotelian “is” and asserts that the speaker has the mystic ability to discern the hidden “essence” within or behind phenomena. The E-prime translation reminds us that the speaker has actually performed an evaluative act in interpreting signals apprehended by his or her body moving in space-time.

“Beethoven is better than Mozart” contains the usual Aristotelian fantasy about indwelling spooks or essences. The E-prime translation, “I enjoy Beethoven more than Mozart” places us back in ordinary space-time where the speaker’s ears and brain can be recognized as the source of the evaluation, and we realize that the statement actually refers to said ears and brain and not to the two collections of music seemingly discussed.

“This is a sexist movie” (standard English) again assumes a fictitious uninvolved observer mystically perceiving inner essences, while “This seems like a sexist movie to me” (E-prime) returns us to Earth and ordinary face-time by including the existential fact that the observer has been involved in making the evaluation.

It has been claimed, by Korzybski, that the neurolinguistic habit of regularly using E-prime trains the brain to avoid common errors of perception, uncritical inferences, habitual prejudices, etc. and to show increased capacity for creative thought and greater enjoyment/involvement in life. This has not been proven, since few have taken the trouble systematically to retrain themselves in E-prime and they have

not been exhaustively tested by psychologists. However, it remains my impression that those scientists and laypersons most apt to use “the spirit of E-prime” (if not always the exact letter) do exhibit the positive traits claimed by Korzybski, or at least exhibit these traits more than a random sample of the population.

On the other side, those most apt to use and over-use the “is” of identity, historically, make up the major part of the world’s long, tragic list of fanatics, paranoids, Crusaders, Inquisitors and Ideologists, and have responsibility for the bloodiest and most horrible atrocities recorded in human annals.

In summary, I suggest that existence never contained “Good” and “Evil” — or “inches” or “pounds” or “ergs of energy” or “degrees Fahrenheit” — until complicated primate brains (“human minds, “in more polite language) put them there as systems of classification. I suggest further that the “naive” view of “good for me or my clan” and “bad for me or my clan” contains all that can meaningfully be said about our actual experience in space-time, and that metaphysical “Good” and “Evil” speak fantastically of mythic realms beyond any possible verification or refutation in space-time.

I will scarcely find myself surprised if this article inspires heated and fervent rebuttals. I await such ripostes with equanimity. I do hope, however, that nobody raises the spectre of the old, hackneyed argument that without the metaphysical concept of absolute “Evil” we will lose our desire or will to protect ourselves against such monstrous gentry as Hitler, Stalin, Jack-the-Ripper, etc. Nobody but Ahab himself ever seems to have believed the whale was absolutely “Evil” (for biting off his leg while he was trying to kill it) and one does not have to regard tigers, polio microbes or other natural entities phenomenologically “bad for us” as also metaphysically and absolutely “Evil” in order to combat them. It does not take metaphysical dogma to fight the patently nefarious; it only takes quick wits in spotting the “bad for me” as soon as it appears on the horizon. Animals literally do this, and humans figuratively do it, by the method of Confucius: respecting one’s own nose.

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Sexual Freedom: Why it is Feared

Robert Anton Wilson

1962

Those who believe in, and seriously advocate and practice, sexual freedom are, and always have been, a minority. If there is one generalization that truly applies to the *majority* of men and women in all civilizations, everywhere, it is that they fear sexual freedom more than anything else, more than death itself, even. This is the crucial mystery of human nature and, quite properly, it has been the area of most intense investigation by depth psychologists from Freud and Reich to Marcuse and Brown.

A. S. Neill, the founder of the Summerhill school, was once asked where in the civilized world a man could practice homosexuality without fear of legal persecution. Neill replied that he knew of no such place, adding that he didn't even know of a place where a man could practice heterosexuality without being persecuted for it. Homosexuals, Dr. Albert Ellis wrote, think that they suffer because they live in an anti-homosexual culture, but the truth is, he added, we *all* suffer because we live in an *anti-sexual* culture.

