

LEIGHTON SMITH: What makes him tick? – Interview Inside
SUE BRADFORD: Why is she smacking parents!
SOCIALIST SWEDEN: Why does it work?
GOD: Dawkins explodes the delusion!
JOHN KEY: Anything there?



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March - April 2007

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politics, economics & life as if freedom mattered

After the release of the report on global warming prepared by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the call for a new environmental body to slow global warming and protect the planet -- a body that potentially could have policing powers to punish violators -- was led by French President Jacques Chirac.

The meaning of this "effort" is that Chirac is attempting to make an international crime out of attempts to increase production and raise living standards. . .

I am not surprised by this attempt to criminalize productive activity. In fact, I predicted it.

- George Reisman, p.16

The Environmental Noose is Tightening

EXTRA: "Global Warming: The panic is officially over" - Monckton



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WHO SAID THAT?

Cultures are not museum pieces. They are the working machinery of everyday life. Unlike objects of aesthetic contemplation, working machinery is judged by how well it works, compared to the alternatives.
- *Thomas Sowell*

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.
- *Martin Luther King Jr.*

So long as the people do not care to exercise their freedom, those who wish to tyrannize will do so; for tyrants are active and ardent, and will devote themselves in the name of any number of gods, religious and otherwise, to put shackles upon sleeping men.
- *Voltaire*

As of oligarchy so of tyranny... Both mistrust the people, and therefore deprive them of their arms.
- *Aristotle*

In the transition to statism, every infringement of human rights has begun with the suppression of a given right’s least attractive practitioners.
- *Ayn Rand*

You can only protect your liberties in this world by protecting the other man’s freedom. You can only be free if I am free.
- *Clarence Darrow:*

When dictatorship is a fact, revolution becomes a right.
- *Victor Hugo*

You have to remember that trade unionists and anti-nuclear campaigners didn’t go away. They just morphed into ecmentalists because they realised that global warming was a better weapon than striking, or doing lesbionics for Mother Russia in Berkshire.
- *Jeremy Clarkson*

Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.
- *John F. Kennedy*

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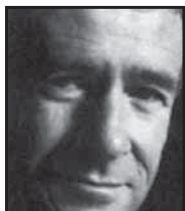
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Emptiness And Ammunition

Peter Cresswell

A dismissive Walter Lippman once declared of presidential candidate Franklin Roosevelt that he was "the master of the balanced antithesis" -- "a pleasant man who, without any important qualifications for the office, would very much like to be president." All true, but FDR's congenital emptiness proved no barrier to electoral popularity.

It never does. On *that*, Pink Tory John Key, NZ's "master of the balanced antithesis," is banking his political career. John Boy's dazzling emptiness will prove no barrier to popularity. Delusions never do.

Popular delusions? They abound. They persist! *They threaten*. The 'Swedish' delusion that welfare states are workable. The *environmental delusion* that we're destroying the planet -- and that Al Gore is honest. The destructive

delusions of *tribalism* and of *ethnic fundamentalism*, and all the empty delusions of religion, flourishing even in this age of science, wealth and staggering technological progress

Empty they are, but these delusions are popular. Says US libertarian Richard Boddie, "People are deluded *en masse*, but enlightened one at a time." This *Free Radical* offers you ammunition and amusement to bring enlightenment to the most deluded. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did bringing it together.

Cheers,

Peter Cresswell
Send Peter mail at
organon@ihug.co.nz.

"Anyone There?"



NEW FREELAND

A LIBERTARIAN FANTASY

something to be going on with • steps towards the freeing of New Zealand

Declaration of Independence, establishing a Constitutional Republic.

Constitution enshrining each citizen's right to life, liberty,
and the pursuit of property and happiness, limiting government's
function to upholding that right.

Cultivation of ethos where envy, welfarism and conformity-worship are replaced
by admiration for individual achievement and excellence, self-reliance, respect
for individual autonomy and man's distinctive faculty—reason.

Phasing out of all statutory bodies and legislation superfluous to or inconsistent
with non-initiation of force principle (see Editorial Policy).

Progressive disengagement of government from health, education,
welfare, broadcasting, art and culture, etc.

Earliest possible removal of shackles from the creative and productive—
GST, Company tax, Provisional Tax regime, Entertainment Tax,
Fringe Benefit Tax, etc.

Acknowledgement that compulsory taxation is theft—a violation of individual
sovereignty—but an unavoidable evil for the foreseeable future. Establishment
of flat rate of income tax at appropriate level, subject to progressive reduction as
government shrinks to its rightful size. Abolition of PAYE system—taxpayers
to be billed, as with rates.

Repeal of all other laws violating individual sovereignty, including those against
victimless “crimes,” i.e. laws regulating adult drug use, gambling,
pornography, prostitution, etc. This is not to bestow moral blessing on these
activities, simply an acknowledgement that they're not the law's business.

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the blogosphere.

The opinions expressed by the writers herein are not necessarily those of the editor, or
of each other.

THE KIWI HERALD

News too good to be true from Moenui (Pop. 421) current holder of The Northern Region Best Kept Grass Verge Award



SPORTS STARS RUSH TO GIVE EVIDENCE

A number of sporting celebrities are expected to make court appearances over the coming months, following the precedent of former All-Black Steve McDowell (above) who achieved national headlines today when he appeared as a defence witness in a rape trial.

Kiwi Herald investigations reveal that recently retired Blackcaps opening batsman Nathan Astle will kick-start a new career next month appearing as a witness in hit-and-run cases, while the notoriously slow-scoring former international John Parker will star as an expert witness in a loitering-with-intent trial.

Sources say that David Tua will appear in a series of assaults later in the year. Meanwhile there are strong rumours that Taito Philip Field has engaged fellow Samoan Beatrice Faumuina to appear for him if charges are laid in the hope that she can help to have the case thrown out of court.

POOR PEOPLE FALL THROUGH CRACKS AGAIN

Police and ambulance staff were called to the dead end McGehan Close this morning after an elderly woman and her grandchild fell into council footpath workings, giving credence to the Prime Minister's observation that "some people are still falling through the cracks."

Constable Frank Tawhai who attended the incident said that the task of rescuing the woman and the child from their predicament was made 'extra difficult because like most poor folk the pair were completely clueless about how to climb ladders.'

"Frankly," Constable Tawhai told the *Kiwi Herald*, "the problem is getting out of hand. I'm spending more and more time trying to get hopeless people out of cracks instead of focusing on counter-terrorism and team policing exercises involving young women."

UNDERCLASS TELL POLITICIANS TO STAY AWAY

Residents in McGehan Close in Moenui were today pleading that gangs of marauding politicians leave them alone. The calls came after National Party leader John Key identified the "dead end street" as one the Prime Minister should join him in visiting.

"Please stay away," said Will Ilolahiah "It is tough enough bringing up kids here without these gangs of the over-class turning up to stage their turf wars."



CHURCH SERVICE ENDS ON SOUR NOTE

A major fracas between worshippers forced an early end to Sunday prayer at the Moenui Baptist Church today. The normally friendly atmosphere was disrupted when Matiu Wilson, who leads the congregation in song, broke his guitar over the head of Jonathon Burdes telling the dazed devotee that if he continued to clap out of time he would be assisted to "take a closer walk with Jesus."

A number of other members of the congregation then joined in the spat after Wilson was felled by a shower of copies of the New Testament. Order was only restored when Pastor Michael Tartuffe set off the fire alarm. The *Kiwi Herald* understands that Mr Burdes' lack of rhythm and his enthusiastic calls of "Hallelujah Jesus" and "Lord I'm a comin'" during hymns have been the source of on-going irritation to Mr Wilson.

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IF BUNTY FROM CLASSIFIEDS

checked her copy occasionally instead of talking on the phone and giving the builders the come-on, this might not have been here.

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WOULD THE PERSON

who borrowed my boat from the Owairua river bring it back. I suppose you've drunk the home-brew. Hope it made you as crook as the rest made me.

Subscribe to the *Kiwi Herald* online at www.Kiwiherald.Blogspot.Com.



MADONNA TO ADOPT KIWI CHILD

Madonna was last night on her way to New Zealand in the hope of adopting a child from McGehan Close. The star, who famously adopted a Malawian child recently, is believed to be one of several overseas celebrities who have

been inspired to adopt "a poor little brown child like the one National Party leader John Key has adopted."

Meanwhile *Kiwi Herald* investigations are unable to confirm whether Woody Allen was sighted at McGehan Close yesterday seeking to adopt a young Asian girl.

LABOUR TO RETURN STOLEN ELECTION

In a major about-face the Labour Government today announced it would "return the stolen election of 2006" to Don Brash, along with several thousand dollars of taxpayers money misspent in the election, and \$12.23 owed on an unpaid bar-tab at Bellamy's.

The Herald could not confirm rumours that Ruth Dyson will soon admit that the unpaid bar tab is hers, nor could it verify that former Minister Marian Hobbs was preparing to take the rap for the loss of the Rugby World Cup in 2003, admitting that she had "lost the will to keep in shape about the same time the All blacks lost their way."

Meanwhile the National Party has been flung into disarray by the news. Don Brash could not be reached at the *Playboy Club* in Las Vegas (where he was last seen), but sources close to John Key said that the Labour Party could not "retrospectively return the stolen election to Don."

"John Key is the new man at the helm and so the election should go to him," said one source. "Don's gone and this is another cheap stunt from the Socialists. We'll be asking Bernard Darnton to investigate."



Newstalk ZB's Leighton Smith: What Makes Him Tick?

"I almost always refuse interviews" says Leighton Smith with a grin.

"Well, aren't I the lucky one then!" I reply with an even bigger one, as I walk into the kitchen one windy Sunday morning last December.

However "interview" would be an interesting choice of noun, given the circumstances. I'm no interviewer—heck, I'm barely a writer—but here I am, at the request of *TFR*, interviewing one of New Zealand's most well-known interviewers at his home in the picturesque Clevedon hills, south of Auckland.

I got the job because I've been haranguing Leighton Smith for more than a decade, pretty much on a daily basis. It was he who dubbed me 'Susan the Libertarian'. I sought refuge in his pro-capitalist radio programme on Newstalk ZB after fleeing Radio Pacific's then morning host. It's probably best for all concerned that she remain nameless, but her sopping wet, politically correct, socialist sympathies would have resulted in one of two certainties: either her demise or mine, at my hands. As I have a healthy regard for my own existence and little desire to go to prison, the choice to move on was simple.

"You know what this looks like, don't you?" he quips as I place a small dictaphone on the table. "I do. But you're not John Tamihere and I'm certainly not Ian Wishart! Besides, I'm sure Mr Wishart had a much flashier machine!" I laugh to myself that, having seen the latter's well-publicised recording device, he doesn't deny it.

Australian-born Smith is something of a New Zealand radio institution. Having been lured to 2ZB in Wellington from Townsville in 1980 'with the best contract ever offered a newbie,' he ended up staying five years. He returned to Australia, 'for good, I thought', but the media gods had other plans that only months later saw him leave a lucrative job in Adelaide radio, to host the all-new Newstalk ZB morning programme from Auckland. 'You'll be bored shitless in 18 months!' said his furious Adelaide producer. But 22 years on and in racing parlance, Leighton Smith continues to pay top dividends.

We discuss numerous topics. Radio, with which I was once involved, sport, travel, and, of course, politics, which figures largely in his programme.

TFR: *Define your politics.*

I can't. I'm no real 'ism'. I've always been interested in politics and current events; parental influences there, I suppose. I'm certainly no left-winger, though.

TFR: *But isn't the old left-wing/right-wing dichotomy obsolete? Surely the real dichotomy is simply between the individual and the state?*

Yes, that's right. There's not a lot of difference between the left and the right anymore. Funnily enough, a piece in The (UK) *Daily Telegraph* echoed as much only this week. The left has been hijacked. Once upon a time you could have a good debate with a leftie in Australia or New Zealand. The same themes ran through both sides, e.g. both were pro-family, hard-working and often religious to a degree. They were all workers. Now the left consists of academics and losers. You can throw the PC term around all you like, but the fact is that it has well and truly captured the left.

TFR: *Libertarianism is about removing the state from people's lives. To what extent do you support that?*

Well, this is where you and I part company on one point. I'm a huge believer in charity, but there's also a place for a welfare net. Having said that, restricting it to a level that I would call desirable is impossible in mainstream politics, because when you learn that you don't have to be responsible for your own actions, you're lost, and society's headed in the same direction. And this country's stuffed because of it. Here's another concern: Microsoft, for example. I see danger in one entity's domination and possible suffocation or undermining of new players because of its size. So to answer your question as briefly as possible, at one end I support a shallow safety net, and at the other a few rules about commerce.

TFR: *But you can't have it both ways. You can't offer welfare and expect it to not be abused. You can't implement commerce regulation and expect it to stay minimal.*

And that's precisely why I can't define, per se, my politics. There's no such thing as perfection. By the way, I'm no devotee of Ayn Rand. She said a lot of great things, but I think she was a selfish bitch. But let me put a question to you. How would a free market deal with problems associated with misleading packaging?

TFR: *Well, I'm an individual and I believe in being a responsible consumer and doing my homework. I'm not going to buy anything of which I'm dubious, and this will answer your Microsoft monopoly issue too, because if, as a consumer, I'm concerned about sole market domination, etc., I'm naturally going to be looking out for alternatives.*

Yes, but is that enough? Let's talk education because it's hugely important, and central to what we're talking about. It's semi-stuffed in New Zealand. I don't like the NCEA at all. I have two sons each doing different systems and I've seen how the NCEA encourages laziness. I want my kids educated with western enlightenment – knowledge is changing constantly – and the ability to think and learn for themselves, and the enthusiasm to do so.

We move on to the subject of education vouchers where we spend several minutes in disagreement. Essentially, Smith supports the concept because he believes it gives people the choice of the type of education they wish their children to receive, which automatically removes the state from the scenario.

My point is that because the state is still in control of the various curricula and the teachers' training colleges, not to mention the public fund, the voucher system is just a stopgap measure designed to dupe parents into believing they have control of their children's education. I'm not sure I was at all eloquent and we reach a stalemate which strikes me as a good time to move on to juicier stuff.

TFR: *What are your thoughts on the libertarian perspective of legalising drugs, guns and prostitution?*

I don't believe in gun control, and adult prostitution should not be a crime, no question about that. But I am adamant that drugs should never be legalised. P (Meth) is everywhere. It's a major problem. As a parent, the state and/or society has failed

dramatically. Parents are responsible for their children until they're adults. Children do not have rights; parents have responsibilities. Children may have expectations, but that should not be confused with 'rights'. One of the last advantages that parents have is that drugs are illegal: "if you do that, I'll call the cops and have you arrested", if it comes to that. Removal of corporal punishment has led to major (juvenile) behavioural problems here and elsewhere in the world. If you make drugs legal, kids will think that it's ok to use them, so where's your problem?

When it comes to adults, well, as long as you're responsible for your actions, that's another argument. But drugs are devastatingly dangerous and if you make them freely available, it will encourage it. I know your argument that prohibition's not working, but my response is how much worse might it be if drugs were legal? Look, you're never going to eliminate bad behaviour, but if the punishment fits the crime you will limit it.

TFR: *Libertarians believe in harsh penalties for harsh crimes, but it's a matter of how you define a crime. And we do not believe it's a crime for an adult to voluntarily ingest a substance. But we believe that it's the criminality of the market that drives it underground, leading to all sorts of problems that are dealt with violently precisely because of its illegality, Chicago in the 1930s being the classic example.*

Look, children are my greatest concern. But when you've got a welfare system that'll bail everybody out ...

TFR: *But two wrongs (ie state welfare and state prohibition) don't make a right!*
Ok, fix that first and then come back and talk to me about legalising drugs!

TFR: *You cover such a wide variety of topics on your show .. it's part of the appeal, as far as I'm concerned. What sort of research do you do?*

Rolling. That's the best way to describe my research. I'm doing what I love to do – and I can satisfy my interests through my work. In terms of sources, I was the first to utilise the internet in the mid-90's. I had a massive advantage for two years because nobody else latched onto it, but I saw its value right from the start. For example, I used to buy the Australian newspapers, but now the net provides all the articles and correspondence the world over. Earlier this morning I was reading The Daily Telegraph, the Financial Times and The Australian and it again occurred to me how magic and wonderful it is that you can sit in this geographical outpost and read what they're reading over there.

TFR: *Your audience is loyal. Do you feel a closeness after so many years?*
Yeah, they're a bit like an extended family.

Lots of regulars both here, and overseas listening online. There's a danger in becoming too close and 'excluding' others in the process, though, and I try to be wary of that. But there are others out there who hate your guts – particularly via text message. Texts are short and sharp by nature, but sometimes they're really vicious. I suspect the callers think they're more anonymous that way. "You shallow prick!" or "You right-wing bastard!" I love it ... it means I'm doing something right!

TFR: *How do you balance the various forms of communication?*

With difficulty. I read too much and it becomes monotonous, but I'm reluctant to pre-read and then paraphrase because there's always the danger that you're not conveying the message correctly. Plus it takes time. I spend a lot of time pulling up stuff and opening emails and occasionally it shows that I'm not paying attention, but I'm anxious to broadcast something important, and there's a lot that is important right now. When the topic's hot, the communications literally pour in.

TFR: *You've been doing a lot of reading on Islam and Islamofascism, etc. What are your conclusions as to where they are and where we (in the west) are?*

They're winning. And they're winning because of multiculturalism, which has brainwashed us, a la education, for example. Multiculturalism is inextricably linked to political correctness. Growing up in Sydney, multiculturalism meant the fabulous variation of people; the Greeks, Italians and Chinese migrants, etc. I loved the mix of people; I loved the different cuisines. That was one reason I never left Australia until I was quite a lot older. But those people came to Australia to be Australians. Now, multiculturalism means the opposite. I've been saying for years that you can't force-mix certain cultures. And I believe the rise of Islamofascism is the greatest threat to world security. Mark Steyn in his latest book *America Alone* says something like this: "While global warming is the world's biggest threat to many people, the real threat comes from Islam. In a few years time, one of us will be wrong". I reckon I know whom. Look, Islam and the west do not mix. Individuals can, but they're not the ones driving the agenda. The latter are the hardliners – and they mean to rule the world. There are not two schools of thought at odds here. One is a school of thought (as in reason) and the other's a school of mad belief. People talk about bringing Islam into the 21st century, but that's not Islam!

TFR: *Western journalists have been described as 'intellectually lazy' regarding their understanding of Middle-Eastern politics. Thoughts?*

Most journalists are not only left-wing, they're also secular. You cannot hope to understand the Middle East if you divorce yourself from the religious beliefs of the parties involved.

TFR: *US foreign policy has been described as ad hoc. To what extent has past US support of Saddam Hussein contributed to the current situation in Iraq?*

Everything contributes to everything. Look, the US is the reluctant sole superpower. I have no time for those who berate America for what it does. It's not perfect, but it's a darn site better than pretty much anything else. At the time they backed Iraq, they were busy with the Soviet Union and Iran. The geo-politics of the whole world changed in the 80's because Reagan was successful. One thing the Soviet Union did was keep Islam under control. But nature abhors a vacuum and the collapse of the Soviet Union gave rise to Islam. I never had a problem with Bush going into Iraq and doing what he did. I believe the fault lies with Rumsfeld and his mishandling of the situation – and now he's gone.

TFR: *But can you impose freedom upon people?*

No, but you can give them the opportunity to take it. Saddam kept control of the various factions via tyranny. And here's the thing within Islam: one faction thinks the other is no better than Jews or Christians.

TFR: *An ideal New Zealand – what would you change?*

If I could pick one thing, I'd like to see an elimination of the victim mentality of Maori. This country isn't going anywhere until every child gets a western education that gives them the opportunity to flourish. The country's progress is going to be hampered until every child is encouraged to succeed, tribalism takes its rightful place in history and socialism has a stake driven through its heart.