Eschewing depth psychology for the moment and taking a deliberately superficial view, why does the "man in the street" fear sexual freedom? That is, what reason would he himself give for the irrational taboos to which he submits and tries to inflict upon others? The answer is a truism. "Sexual freedom," the man in the street will tell you, "leads to anarchy and the collapse of Order."

Instead of automatically denying this (as most advocates of sexual freedom do), let us consider it for a moment. The architect of modern anarchism, Michael Bakunin, wrote in his *God and the State* that without "God," the State is impossible. He instances as proof the Republics of France and the United States, both of which were founded by free-thinkers and atheists, but which both embraced the "God" idea very rapidly when the practical details of governing had to be faced. Wilhelm Reich's *Sexual Revolution* and *Mass Psychology of Fascism* document that pro-State attitudes and authoritarianism are usually joined with dogmatic religion and anti-sex fears, whereas anti-State and libertarian attitudes are generally coupled with free thought and pro-sex affirmation. Adorno's classic *Authoritarian Personality* gives reams of statistical proof of the Reichian thesis. A governor, we can safely say, has less problems in enforcing obedience if his subjects are mystical, religious and frightened of sex.

The reason for this is easy to understand. *Sex denial is very close to being absolutely impossible*, and — as the subtle Jesuits knew long before Freud — even when the would-be ascetic thinks he has "triumphed" over the flesh, it sneaks up on him from a new direction and takes him by surprise. Thus, *the inevitable consequence of sex denial is guilt*: that special guilt which comes of continual failure to accomplish that which you consider "good." (This continual failure is the "dark night of the soul" lamented by medieval monks). Now, a guilt-ridden man is an easy man to manipulate and force to your own will, because self-respect is the prerequisite of independence and rebellion, and the guilt-ridden person can have no self-respect. Modern advertising revolves around this central fact as a great safe

lock pivots on a single jewel: from “B.O.” and “97 pound weakling” to the soap that makes you feel “*clean all over*,” advertising has inculcated self-doubts and guilts in order to persuade that the sponsor’s panacea will cure these very doubts which the sponsor himself through his ad agency has created!

What does “government” mean, after all? Control of Mr. A by Mr. B — or, in other words, the subordination of me man’s will to another’s. We have been taught that society cannot exist without government and that this sub-ordination of wills is existentially necessary and unchangeable; hence, we accept it. But anthropology presents a different picture. As the anthropologist Kathleen Gough has written, “The State as a social form has existed for about one-two-hundredth part of man’s history... it may be one of the shortest-lived forms of human society.”¹ What we call anarchy — i.e., voluntary association — has been man’s dominant pattern for 199/200ths of his history. It should be no surprise that, as Rattray Taylor shows in *Sex in History*, these pre-State societies were not sexually repressed and did not fear sexual freedom to the utmost extent.

Enforced conformity of human beings — the subjugation of society to the will of the State — leads to generalized stress upon the total organism of each. Modern psychosomatic medicine makes abundantly clear that all life (protoplasm) consists of electro-colloidal equilibrium between gel (total dispersion) and sol (total contraction), and every stress produces contraction, as is seen in exaggerated form in the typical withdrawal of the snail and turtle, a human infant visibly cringing with fear, etc. It is this (usually microscopic) contraction of the physical body that we experience psychically as “anxiety.” When it becomes chronic, this contraction effects the large muscles and creates that “hunched, bowed” look which actors employ when portraying a timid and beaten man. The tendency toward this “posture of defeat” is visible in all State-dominated societies, as it was conspicuously absent in the bold carriage of the State-less Polynesians and American Indians when first contacted.

But the chronic anxiety which is the subjective aspect of this physical “shrinking biopathy” leads to a *defensive* attitude and a philosophy of *control*. Government *per se* consists of this compulsion to control in its most highly developed form, and war represents the most coercive and ultimate form of control. No government lasts more than a generation without plunging its subjects into war; even the government founded by the pacifist Gandhi has plunged its subjects into war *eight times* in the generation since his death. Four wars per century is the average ratio for a long-lasting government.

Geldings, any farmer will tell you, are easier to control than stallions. The first governments, which were frankly slave-states, inculcated sexual repression for precisely this reason. Besides creating loads of guilt and self-doubt in the slaves, thus making them easier to intimidate for the reasons previously explained, sexual repression is itself a contraction of the large muscles. You cannot banish a wish from consciousness, as Groddeck demonstrates in *The Book of the It*, without contracting your abdominal muscles. Sexual repression in particular means what Neill calls “the stiff stomach disease,” because the only way the genitals can be stopped from lively activity is by deadening them through abdominal armoring. It is Wilhelm Reich who deserves credit for seeing the ultimate implications of this. Reich pointed out that loosening of the chronic muscle contractions which characterize submissive “civilized” man must be a process of *physical* pain and *psychic* anxiety. We are now able to understand the two great mysteries of social behavior: why sexual repression is accepted and why government is accepted, when the first diminishes joy and the second is leading obviously to the destruction of the species. *Submissiveness is anchored in the body*. The anti-sexual training of infants, children and adolescents creates muscular tensions which cause pain whenever rebellion is attempted. This is why homosexuals and sexually free heterosexuals are so conspicuously “neurotic”: besides the condemnation of society, they suffer also the “condemnation” of their own muscles pushing them toward conformity and submission.

Freud’s famous pessimism is rooted in understanding of the psychic side of this process which I have described physically. “Man is his own prisoner,” was Freud’s final, gloomy conclusion. But recent

¹ *The Decline of the State*, by Kathleen Gough. Correspondence Publishing Company. 1962.

thinkers have been less sure of this. Reich's *Sexual Revolution*, Brown's *Life Against Death* and Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* all look forward toward a "civilization without repression," and all three tend to recognize that this would have to be a State-less civilization.

Before the murder of Mangus Colorado and the betrayal of Cochise, Apache society represented an approximation of such a free culture. Until marriage, all were sexually free to enjoy themselves as they wished (the same freedom returned when a marriage was dissolved) and if the chief's wishes were not acceptable to anyone he was at liberty to enter another Apache tribe or start one of his own if he had enough followers. (Geronimo did just this when Cochise made his treaty with the U.S. government.) The tribe, thus, was held together by what anarchists call *voluntary association* and did not contain an authoritarian State apparatus.

In a technologically more advanced society the same principle can be carried out. Proudhon's famous formula for anarchism, "the dissolution of the State into the economic organism," means, basically, the substitution of voluntary contractual organizations for the involuntary coercive authority of the State. In such a system, whatever voluntary associations a man joined would be truly an expression of his will (otherwise, he would not join them). Such a State-less civilization could be as sexually free as the State-less bands, tribes and chiefdoms of pre-history; *repression would have no social function*, as there would be no need of creating guilt and submissiveness in the population.

Such a picture is not as "utopian" as it may seem — and "utopianism" is not something to despise nowadays, when the very survival of mankind is, as Norman Brown has noted, a "utopian dream." Cybernation has created, — as Norbert Weiner predicted it would, and as writers like Kathleen Gough and Henry Marcuse are beginning to note with mixed joy and fear — the possibility of a society of abundance in which there will be very little need for work. Traditional humanity is at the end of its tether, due to the two great achievements of modern science, nuclear energy and cybernation. If we as individuals manage to survive the first, our culture certainly cannot survive the second. When it is no longer necessary for the masses of men to toil "by the sweat of their brows" for bread, one of the chief props for social repression will fall. Large-scale unemployment up to the level of massive starvation has, it is true, occurred in the past, and the ruling class has managed to remain in their saddles; but the large-scale unemployment to which we are now heading will make all previous "depressions" seem minor by comparison, and there will be no hope of relief ever coming — there will be no way to create new jobs. Undoubtedly, the ruling classes will allow the starvation to reach epic proportions; and, undoubtedly, the muscularly repressed masses, conditioned to submission and self-denial, will accept it — except for a few rebels, as always; but, eventually, perhaps when cannibalism sets in, the whole edifice of culture based on repression will come tumbling down and, like Humpty Dumpty, nobody will be able to put it together again. Those now alive may live to see this.