TFR: *You'll get no argument from us! What about Political Correctness in all its manifestations. Will it eventually unravel? Will it be its own undoing, like the Soviet Union?*

No. I think it's there for the duration. Some aspects might morph, but it's too entrenched. That's why I'm not a card-carrying Libertarian, because there's too much of it (PC) around for the purity of libertarianism. But if I was forced by law to join a political movement, it would be libertarianism – which flies in the face of its philosophy somewhat!

TFR: *Yes, just a bit! But speaking of libertarianism, one of your heroes is Thomas Jefferson. Why?*

My interest in Thomas Jefferson coincided with my argument with (then Transport Minister) Maurice Williamson and his ID card and the implications thereof. We don't value our freedoms, we take them for granted. We don't teach history properly and if you don't understand history, you're destined to make the same mistakes. I was so impressed with Jefferson that I named this house 'Il

Monticello' after his estate. He was fond of all things Italian, as am I. In fact this whole house was made in Italy and shipped over.

TFR: *Which brings us neatly to Clevedon Hills Wines. How did that come about?*

It was a case of it being third time lucky. A friend and I were going to do something down in Martinborough but he chickened out and I've never let him forget it. Then Dad and I had plans near the Blue Mountains in NSW, but he died prematurely, so when this land came up for sale, that was that, although it was certainly a case of waiting for the right spot. We planted in 1998 and had our first vintage syrah in 2000 and it still hasn't hit its straps. I've also had the very best coaching from Enzo Bettio at Vin Alto. He makes the wine and we work together well.

TFR: *Ok, some quick questions to finish. National under John Key: Good move or not?*

Is Key positioning himself broadly intentionally to appeal to the widest number of people right from the outset; in other words is he just playing politics to get elected, or is that what he really believes? I don't know. Perhaps we'll have a better idea by the time this goes to print.

TFR: *Define morality.*

Certain behaviours are there for a reason and it took me a long time to realise that because, as I've said before elsewhere, I really was a foot soldier in the sexual revolution. I guess that, briefly summarised, my morals are Christian-based, albeit somewhat thwarted.

TFR: *What frightens you? What annoys you?*

Two things frighten me: my kids going off the rails and my ending up with nothing when I'm too old to get myself out of it. What annoys me? Gee, what a good question. Probably stupidity. I can respect others who think something through and come to a different conclusion to mine as long as there's reason for it, but I have no time for the alternative. And incivility. I detest a lack of civility or respect for others, their rights and liberties, etc.

TFR: *What do you watch on TV?*

Not much. The news, so I know what's going on. but I've often gone by the third story. Ah yes, I watch the Warriors! I love my league and I've been following it since the Winfield Cup started on New Zealand screens. I remember going to the US for the first time in 1983 and I was fascinated by cable. I stayed up all night watching it because we only had the two channels here then.

TFR: *Most memorable interview?*

There are a few. Jeffrey Archer several times, even though I've never read his books. I first met him in Wellington at 2ZB and he was visibly angry that I'd not read the book he was promoting. But the second time we met, he said that his diary that year noted that first interview as being the best of the whole world tour. I interviewed Margaret Thatcher at the height of the Falklands crisis. I had to record it in the middle of the night. Charlton Heston made a big impression. He was very civil. Also Christian Pol Roger, the renowned French champagne-maker. He's been here and I've visited him in Epernay. We've become friends.

TFR: *Biggest interviewing disappointment?*

The number of high profile actors who had no civility whatsoever and were totally up themselves. Mickey Rooney was one, although he wasn't the worst by a long shot. Eartha Kitt was difficult and pretentious, but renowned for it. Often authors of non-fiction can be disappointing. An example was Frances Mayes, the most tedious woman I've ever met. Even Carolyn [Leighton's producer] said as much, and that's saying something.

TFR: *Quickfire Favourites:*

Food: Italian, of course! *Authors:* These days, Mark Steyn, Thomas Sowell and likeminded philosophers, also Victor Davis Hanson, the classically liberal historian. *Fiction?* Daniel Silva, Brad Thor, Vince Flynn and Lee Child. *Holiday destination:* Cruising. I used to think it was for old farts, so either cruising has changed or I'm an old fart. I've cruised three times, around the Caribbean, Istanbul to Rome, and the south of France. You go aboard, unpack once and enjoy total luxury. There's nothing wrong with a bit of luxury.

TFR: *Rumour has it that you're fast approaching a significant birthday. What do you know now that you didn't, say, 20 years ago?*

Plenty! The doubts I had about the personal route I was taking at the time were correct! I know that I love to travel as much as possible. I love Asia and I'd like to go back to Russia. I was there in the 80's and I could spend the next two hours telling stories about that one trip and you wouldn't be bored. I can take or leave South America. Africa? I keep hearing horror stories - maybe North Africa, if only to make up my own mind. I can always see more of Italy. I could take more of London, thanks to Carolyn, and I'd love to revisit the south of France. I like gorgeous countryside, with good food and wine and a sense of "I belong here." I felt that way about New Orleans and have been back many times. Same with Israel; I

felt an attachment. Speaking of Israel, why haven't you asked about my religious beliefs?

TFR: *Well, go on then.*

You can't do an interview when discussing world affairs and political philosophy without discussing personal beliefs, because we must all be influenced by our core beliefs. As far as I'm concerned, I fail to see how anybody can think all this (waves expansively across the horizon) is an accident. Now where you go from there is a matter of personal journey, but the whole scenario an accident? Give me a break! You can't believe in either theory - creationism or atheism - without faith. But what you believe does to some degree govern where you're going to fall on some issues.

TFR: *After all these years on air, why do you keep doing it?*

Because I still love it - most days. I always thought I'd walk away in my mid-50's, but I'm still here. The industry's changed dramatically over the years, especially with the introduction of FM licenses. There were only a handful of stations when I came and now Auckland's one of the busiest radio markets in the world, per capita. Stations now have to target much more specifically; the days of 52% market share like I had in Wellington in 1981 are long gone, as are the days of morning radio outranking breakfast. It took a while to get used to that; I like being number 1. But morning is the only programme I'm interested in doing. I could never do breakfast. To quote [sports host] Murray Deaker (Smith grins at this point), I apparently "don't have a well-developed sense of humour"! Besides, I don't operate well, first thing in the morning ...

I suspect his longtime listeners would disagree. The one-time Sydney cabbie - 'still the best part of my life' - who spurned a law degree in favour of a broadcasting career seems to have found roots in a country he once had no interest in visiting, let alone living.

Life is full of "what ifs," which begs the question as to what might have happened had Wellington not produced some unseasonably beautiful mid-winter weather the weekend a skeptical Leighton Smith arrived from sunny far-north Queensland to check out 2ZB.

Well, one thing's for sure. I would have broken the fifth commandment some ten years ago. Long live free speech and capitalism - in spite of this government.



Leighton Smith can be found on the net at www.leightonsmith.co.nz, and on the radio on Newstalk ZB (www.newstalkzb.co.nz). Susan Ryder can often be found talking to Leighton, mornings at ZB.



Greg Carvell: Shot in self defence a machete-wielding robber at his family's Auckland gun shop.

If that's the case, then surely the shooting in self-defence of a machete-wielding robber at an Auckland gun shop (who was shot and disabled with just one shot rather than the three police needed to achieve the same result) was even more justified.

Even if we ignore the vexing question of how it was that an "untrained civilian" was able to do with just one shot what a "trained police officer" needed three shots to achieve, there is no doubt this Police Complaints Authority finding makes the decision of police hierarchy to subsequently press firearms charges against the Auckland gun-shop owner even more illogical, small-minded and elitist.

It will certainly help swell the numbers of those who believe police policy increasingly favours criminals, and that these charges are an abuse of the legal process.

Police hierarchy understand well the very serious emotional and financial costs a court appearance to justify the use of deadly or potentially deadly force in self-defence brings to the defendant and their family. That is why the Police Complaints Authority has for decades routinely investigated all such incidents first. Interestingly, to date, the Police Complaints Authority has also never ever found any police officer to have used force improperly—including deadly force even when

the evidence presented appears inconclusive or even possibly contradictory.

How is it then, that when a member of the public responds to a potentially life-threatening situation in exactly the same way as a police officer is expected to do, they are treated in such a different manner both by police and by the legal system? Both surely are performing an equal socially beneficial act and both should be lauded and protected equally?

Indeed, there is a serious conflict of interest when police have the power to prosecute previously law-abiding citizens for using force to defend themselves from violent criminals, as this is a direct and inevitable consequence of the police's own failure to adequately protect the public in the first place. The regularity with which police do prosecute those who defend themselves makes it clear that they appear to believe police have more right to self-defence than the ordinary citizen, and that they simply do not care how much emotional trauma, family stress and unnecessary legal costs they impose on innocent victims of violent crime.

Since the law on self-defence makes it clear self-defence is a universal right available to everyone if necessary, it is high time attempts by police hierarchy to monopolise effective self-defence through the imposition

of vindictive and extra-judicial penalties on ordinary citizens be addressed.

Given the steady rise in violent crime in New Zealand (a rise that police currently appear powerless to reduce or even hold steady) it can be predicted that self-defence incidents will become more frequent over time; it is surely not unreasonable to suggest the setting up of a less formal and therefore less costly and less stressful independent self-defence tribunal, somewhat along the lines of a coroners court.

Such a tribunal would also take the place of the present Police Complaints Authority investigations into any police shootings thus ensuring the whole process of police accountability becomes more legally robust, less elitist, more transparent and more independent.

Since these are among the lowest-cost units of the legal system, one would think the idea would find widespread support in both legal circles and in the wider community—except possibly amongst those whose poor past judgement and vested interest has created the need for them in the first place.

Lech Beltowski is an Auckland GP, and spokesman for the Sporting Shooters' Association of New Zealand.

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Why Does Sweden Work?

Part 2 of our interview with Johan Norberg, Globalisation Advocate

'*The Devil's Advocate*,' a Scandinavian free-market radio show, travelled to Stockholm to discuss globalisation with Swedish author and globalisation advocate Johan Norberg, and (in Part 1) began by asking whether this still holds true in the light of evidence that wages are falling for workers in the West, and that the Washington Consensus model for capitalism has failed in many developing countries.

In this excerpt, they discuss the success of the Nordic welfare states and how they compare with the U.S., as well as the role of the state in the economic development of the Asian Tigers.

TDA: *Johan, we have been talking a bit about globalisation and the effects for poor and rich countries. Let's talk about some specific rich countries, very rich countries actually, some of the richest in the world, namely the Nordic welfare states. Because here in the Nordic welfare states there are high levels of redistribution through progressive taxation. A recent study showed that Denmark and Sweden actually have the highest level of taxation in the O.E.C.D. There are enormous public sectors and quite a bit of regulation and unionised labour markets. According to classical liberalist theory, this would actually be the "Road to Serfdom", so to speak. These countries should be poor and unfree, yet they rank among the most competitive in the world with healthy economic growth and populations which are happy. They are not totalitarian states, as Hayek perhaps would have guessed in his day. How do you explain that?*

No that's right, it seems like a paradox. Look at us. We seem to be happy, not being miserably oppressed by Denmark and Sweden. Well, I think that this is true, and in a way it poses a challenge for the classical arguments saying that it's impossible to have a middle way, you will always continue to expand government and in the end you will have difficulty in even keeping the democracy alive in countries like that. I think that when we talk about the Nordic countries, it's important to look at the background, where we come from, the kind of preconditions that existed for our model, because they are a very important part of the story.

I will talk about Sweden because that's what I'm most an expert on, and you can tell me if this

doesn't apply to Denmark, but already in the mid nineteenth century you could hear foreign visitors coming to Sweden, a Sweden that was back then a fairly authoritarian system with a centrally planned economy and a lot of protectionism, but that was beginning to change into a very free market, liberal economy with religious freedoms, freedom of the press and so on. At that time, we could read about, for example, a French visitor who came to Sweden and said wow, there's something specific about this system. Despite the fact that they are not in agreement with one another, they have different points of view, different politicians here and there, we see that there's really good governance, there's low corruption. If you deal with the bureaucracy here in Sweden, it's amazingly efficient and transparent if you compare it to France, in the 1850s and perhaps today as well. And he mentioned other things like gender equality and a lack of personal interests affecting the behaviour of politicians and the bureaucracy and civil servants.

He thought, and I think there are many good arguments for this, that it resulted from a country that was fairly homogenous traditionally, with a high degree of trust between people, with the average neighbour coming from rural villages where people knew one another and where politicians came from a very long tradition of democracy—in Sweden, we didn't even have a feudal system—which meant that the representatives from the village, who had a say in what the king did and so on, were always seen as part of society. They were not seen as some sort of alien, external elite that enforced specific rules, and the good thing about that is that there will perhaps be more trust, more of a way for politicians and civil servants to say "I'm actually here to do a job on behalf of others and try to do it in a good way. I'm not here to try to steal as much as possible in as short a time as possible." The problematic thing of course, from a liberal point of view, is that it also leads to

less suspicion of power, because if we don't have the alien, external, dangerous elite, but instead "oh, it's my cousin or my neighbour or the second cousins..."

TDA: *But are you saying that the reason why the Nordic welfare states are doing well is chiefly because they didn't have huge public sectors in the beginning, when they started creating wealth, or are you saying that the governments of Nordic welfare states have actually defied classical liberal theory and made sound decisions, taken good care of their citizens and created wealth?*

I think that what I'm saying is a little bit of both, actually, that those preconditions and those ways of dealing with the government were born in a completely different system, when there were other demands, a higher degree of trust, more of a work ethic and belief in transparency and so on. Those survived for a very long time and it meant that even as the government grew bigger and did more things, it was done in a transparent way. It was done, I think more often than in other places—I hope I don't sound chauvinistic now—in the belief that we're actually trying to do something good for people.

That could mean that we could have a bigger public sector with more money ending up in the hands of bureaucrats and politicians, because they didn't try to corrupt the system as often as in other places. Whereas in many other places, especially in poorer countries with a shorter tradition of an open democratic system, when they try to imitate the Swedish system of large public companies and a lot of money in the hands of the public sector, well then it often means that there's a fight over those resources and how to benefit yourself and your own as much as possible. I think that's a big difference.

The bureaucracy in the Nordic countries defied many of the liberal suspicions of how they would act, but at the same time they did it because they were born under a completely different system. In the long run, I think it creates problems because that morality doesn't exist as a gift from God. It's born in a specific system and if the system doesn't create the right incentives then it won't survive for very long.

TDA: *But are you saying then that if, let's say, the trust is retained in government and the public sector by Nordic states, then you could actually expand the public sectors to*

even larger levels than today and we could still be wealthy countries?

I think you can do it for some time. One example of this is the way we've worked in our countries. As you say, Denmark and Sweden have the highest taxes in the world. Still, we go to our jobs. Many foreigners have asked me about this. They think we're mad. Why do we do this if we don't make much more than if we don't work? I think one of the reasons is that the historical work ethic, in a fairly small society with large degrees of social pressure, means that you're supposed to do it, no matter what.

But in the long run, if you have that kind of system, people who enter that society, being young and not brought up under a system where the incentives said that you would profit a lot if you started companies and worked hard, well they will not use the system, they will abuse it. In many degrees, that's a rational response to a bizarre system. We can see in Sweden that especially the young and the immigrants, people who enter the society now and try to get into the labour market, well they more often than others end up in unemployment and welfare roles and things like that. That's why I think we're in trouble in the long run with such a large state, because it undermines those preconditions.

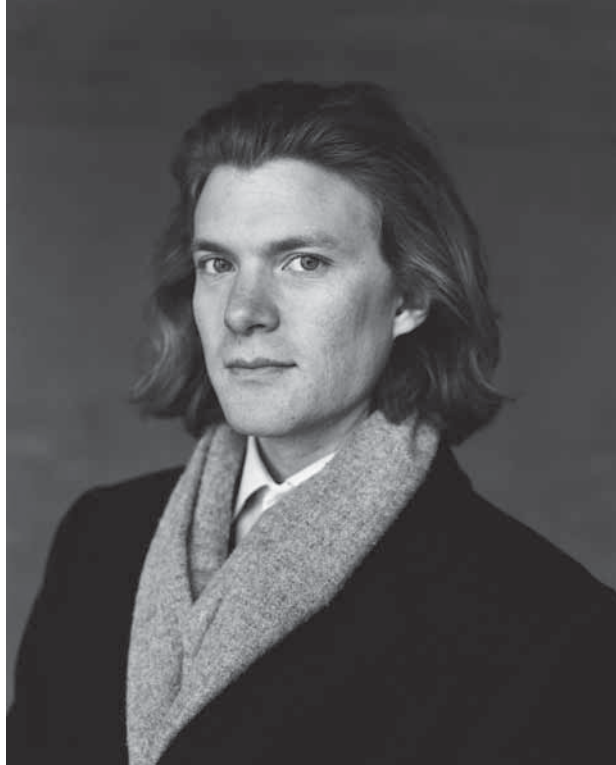
TDA: *So do you foresee a bleak future for the Nordic welfare states or will they keep outperforming most other economies, even more liberalised ones?*

I'm actually not one of those who believe in doom and gloom for the Nordic countries. One reason is that small countries like ours have shown that it's also possible to turn it around when there's a political understanding of the need for change. I think that to some degree has already happened.

Sweden had a very problematic situation. Until the 1970s, Sweden wasn't really an exception when it came to taxes and so on. It was after that that we began to regulate the labour market and increase taxes. Well, that meant twenty-five years of stagnation in Sweden and we fell from the being the fourth richest country in the world to the fourteenth. But in the late eighties and early nineties we had a period of fairly rapid liberal reforms, opening up the product markets and the economy, beginning to introduce in healthcare, education and so on. That made for a more entrepreneurship, the big companies and telecoms and so on. I think that might happen again.

TDA: *As you rightly stated, after a long*

period of sluggish growth in Sweden, you had a conservative government under Carl Bildt. I'm looking at a book on your table called Winter in the Welfare Country. I guess that was a book describing the situation. Also in Denmark in the eighties we had a conservative government, which changed the way society was thought of from a very social democratic model. How important



Johan Norberg: *"We get a lot of people who come here with abilities, who are willing to work very hard, but find that they have to leave Sweden to get that chance. That's our biggest shame right now, I think."*

do you think those changes have been in keeping the welfare states competitive?

I think they've been essential for keeping it going. We really had a Winter in the Welfare Country in 1990, when the economy was almost collapsing. Five years later we began to see the successes of the new telecom and I.T. companies and so on.

It's important to say also that the Social Democrats often said "This is outrageous, the reforms you do now. This will completely destroy the system." And then they got power and they kept all those reforms in place. So I think we have more of a pragmatic tradition, which means that even the Left is often in agreement when it comes to doing specific things. It was a left-wing government in Sweden that just abolished the inheritance tax, the gift taxes and so on, because they understand that in a global economy we have to do things like that.

Those reforms were very important because

they gave us small countries an opportunity to do what we do best in a global economy. If we do that, I think that globalisation can actually help not just the economies, but also systems like welfare states to survive better, because it means that the things that we don't do well, the things that the welfare state stops or puts obstacles in the way of—for example the creation of more private capital for investments in companies—we can get from the global market. If we have less innovation of businesses and technology in the healthcare sector for example, if it's socialised, well then we can import those things from the U.S. and the private market there. So in a way, smart socialists can really globalise and liberalise the welfare state in Sweden and Denmark to make it prosper even better.

TDA: *If you look at the world today, many people would say that the country that most resembles the classical liberal ideal would be the U.S. Some might now point to some of the Baltic countries as actually being more classical liberal, but the US is the traditional model. There's also a high level of inequality in America, but one would think that one of the reasons why many Americans would accept the inequalities is the conviction that by hard work, you are able to make a better living for yourself, no matter how poor you start out.*

But in a recent edition of The Economist, two studies were quoted about social mobility at the bottom of society, comparing the Nordic countries with the U.S. The studies found that "around three quarters of sons born into the poorest fifth of the population in Nordic countries in the late 1950s had moved out of that category by the time they were in their early forties. In contrast, only just over half of American men born at the bottom later moved up".