The unrepressed man of the future — if there is a future — will look back at our age and wonder how we survived without all landing in the madhouse. That so many of us do land in madhouses will be accepted as the natural consequence of repressed civilization.

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What I Didn't Learn at College

Robert Anton Wilson

1961

“Teach? At Harvard? It cannot be done.”

— Henry Adams

In my youth, because I was a wicked sinner, God punished me by condemning me to one-and-a-half years in a School of Education. (Never mind which one it was; I have no desire to single it out for special blame. Escapees from other Schools of Education assure me that they are all equally squalid.)

Basically, I learned three things at that institution. The first was that it is possible to sleep all through the average education course (or to bring a book on some interesting subject and read it) and still pass the final examination easily.

The second and third things that I learned were that all modern educators agree that education should consist of, not stuffing the pupil's mind with miscellaneous information, but actually preparing him for the life he will lead after graduation; and that all modern educators are firmly united against any attempt to live up to this ideal.

In other words, they all verbally approve of “education for life,” and they are all terrified of ever telling the truth to the pupils on any subject whatsoever. What they really aim at is education for “citizenship” (one of their favorite expressions); what this means is education for conformity to the insane conventions of this pathological society.

It is now autumn and thousands of young men and women are departing for college, most of them having the delusional belief that they will find education there. Like all delusions, this is both amusing and pitiful.

They would have greater chances of success if they were looking for chastity in a brothel, truth in the daily newspapers, or entertainment on television. There is more hope for the blind man in a dark room looking for a black hat that isn't there. Finding education in an American college or university is as possible as finding swimming pools in the Sahara.

It seems to me that, since the *Realist* regularly gets mail from college students, this is a good place to put down the fundamental facts which are never expressed in our official educational system.

I must add a warning, however: I am not responsible for the consequences if anybody is so rash as to quote or paraphrase any of this within hearing distance of a professor. I especially refuse to bear the blame if you are naive enough to use any of it in a term paper. The consequences will be much the same as if you wrote to Fulton Sheen to ask how much homosexuality goes on in the priesthood. You will not get an answer; you will get a malediction. -

The first thing to learn in a good contemporary education (and the one thing you will never learn in a college or university) is that, contrary to Harry S. Truman's famous words, U.S. foreign policy *is not based on the Sermon on the Mount*.

I know how shocking this must be, but I assure you that you will find nowhere in the words of Jesus a justification of dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or using burning napalm on the babies of North Korea, or sending mercenaries to take away from the Cuban people the government that they want. These things are typical practices of imperialism, and have nothing to do with the philosophy of love taught by Jesus.

Although Truman was the only one dumb enough to say, with his bare face hanging out, that the activities of our State Department and CIA are motivated by the Sermon on the Mount, Eisenhower and Kennedy have made safely vague remarks to give the same general impression.

The only way you can discover how far from the truth these claims are is to look into C. Wright Mills' *The Causes of World War III*, where you will discover, for instance, that John Foster Dulles once said, in so many words, that the U.S. Government will go to war in the Near East if the interests of Standard Oil are imperiled there. There are many interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount, but none of them include defending the Profit Motive with the blood of men.

The blunt truth is (and I apologize again for how shocking this must be, and I warn you again not to say it in a classroom, if you want to pass the course) that U.S. foreign policy is motivated by the economic and power interests of a small group of industrialists and militarists.

Nobody in Nutley, New Jersey or Sandusky, Ohio is being hurt when the Cubans throw off their blood-sucking exploiters and establish a people's government, but several large corporations are being hurt by it. You and I have nothing to gain, and everything to lose, if we are sent down to Cuba to kill men, women and children, in order to force them to take the land away from the peasants and give it back to a few landowners; but certain large corporations have a great deal to gain if you and I are sent down there to do that dirty work for them.

There are several fact-packed books which tell a great deal about the relations of government and economic ruling classes down through history. Two especially good ones are Brooks Adams' *The Law of Civilization and Decay* and Alexander Del Mar's *History of Monetary Systems*. Almost any professor will agree that Brooks Adams was one of America's greatest thinkers and historians; Del Mar was called the greatest historian of the 19th Century, and was frequently consulted as an expert by governments (who often refused to take his advice).

Both books have been out of print for years, and neither is used in a college or university today, as far as I know. Arthur Kitson's testimony before the Macmillan Commission has never been refuted, yet his book (*The Banker's Conspiracy! which unleashed the World War*) is as little-known, in academic circles, as Adams or Del Mar. Read all three of them, and see what you think of the history and economics taught in your school.

Every college economics course contains a built-in refutation of Marx, but how many students who have gone on to take the trouble to read Marx can agree that these "refutations" are honest or even half-way in contact at all with what Marx actually argued? Proudhon pointed out before Marx — and Adams and Del Mar demonstrated exhaustively — that the function of governments has been, throughout history, to exploit the masses in the interests of the few.

Every form of exploitation consists of seizure by a few of some natural power, followed by forcing the rest of us to pay on that the traffic will bear for some share of that natural power. The earth, the actual living-space of the planet, is owned by a small group, and the rest of us have to pay tribute to them (called "rent") for the right to stay here; otherwise we are in danger, apparently, of being thrown into the ocean or expelled into outer space.

Now, how did these "owners" get to "own" the planet? Did they buy it from God some time in pre-history? If you're planning to leave school and go out and get an education, ask some professor that question some time. The fact is that the government guarantees with its police and army that these "owners" will have the *right* to own and the rest of us will have the *duty* to pay tribute to them.

The same holds true with all natural powers. The government decides who will own the water-power, the electricity, the ores, etc. of a continent; the rest of us then have to go to the “owners” and pay whatever they ask to get a share of it for ourselves. This is called “freedom” because we have the choice of paying what they ask or starving to death.

The chief type of exploitation in the modern world, and the chief cause of wars, is usury. This practice — condemned by Aristotle, St. Ambrose, the Bible, the Koran, Confucius, Cato the Elder, Shakespeare and almost all of the great thinkers before about the sixteenth century — has become so dominant in the modern world that La Tour de Pin called our epoch “the age of usury” and Brooks Adams said that “since Waterloo, usury has ruled the world.”

The mechanism is the same as that of all other forms of exploitation, the seizure by a few of that which potentially belongs to all. In the case of usury, the natural power that is seized is the accumulated labor of past generations, and this is “rented” just as land is rented.

Since this is a process in time — unlike land, which exists only in space — it is a self-augmenting and increases as an exponential function, a discovery made independently by at least four thinkers in the last 50 years: Henry Adams (“The Rule of Phase Applied to History”); C. H. Douglas (*The Natural Economic Order*); Alfred Korzybski (*Manhood of Humanity*); and Buckminster Fuller (“Comprehensive Designing”).

Man accumulates *power-and-knowledge* (the ability to use natural resources for human purposes) at a rate which increases each generation; this natural function, belonging to all humanity, becomes *capital*, which is “owned” by a few and rented to the rest of us at usurious rates of interest.

(Proudhon proved over a hundred years ago that 1% interest was all that was justified by the labor expended by the usurer.)

We live, in other words, in a world that is man-made — made by the accumulated effort of 250 generations of *homo sapiens* — and all of the knowledge, techniques, machines, methods of communication (from Roman roads to television), etc., which make this world human, are owned, in the form of capital, and rented to us, in the form of usury. This is made possible by *money*, a *symbol* of wealth, which we have been conditioned to take as wealth itself.