This would suggest that significant public spending, regulation and a big caring state can be competitive, dynamic and ensure individual freedom at the same time. Perhaps it's not only in Scandinavia. Maybe they should also try and adopt more progressive taxation and an even bigger public sector in the U.S.?

Well, I love The Economist. It's such a great magazine... [However] one thing that I never understand is their misreading of the statistics on social mobility in the U.S., compared to Nordic countries. I think it's the kind of paradox that they really love to confuse their readers with.

The problem with those statistics is that in an egalitarian and equal society, if you only count social mobility as a way of moving ahead

of others into a different income category, then by nature it's easier to do that in a very equal society where there are very tiny wage differentials. It means that if you get another thousand Danish krone per month, you've moved up a lot. You show incredible social dynamics and mobility in such a society. Whereas in a less egalitarian society like the U.S., you would need ten times as much as that to really move ahead further than others.

The bureaucracy in the Nordic countries defied many of the liberal suspicions of how they would act, but at the same time they did it because they were born under a completely different system. In the long run, I think it creates problems because that morality doesn't exist as a gift from God. It's born in a specific system and if the system doesn't create the right incentives then it won't survive for very long.

And then I think it's really a matter of your opinions, your values. Is the important thing that you're better than others? That you can move ahead of one thousand other individuals, as we do when we show social mobility in Sweden and Denmark? Or is the important thing that you're able to improve your life in absolute terms? That by working hard, getting a promotion or starting a company, you're able to buy that summer house that you always wanted, or to have a longer vacation or something like that? Well I'm more interested in the latter, and that's so much bigger in the United States: the ability to improve your own situation in absolute dollars and cents.

That's something I think The Economist misses, and I think that's one of the reasons why there is more tolerance of unequal outcomes in the U.S., because people can see with their own eyes, in their own situations or those of their friends, relatives and neighbours that you can make a dramatic shift in your own life circumstances if you do the right things, if you're lucky in the workplace and so on. Another thing that should be mentioned in that regard is that there is actually one thing really holding the American system back, and that's an awful school system, a horrible system that's doesn't create opportunities or abilities. They have a very good university system, but the schools are awful. So one thing they should learn...

TDA: *But even with access to higher education, statistics also show that those who come from families who have gone to Ivy League schools, the good, prestigious universities, are themselves much more likely to get a good university education. That's something that points to those who are less well-off being held back by the American system.*

With the school system, I would say that the

problem is that they just don't work, especially in poorer neighbourhoods. They're just awful, and one thing that I think the Americans should learn from is the attempts to introduce competition between schools, the kind of school voucher system that we have in Sweden, for example.

TDA: *So the Milton Friedman model?*

The Milton Friedman model, which is also the Swedish model nowadays when it comes

to schools. I think that would definitely help people from poorer circumstances, with less education in the family, to move ahead.

When it comes to the universities, that's also a problem definitely. We can see those rigid traditionalist structures where if you're the son or daughter of the right person, you always have a good way of moving up. But that's a bigger problem in a system of rationing, as in the European university model, where you really ration the number of places in the university. If it's more commercially based, if people bring their own money to the system, well then you can also expand the universities and the number of places, so that it doesn't mean that you take the seats and the places away from others. And hopefully then, when you attend the university at least, some meritocracy will decide who's written the best Ph.D. and so on.

TDA: *There is one area where the U.S. seems to outperform the Nordic welfare states. That's with regard to successful integration of immigrants, who tend to become more productive citizens than in Europe where immigrants seem to be unemployed and higher represented in crime statistics. How do you explain that?*

Well I think the problem is that in Europe we haven't just introduced one barrier against immigrants and refugees at the border, including very talented people who would really do a lot of hard and good work in our countries. We've also erected a second barrier in our economies, around our labour markets that really—partly because of the influence of the trade unions—protect those who already have jobs, but make it very difficult for people to access the markets if they don't.

One of the reasons is as simple as wages. If you're looking at Sweden, we don't have a

minimum wage instituted by the government, but we have strong trade unions and they enforce the same kind of de facto minimum wages in the areas of the economy where they are dominant, and that's around sixty-five percent of the median wage. So that's the lowest wage you can have. Now if you're new to the labour market, no matter if you're an immigrant or you're young, it means that you have to at least have the productivity of sixty-five percent of the median worker, of all the workers who have been in the market for decades, have experience from other jobs, the references and the language, and that will make it very difficult for outsiders to move into the labour market.

In the U.S., they have a real minimum wage but it's around thirty percent of the median wage, and in that case you'll get access much easier.

So that's why we can see in Sweden for example that we have received a lot of people from countries like Somalia and Iran, who are in Sweden for a while but don't find the jobs. They see that it's difficult to start companies. They never get the chance to start. They move on. They move to Britain or the U.S., where it's so much easier to get a job. In Minneapolis—an old Nordic part of the U.S.—they have about twenty thousand Somalis, I recently read, about the same number as we have in Sweden. Well in Minneapolis they've started almost one thousand companies. In Sweden, the same number of Somalis has started something like thirty-eight.

TDA: *That's a Swedish study, I believe.*

Yes, that's right. It's by Benny Carlson, an economic historian who looked at those two case studies. I mean then we must face it that we get a lot of people who come here with abilities, who are willing to work very hard, but find that they have to leave Sweden as well to get that chance. That's our biggest shame right now, I think.

End of Part Two.

Look out for Three in the next issue, including Norberg's vision of The Good Society: What is the proper role for government, and what should be left to markets and individuals? Is a development towards a classical liberal democracy (based on the rule of law and strictly limited government) realistic in an era where even (we might say especially) right-wing governments are at ease with the notion of a big state.



Johan Norberg is a Swedish writer devoted to promoting globalisation and individual liberty, and the author of the much celebrated In Defence of Global Capitalism. He also presented the British Channel Four documentary Globalisation is Good, which is based on his book. Since 2006 he has been a Senior Fellow with the Brussels based European think tank Centre for the New Europe.

This edition of 'The Devil's Advocate' was edited and hosted by Lars Hvidberg and Jacob Mchangama, and can be heard in full at www.devilsadvocate.dk.

Positive Conversations Are Vital To Children

Perhaps it is a new spin on the old saying about the hand that holds the ladle ruling the world.

In any case, dinner conversation is a huge and vital part of a child's development, says literacy campaigner Graham Crawshaw.

New Zealand plumbed the depths in the recent United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) league table of how developed countries treat children, with one throwaway fact being that we are rated 24th for parents regularly eating a meal with their children.

For Crawshaw that's a telling indictment, but he believes ideally children should be able to speak to an assortment of trusted adults, as well as parents and caregivers.

He considers positive conversation is a

medicine to heal a child's low self-esteem, a road map to find a place called, "their ideal learning zone" and a toolbox to repair years of frustration and anger (mostly but not exclusively) in boys written-off by New Zealand's education system.

"Positive conversations are indispensable to everyone, young or old," says Crawshaw.

He wants all adults first of all to make the effort to converse with children, and secondly to do it in such a way as to draw them out,

rather than bogging them down with details.

Crawshaw says conversation with children takes hard work and application, but adults who learn the art can hugely increase both a child's confidence and knowledge, and their own as well. A touch of (clean) humour always helps, however puns are frequently lost on children – but begin to work well as literacy skills increase.

He admits that times have changed since his own childhood in the 40s and 50s, during which his parents arranged for him to stay with 35 different farming families during school holidays.

The young Crawshaw took the train or the bus to rural far-flung areas of Northland and the Waikato, and became integrated into families, all of whom treated him well.



"Today everyone must stop him or herself lest, even for saying hello to a child, they be thought a paedophile," he says.

He says a consequence of this fearfulness is increased dumbing down, as children develop less confidence, fewer verbal skills and possibly retreat from conversation to forms of electronic entertainment.

Crawshaw intends to share his ideas in detail in a forthcoming memoir.

"The common profile of a boy at one of our camps is that he will hate school, have poor grades and probably have no dad. I therefore never ask about school, grades or dads.

"It just takes practice – ask kids about their pets, congratulate them on their haircut, ask where you could get one the same, see if there are any trees at their place and ask if they climb or build tree huts in them; ask about their names and their nature.

"Where there's a will, there's a conversation, provided you keep it open-ended, non-judgemental and positive."

His camps combine physical activities, such as hikes and mud slides, with white-board sessions to teach the basics of phonics, "but in my view you simply can't take conversation

out of the equation – it's a vital part of learning."

He remembers conversations he has with grand-children and the children of friends, such as their pets, their best or least liked insect, hobbies and ambitions.

And conversations around the dinner table, as

with an 'f.'

During their week at camp they would learn to converse with peers without putdowns, and with adult and teenage cabin leaders trained to be attentive.

It may raise a red flag with some people, those unfamiliar with the Arapohue Reading Camps

"It's tragic that we are made to be fearful about speaking to children we meet," says Crawshaw. "Of course children must be protected from some adults but in my view it's gone too far." He says a consequence of this fearfulness is increased dumbing down.

opposed to expensive outdoor pursuits, have always been a key activity at reading camps run on his Dargaville farm.

Boys, aged between seven and eleven come in with monosyllabic verbal skills, too often – according to Crawshaw – stunted by indifferent or sarcastic adults, including teachers and caregivers. Their very basic vocabulary has four frequently used words: cool, wicked, awesome ... and duck, starting

and Crawshaw's ideas on education primarily happening away from "school."

"It's tragic that we are made to be fearful about speaking to children we meet," says Crawshaw.

"Of course children must be protected from some adults but in my view it's gone too far.

"It takes a whole village to raise a child, and that means every child should ideally have a network.

"Today many children only ever get to converse with a handful of adults, their parents, teachers, maybe a sports coach.

"Sport is great but it's surely not the be all and end all in a well rounded life."

He never loses an opportunity to tell a child that they can go far... "do you like bugs? – well you could become New Zealand's top entomologist – someone has to be!"

Crawshaw says what is true of children is equally true of adults.

"Usually when we say we enjoyed a social occasion, we are really referring to the quality of conversations they had there.

"I think everyone should practice the art of listening and drawing others out. It's an art that does not have to die in the present age.

"The people we meet can unlock a whole world of knowledge for us, if only we learn how to converse with them."

Paul Charman is an Auckland journalist, and a colleague of reading advocate Graham Crawshaw.



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RICHARD GOODE

Yes, Jim, I Do Mind

Just before Christmas, Associate Health Minister Jim Anderton announced an impending ban on "party pills". A report by the Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs had found that BZP poses a "moderate risk of harm". He announced that he would be consulting the "wider community" before making a final recommendation to Parliament.

I'm part of that wider community. I use BZP now and then to help relieve mental fatigue, drowsiness and general inertia. It keeps me bright and alert. So I dream that one day soon I'll get my phone call from Jim Anderton. "Hi Richard, it's Jim. Look, I'm thinking of banning BZP. You're on my list of several hundred thousand New Zealanders who use BZP. As a BZP user, you'll be one of the people most affected by a ban. So, the question I want to ask about BZP is, do you mind if I go ahead and ban it?"

Yes, Jim, I do mind. But, of course, it's not all about me. According to the latest research from Massey University's SHORE, 1 in 5 NZers (aged 13 to 45) have used BZP-based party pills - that's about half a million adults. A BZP ban will deprive hundreds of thousands of NZers of enjoyment. And enjoyment is, after all, one of the things that makes life worth living. But, funnily enough, fun isn't mentioned once in the EACD's report to the Minister.

The government still believes in the Myth of Prohibition - that by banning a drug, you can stop drug use. You can't. Ban party pills, and the number of people using party pills will most probably decrease, yes. But former party pill users will simply get high on something else. Many will revert to using already illegal party drugs like methamphetamine ("P") and ecstasy - the "party pills" will simply become more expensive, more fun, and more dangerous than before.

Imagine the advent of a new designer drug, whose effects are exactly the same as alcohol's, but which doesn't cause liver cirrhosis or hangovers. Would the government allow it to stay legal? It would not. The EACD would find that the drug posed a serious risk of harm - because of violence, accidents and dangerous driving, and the drug's insidious effects on almost every other organ. Accordingly, it would recommend to the Minister that the new drug be banned by

classifying it as Class B (or even Class A - alcohol can be very nasty) in the schedules to the Misuse of Drugs Act. But, surely, if the government is at all interested in "harm minimisation" (which is, after all, its official policy), it would actively encourage the substitution of alcohol for the new 'alcohol-lite' designer drug with a view to eventual complete displacement.


Now consider BZP. It's effects are quite different to alcohol's, but also much more benign. For example, BZP is on the World Anti-Doping Agency's banned drug list because it is a performance-enhancing drug. By contrast, alcohol is notorious for being performance-impairing (on the road, in the bedroom, indeed, everywhere).

Under existing law, discerning drug users are denied the option of using numerous illegal but safer alternatives to our most popular recreational drug, alcohol, which causes more hospitalisation and death than all illicit drugs combined. And, to add insult to injury, we are denied the benefits of research and development into more effective and safer recreational drugs. Who would bother to invest in such research if, as is threatened to happen in the present case of the industry body STANZ and "party pills", the fruits of such efforts are immediately banned?

The Libertarianz Party strives for a future New Zealand in which Nanny State no longer coddles and chastises us at every turn. We envision a New Zealand in which parents exercise authority over their children, and adults are free to do as they please, so long as they respect other people's freedoms and take full responsibility for the consequences of their own actions. In such a libertarian utopia, there will simply be no need for legislation banning things which have a "moderate potential for harm". Parents will see to it that their children stay out of harm's way, adults will take responsibility for their own welfare, and the government will not waste your money on futile efforts to stem the tide of human nature. Ultimately, we would repeal the Misuse of Drugs Act. Meanwhile, the Libertarianz Party has a transitional drugs policy: to legalise all drugs safer than alcohol. This policy would result in the legalisation of a surprisingly large number of substances already scheduled in the Misuse of Drugs Act - and all of them safer to take on a night out than a few drinks.

Dr. Richard Goode is a BZP user and the Spokesman on Drugs for the Libertarianz Party.

Head to Libertarianz site www.LP.Org.NZ
to download Dr Goode's petition to stop the party pills ban.



Remember prohibition?

It still doesn't work.



Yes, Sue, I Do Mind!

"Who's There?" "Nanny State"

First, some simple propositions on the smacking 'debate' as it applies to politics:

- People who are unable to distinguish between smacking and beating should be abjured from public debate on the issue.
- Parliaments do not exist to "change the culture," they exist to write law protecting individual rights.
- Personal views on how you discipline your own children or how you were once disciplined are irrelevant with respect to laws that limit how others discipline their children.

It is insane that an MP promoting a Bill to ban smacking one's own children is completely unable to distinguish between smacking and beating, between smacking and violence. Insane, just insane.

Sue Bradford's anti-smacking Bill she says removes "an excuse for violence towards children" by criminalising those who, in her words, "beat, assault and hit their children." This is how she herself characterises smacking: as beating, assaulting and hitting children.

But smacking is not "violence"; smacking is not beating or assaulting children—failing to distinguish between smacking and violence is a failure to distinguish at all—and a failure too to understand that there are already laws on the books against beating, assaulting or inflicting violence against children, but those who *do* beat their children simply ignore them. A new law criminalising smacking is utterly unlikely to influence those parents who do inflict violence towards children; instead, it will just criminalise parents who don't.

Despite the claims of Bradford and Cindy Kiro and Uncle Tom Cobley and all, "*We*" aren't "killing our kids"—*some lowlives are killing their kids*. They don't care what the law says, and a new law criminalising good parents won't change that. Not one bit. The lowlives will keep on breeding, we'll keep on paying them to breed, and they will just keep right on beating and killing. The problem is not bad law; it is bad welfare.

There are those who say that "Smacking is morally wrong." Maybe it is, but that's irrelevant to the *political* debate. It is to confuse the *immoral* with the *illegal*. Parliaments do not exist to legislate morality; they exist properly

to legislate for the protection of individual rights. As long as parents are neither beating nor torturing their children, then how they discipline their children is none of the legislators' business.

Message to Sue and her cronies: Stay out of my home. You haven't been invited in.

YOU COULD BE FORGIVEN for thinking there is something else going on here in Bradford's mission to criminalise good parents – you could be forgiven that, because you would be right.

Remember if you will that she's not in the Green Party for the environmental politics – she's there because she saw, in her words, a party "ripe for takeover." Takeover for what? Well, remember too that is the woman who left Anderton's hard-left New Labour Party in 1990 because in the expulsion of two Trotskyite sects from the party she saw a "definite move to the right"—and she only joined Anderton's lot after she'd been through the Communist Party youth programme, the Progressive Youth Movement, the "direct action" faction of Mobilisation to Stop the Tour, the Maoist Worker's Communist League, the Unemployed Beneficiaries Movement, and the NZ-China Friendship Society (this last in the time of Mao and Mao's genocide). She hasn't changed her views in all that time, just the way to go about them.

She is intent on removing your hands from your children; but she has no problem at all with the state getting their mitts on them. And not just "no problem" – hell, she's enthusiastically in favour.

You can see that in her enthusiastic endorsement of all the paraphernalia of the state being brought to bear in driving a wedge between parents and their children. It's there for example in her enthusiastic endorsement of fellow Stalinist Cindy Kiro's Orwellian proposal that the state "monitor every child from birth" to make sure that parents are "being good" in following all of Nanny State's dictates. Kiro has given this a long and vapid name to make her scheme sound nice and warm and inclusive, *Te Ara Tukutuku Nga Whanaungatanga o Nga Tamariki: Weaving Pathways to Wellbeing*. Make no mistake however, this is full-fledged state monitoring of parents and children.

Bob McCoskrie National Director of Family First makes the quite correct point:

Who gets to decide what is best for children? This report is clear; it's Dr Kiro and the morass of bureaucracy that is going to surround this initiative. It is a licence for 'professionals' to interfere in families' lives when there is no crime and no abuse. This would fundamentally alter the relationship between the family and the state.

This is literally a Nanny State project, and it will make the previous hysteria about "inappropriate touching" look like a training run. As someone once said, when they do come for you they won't be carrying a gun; they'll be carrying a clipboard and a glass of warm milk.

You can see it too in Bradford's enthusiastic participation in her Kotare School project – a self-described "centre for radical and liberating education for social change." "Kotare is unabashedly political..." explained a co-trustee to a sympathetic audience.

Our workshops and programmes have diverse titles from "*Coalition Building Skills for Activists*" to "*Refresh and Review for Isolated Community Workers*" to "*The Revolutionary Pyjama Party – Film Weekend*".

"Diverse" indeed. From Trotsky to Mao in a single Red weekend.

Years ago Victor Hugo wrote about a type of human being who trafficked in children, secretly abducting young children from their parents and inflicting hideous harm upon their bodies to turn them into monsters they could sell to travelling freak shows. These people, *comprachicos* they were called, were invisible, but the traces of their work could be seen on the faces of the young, mangled children whom they sold. "Victor Hugo's exalted mind could not conceive that so unspeakable a form of inhumanity would ever be possible again," observed Ayn Rand. He was wrong. The modern heirs of the *comprachicos*, she said, are smarter and subtler than their predecessors: they do not hide, they practice their trade in the open; they do not need to secretly abduct children, the children are delivered to them by law; they do not use sulphur or iron, they achieve their goal without ever laying a finger on their little victims.

Smacking? This is not just about smacking. It's about control.



GEORGE REISMAN

SPECIAL FEATURE:
THE TIGHTENING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL NOOSE

The Environmental Noose is Tightening

Forty-Five nations joined France in calling for a new environmental body to slow global warming and protect the planet, a body that potentially could have policing powers to punish violators.

—Associated Press, Feb. 5, 2007

The momentum of environmentalism is becoming increasingly powerful and it looks like its agenda of limits and rollbacks on greenhouse-gas emissions is going to be imposed, probably after the election of the next president. I think our situation is comparable to that of Germany in 1932. Horrendous changes are coming.

Associated Press reports that the French effort was "led by French President Jacques Chirac," after the release of the report on global warming prepared by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The meaning of this "effort" is that Chirac is attempting to make an international crime out of attempts to increase production and raise living standards, to the extent that those attempts entail an increase in the discharge of greenhouse gases.

This, incidentally, is the same Jacques Chirac who recently announced that he did not consider it particularly dangerous for Iran to have a nuclear bomb or two. (*New York Times*, Feb. 1, 2007). Nuclear bombs in the hands of lunatics are not a problem for M. Chirac. Sane people, pursuing their material self-interest by means of increasing production—that's a problem for M. Chirac. That's what he considers dangerous and needing to be stopped.

I am not surprised by this attempt to criminalize productive activity. In fact, I predicted it in my book *Capitalism*. I wrote,

[I]t should be realized that the belief in the need for global limits on carbon dioxide and other chemical emissions and thus in the need for international allocation of permissible emissions implies that every country is an international aggressor to the degree that it is economically successful (and thus, of course, that the United States is the world's leading aggressor). For the consequence of its success is held to be either to push the volume of allegedly dangerous emissions beyond the safe global limit or to impinge upon the ability of other countries to produce, whose populations have more urgent needs. Thus, in casting the production of wealth in the light of a danger to mankind, by virtue of its alleged effects on the environment, and thereby implying the need for global limits on production, the ecology movement attempts to validate the thoroughly vicious proposition, lying at the very core of socialism, that one man's gain is another's loss. (p. 101)

In a note referenced at the end of this paragraph, I added,

If the influence of the ecology movement continues to grow, then it is perfectly conceivable that in

years to come, the very intention of a country to increase its production could serve as a cause of war, perhaps precipitating the dispatch of a U.N. security force to stop it. Even the mere advocacy of economic freedom within the borders of a country would logically—from the depraved perspective of the ecology movement—be regarded as a threat to mankind. It is, therefore, essential that the United States absolutely refuse to sanction in any way any form of international limitations on "pollution"—that is, on production. (p. 118)

I regret having to say that I can't take very much satisfaction from having had this foresight. It's like being marched to a concentration camp and saying, "I tried to tell everyone this is where we'd all end up."



Nuclear bombs in the hands of lunatics are not a problem for M. Chirac. Sane people, pursuing their material self-interest by means of increasing production— That's a problem for M. Chirac. That's what he considers dangerous and needing to be stopped.

I've written an essay of almost 4,000 words in reply to the UN panel's report and the inferences being drawn from it. It's a stand against the tide, consisting both of important new material and material drawn from *Capitalism*. But instead of publishing it here, I've employed an agent to try to place two fifteen-hundred-word segments of it in major mainstream publications.

Those segments can't appear here until they appear in whatever publications accept them, or have been rejected by all of the places to which they've been submitted. If one or both of them is accepted, then I'll have reached an audience of several hundred thousand readers rather than just a few hundred. Unfortunately, the odds of one or both of them actually being accepted are slim. My subjective estimate is that the odds are probably less than my chances of my winning a lottery, and that's allowing for the fact that I don't buy lottery tickets.

In any event, here's the material I took, with some adaptation, from *Capitalism*. I offer it for the benefit of those who haven't read it before and as a refresher for those who have.

What Depends on Industrial Civilization and Man-Made Power

As the result of industrial civilization, not only do billions more people survive, but in the advanced countries they do so on a level far exceeding that of kings and emperors in all previous ages—on a level that just a few generations ago would have been regarded as possible only in a world of science fiction. With the turn of a key, the push of a pedal, and the touch of a steering wheel, they drive along highways in wondrous machines at seventy miles an hour. With the flick of a switch, they light a room in the middle of darkness. With the touch of a button, they watch events taking place ten thousand miles away. With the touch of a few other buttons, they talk to other people across town or across the world. They even fly through the air at six hundred miles per hour, forty thousand feet up, watching movies and sipping martinis in air-conditioned comfort as they do so. In the United States, most people can have all this, and spacious homes or apartments, carpeted and fully furnished, with indoor plumbing, central heating, air conditioning, refrigerators,

freezers, and gas or electric stoves, and also personal libraries of hundreds of books, compact disks, and DVDs; they can have all this, as well as long life and good health—as the result of working forty hours a week.

The achievement of this marvelous state of affairs has been made possible by the use of ever improved machinery and equipment, which has been the focal point of scientific and technological progress. The use of this ever improved machinery and equipment is what has enabled human beings to accomplish ever greater results with the application of less and less muscular exertion.

Now inseparably connected with the use of ever

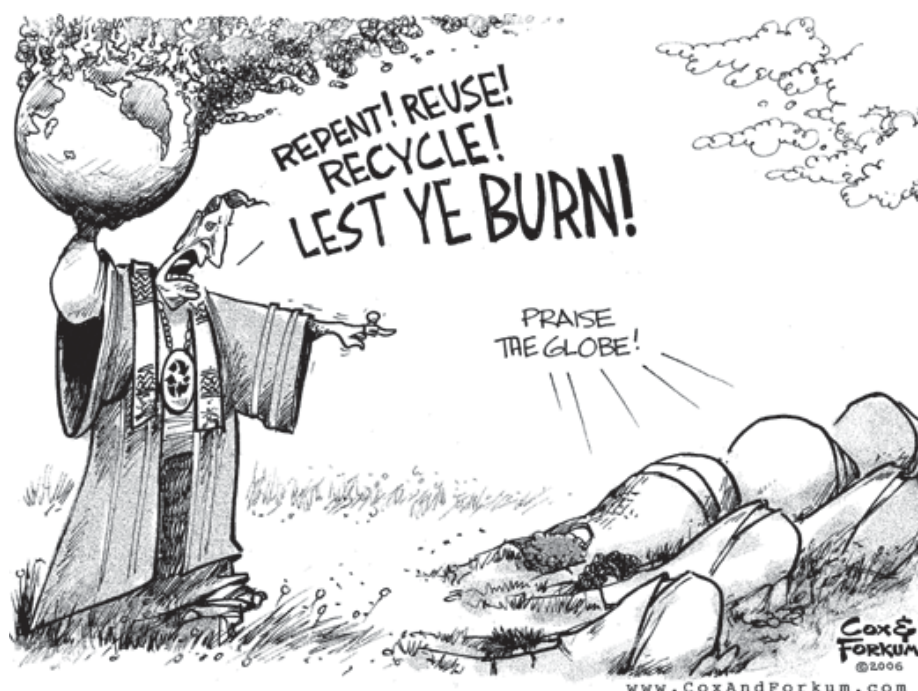
use, is an equally essential basis of all of the economic improvements achieved over the last two hundred years. It is what enables us to use the improved machines and equipment and is indispensable to our ability to produce the improved machines and equipment in the first place. Its application is what enables us human beings to accomplish with our arms and hands, in merely pushing the buttons and pulling the levers of machines, the amazing productive results we do accomplish. To the feeble powers of our arms and hands is added the enormously greater power released by energy in the form of steam, internal combustion, electricity, or radiation. In this way, energy use, the productivity of labor, and the standard of living are inseparably connected,

If the influence of the ecology movement continues to grow, then it is perfectly conceivable that in years to come, the the very intention of a country to increase its production could serve as a cause of war, perhaps precipitating the dispatch of a U.N. security force to stop it. Even the mere advocacy of economic freedom would logically be regarded as a threat to mankind.

improved machinery and equipment has been the increasing use of *man-made power*, which is the distinguishing characteristic of industrial civilization and of the Industrial Revolution, which marked its beginning. To the relatively feeble muscles of draft animals and the still more feeble muscles of human beings, and to the relatively small amounts of useable power available from nature in the form of wind and falling water, industrial civilization has added man-made power. It did so first in the form of steam generated from the combustion of coal, and later in the form of internal combustion based on petroleum, and electric power based on the burning of any fossil fuel or on atomic energy.

This man-made power, and the energy released by its

with the two last entirely dependent on the first. Thus, it is not surprising, for example, that the United States enjoys the world's highest standard of living. This is a direct result of the fact that the United States has the world's highest energy consumption per capita. The United States, more than any other country, is the country where intelligent human beings have arranged for motor-driven machinery to accomplish results for them. All further substantial increases in the productivity of labor and standard of living, both here in the United States and across the world, will be equally dependent on man-made power and the growing use of energy it makes possible. Our ability to accomplish more and more with the same limited muscular powers of our limbs will depend entirely on our ability to augment them further and further with the aid of still more such energy. (pp. 77- 78.)



A Free-Market Response to Global Warming

Even if global warming is a fact, the free citizens of an industrial civilization will have no great difficulty in coping with it—that is, of course, if their ability to use energy and to produce is not crippled by the environmental movement and by government controls otherwise inspired. The seeming difficulties of coping with global warming, or any other large-scale change, arise only when the problem is viewed from the perspective of government central planners.

It would be too great a problem for government bureaucrats to handle (as is the production even of an adequate supply of wheat or nails, as the experience of the whole socialist world has so eloquently shown). But it would certainly not be too great a problem for tens and hundreds of millions of free, thinking individuals living under capitalism to solve. It would be solved by means of each individual being free to decide how best to cope with the particular aspects of global warming that affected him.

Individuals would decide, on the basis of profit-and loss calculations, what changes they needed to make in their businesses and in their personal lives, in order best to adjust to the situation. They would decide where it was now relatively more desirable to own land, locate farms and businesses, and live and work, and where it was relatively less desirable, and what new comparative advantages each location had for the production of which goods. Factories, stores, and houses all need replacement sooner or later. In the face of a change in the relative desirability of different locations, the pattern of replacement would be different. Perhaps some replacements would have to be made sooner than otherwise. To be sure, some land values would fall and others would rise. Whatever happened individuals would respond in a way that minimized their losses and maximized their possible gains. The essential thing they would require is the freedom to serve their self-interests by buying land and moving their businesses to the areas rendered relatively more attractive, and the freedom to seek employment and buy or rent housing in those areas.

Given this freedom, the totality of the problem would be overcome. This is because, under capitalism, the actions of the individuals, and the thinking and planning behind those actions, are coordinated and harmonized by the price system (as many former central planners of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have come to learn). As a result, the problem would be solved in exactly the same way that tens and hundreds of millions of free individuals have solved greater problems than global warming, such as redesigning the economic system to deal with the replacement of the horse by the automobile, the settlement of the American West, and the release of the far greater part of the labor of the economic system from agriculture to industry. (pp. 88-89)

George Reisman is the author of *Capitalism: A Treatise on Economics* (Ottawa, Illinois: Jameson Books, 1996) and is Pepperdine University Professor Emeritus of Economics. You can find him on the web at www.Capitalism.Net, and at his blog, www.GeorgeReisman.Com/Blog/Index.html.

A Great Politician

While Helen Clark was awash in a feel-good sea of sustainability in her speech outlining her plans for the Parliamentary year —blathering ineffectually about biofuels, climate change and how many trees six government departments are going to plant to save the planet—another world leader was making much more sense.

Since 1990 (and in distinct contrast to our own unfortunate history in this regard) the Czech Republic has been blessed with two wonderful leaders: first 'velvet revolutionary' Václav Havel—described by *Reason* magazine as "our era's George Orwell"—and now Václav Klaus.

Václav Klaus is not a warmist. Speaking to a Czech economics daily, Klaus deconstructed the IPCC climate panel of the United Nations, and their latest Summary for Policymakers released in Paris earlier this month. Harvard physicist Luboš Motl translates Klaus's Czech to 'Czenglish':

Q: On Wednesday, the European Commission has approved carbon dioxide caps for new cars. One week earlier, the U.N. IPCC climate panel released a report that has described, once again, the global warming as one of the major threats for the whole civilization. The Stern report about similar threats was published before that. And you suddenly say that the global warming is a myth. Try to explain, how did you get this idea, Mr President?

A: It's not my idea. Global warming is a myth and I think that every serious person and scientist says so. It is not fair to refer to the U.N. panel. IPCC is not a scientific institution: it's a political body, a sort of non-government organization of green flavor. It's neither a forum of neutral scientists nor a balanced group of scientists. These people are politicized scientists who arrive there with a one-sided opinion and a one-sided assignment. Also, it's an undignified slapstick that people don't wait for the full report in May 2007 but instead respond, in such a serious way, to the summary for policymakers where all the "but's" and "if's" are scratched, removed, and replaced by oversimplified theses. This is clearly such an incredible failure of so many people, from journalists to politicians... If the European Commission is instantly going to buy such a trick, we have another very good reason to think that the countries themselves, not the Commission, should be deciding about similar issues.

Q: How do you explain that there is no other comparably senior statesman

in Europe who would advocate this viewpoint? No one else has such strong opinions...

A: My opinions about this issue simply are strong. Other top-level politicians do not express their global warming doubts because a whip of political correctness strangles their voice.

Q: But you're not a climate scientist. Do you have a sufficient knowledge and enough information?

A: Environmentalism as a metaphysical ideology and as a worldview has absolutely nothing to do with natural sciences or with the climate. Sadly, it has nothing to do with social sciences either. Still, it is becoming fashionable and this fact scares me. The second part of the sentence should be: we also have lots of reports, studies, and books of climatologists whose conclusions are diametrically opposite. Indeed, I never measure the thickness of ice in Antarctica. I really don't know how to do it, I don't plan to learn it, and I don't pretend to be an expert in such measurements. However, as a scientifically oriented person, I know how to read science reports about these questions, for example about ice in Antarctica. I don't have to be a climate scientist myself to read them. And inside the papers I have read, the conclusions we may see in the media simply don't appear. But let me promise you something: this topic troubles me which is why I started to write an article about it last Christmas. The article grew in size and it became a book. In a couple of months, it will be published. One chapter out of seven will organize my opinions about the climate change. Environmentalism and green ideology is something very different from climate science. Various findings and screams of scientists are abused by this ideology.

Q: How do you explain that conservative media are skeptical while the left-wing media view the global warming as a done deal?

A: It is not quite exactly divided to the left-wingers and right-wingers. Nevertheless it's obvious that environmentalism is a new incarnation of modern leftism.



Four politicians, but only one makes any sense.

Q: If you look at all these things, even if you were right ...

A: ...I am right...

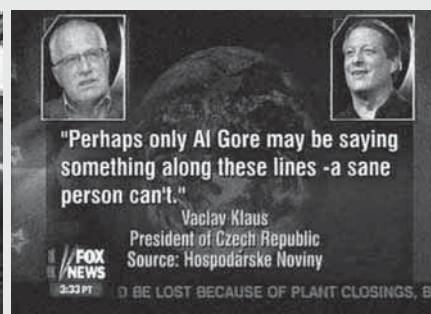
Q: ...Isn't there enough empirical evidence and facts we can see with our eyes that imply that Man is demolishing the planet and himself?

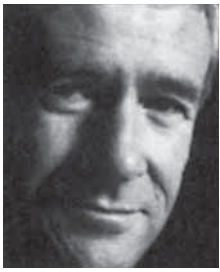
A: It's such a nonsense that I have probably not heard a bigger nonsense yet.

Q: Don't you believe that we're ruining our planet?

A: I will pretend that I haven't heard you. Perhaps only Mr Al Gore may be saying something along these lines: a sane person hardly. I don't see any ruining of the planet, I have never seen it, and I don't think that a reasonable and serious person could say that he has. Look: you represent the economic media so I expect a certain economical erudition from you. My book will answer these questions. For example, we know that there exists a huge correlation between the care we give to the environment on one side and the wealth and technological prowess on the other side. It's clear that the poorer the society is, the more brutally it behaves with respect to Nature, and vice versa. It's also true that there exist social systems that are damaging Nature - by eliminating private ownership and similar things - much more than the freer societies. These tendencies become important in the long run. They unambiguously imply that today, on February 8th, 2007, Nature is protected incomparably more than on February 8th ten years ago or fifty years ago or one hundred years ago. That's why I ask: how can you pronounce the sentence you said? Perhaps if you're unconscious? Or did you mean it as a provocation only? And maybe I am just too naive and I allowed you to provoke me to give you all these answers, am I not? It is more likely that you simply present your honest opinion.

Václav Klaus is the second President and former Finance Minister and Prime Minister of the post-Soviet Czech Republic.





ROGER KERR

Achieving the Dream

A 'dream-catching' survey of 10,000 New Zealanders conducted just on a year ago revealed that our beaches and empty spaces are the number one pride-trigger for Kiwis. Staying 'unspoilt' and 'clean and green' also rate highly in our top ten dreams and aspirations.

Those of us lucky enough to be going bush this summer would do well to reflect on the threats to those spaces and dreams, and some of the solutions we could be embracing if we want to preserve the Kiwi way of life.

A new study released last year by the Business Roundtable offers compelling evidence to support the role of markets in finding solutions to environmental problems, and warns against the impact on the foundations of market economies of 'command and control' responses to environmental threats.

In *Environmentalism Versus Constitutionalism: A Contest Without Winners*, University of Queensland professor of public law Suri Ratnapala weighs the threats to the environment that, if unattended, can endanger our way of life, against the threats to constitutional government and the economy that can arise from managerial-style responses to the challenges of environmental protection. He argues that in the end such responses will not only diminish our freedom and weaken our institutions but will also end up harming the environment by reducing our capacity to deal with real threats.

In backgrounding the arguments, Dr Ratnapala notes that the difference between prosperous and struggling countries can primarily be explained not by disparities in their natural resources or good fortune, but by the difference between their respective institutions. Prosperous countries tend to have a relatively high degree of personal safety, property rights and contractual certainty under the rule of law, while in stagnant economies these things are generally not secure and the rule of law is feeble.

He observes that the power of market economies underpinned by strong institutions in helping to move people from poverty to prosperity is well understood. But he notes that the role of markets in helping societies overcome problems created by human activity – including environmental harm – is often overlooked.

The report discusses three ways through which

markets can help address such problems: the free exchange & vigorous debate of ideas & information; innovation & technology-driven solutions enabled by wealth creation; and market processes based on property rights and the law of contract that are superior to 'command and control' measures as mechanisms for the efficient allocation of scarce resources.

An important background feature of the report is a discussion of the current environmental

If we consider the biggest environmental problems in New Zealand today, a common thread is clear: they all come down to mismanagement, neglect, under-investment and lack of clear enforceable property rights.

debate which highlights one of the major obstacles to a proper consideration of the legal and policy issues.

In Dr Ratnapala's view, a specific impediment to discussion of the issues is the claim of consensus, the perception that the debate regarding the existence and scale of threats to the environment is over, and that we have no choice left but to embrace the command and control agenda.

He challenges this claim and argues that we are more likely seeing the beginning of the first serious public debate on the subject, and that it is not in the interest of science or humanity to silence the alternative points of view on these issues.

While emphasising that we should aim to have a healthy environment and should prevent harm that is preventable, Dr Ratnapala cautions against extreme environmentalist views that pursue an imaginary, past, pristine condition of the Earth at the cost of all other interests.

The study goes on to examine the state and impact of law in New Zealand and elsewhere with respect to the regulation of property use and the question of compensation, as well as the arguments of those who support regulation and the subordination of property rights to other interests.

It notes that New Zealand's Resource Management Act 1991 replaces the common law approach with a micro-management control system that is, in Dr Ratnapala's assessment, "a mixture of indeterminate rules, discretions, overarching policies and unstable judicial law generated by breadth of discretion bestowed on the court."