Money bears, the same relation to wealth that a ticket to a seat at a concert bears to that seat. It is the kind of relation which exists between the menu and the meal, or between the map and the territory.

Dostoyevski's Grand Inquisitor pointed out that every state and church in history have ruled through “miracle, mystery and authority.” Herbert Muller's *The Loom of History* has taken that phrase as a keystone: he studies each civilization to ask how much it depended on “miracle, mystery and authority,” and how much it rested upon the natural creative critical powers of the free mind. Since Muller's standards are basically Square, not Hip, he finds a few civilizations that almost satisfy him, although he is honest enough to condemn most.

From a Hip point of view, which demands the complete absence of “miracle, mystery and authority,” and the absolute freedom of their opposite forces, which are Wilhelm Reich's trinity of “love, work and knowledge,” all civilizations with governments are sick. A healthy civilization would have no governments. Only “miracle, mystery and authority” need to be administered by a government; love, work and knowledge administrate themselves.

Morgan's *Ancient Society* and Reich's *Mass Psychology of Fascism* give several examples of societies without governments — societies of *work-democracy*, as Reich calls it — where love, work and knowledge were set free to administrate themselves. They function for self-regulation naturally, homeostatic ally, in the group as well as in the individual.

(Morgan, like Del Mar and Adams, has been allowed to go out of print; Reich is banned by the U.S. Government — as he was also banned by the Nazi and Soviet governments.)

The “Sturch” — a fine word, coined by Philip Jose Farmer, to signify the mutual activities of State and Church — always rests upon “miracle, mystery and authority,” always acts to prevent the natural

self-regulation of love, work and knowledge. The Sturch is the sadistic end of the sado-masochistic neurosis of man; the masses, which accept and even welcome the Sturch, are the masochistic end.

When given a free choice between fascism and social democracy, in 1932, 17 million German workers went out and *voted* for the “miracle, mystery and authority” of fascism against the “love, work and knowledge” of social democracy.

Not that the social democracy available in Germany then wasn't itself sick; I haven't got room to make every necessary distinction in this column. Of course, I am against Fidel Castro's government, but I am more against the attempts of the U.S. Government to create something even worse in Cuba. All governments are evil, but some are more evil than others. The best government is the least government, said Jefferson. The least government, added Benjamin Tucker, is no government.

This is getting rather abstract, I perceive; allow me to bring it back to earth with a concrete example.

During the Civil War, the U.S. Government borrowed from the Rothschilds some 275 million dollars *in paper money*. After the war, poor old Ulysses Grant was hornswaggled into signing a bill ordering the Treasury to repay the debt *in coin*. Now, at that time, one dollar coin was worth two dollars paper; the Rothschilds got back 550 million for 275 million, plus their usual usurious interest. This is not ordinary usury; it is what Pound called *hyper-usura* and Benjamin Tucker called *misusury*. The people of the United States had to make up that additional 275 million dollars out of their earnings, in the form of additional taxes. (See Del Mar's *History of Monetary Systems*, and Overholser's *History of Money in the United States*.)

The same type of swindle was inflicted on the people again under that great democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt, when the “government” bought ten billion of gold which they could have had for six billion before they changed the price of gold. Somebody made four billion in profits, and if the “government” gave it to them it was out of the pockets of the people. (See Ezra Pound's *Impact*.)

The same basic trick, similar to the *okkana borra* of the gypsies (the “gypsy switch” as bunco squads call it — although they are not empowered to prosecute it when the government is involved in it), was behind the famous “Scandal of Assumption” when Alexander Hamilton and some friends bought up the veterans' certificates at 1 cent on the dollar and then persuaded Congress to authorize payment of them at face value. (See Bowers' *Jefferson and Hamilton*.)

A few elderly readers may be yawning at this point, having heard it all before. Patience, fellers: the beginning of this column was not rhetoric. I am really writing it because I have discovered a whole generation of college students who have never heard anything of this sort in their whole lives. I don't mean that they've heard only a little of it; I mean they've heard zero, nothing. *They haven't got a clue*, as my wife says.