The study finds that New Zealand's current resource management laws and related policies are eroding constitutional government in New Zealand, and impacting negatively on

the economy and ultimately on our capacity to find the most appropriate responses to environmental problems.

If we consider the biggest environmental problems in New Zealand today – poor water quality, pollution of streams and lakes, use of hazardous substances like pesticides, and the threat to native species and farming posed by uncontrolled pests – a common thread is clear: they all come down to mismanagement, neglect, under-investment and lack of clear enforceable property rights.

If New Zealanders are serious about living the clean green dream, there is wisdom in the view that we should back off our current, bureaucratic system of environmental management and place more weight on a framework of clear and fair rules whose management is entrusted to democratic institutions and independent courts.

Roger Kerr is the executive director of the New Zealand Business Roundtable. Dr Ratnapala's report can be found at www.nzbr.org.nz/documents/publications/publications-2006/ec.pdf.



DR AUGIE AUER

SPECIAL FEATURE:
THE TIGHTENING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL NOOSE

Imagining Climate Change

What a wonderfully powerful human trait is the imagination. No other form of animal life can think creatively as we humans...to dream up scenarios of passion...love, joy, hatred, anticipation. But distort our imaginative powers with a bit of fear & guilt instilled by mischievous science...and presto, you have the makings of the catastrophic global warming [ooops, I'm sorry], I mean, climate change hysteria.

Furthermore, the efficiency of CO₂ as a greenhouse gas does not increase with concentration, as the Al Gores of the world tell us. Its effectiveness obeys the law of diminishing returns. Only the first 150ppm or so is all that is needed for the planet's greenhouse effect to operate near maximum. Additional carbon dioxide only serves as a spent force.

Because of the dominance of a simple, Earth-unique gas, water vapour, we could say that mankind could not alter our climate if we wanted to! Since carbon dioxide is not the problem, there is no need for any mandatory reduction of planetary CO₂ or punitive taxations to prevent its use. Note that this not a proposal to abandon our responsibility is of stewardship of the planet's atmosphere.

Scientists have an ethical responsibility to be truthful in their research, to avoid being arrogant, intimating & intolerant. This is not intended as a criticism of all those involved

This hysteria was reinforced on 2 February when the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its 'Summary to Policymakers' (SPM); but the report on which the Summary is based, IPCC's 4th Assessment 2007, will not be published until May. The problem is that the SPM was produced, not by the scientific writers and reviewers, but by a process of negotiation among unnamed bureaucratic delegates from sponsoring governments. Is it any wonder that this SPM attracted considerable media interest because of its alarmist dogma. The "Man bites dog!" stories always do.

The Earth's constituent gases consist of 77% Nitrogen, 21% Oxygen with the 2% balance comprised of the so-called 'greenhouse gases'. These trace gases are water vapour (averaging about 1%), followed by carbon dioxide (CO₂) at a whopping 0.038% (usually reported as 380 ppm [parts per million]), methane at 0.00015% and even lesser concentrations of minor gases. So how can a gas that occupies a measly 0.038% of our atmosphere warrant so much attention? That's what needs to be challenged.

So what is going on? Are we are a course of certain environmental Apocalypse? Of course we're not. Here's why.

This means that the human contribution of CO2 to the Earth's greenhouse warming process is an inconsequential 0.12%. Even if CO2 doubled in the atmosphere due to man's activity, its impact on greenhouse processes would remain miniscule..

Every one of the outcomes predicated on present & continued burning of fossil fuels by mankind are projections generated by computer simulations of future climatic patterns. They are not reality, not certainty, rather a kind of computer imagination. And even with all the mathematical manipulations, the climate models are only as good as the knowledge that is imputed to them. And as much as we would like to think that our knowledge of all atmospheric processes is substantial, the fact is it's grossly lacking in both scope & thoroughness especially when it comes to looking decades into the future. This means that high levels of accuracy & certainty just can't be achieved. Sometimes computer models can't predict our local weather with useful certainty just 48 hours in advance.

The greenhouse effect is a near-miraculous process that carefully regulates the temperature of the planet. By absorbing & re-radiating downward some of the heat energy that would escape to space from the Earth, greenhouse gases effectively keep the average temperature of the planet near 15C rather than at (minus) -18C. So the greenhouse effect is required for life!

Then there's the matter of CO₂...that harmful gas that Al Gore would have us believe is choking us all to death, that greenhouse gas which Jeanette Fitzsimmons claims "the planet is groaning under the weight of". Again, let's set the record straight. To start with, CO₂ is not a harmful, pollutant gas! It could best be described as an airborne fertilizer that humans exhale. Diesel exhaust, now that's a pollutant.

Water vapour is, by far & away, the most dominant and naturally-produced of all greenhouse gases, contributing to a massive 95% of the beneficial warming process. Within the remaining 5%, there isn't much clout available for carbon dioxide; it only contributes a meagre 3.5% or so. And when this input is subdivided into naturally produced & anthropogenically sourced, just under 97% comes from Nature, just over 3% from mankind. This means that the human contribution of CO₂ to the Earth's greenhouse warming process is an inconsequential 0.12%. Even if CO₂ doubled in the atmosphere due to man's activity, its impact on greenhouse processes would remain miniscule.

in climate research, but it is directed in some regard to politicians & policymakers who, in interpreting the 'science', tell us "You have a problem, we can solve it & no other opinion matters." They communicate through a seemingly biased media emphasizing unsubstantiated fright & sensationalism: e.g., a rise in sea-levels that would inundate Pacific island nations. "We must act now!", the global warming zealots scream. Yet I recall my Dad warning about high-pressure salesmen with the 'It must be done now' pitch. Where's David Russell when you need him?

Recall the admonition of Robertson Davies, a 20th century journalist/novelist: "Every man is wise when attacked by a mad dog; fewer when pursued by a mad woman; only the wisest survive when attacked by a mad notion." Imagine that!

Dr Augie Auer is no climate science lightweight. He was chief meteorologist for the New Zealand Meteorological Service from 1990-1998. Prior to this, Dr Auer worked for 22 years as a professor of atmospheric science at the University of Wyoming.

This article was first published by the NZ Centre for Political Debate, NZCPD.Com



CHRISTOPHER
MONCKTON

Global Warming: “... The Panic Is Officially Over”

IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, 2007: Analysis & Summary. February 2007

*Former Special Advisor to Margaret Thatcher Christopher Monckton
fisks the latest UN global warming assessment and concludes: “the
panic is officially over.”*

FIGURES in the final draft of the UN's fourth five-year report on climate change show that the previous report, in 2001, had overestimated the human influence on the climate since the Industrial Revolution by at least one-third.

Also, the UN, in its 2007 report, has more than halved its high-end best estimate of the rise in sea level by 2100 from 3 feet to just 17 inches. It suggests that the rate of sea-level rise is up from 2mm/yr to 3mm/year – no more than one foot in a century.

UN scientists faced several problems their computer models had not predicted. Globally, temperature is not rising at all, and sea level is not rising anything like as fast as had been forecast. Concentrations of methane in the air are actually falling.

The *Summary for Policymakers* was issued February 2, 2007, but the report on which the Summary is based will not be published until May. This strange separation of the publication dates has raised in some minds the possibility that the Summary (written by political representatives of governments) will be taken as a basis for altering the science chapters (written by scientists, and supposedly finalized and closed in December 2006).

The draft of the science chapters, now being circulated to governments for last-minute comments, reveals that the tendency of computers to over-predict rises in temperature and sea level has forced a major rethink.

The report's generally more cautiously-expressed projections confirm scientists' warnings that the UN's heavy reliance on computer models had exaggerated the temperature effect of greenhouse-gas emissions.

Previous reports in 1990, 1995 and 2001 had been progressively more alarmist. In the final draft of the new report there is a change in tone. Though carbon dioxide in the air is increasing, global temperature is not.

Figures from the US National Climate Data Center show 2006 as about 0.03 degrees

Celsius warmer worldwide than 2001. Since that is within the range of measurement error, global temperature has not risen in a statistically significant sense since the UN's last report in 2001.

Sources at the center of the drafting say that, though the now-traditional efforts are being made to sound alarmist and scientific at the same time, key projections are being quietly cut.

One says: “Stern is dead. The figures in the final draft of the UN's *Fourth Assessment Report* make the recent report of [the UK's] Treasury's chief economist on the cost of climate change look like childish panic.” The UN's 2001 report showed that our greenhouse-gas emissions since 1750 had caused a “radiative forcing” of 2.43 watts per square metre. Our other effects on climate were shown as broadly self-cancelling.

In the current draft, the UN has cut its estimate of our net effect on climate by more than a third, to 1.6 watts per square metre. It now thinks pollutant particles reflecting sunlight back to space have a very strong cooling effect.

As a deterrent to direct comparisons between the two reports, the key table of “radiative forcings” – the list of human influences on the amount of heat-energy in the atmosphere – has been rotated by 90 degrees compared with the 2001 table.

The UN also uses a 90% “confidence interval” rather than the 95% interval that is normal statistical usage. This has the effect of giving the UN's projections a misleading appearance of greater certainty.

The UN's best estimate of projected temperature increase in response to CO2 reaching 560 parts per million, twice the level in 1750, was 3.5C in the 2001 report. Now it is down to 3C.

The 2007 draft concludes that it is very likely that we caused most of the rise in temperatures since 1940. It does not point out that for half that period, from 1940 to 1975, temperature actually fell even though

carbon dioxide rose monotonically – higher every year than the previous year.

Of the UN's six modeled scenarios, three are extreme exaggerations. Two assume that population will reach 15bn by 2100, though demographers say population will peak at 10bn in 40 years and then plummet. The UN's high-end temperature projection to 2100, up from 5.8C to 6C, is based on these extreme and unrealistic scenarios.

The new report confirms the finding of the 2001 report that global warming will have little effect on the number of typhoons or hurricanes, though it may increase the intensity of some storms a little.

Computer models heavily relied on by the UN did not predict the considerable cooling of the oceans that has occurred since 2003 – a cooling which demonstrates that neither the frequency nor the intensity of the hurricanes in the year of Katrina was attributable to “global warming”.

The UN's models also failed to predict the halt to the rise in methane concentrations in the air that began in 2001. And they did not predict the timing or size of the El Nino which hiked temperature in 1998. Without it, the satellite record shows little or no greenhouse warming.

Land-based temperature records may accordingly overstate the problem.

Likewise the UN's models have recently been found to have over-projected the observed rise in sea temperatures, which has had to be corrected downward to allow for over-reading by incorrectly-calibrated instrumentation.

The UN's draft *Summary for Policymakers* contains no apology for the defective and discredited “hockey-stick” graph that erroneously abolished the warm climate of the Middle Ages, arousing in some minds the suspicion that the intellectual honesty of the IPCC process is deficient.

Ambiguities in the report, and considerable discrepancies between it and its predecessor, show that there is no scientific consensus on many points for which consensus is often claimed.

Overall, however, the report is drafted so as to allow environmental extremists to cite its high-end projections as evidence of the need for urgent action.

The ambiguities, together with the conspicuous failure to apologize for the discredited “hockey stick” graph, fully justify the decision of fast-developing third-world countries such as China and India not to yield to pressure from the EU at the recent Nairobi climate summit to cut their greenhouse-gas emissions.

China, with 30,000 coal mines, is opening a new pit every week and a new coal-fired power station every five days until 2012. Well before then, China will overtake the US as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases.

Even if a country the size of Britain were to shut down and cease using energy or cars altogether, the growth in carbon emissions in China would more than make up for our sacrifice long before the Kyoto agreement expires in 2012.

Even if the US were to shut down its entire economy, growth in emissions from fast-emerging new polluters such as China, India, Indonesia, Russia, and Brazil would replace the US emissions within the next quarter of a century.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of the UN will approve the complete report for publication at its 36th session, in Bangkok, Thailand, in May 2007.

In the meantime, there will be continuing pressure from a small but vociferous body of politicized scientists, bureaucrats, and lobby groups to suggest that the 2007 report is more alarming than its predecessors. However, the sharp downward revisions in the values of the two central variables – the human contribution to warming compared with 1750 and the projected rise in sea level to 2100 – indicates that the UN has come to appreciate the dangers that would have arisen if it were to have persisted in its former exaggerations.

The “consensus” clique is displeased at the UN's new-found moderation, particularly in its halving of its upper-bound projection of the rise in sea level to 2100. But it was they who formerly insisted that the UN, with 2,000 participating scientists, represented the very heart of the “consensus”. Accordingly they find themselves unable convincingly to repudiate the findings of a body whose work they have hitherto represented to us as sacrosanct.

Though the mass media are now well-programmed to focus on the more alarmist aspects of the report, the halving of the sea-level projection is in effect a declaration, from the heart of the “consensus”, that the consequences of warmer worldwide weather will be minor and may be beneficial, that the worst scenarios are no longer probable, and that the panic is officially over.

Summary of the Summary

What the UN said – and (based on the science) what it ought to have said (Main points from the 2007 *Summary for Policymakers* are in *italics*. Comments from Christopher Monckton are in **bold face**.)

UN: Equilibrium global average warming if carbon dioxide is stabilized at 550 parts per million is very likely to be between 1.5° and 4.5°C and likely to be at least 2°C above 1750 values. Best estimate is 3°C.

CM: “Equilibrium” temperature will occur at least 100 years after stabilization. By then, oil and gas are likely to have become scarcer. Also, much of the forecast warming has already occurred. Perhaps as little as 0.6C of further warming will occur at CO2 doubling.

UN: To 2025, a warming of about 0.2°C per decade is projected. Half would have occurred even if concentrations had been stabilized at year 2000 levels, because of slow ocean response.

CM: Temperature stopped rising in 2001. “Slow ocean response” means the sea, 1100 times denser than air, is taking up much of the heat. If so, we have more time and less of a problem than had been thought.

UN: Since the 1990 report, projections have suggested global temperature increases of 0.15 to 0.3°C per decade for 1990 to 2005. 0.2°C per decade has been observed.

CM: The outturn is actually 0.16°C (1990–1999), right at the lower end of the UN's projections. The outturn for 2000 to 2010 will probably be 0.18°C.

UN: Projected sea level rise for 2090–2099 v. 1980–1999 is 7.5 to 17 inches, two-thirds from thermal expansion, one-third from melting polar ice.

CM: The reference period should be a decade, not 20 years, and should be the most recent decade, reducing the projection by 10–15%. The rate of increase in sea level has changed little in 80 years.

UN: Ice-cores suggest more carbon dioxide and methane in the air now than in 650,000 years. Increases since 1750 are chiefly from use of fossil fuels, farming, deforestation and other changes in our land use.

CM: The central question is this: “By how much will the increases in greenhouse gases cause temperature to rise?” On the answer to that question, there is no scientific consensus at all.

UN: Atmospheric carbon dioxide, the most important greenhouse gas we emit, rose from 280ppmv in 1750 to 379ppmv in 2005.

CM: Even if the UK stopped using energy, cars or industry altogether, world temperature by 2035 would be just 0.006C less than if we carry on as usual.

UN: There is very high confidence that our global net effect since 1750 has been warming of 1.6 watts per square metre, likely to have been at least five times greater than that due to changes in solar output.

CM: Just six years ago, the UN said our global effect since 1750 had been 2.43 watts per square metre. Since temperature has failed to rise as fast as predicted, this estimate has had to be slashed by a third.

UN: The combined radiative forcing arising from increases in the major greenhouse gases is +2.3 Wm-2. The rate of increase since 1750 is very likely to have been unprecedented in more than 10,000 years.

CM: Mere lack of precedent does not in itself imply a problem. The greenhouse-gas forcing of 2.3 Wm-2 is lower than the 2.43 Wm-2 in the 2001 report, and the net forcing of 1.6 Wm-2 is down by a third.

UN: The CO2 radiative forcing increased by 20% during the last 10 years (1995–2005), the largest change observed or inferred for any decade in at least the last 200 years.

CM: The figure is actually 17%. China is opening a new coal-fired power station every five days until at least 2012. Within two years, China will emit more CO2 than the US.

UN: Aerosol emissions, chiefly sulphate, organic carbon, black carbon, nitrate and dust, are thought to produce a total direct radiative forcing of -0.5 Wm-2, and an indirect cloud albedo forcing of -0.7 Wm-2.

CM: The climate feedback from pollutant aerosols cuts the UN's estimate of our influence on climate since 1750 by a third, from 2.43 to just 1.6 watts per square metre.

UN: Changes in solar output since 1750 are estimated to have caused a radiative forcing of +0.12 Wm-2, down from +0.3Wm-2 in the 2001 report.

CM: Published papers by solar physicists since the previous UN report suggest that the Sun could have had a much larger influence than this – and could have caused more than two thirds of observed warming. Solar activity is expected to decline for the next 50 years.

UN: Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, evident from increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, melting of snow and ice, and rising sea level.

CM: The fact of warming tells us nothing of the cause. Correlation does not necessarily indicate causation. The world's ice mass has grown in the past 30 years. Recent fluctuations in the rate of increase in sea level are not unusual compared with the fairly recent past.

UN: Eleven of the last twelve years rank among the 12 warmest years since 1850. The trend from 1906 to 2005 of 0.74°C is larger than the 2001 report's trend from 1901–2000 of 0.6°C.

CM: The start date has been brought forward five years. From 1900 to 1905 the temperature fell. Thus the trend has changed little. Also, the UN's figures are from unreliable surface readings that do not always conform with satellite readings.

UN: The average rate of warming over the last 50 years (0.13°C per decade) is nearly twice that for the last 100 years.

CM: The UN only obtains this result because between 1940 and 1975 temperature fell. In fact, between 1910 and 1930 the average rate of warming also was 0.13C, so the rate in the past 50 years is not unprecedented.

UN: New analyses of balloon and satellite measurements of atmospheric temperature show warming rates that are similar to the surface, largely reconciling a previous discrepancy.

CM: The records only match if the El Nino event of 1998 is taken as part of the trend. Without it the satellite measurements show less warming than the surface, where warming is said to be occurring but may not be.

UN: Atmospheric water vapour content has increased since the 1980s over land and ocean as well as in the upper troposphere. The increase is broadly consistent with the extra water that warmer air can hold.

CM: The result of the more humid atmosphere is a substantial greening of the fringes of the Sahara, which has shrunk by 300,000 square kilometers in the past 20 years.

UN: Observations show that the average temperature of the global ocean has increased to depths of at least 3000m and that the ocean has been absorbing most of the heat added to the climate system.

CM: Ocean temperature has been falling recently. Models over-project sea surface temperatures and only match observation if averaged to a very great depth, where temperature has not changed.

UN: Warming that causes seawater to expand may have contributed 0.42mm a year to the average sea level rise from 1961 to 2003, and 1.6mm a year from 1993 to 2003.

CM: There is no hard evidence for any increase in thermosteric expansion of the sea. Leading scientists say the rate of increase in sea levels has not changed in 80 years.

UN: Snow and mountain glaciers have declined. Decreases in glaciers and ice caps

(not counting Greenland and Antarctica) caused sea level to rise by 0.50mm a year (1961-2003) and 0.77mm a year (1993-2003).

CM: Mountain glaciers account for less than 5% of the world's ice. Ice mass in Greenland and Antarctica (95% of the world's ice) has grown in the past 30 years, compensating for loss of mountain ice.

UN: There is high confidence that the rate of observed sea level rise increased from the 19th to the 20th century, and the total 20th century rise is estimated to be 0.17m.

CM: Sea level has been rising for thousands of years. In the past century it rose just six and a half inches – less than a sixteenth of an inch a year. The rate of increase has been constant since 1922, though the UN says it has been rising a little recently.

UN: Numerous changes in climate have been observed at the scales of continents or ocean basins. These include wind patterns, precipitation, ocean salinity, sea ice, ice sheets, and aspects of extreme weather.

CM: Climate has always changed, because it is what mathematicians call a "chaotic object". Behaviour of chaotic objects cannot be predicted, but is capable of changing suddenly in any direction.