The struggle today is not to discover new stuff so much as it is to get the old stuff to the heads of those who have been artificially isolated from it by mendacious miseducation. .

Henry Adams' *Education*, a charming and trivial work that makes a few good points here and there, is recommended reading at several universities. His brother Brook's *Law of Civilization and Decay*, which contains the hard economic facts which inspired Henry's romantic pessimism, might as well have not been written as far as impact on the “groves of academe” is concerned.

The usurocratic system rests upon the same “miracle, mystery and authority” as the slave system from which it is derived; Marx was quite right in calling the modern worker a “wage-slave.” Work is the productive application of human energy to the advancement of the human community; only a handful of artists and composers *work* in our system. The rest of us *slave* for wages.

The difference is in the direction of the will, and there must be both, direction and will, for that expression to mean anything.

Toiling for wages is not work. It creates slackers, loafers, etc. precisely because it is not work. Loafing is a pathology; the healthy man needs work. It is because it is so hard to find *work* that will support one, and so easy to submit to *wage-slavery*, that pathological loafing and criminal behavior are pandemic in

our society. The natural work-democracy of the Trobriand Islanders, the Bruderhof community, etc. do not create such pathology.

The professor who says that, in a communal economy, the workers will support the loafers, is, of course, talking like a Babbit (which is only to be expected, since the Babbits pay his salary); worse yet, he is showing deplorable ignorance of the natural functioning of energy in the human body, as revealed by Reich in *The Function of the Orgasm* and *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*. If you have any doubt about the whole system being based on “miracle, mystery and authority,” try this simple experiment. Ask any economics professor: “What determines the *price* of money?” You will hear such a rigmarole of double-talk and metaphysical peri-phrasticism as has not been concocted by the human brain since the theologians of Rome set out to refute Galileo.

Miracle, mystery and authority all take their power from what Reich called *the emotional plague of mankind*, a perversion of natural functioning that began when the work democratic matriarchies were replaced by authoritarian patriarchies about 6,000 years ago. Government, slavery, usury and warfare have been chronic ever since, bringing with them untold epidemics of psychiatric and psychosomatic illnesses.

The chief of these is what the Scottish psychiatrist Ian Suttie called “the taboo on tenderness” and Paul Ritter calls “the emotional limp of civilized man.”

It is well known that the electro-colloidal processes of life take place in a periodic manner. Basically, it seems that the energies of the body move toward the skin surface in pleasure, and move back toward the core in anxiety. (A lie-detector measures the withdrawal of electrical energy from the skin during anxiety.)

Dr. Reich’s classic experiments of 1935–36 measured electrical potential during sexual excitation, pain, fear, when sweet candy is placed on the tongue, etc. He showed that energy runs from core-to-surface (“out of the self, toward the world”) in all forms of pleasure, and from surface-to-core (“away from the world, back to the self”) in all forms of displeasure.

Besides shedding a great deal of light on the problem of cancer (which the AMA still won’t admit is basically a psychosomatic disturbance, even though it strikes one out of eight in our society and is completely unknown in some primitive societies), these experiments also have tremendous sociological implications.

Since Freud, or actually since Charcot in the last century, it has been obvious that many disturbances, both psychiatric and psychosomatic, result from the repression of the natural sexuality of infants, children and adolescents.

Yet any attempt to change this situation, to stop the torture of these young ones who cannot protect themselves, to prevent the beginnings of untold pathologies ranging from hysterical blindness to chronic ulcers, to save the children from unnecessary suffering and the adults which they will become from un-necessary irrationalism and neurosis — any such attempt has met with the most vitriolic opposition, not only from the Sturch, but from the medical profession itself.

There is only one reason for this: The emotional plague of mankind (which manifests itself “physically” as chronic headache, chronic improper respiration, chronic drunkenness, chronic feeling of contactlessness, etc., and “psychically” as the taboo on tenderness and the longing for “miracle, mystery and authority”) is necessary for the continuation of patriarchal-authoritarian government.