UN: Arctic temperatures rose twice as fast as the global average since 1905. However, Arctic temperatures are very variable. A warm period was observed from 1925 to 1945.

CM: The Arctic warm period from 1925 to 1945 mentioned by the UN was actually warmer than the present by as much as 1 degree Celsius. The polar bears thrive, and still thrive. Most researches show the Antarctic is cooling.

UN: Satellite data since 1978 show that annual average Arctic sea ice extent has shrunk by 2.7% per decade, with larger decreases in summer of 7.4% per decade.

CM: Almost all the Arctic is sea-ice. There was almost certainly less Arctic sea-ice in the early 1940s than there is now, and there may have been none in Summer in the middle ages.

UN: Shrinkage of Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets contributed 0.41mm a year to sea level rise from 1993 to 2003. Some Greenland and Antarctic outlet glaciers are draining interior ice faster than before.

CM: During the past 30 years, both Greenland and Antarctica have gained ice mass. In the 10 years from 1993 to 2003, the Greenland ice sheet grew an average extra thickness of 2 inches a year.

UN: Arctic permafrost surface temperature has risen up to 3°C since the 1980s. The

maximum area covered by seasonally frozen ground has decreased by about 7% in the Northern Hemisphere since 1900.

CM: The bones of woolly mammoths and other creatures are found in the thawing permafrost, showing that it was not always frozen. Scares about release of methane from permafrost have proven false.

UN: There has been more rain since 1900 in the eastern Americas, northern Europe and northern and central Asia; less in the Sahel, Mediterranean, southern Africa and parts of S. Asia.

CM: There has been no net change in average world rainfall for 100 years. Likewise, the pattern of monsoons, vital to prevent droughts, has remained unchanged.

UN: Since the 1970s there have been longer, harder droughts partly caused by warming and less rain, particularly near the Equator. Warmer seas and less snow cover also suggest droughts.

CM: Records such as those for Moon Lake in the US show that the frequency and severity of droughts has decreased in the past 1,000 years and in the past 50 years. The Sahara is greening fast.

UN: There is no trend in the number of tropical cyclones. Satellites suggest more intense tropical cyclones since 1970, correlated with warmer seas. Cyclone data, particularly pre-1970, are questionable.

CM: The annual number of hurricanes has in fact been declining steadily over the past 50 years. The hurricane season that included Katrina was exceptional, but had precedents 70 years ago and in 1821.

UN: Paleoclimate suggests recent warming is unusual. Past warming has shrunk ice sheets and raised sea level. Recent studies show more variable Northern Hemisphere temperatures than the 2001 report.

CM: The UN casts doubt upon the integrity of its climate change reports by failing to apologize for the defective and now-discredited "hockey-stick" graph of world temperatures since 1000 AD.

UN: Warmer periods during the past 1,000 years have fallen within the uncertainty range given in the 2001 report.

CM: The uncertainty range was so large as to be meaningless. A growing number of scientific papers attest to a mediaeval warm period warmer than the present.

UN: Average Northern Hemisphere temperatures during the second half of the 20th century were very likely warmer than in the last 500 years and likely the warmest in at least the past 1300 years.

CM: In some places, the Middle Ages were up to 3C warmer than today. There is evidence from scientific papers worldwide that the warm period in the middle ages was global.

UN: It is very likely that we caused most of the world temperature rise since 1950. Our influence now extends to continental temperatures, atmospheric circulation patterns, and some extremes.

CM: UN temperatures for the USA and China disagree with those published locally. Temperature in New Zealand has scarcely risen for 50 years. Some Russian figures for the past 15 years are missing.

UN: It is likely that greenhouse gases alone would have caused more warming than observed because volcanic and manmade pollutants have offset some warming.

CM: Most of the warming arises from the increased frequency of El Nino events in recent years. Volcanic aerosols only have a temporary effect.

UN: Snow cover is projected to contract. Widespread further thawing is projected over most permafrost regions. Sea ice may shrink at both poles. Arctic late summer sea ice may largely disappear by 2100.

CM: The projections are speculative. There may have been little sea ice at the North Pole in the middle ages. Some solar physicists think warming may lessen in 20 years as the Sun enters a less active phase.

UN: Typhoons and hurricanes may decrease but their intensity is expected to increase, with higher wind speeds and heavier rain. Models

did not predict the increase in intense storms since 1970.

CM: There has been a steady decrease in hurricanes since 1970. Dr. Landsea, a UN author, resigned when his lead author, on a political platform, announced that hurricanes had become more frequent.

UN: Global warming and sea level rise may continue for centuries even if greenhouse gas emissions are stabilized. Stabilization in 2100 may lead to further warming of 0.5C, mostly before 2200.

CM: There is no reason to project a significant acceleration in the rate of increase in sea level at all, or of temperature more than a century after stabilization. Projections are based on modeling, not on evidence.

UN: If CO2 forcing were stabilized in 2100, thermal expansion alone would raise sea level 0.3 to 0.8m of sea level rise by 2300 relative to 1980–1999) and would continue at decreasing rates for many centuries.

CM: Initial calculations suggest that, as Professor Richard Lindzen and others hypothesize, equilibrium climate response may be intra-annual rather than supra-centennial.

UN: The shrinking Greenland ice sheet may continue to contribute to sea level rise after 2100. Warming since 1750 of 1.9 to 4.6°C may melt almost all of it, raising sea level by 7m if sustained for millennia.

CM: These speculations are unfounded. Arctic temperatures undergo periodic changes. Even if sea level were to rise 23ft over millennia, annual costs for defenses

would be small.

UN: The Antarctic ice sheet may remain too cold for widespread melting and may gain mass from increased snowfall, but net loss of ice mass may occur if dynamical ice discharge dominates the ice-mass balance.

CM: In the past 30 years the mass of the Antarctic ice-sheet has grown, reversing a 6,000-year melting trend. Antarctica contains 90% of the world's ice, and growing.

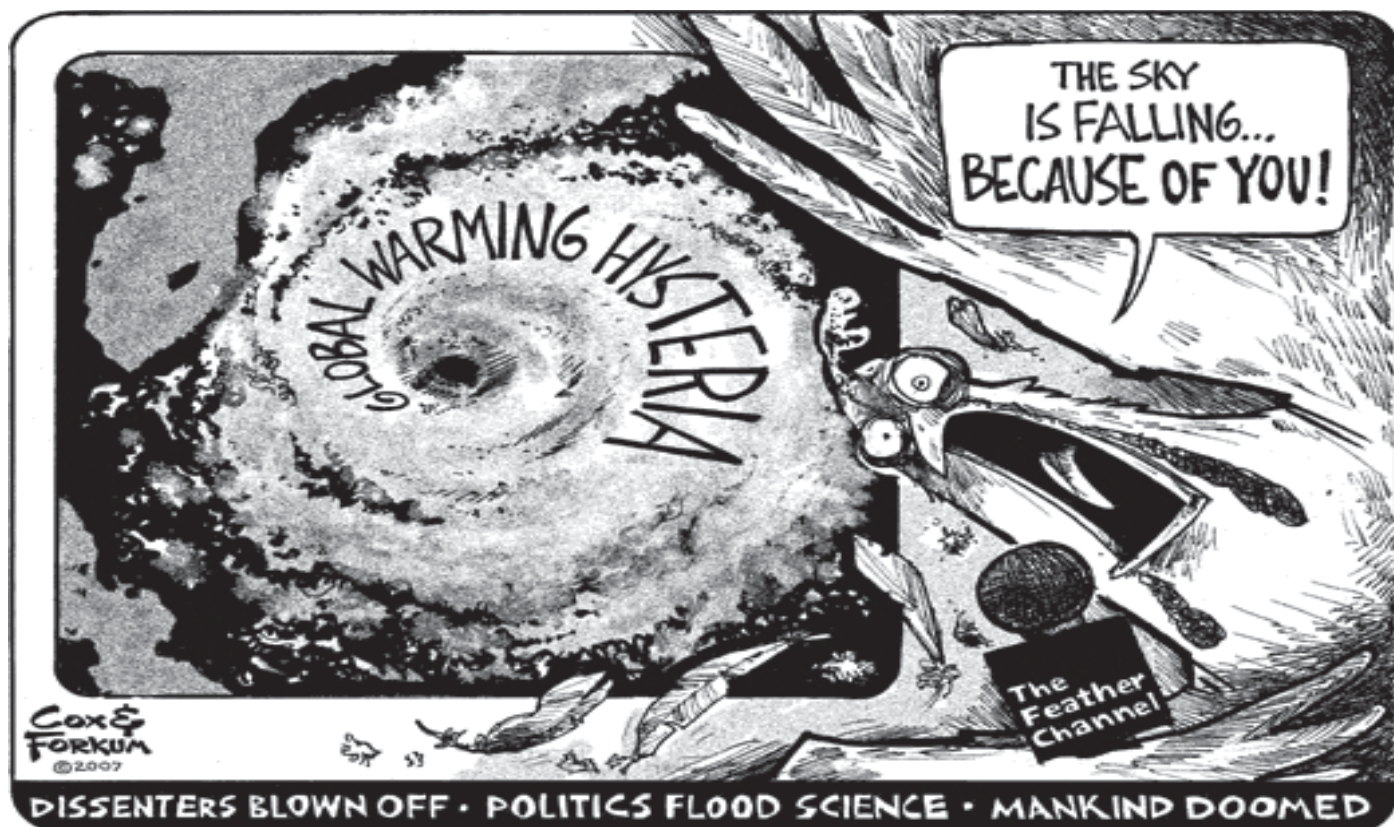
UN: Our CO2 emissions to 2100 will contribute to warming of the atmosphere and to sea level rise for more than 1000 years.

CM: After the warming in the first 100 years, oil and gas will have become too expensive for mass use. Very little additional warming caused by fossil-fuel use will occur in the subsequent millennium.

UN: Computer simulations that include only natural forcings do not simulate the warming observed over the last three decades.

CM: The UN's simulations omitted the important El Niño ocean oscillation which has been more prominent in recent years, and underestimated urban heat-island effects: thermometers are mostly near towns.

Lord Monckton served (1982–1986) as Special Adviser to the Rt. Honorable Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, in the Prime Minister's Policy Unit, 10 Downing Street, London. This summary was prepared for the Center for Science and Public Policy. His views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Center for Science and Public Policy. An alternative, independent *Summary for Policymakers*, using the same scientific evidence on which the IPCC's *Summary for Policymakers* is based, has been put together by the Fraser Institute. It can be found on the net at www.fraserinstitute.ca/shared/readmore.asp?sNav=pb&id=886.





PETER CRESSWELL

ENVIRONMENT

The Invisible Hand Of The Market

Doesn't Deliver A Sustainable Nation." True or false?

"The invisible hand of the market doesn't deliver a sustainable nation."

So said Prime Minister Helen Clark on Tuesday in her Statement to Parliament setting out her priorities for the year ahead.

Is that true? If we assume here that "sustainable" means something like, "good for the environment," is it really true to say that the invisible hand of the market doesn't deliver a good environment?

Well, no it's not true. In fact, quite the reverse. As Czech president Vaclav Klaus pointed out earlier this week:

We know that there exists a huge correlation between the care we give to the environment on one side, and wealth and technological prowess on the other side. It's clear that the poorer the society is, the more brutally it behaves with respect to Nature, and vice versa. It's also true that there exist social systems that damage Nature - by eliminating private ownership and similar things - much more than the freer societies.

It's indisputably true that the wealthier the country and the better its respect for property rights, the better its environment. Think about the environmental basket-cases that were Soviet Eastern Europe—those places where the market's invisible and benevolent hand had been absent for nearly a century when the Berlin Wall fell in 1990, and compare that to how Western Europe looked.

Message to Helen then from Vaclav Klaus: It is the invisible hand of the market that delivers wealth: The wealthier a country, the cleaner its environment. Editor Nevil Gibson continues the lesson in the NBR:

The government's commitment to sustainable energy policies pales by comparison with what is already being achieved in the [US, the] nation Labour's supporters most like to hate. And it was done before Helen Clark embraced the green cause... The answer is the opposite to Helen Clark's claim that the market cannot deliver. In the US it clearly has, through the adoption of cleaner technologies and a vast amount of investment.

Gibson points out that while Helen Clark blathers, the US is already doing better than both talk-is-cheap NZ and regulation-happy Europe in Kyoto emissions growth, both in using more efficient and cleaner fuels, and

in "the actual achievements" of the US and its partners in the Asia Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, which is made of up countries that account for about half of the world's population, economic output and energy use.

The partnership is based on market principles and has embarked on 100 projects that will deliver reduced greenhouse gases, cleaner air and less poverty in the industrialised areas of Asia.

In [bureaucrat Kurt] Volker's words, '...the only way for these [developing] countries to minimise the increase in greenhouse gas emissions as their energy demand soars with economic growth is through the market application of cleaner technologies. We need to develop these technologies and bring them to the marketplaces of the developing world.'

Message to Helen then, courtesy of Nevil Gibson: "[The invisible hand of the market offers] a far better and more realistic solution than believing a government's 'visible hand' will best deliver a sustainable nation." Too right.

LET ME OFFER Helen two further examples from unlikely places. The first is from Sand County, Wisconsin (over), the home of the father of Deep Ecology, Aldo Leopold, and the base from which he wrote the founding text of Deep Ecology, his Sand County Almanac. The area around Leopold's estate is now run, not by a government department, but by a private foundation. This is intentional. Leopold's belief

US global warming hearing cancelled after "ice storm"

A note from the US House of Representatives for those who enjoy irony:

HOUSE HEARING ON 'WARMING OF THE PLANET' CANCELED AFTER ICE STORM HEARING NOTICE

Tue Feb 13 2007 19:31:25 ET

The Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality hearing scheduled for Wednesday, February 14, 2007, at 10:00 a.m. in room 2123 Rayburn House Office Building has been postponed due to inclement weather. The hearing is entitled 'Climate Change: Are Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Human Activities Contributing to a Warming of the Planet?'

The hearing will be rescheduled to a date and time to be announced later.

DC WEATHER REPORT:

Wednesday: Freezing rain in the morning. Total ice accumulation between one half to three quarters of an inch. Brisk with highs in the mid 30s. North winds 10 to 15 mph...increasing to northwest 20 to 25 mph in the afternoon. Chance of precipitation near 100 percent.



NIGER, AFRICA: "... a simple tale of human ingenuity, incentivised by the small matter of better property rights, overcoming an ecological disaster."



SAND COUNTY, WISCONSIN: Home to Aldo Leopold, deep ecology ... and successful private conservation.

was that conservation had to be a voluntary proposition, that no other arrangement can work (and DoC's many conservation failures are testament to that too, aren't they).

The Sand County Foundation, says one recent article, "has become a world leader in free-market environmentalism, setting an example of sound science and voluntary private action well worth emulating." According to the Foundation, in this they are simply following Leopold's principles, when he said:

Conservation is a state of harmony between man and land. When both become poorer by reason of their coexistence, we don't have conservation. When both are richer, we have conservation.

So contra Clark, Leopold himself seemed to believe that the visible hand of the state is not the way for serious conservationists to proceed, and that perhaps the invisible hand of the market provides better environmental outcomes. As the Leopold Foundation's president Brent Haglund affirms, in a further lesson for Helen:

Good habitat management doesn't cost, it pays. Good habitat management that takes advantage of science can be a cost-effective means for improving wildlife and wildflower populations and communities.

THAT SAME LESSON has just been learned in Niger, Africa. As The Commons Blog points out (www.commonsblog.org), even the traditionally pro-bigger-government

journalists at *The New York Times* have noticed "how property rights to trees growing on farmers' land have contributed to both economic growth, agricultural productivity and conservation in Niger at virtually no cost."

In this dust-choked region, long seen as an increasingly barren wasteland decaying into desert, millions of trees are flourishing, thanks in part to poor farmers whose simple methods cost little or nothing at all... [D]etailed satellite images and on-the-ground inventories of trees, have found that Niger, a place of persistent hunger and deprivation, has recently added millions of new trees and is now far greener than it was 30 years ago. These gains, moreover, have come at a time when the population of Niger has exploded, confounding the conventional wisdom that population growth leads to the loss of trees and accelerates land degradation, scientists studying Niger say...

What contributed to the success? Apparently greater rainfall and property rights! As the article elaborates:

Another change was the way trees were regarded by law. From colonial times, all trees in Niger had been regarded as the property of the state, which gave farmers little incentive to protect them. Trees were chopped for firewood or construction without regard to the environmental costs. Government foresters were supposed to make sure the trees were properly managed, but there were not enough

of them to police a country nearly twice the size of Texas. But over time, farmers began to regard the trees in their fields as their property, and in recent years the government has recognized the benefits of that outlook by allowing individuals to own trees. Farmers make money from the trees by selling branches, pods, fruit and bark. Because those sales are more lucrative over time than simply chopping down the tree for firewood, the farmers preserve them.

As Sean Corrigan summarises at the Mises Blog, "no expensive and ill-used Western aid, no high tech inputs, no government planning, no Malthusian doom"—indeed, beyond the protection of property rights, the visible hand of the State is entirely absent. And the result: "just a simple tale of human ingenuity, incentivised by the small matter of better property rights, overcoming an ecological disaster."

SO THE LESSON for Helen Clark from around the world is the same:

- More market equals better environmental outcomes.
- More secure property rights equals better environmental outcomes.
- "The invisible hand of the market doesn't deliver a sustainable nation"? Don't believe a bloody word of it. The truth is entirely the reverse.

It shouldn't really be a surprise. After all, the science of economics is often defined as "the analysis of how finite resources are used to meet infinite wants"; you would think then that if sustainability really means anything, it must surely be the case that the science of economics has something to say about it.

Do you think there's a lesson here that Helen really wants to learn? Or that you might want to? Or even one that John (Al Gore pushes all my buttons) Key might care about? What say you, customers?

Malthus meets the Greens Peter Cresswell



Greens' co-leader Russel Norman (above left) has been reading Thomas Malthus (above right), and the results are far from enlightening.

Who exactly is Thomas Mathus, I hear you ask? Thomas Malthus was the world's first

'Enlightenment doomsayer.'

In his *Principles of Population*, economist Thomas Robert Malthus forecast that with unchecked population growth, the demand for food would inevitably become greater than the food supply. "Population increases in a geometric ratio, while the means of subsistence increases in an arithmetic ratio" were his words. War, pestilence, vice and crime were the inevitable checks on population growth. It was a grim prediction of catastrophe for mankind, based on formidable mathematics, and with one serious error.

Thomas Malthus was writing in 1798. He had an excuse for the error. But writing just the

day before yesterday, Russel has none. Like Malthus two-hundred years and an Industrial Revolution ago, Russel points out what he says are obvious problems with "exponential growth in a finite world" and the problems that we humans have with that conundrum. Concludes Russel: We're all going to ... well, not die, not so long s we have the Green Party's solar panel programme in place anyway. But without that, it's curtains for us all.

Russel's problem is the same 'problem' identified by Malthus, but without the mathematical ability, i.e., "Population increases in a geometric ratio, while the means of subsistence increases in an arithmetic ratio," or in Russel's words:

[If] we reached LabNats' nirvana of 4% GDP growth then the economy would be 16 times larger at the end of just one human lifetime, which just could have very significant resource implications!

Wow. Thank Russel for that (lack of) insight. Thomas Malthus can perhaps be forgiven for being so egregiously wrong—he was after all writing before the Agricultural Revolution and the Industrial Revolution that followed, which together proved conclusively, first that production is not a zero-sum game, and that, second, as everyone from Julian Simon to Bjorn Lomborg to George Reisman has pointed out, the ultimate resource is not what we dig out of the ground—the ultimate resource is the human mind.

Both a happy, and a true state of affairs you might say.

Malthus had an excuse for not knowing this, but Russel has none. He's watched the progress from Stone Age to Silicon Age, with all the enormous and historically unprecedented population and production growth along the way, and he's still at a loss to explain how we're all still here.

As they say, the reason for the end of the Stone Age was not because we ran out of stones, it was because someone produced better things to use than stones. It was the human mind applied to production that produced those better things; it is the human mind applied to production that is the reason we're all still here.

The human mind applied to production has refuted Thomas Malthus, Stephen Schneider, Paul Erlich, The Club of Rome, Jared Diamond, the Four Horsemen of all the various enviro-Apocalypses all predicting disaster ... and unless Russel Norman and Al Bore and Nicholas Stern and their colleagues succeed in shackling producers as they're trying to, the human mind applied to production will have no trouble refuting Russel Norman.

Let me explain why.

The human mind when it's left free to produce is an astonishing thing. Uncle Tom Copley and all keep predicting catastrophe for mankind, and they keep getting it so wrong because they lack the understanding of the capacity of the human mind to produce when left free and unfettered—and because they lack the understanding of how the dynamic system of capitalism works to make scarcity a thing of the past by leaving the human mind free and unfettered.

This is the secret to capitalism's huge success: that it leaves the human mind free and unfettered.

What Russel and Malthus got wrong of course was not just their arithmetic, but their whole understanding of the role of price signals and

entrepreneurialism—indeed of the capitalist economy as a dynamic rather than a static engine of production. The capitalist engine of creation is a supple beast when left free and unshackled, allowing human minds to read price signals and opportunities, and to adapt their own resources to suit. The results are astonishing.

Our world and everything that it provides is limited—though as George Reisman points out, hardly as limited as you might think—but when resources are finite the 'tragedy of the commons' argument strongly advocates private property in order to internalize the costs of using resources, and strongly advocates the system of capitalism to produce ever-new resources.

Leaving aside the 'tragedy of the commons' argument for the moment, just how exactly do we "produce new resources"? George Reisman explains the secret: the human mind applied to resources transforms the raw materials that nature provides into "goods" for human use.

The goods-character of natural resources... is created by man, when he discovers the properties they possess that render them capable of satisfying human needs and when he gains command over them sufficient to direct them to the satisfaction of human needs...

Nature's contribution to natural resources is much less than what is usually assumed. What nature has provided... is the material stuff and the physical properties of the deposits in these mines and wells, but it has not provided the goods-character of any of them. Indeed, there was a time when none of them were goods.

Indeed, there was a time when these things were just trees, rocks and mud puddles. Reisman explains how these things provided by nature acquire what he calls "goods-character":

If a thing is to become a good, or in other words, if it is to acquire goods-character, all four of the following prerequisites must be simultaneously present:

1. A human need.
2. Such properties as render the thing capable of being brought into a causal connection with the satisfaction of this need.
3. Human knowledge of this causal connection.
4. Command of the thing sufficient to direct it to the satisfaction of the need (p. 52).

The last two of these prerequisites, it must be stressed, are man made. Human knowledge of the causal connection

between external material things and the satisfaction of human needs must be discovered by man. And command over external material things sufficient to direct them to the satisfaction of human needs must be established by man. For the most part, it is established by means of a process of capital accumulation and a rising productivity of labor.

All this has immediate bearing on the subject of natural resources. It implies that the resources provided by nature, such as iron, aluminum, coal, petroleum and so on, are by no means automatically goods. Their goods-character must be created by man, by discovering knowledge of their respective properties that enable them to satisfy human needs and then by establishing command over them sufficient to direct them to the satisfaction of human needs.

For example, iron, which has been present in the earth since the formation of the planet and throughout the entire presence of man on earth, did not become a good until well after the Stone Age had ended. Petroleum, which has been present in the ground for millions of years, did not become a good until the middle of the nineteenth century, when uses for it were discovered. Aluminum, radium, and uranium also became goods only within the last century or century and a half.

Summarises Benjamin Marks in 'The Malthusian Trap,'

it's possible to take seriously Malthus's warning, but as Reisman and Ludwig von Mises point out, "it comes true only under socialism"—only under a system in which private property has not been introduced and the tragedy of the commons is still in effect, and under a system of (non)production where the human mind is not able to read price signals and opportunities, and to adapt their own resources to suit.

Only can a society based on private ownership of the means of production harmonize the number of births with the limitations of the means of subsistence. The Malthusian problem is one that economics solves. No wonder the Malthusians want to get rid of economics. Their rule only applies in non-economic "societies." And, even then, only in its abridged Misesian form. The environmental movement of today is aiming toward living in a non-economic "society" by showing why it would be unpleasant to live in. It is staggering how a movement like this could amass such a following.



Peter Cresswell's blog can be found at www.PC.Blogspot.Com. Send him mail at organon@ihug.co.nz.

Richard Dawkins:



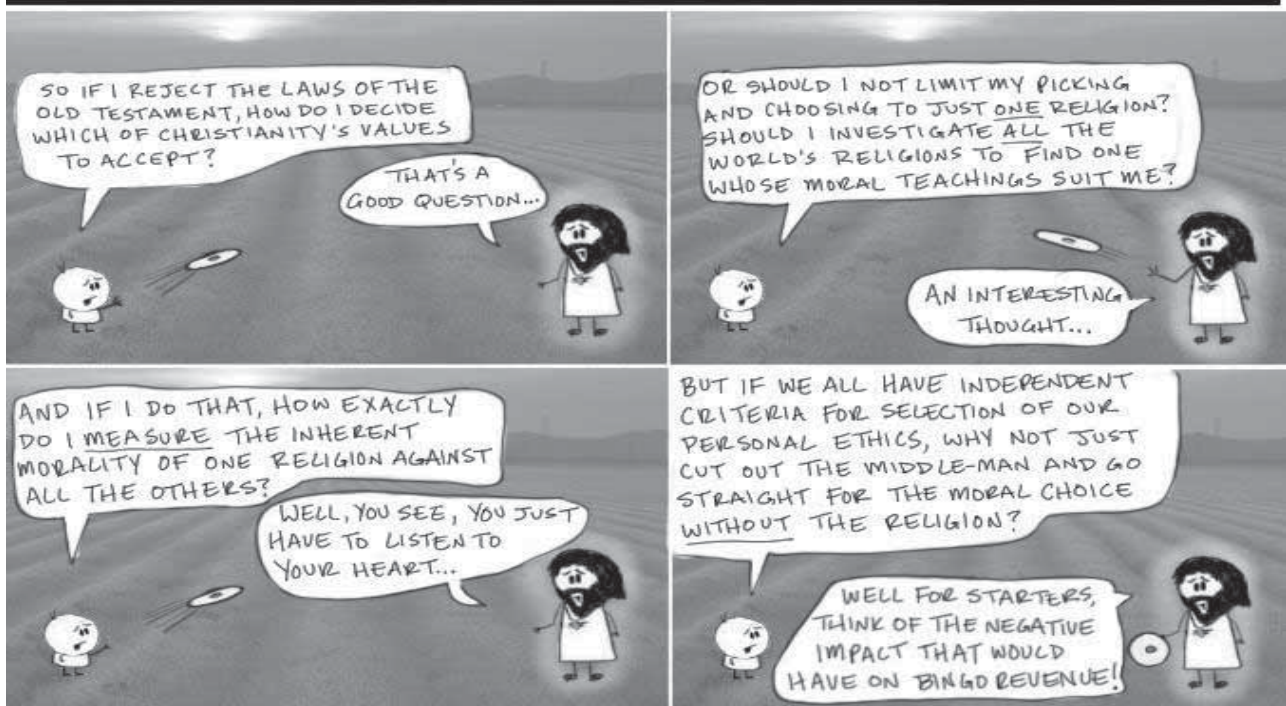
"...we do not as matter of fact derive our morals from scripture. Or, if we do, we pick and choose among the scriptures for the nice bits and reject the nasty. But then we must have some independent criterion for deciding which are the moral bits: a criterion which, wherever it comes from, cannot come from scripture itself and is presumably available to all of us whether we are religious or not."

Scientist Richard Dawkins

'The God Delusion'

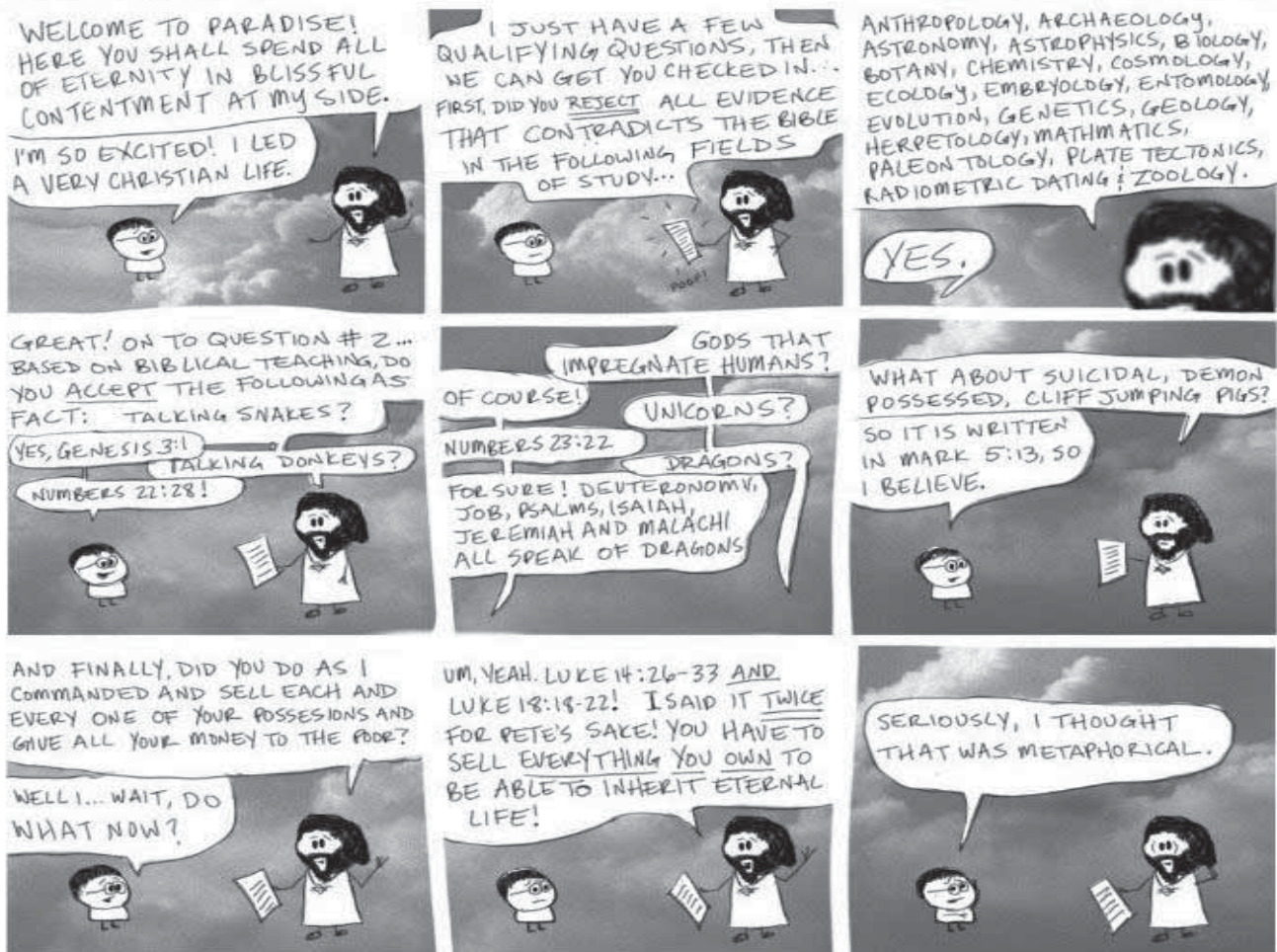
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The God Delusion and the Moral Confusion

The God Delusion is a wonderful book and Richard Dawkins is a superb intellect who—according to *TFR* Editor Emeritus Lindsay Perigo—“certainly understands Objectivism with a small ‘o’.”

The God Delusion

Dawkins's book intelligently and thought-provokingly dispels one by one all popular Judaeo-Christian arguments that have been put forward by theologians eager to shore up their own faith in the existence of God. With logic, reason and passion Dawkins successfully undermines “the God Hypothesis” that suggests “there exists a superhuman, a supernatural intelligence who deliberately designed and created the Universe and everything in it, including us.” Dawkins aims to persuade his readers that a belief in such a God is not just a delusion with no basis in reality, but that it is an impediment to our rational understanding of the objective world. In other words, that by proposing the existence of a supernatural being more improbable and inexplicable than the universe itself, “the God Hypothesis” explains nothing of the workings of the universe.

However, this book is not just an intellectual discourse on the improbability of God's existence; it is also an intellectual call-to-arms of great necessity. After the rise in religiously motivated terrorism and of state-sponsored appeasement of mysticism, religion can no longer be considered to be merely a benign pastime practiced by the gullible and naive.

“The enlightenment is under threat,” declares Dawkins in his mission statement to the newly formed Richard Dawkins Foundation, devoted to the education and consciousness raising of the ills of religion and the benefits of science and reason. “So is reason. So is truth. So is science, especially in the schools of America.”

I am one of those scientists who feels that it is no longer enough just to get on and *do* science. We have to devote a significant proportion of our time and resources to defending it from deliberate attack from organised ignorance. We even have to go out on the attack ourselves, for the sake of reason and sanity.

Dawkins does not just feel the need to attack Muslim-inspired terrorism against the West, but also the encroaching influence that the religious lobby has on prohibitions of human stem-cell research and on cloning technology,

and on the teaching of Creationism in state-funded schools.

The Moral Confusion

So the book is great. Unfortunately, one of the weaknesses, as Dawkins himself concedes, is that he does not know where our morals come from. But as Dawkins illustrates, neither do the religiously minded.

He points out that no modern Christian or Jew would be likely to follow the Old Testament moral examples of Abraham (Genesis) and Jephthah (Judges) who both were willing to offer their children as human sacrifices to please God. Nor are they likely to share the morals of Lot (Genesis) and a Levite priest (Judges), who when demanded by a mob to hand over their male guests to sodomise, offered up their own daughters for rape instead. Dawkins notes:

...we do not as matter of fact derive our morals from scripture. Or, if we do, we pick and choose among the scriptures for the nice bits and reject the nasty. But then we must have some independent criterion for deciding which are the moral bits: a criterion which, wherever it comes from, cannot come from scripture itself, and is presumably available to all of us whether we are religious or not.

However in the absence of a coherent religious morality, Dawkins is also not sure what type of secular philosophy our morality should be based upon. In one chapter he considers (what he considers to be) the two contrasting choices: between Immanuel Kant (an absolutist) and Jeremy Bentham (a consequentialist).

Absolutists believe that there are absolutes of right and wrong, imperatives that make no reference to their consequences. Consequentialists more pragmatically hold that the morality of an action should be judged by its consequences.

Dawkins associates moral absolutism with religious dogma and therefore appears to favour the consequentialists. Nevertheless, I find it strange that he should in the same chapter praise the Christian Immanuel Kant as a “sophisticated moral philosopher.” This is

the same Immanuel Kant who, by proposing the existence of a noumenal realm, both unknowable and impenetrable, has done more to popularise “the God Hypothesis” and absolutist morality in a secular mystical form than any philosopher since. You can tell that Dawkins knows that something is amiss with Kant's philosophy, but he doesn't explicitly say what it is.

At a loss to explain where our morals come from, and not explicitly taking sides in the secular debate between absolutists and consequentialists, Dawkins then proceeds to draw some moral imperatives from the theory of evolution. After all, it was the theory of evolution that helped convince him that the “God Hypothesis” was improbable in the first place. He therefore takes time to discuss his previous writing on evolution that highlighted the importance of the “gene” as the unit of natural selection.

In his first book, the *Selfish Gene* (1976), he convincingly makes the case that natural selection acts on individuals and not on groups; individuals that are made up of genes that act “selfishly” to ensure their own inheritance.

Dawkins has been accused ever since of having claimed that human beings are by nature “selfish” and that by doing so he has given intellectual fuel to the capitalist ideologies of Thatcher and Reagan. (Just imagine.) Due to this confusion, he feels compelled to state his thoughts on the moral worth of selfishness in human beings.

To his credit Dawkins is unflinchingly honest and candid. He could have followed the clichéd socialist *zeitgeist* of our times and made a strong emotional plea against all selfishness, materialism, and the consumer society in general. However, he is clearly too intelligent a thinker to fall for that. Instead, he acknowledges that the “trader principle” is desirable and that “selfish parasitism” is unsustainable.

“The other main type of altruism for which we have a well-known Darwinian rationale is reciprocal altruism (‘You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours’)... The hunter needs a spear and the smith wants meat. The asymmetry brokers a deal.

More generally, selfishness, or free-riding parasitism on the goodwill of others, may work for me as a lone selfish individual and give me personal satisfaction. But I cannot wish that everybody would adopt selfish parasitism as a moral principle, if

only because then I would have nobody to parasitize.

Although, he conflates “selfishness” (c.f. self-interest) with parasitism, and the “trader principle” (c.f. non-initiation of force) with reciprocal altruism, his position on ethics is not so far away from Ayn Rand’s Objectivist position, just with different labels.

Dawkins doesn’t know where our morals come from but reflects on what he calls the “shifting moral *zeitgeist*.” Morals according to Dawkins are in a continual state of flux, determined by conversations at dinner parties, public debate in the media, verdicts and judgements of court cases and national elections. Dawkins therefore appears to make the mistake of praising moral relativism as an antidote for religious moral certainty. Nowhere does he blunder more into moral quagmire of relativism than in the last part of his chapter on the religiously motivated anti-abortion “pro-life” position.

The chapter starts out well, brilliantly so. Dawkins discredits the great ‘Beethoven fallacy’—what if you were to kill the next Beethoven *in utero*!—often misused as an argument by anti-abortionists, and highlights how the religious-minded often perversely discredit the suffering of a full-grown adult in favour of an insensitive clump of cells. Dawkins makes the comparison of the amount of suffering that can be plausibly ascribed to an embryo or foetus (a non-sentient being) compared to that of the mother (a rational and sentient being) and finds that religious dogmatists illogically favour the potential over the actual.

Every refusal of any offer of copulation by a fertile individual is, by this dopey ‘pro-life’ logic, tantamount to the murder of a potential child! Even resisting rape could be represented as murdering a potential baby (and, by the way, there are plenty of ‘pro-life’ campaigners who would deny abortion even to women who have been brutally raped).

However, he also uses evolution as the basis

for a relativistic position on abortion; indeed he believes that evolution *demand*s it.

The evolutionary point is very simple. The *humanness* of an embryo’s cells cannot confer upon it any absolutely discontinuous moral status. It cannot because of our evolutionary continuity with chimpanzees and, more distantly, with every species on the planet.

That human beings share a lineage with chimpanzees is true, but in terms of the debate on what our morality should be in regards to *human* life, it is anything but germane. Such arguments are misleading ways of putting a case against moral absolutism that “we are composed mostly of chimpanzee genes - we are not as unique as we thought - there seems absolutely nothing special about us.” But this is merely the flipside of the argument from religion that says, “God made humans special,” because it by no means addresses how the moral status of human beings should be derived in the first place - something for which Ayn Rand’s Objectivism is perhaps the first to provide a successful answer (see especially Ayn Rand’s “The Objectivist Ethics” in her book *The Virtue of Selfishness*.)

The Moral Conclusion

Aristotle argued well over 2000 years ago in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that the essence of being moral is having the ability to reason: all humans possess the essence, but not all function according to it.

Life seems to be common even to plants, but we are seeking what is peculiar to man. Let us exclude, therefore, the life of nutrition and growth. Next there would be a life of perception, but it also seems to be common even to the horse, the ox, and every animal. There remains, then, an active life of the element that has a rational principle... Now if the function of man is an activity of soul which follows or implies a rational principle... human good turns out to be activity of soul in accordance with virtue.