And this emotional plague is *anchored* in each new generation by the sexual repression of infants, children and adolescents. This anchoring is nowhere nearly as metaphysical as Freudian terminology makes it appear. It is simply that the periodic function of pleasure-unpleasure (energy contraction/energy expansion) is not all owed to function naturally. Instead, what Pavlov called *conditioning* and Skinner calls *reinforcement* is used, so that anxiety and contraction become increasingly chronic and pleasure and expansion become increasingly rare.

Seventy years ago, Freud noted that breathing difficulties are present in every neurosis. He made one of his brilliant but inadequate metaphysical guesses: the neurotic is secretly longing for suffocation as a punishment for incestuous desires. Reich makes it abundantly clear that some such irrational thinking may go in the periphery of the mind, but that the improper breathing is a symptom in and of itself, caused by chronic contraction and chronic fear of expansion.

So now you see why sex and economics are the two subjects most clothed with "miracle, mystery and authority" in our sick society, why they are the two subjects about which professors always speak in down-right lies or metaphysical double-talk. It is not a co-incidence: the two are related. People cannot be made submissive to irrational authority unless their natural energy functions are first crippled by sexual repression.

Robert Owen and the other early socialists were quite right in feeling that sexual liberalism and economic advancement were somehow connected and had to be worked on together, and Marx and his followers went completely wrong in ignoring the sexual problem and leaving it in the hands of the psychiatrists, who, like other medical men, are exploiters of a monopoly protected by the Sturch and naturally unwilling to follow any chain of thought likely to lead them into conflict with the Sturch.

The whole story of the collapse of Marxism into futile dogmatic politics and of Freudism into a reactionary tool of the Sturch is contained in that one great blunder.

Only Reich managed to keep the whole man in view, and to see the connection between work-democracy and sexual self-regulation on one hand and authoritarianism and sexual repression on the other hand. Naturally, both Marxists and psychoanalysts quickly disowned Reich.

Looking back over this column, I see that I haven't said nearly enough about "the taboo on tenderness" and how it affects everything from sports to the rate of interest at Household Finance Company, or about the way usury makes wars, and that I haven't gone into sufficient detail about the electro-colloidal functioning of human energies. This cannot be helped. I did not set out to convince anybody of anything, or to "prove" something. Both conviction and proof need much more time and space than I have at my disposal here.

Chiefly, my hope has been to arouse curiosity, by making the reader aware of those vast areas of fact and theory which are never discussed in the "institutions of learning." I have dragged in the titles of several books, hoping that the curiosity I arouse might send a few people to those books in search of further information.

Everybody who looks into medieval and renaissance history quickly becomes aware that a great deal is omitted from most college courses on those subjects, and that the Catholic Church is responsible for these omissions. I do not know why it is that when people become aware that certain other things are omitted from most college and university courses, and that Church, State and High Finance all have good motives for wishing these things omitted, these people do not form a natural suspicion. This is especially hard to understand when one reflects that we have all heard of cases of professors who lost their jobs for daring to open their mouths about these subjects.

I leave you with one last riddle to plague your professors with (if you have the nerve, and don't care whether you graduate or not). Almost all literature courses present T. S. Eliot as the greatest poet of the Twentieth Century, and yet Eliot has frequently and publicly stated that all he knows about writing poetry he learned from Ezra Pound, who is hardly ever taught and little discussed. Can the reason be that Pound's poetry is full of lines like the following?

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These fought in any case,
and some believing, pro domo, in any case...
Some quick to arm,
some for adventure,
some from fear of weakness,
some from fear of censure,
some from love of slaughter, in imagination,
learning later...
some in fear, learning love of slaughter;
Died some, pro patria, non "dulce" non "et decor"...
walked eye-deep in hell
believing in old rp.en's lies, then unbelieving
came home, home to a lie,
home to many deceits,
home to old lies and new infamy;
usury age-old and age-thick
and liars in public places.

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