Influenced by Aristotle, Ayn Rand similarly defined the ethics of Objectivism from the

basic premise of man’s means of survival.

The standard of value of objectivist ethics - the standard by which one judges what is good or evil - is man’s life, or: that which is required for man’s survival *qua* man. Since reason is man’s basic means of survival, that which is proper to the life of a rational being is the good; that which negates, opposes or destroys it is the evil.

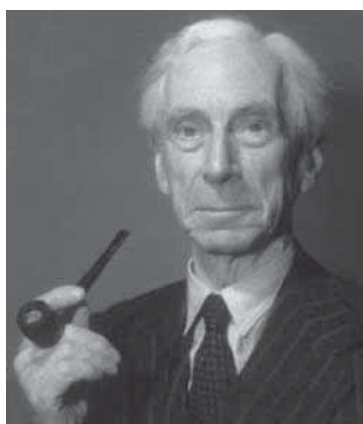
In other words, morality must come from the individual by the standard of his or her own life, and based fundamentally on what is required by their nature as a human being. Men and women must therefore be free to act, with reason being their fundamental means of survival as a human being, and hence rationality being the primary ethical virtue. By this standard, said Rand, anything that opposes or ignores reason - faith, say, or evasion - may be regarded as the primary ethical vice.

To his credit as a scientist in this Aristotelian tradition of natural philosophy, Dawkins does in fact acknowledge Aristotle’s rational principle of morality (while unfortunately not taking Rand’s crucial further step) when he quotes (favourably) Robert Hinde that “moral precepts, while not necessarily being constructed by reason, should be defensible by reason.”

I actually do believe that Dawkins already understands Rand’s insight at some level, even if he does not explicitly acknowledge it, and it comes through in his writings. Dawkins has a heroic sense of life and I admire him for his courage to speak out against the unreason of mysticism and passionately for honesty, truth and reason.

Dawkins has said that “faith is a process of non-thinking.” If that be true - and it is—then surely it behoves us (and him) to go one step further and declare that faith (or irrationality) is also a process of *non*-reason, inevitably leading to immorality.

Marcus Bachler is a research scientist working hard on a cure for ageing at Oxford University in the UK. He is 165.



A pagan and three atheists: Aristotle, Bertrand Russell, Ayn Rand and Richard Dawkins



The God Debate Reloaded

Does God exist? That question was recently re-debated in *Time* magazine by two eminent scientists: Richard Dawkins, author of recent best-seller *The God Delusion*, and Francis Collins, Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute since 1993.

During such rare public debates I am always in the corner of the atheist, hoping that he or she will expose the mystical irrationality of their debating opponent. Now, it's true that an atheist is not necessarily rational or moral – and there are any number of examples that bear this out—but it's also *necessarily* true that a religious mystic can never be *consistently* rational – their faith undercuts their reason.

However, I always have one reservation for the atheist: even if they are making a good case for the objective nature of reality and the cogent necessity of reason as the tool for discovering and understanding it (with the scientific method being the most well-known and celebrated example), I am usually disappointed by the atheist's argument concerning morality. Where these debates generally run aground for atheists is at the merest whiff of an argument for an *absolute morality*, one that distinguishes that which is good or desirable from that which is evil or undesirable.

Too often morality is seen as the natural province of the religionist. If God is dead, or non-existent, then from whence do moral rules derive?

Too often morality is seen as the natural province of the religionist. If God is dead, or non-existent, then from whence do moral rules derive? Too often, the atheist is unable to respond with anything other than vague suggestions.

The atheist response is typically a rejection of any notion of an *intrinsic* or *absolute* morality, believing it to be inherently associated with religious dogma, and instead adopting what seems to be the naturally contrary position, one of *moral relativism*. The clever mystic recognizes their opponent's weakness straight away, immediately taking the moral high-ground on right and wrong – giving often clear examples of evil—Nazis and their concentration camps and genocide being obvious examples—while the Atheist denies that any moral high-ground can exist or be determined.

The religious mystic is quick to use this as the major distinction between their philosophical positions, thereby conflating weak metaphysical and epistemological arguments with those of a shaky or uncertain morality and ethics. Take for example this excerpt from the Collins vs. Dawkins debate:

COLLINS: For you to argue that our noblest acts are a misfiring of Darwinian behavior does not do justice to the sense we all have about the absolutes that are involved here of good and evil. Evolution may explain some features of the moral law, but it can't explain why it should have any real significance. If it is solely an evolutionary convenience, there is really no such thing as good or evil. But for me, it is much more than that. The moral law is a reason to think of God as plausible--not just a God who sets the universe in motion but a God who cares about human beings, because we seem uniquely amongst creatures on the planet to have this far-

developed sense of morality. What you've said implies that outside of the human mind, tuned by evolutionary processes, good and evil have no meaning. Do you agree with that?

DAWKINS: Even the question you're asking has no meaning to me. Good and evil--I don't believe that there is hanging out there, anywhere, something called good and something called evil. I think that there are good things that happen and bad things that happen.

COLLINS: I think that is a fundamental difference between us. I'm glad we identified it...

Compare this moral shortcoming pointed out by Collins with a BBC debate held almost sixty years ago between the famous agnostic philosopher Bertrand Russell and the

philosopher and theologian Father Copleston. Exactly the same moral positioning emerges.

COPLESTON: Well, I brought in moral obligation because I think that one can approach the question of God's existence in that way. The vast majority of the human race will make, and always have made, some distinction between right and wrong. The vast majority I think has some consciousness of an obligation in the moral sphere. It's my opinion that the perception of values and the consciousness of moral law and obligation are best explained through the hypothesis of a transcendent ground of value and of an author of the moral law. I do mean by "author of the moral law" an arbitrary author of the moral law. I think, in fact, that those modern atheists who have argued in a converse way "there is no God; therefore, there are no absolute values and no absolute law," are quite logical.

RUSSELL: I don't like the word "absolute." I don't think there is anything absolute whatever...

And what is the origin of Bertrand Russell's morality then? Here Russell demonstrates his inability to identify it.

RUSSELL: You see, I feel that some things are good and that other things are bad. I love the things that are good, that I think are good, and I hate the things that I think are bad. I don't say that these things are good because they participate in the Divine goodness.

COPLESTON: Yes, but what's your justification for distinguishing between good and bad or how do you view the distinction between them?

RUSSELL: I don't have any justification any more than I have when I distinguish between blue and yellow. What is my justification for distinguishing between blue and yellow? I can see they are different.

COPLESTON: Well, that is an excellent justification, I agree. You distinguish blue and yellow by seeing them, so you distinguish good and bad by what faculty?

RUSSELL: By my feelings.

His *feelings*! Oh God! Russell outs himself as a moral subjectivist too! Naturally Copleston

is ecstatic with this outcome, and takes the initiative, mocking Russell's attempts to use his "feelings" as an objective or rational criteria for determining morality. As Russell vainly attempts to universally condemn the actions of Nazi concentration camp commanders based upon his own uneasy "feelings" on the matter, we see him left floundering in the quicksand of moral subjectivism.

How does Dawkins react when confronted by a similar challenge to define his moral philosophy in *non-relativistic* terms?

DAWKINS: For me, moral questions such as stem-cell research turn upon whether suffering is caused. In this case, clearly none is. The embryos have no nervous system. But that's not an issue discussed publicly. The issue is, "Are they human?" If you are an absolutist moralist, you say, "These cells are human, and therefore they deserve some kind of special moral treatment." Absolutist morality doesn't have to come from religion but usually does. We slaughter non-human animals in factory farms, and they do have nervous systems and do suffer. People of faith are not very interested in their suffering.

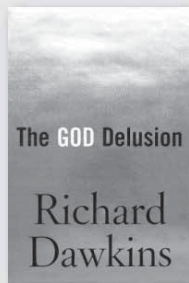
COLLINS: Do humans have a different moral significance than cows in general?

DAWKINS: Humans have more moral responsibility perhaps, because they are capable of reasoning.

Dawkins has done much better here than Russell and has not slipped completely into the pitfall of moral subjectivism he did earlier. But Dawkins is still left tantalisingly on the precipice - hanging almost reluctantly by his finger tips onto the final arbiter that distinguishes between mystical and secular absolutist moral philosophy, namely the moral standard of a rational life lived through the scrutiny of reason.

Unfortunately, without a proper philosophical framework such as Objectivism - which clarifies the foundations for a contextually absolute morality based on reason, purpose and self-esteem—those rational atheists who are so often in the vanguard of public debate with religious mystics leave themselves *literally* morally disarmed. It's a shame. A great shame.

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THE GOD INSTINCT

BOOK REVIEW by Dr Vincent Gray of Richard Dawkins' "The God Delusion"

Bantam Press 2006 406 pages \$40

In 1811 Percy Bysshe Shelley was expelled from Oxford University for writing a book entitled *The Necessity for Atheism*.

Today we have the distinguished Oxford Professor of the Public Understanding of Science writing a similar work, and prospering from it. We have certainly made progress in anti-religious tolerance, at least in Great Britain. The question is, how far does such tolerance extend, and can the "God Delusion" be explained.?

When somebody asks me why I do not believe in God I always reply "because there is no evidence." I might get a reply, suggested by Dawkins, that there is no evidence that humans exist elsewhere in the universe, but it is still highly likely, given the probable large number of planets capable of hosting our own existence. So why do I not think God to be just as probable? Then, I have to reply that nobody has been able to explain where, who or how God exists. It is, by contrast, easy to understand how humans could develop elsewhere. But I draw the line at an unsubstantial, indefinable being

Dawkins does a fine hatchet job in ridiculing both the beliefs and the explanations for the mainly Christian God. Many of the "arguments", even if accepted, fall down when God cannot be identified. He places great emphasis on the absurd extent of religious beliefs in the United States, presumably aimed at his US sales. He uses kid gloves on Islam, which has even more outrageous beliefs, and he is unwilling to tackle Hinduism. Buddhism does not even count.

The Bible comes in for detailed dissection. He shows that a believer in the literal truth of the Bible has to contend with a recommendation for genocide (Joshua Fit de battle of Jericho), the stoning of adulterers, gang rape (Chapter 19, Judges) and discrimination against homosexuals and masturbators.

I must admit that my take on Jesus has been influenced by the two alternative versions of the gospels proposed by Robert Graves in *The Nazarene Gospel Restored* and his novel *King Jesus*. But Dawkins goes further in pointing out that the gospels disagree as to where Jesus was born, that there was no census at the time postulated, and there is even doubt whether the Hebrew word that was translated as "virgin" might really have meant only "maiden." Luke is proud that Joseph was descended from David, and there would not be much point in this if Joseph was not Jesus' father.

Having done an excellent job in taking apart the absurd beliefs and practices of the worshippers of the (mainly Christian) God, Dawkins makes a very poor effort in trying to explain why they do it.

It all seems to lie in his inability to "believe" in social evolution, and his embrace of his own alternative "religion," which turns out to be "The Selfish Gene" - upon which his reputation has been made

Nobody can deny that genes determine heredity, and that survival of the genes of effective individuals is the engine of evolution. But Dawkins cannot seem to move beyond individual survival or recognise that survival or prosperity of a society can often decide survival of individuals within it.

Social evolution is the stuff of history, generally recognised long before Darwin. Darwin was inspired by the writings of his contemporary, Herbert Spencer, who wrote an influential history of civilization, and coined the phrase "survival of the fittest" to describe the changes that have taken place, a phrase that was enthusiastically adopted by Darwin to describe evolution by individuals.

Dawkins seems to realise the lack of a social mechanism in his thinking but cannot quite bring himself to admit it. He expresses his *angst* at greater length in his book *The Extended Phenotype*, inventing a concept called a "meme." A meme, is a "unit of cultural inheritance," a "non-genetic kind of replicator, which flourishes only in the environment provided by complex, communicating brains."

Dawkins tries to argue that belief in God is a "meme" but he cannot allow memes to evolve like social customs since it is not a "replicator" Surely he is talking about "instincts" a topic which Darwin discussed at great length. Instincts are genetically controlled forms of social behaviour. Society itself may not be a "replicator," but instincts developed by society are "replicated" together with the rest of each "selfish gene. Those societies which form evolutionary effective social practices survive by comparison with others, and the "selfish genes" of individuals within the successful society which survive best are those who support the successful social behaviour.

Early human societies only survived when they had a strong leader, a tight discipline, and a ruthless ability to kill animals and enemies. In such primitive societies, loyalty to the boss was necessary for survival, and if the boss could persuade his flock that he was sanctioned by God it could make the society even more successful. [*This was a symbiotic relationship characterized by Ayn Rand as the "Attila and the Witchdoctor" relationship* - Ed.] Loyalty to the boss and a belief in his divine origin became part of their genetics, an instinct. This instinct is still powerful and is dominant in most human societies today...

Dawkins is similarly confused in his discussion of morality, and wonders why monsters such as Hitler and Stalin do not follow what we might generally consider to be "moral standards." This is where he fails to understand that the "God instinct" can easily transfer itself to other irrational beliefs. Stalin for example was a theology student who converted the rather utopian concepts of communism into a personal state religion with himself as a Caesar—a setup that lasted for 74 years. Hitler, with his substitute religion of German racial superiority lasted only 14 years, mainly because non-Germans were unlikely to buy it.

Dawkins is altogether silent on other substitutes for God. They include spiritualism, which was so popular with Victorian intellectuals when Darwin destroyed their faith, Stalinist communism, fascism and environmentalism, the fad currently sweeping the world. These substitute religions may sometimes be more dangerous for survival than beliefs in God.

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Is-ought? Not a problem

"If God is dead," say theologians and ethicists, then what of ethics?

Can one have morality without God?

"No," say religionists, who rely on the edict of their imaginary friend to give them rules for living—rules which must be followed as absolutes, without question, most of which start with "Don't..."

"No," say many subjectivists, sceptics, moral relativists and those trained in university philosophy departments. It is foolish, they say, to seek moral law within the universe, or to favour one set of rules over another. If God is dead then anything goes, and all lifestyles are equally valid. "Go with the flow"; "do what feels good"; "act as if everyone were to act as you do" ... various forms of whim worship are suggested as alternatives to morality, but few are anything more than either whim worship or the imposition of more or less arbitrary rules.

I think it should be clear enough that there are serious problems with the approaches taken by both the religionists (who would have us act on intrinsic rules), *and* by their subjectivist opponents (who would have us abandon all rules altogether).

But to dismiss these objections is not to answer our question here, which is: "Can you then have morality without God? Whence comes moral structure if the Law-Giver in Chief is dead?". The answer, of course, is reality. Where else could it come from?

In response, those trained in university philosophy departments will often wheel out something called the 'Is-Ought' argument as 'proof' that facts are inherently value-free, or (to put it another way), that neither reality nor reason provide any basis from which to formulate a reliable ethics.

It's called the 'Is-Ought' argument because the bloke who first devised this remarkable piece of sophism—a drinker called David Hume—suggested the fact that the world *is* this way or that way provides no means of suggesting whether one *ought* or *ought not* do something, and thus there is no way—no way at all—to put together any sort of rational morality. This is the sort of thing that in university philosophy departments passes for a sophisticated argument.

What's remarkable is that such a fatuous proposition should still have sufficient legs to persuade graduates of philosophy

departments over two-hundred years after it was formulated. The 'is-ought problem' is a problem only if your mind has been crippled by such a department.

Aristotle stands first in line as a healthy contrast to both religionists and subjectivists, and to university philosophy professors, in being a consistent (and too-frequently overlooked) advocate of a rational, earthly morality—his was a "teleological" approach to ethics. That is, he said, we each act to achieve certain ends, and those ends must be the furtherance of our lives. All actions are (or should be) done "for the sake of" achieving some goal.

Aristotle provides a starting point from which to proceed rationally. Let's think about what the basis for any rational standard of morality for human life would be. Morality should be ends-based – it should be goal-directed – but what end should it pursue? Surely the starting point would be the nature of human life itself? *Shouldn't the fact that human beings do have a specific nature tell us what we ought to do?*

It was Ayn Rand who identified that the crucial fact about human life that provides such a starting point is the *conditional* nature of life, the fact that living beings daily confront the ever-present alternative of life or death. Act in this way and our life is sustained. Act in that way, and it isn't. Life is not automatic; it requires effort to sustain it, and reason to ascertain what leads towards death (which is bad), and what leads towards life (which is good). What standard then provides the basis by which a rational morality judges what one ought to do, or ought not to do? Life itself. *Life is the standard*. As Ayn Rand observed in her essay 'The Objectivist Ethics,'

It is only the concept of "Life" that makes the concept of "Value" possible. It is only to a living entity that things can be good or evil.

Greg Salmieri and Alan Gotthelf point out that,

Rand's virtue-focused rational egoism differs from traditional [i.e., Aristotelian] *eudaimonism* in that Rand regards ethics as an exact science. Rather than deriving her virtues from a vaguely defined human function, she takes "Man's Life" – i.e. that which is required for the survival of a rational animal across its lifespan – as her standard

of value. This accounts for the *nobility* she ascribes to production – "the application of reason to the problem of survival." For Rand, reason is man's means of survival, and even the most theoretical and spiritual functions – science, philosophy, art, love, and reverence for the human potential, among others – are for the sake of life-sustaining action. This, for her, does not demean the spiritual by "bringing it down" to the level of the material; rather, it elevates the material and grounds the spiritual.

The fact that life *is* conditional tells us what we *ought* to do: in order to sustain our life, we *ought* to act in a certain way. This is the starting point for a rational, reality-based ethics.

If, for example, that glass of brown liquid in front of you *is* dangerously toxic, then one *ought not* drink it. That would be *bad*. If, however, it *is* a glass of Limburg Czechmate, then all things being equal one *ought* to consume it—and with enthusiasm. That would be *good*.

So much for the 'is-ought problem.' The fact that reality *is* constituted in a certain way, and that every living being confronts the fundamental existential alternative of life or death is what provides the basic level of guidance as to what one *ought* or ought not do. This fundamental alternative highlights an immutable fact of nature, which is that everything that is alive must act in its self-interest or die. A lion must hunt or starve. A deer must run from the hunter or be eaten. Man must obtain food and shelter, or perish.

The fact that we exist possessing a specific nature tells us what we *ought* to do.

(The intelligent reader will already have noticed that in seeing morality in this way, *the primary issue in morality is not our responsibility to others, but fundamentally our responsibility to ourselves*. Without first understanding our responsibility for sustaining our own life, no other responsibilities or obligations are even possible. Tibor Machan observes that this fact is recognised even in airline travel, where the instruction is always given that if oxygen masks drop from the ceiling you should put your own on first before trying to help others. Basically, this is a recognition that if you don't look after yourself first then you're dead, and of no use either to anyone else or to yourself. This might help explain to interested readers why Ayn Rand named her work on ethics: *The Virtue of Selfishness*.)

To a living being then, facts are not inherently value-free, they are *value-laden* – some facts we should act to avoid, others to embrace, but all facts we should seek to understand, and we should understand that all facts are potentially of either value or disvalue to us.

Contemplating the delightful reality of a glass of Twisted Hop Ale, for example, demonstrates that some facts can be very desirable indeed, and are very much worth embracing. The point here is that *it is not the facts themselves that make them valuable, it is our own relationship to those facts*: how those facts impinge upon and affect our lives for either good or ill. It is up to us to discover and to make the most of these values. Leonard Peikoff makes the point in his book *Objectivism*:

Sunlight, tidal waves, the law of gravity, *et al.* are not good or bad; they simply are; such facts constitute reality and are thus the basis of all value-judgments. This does not, however, alter the principle that every “is” implies an “ought.” The reason is that every fact of reality which we discover has, directly or indirectly, an implication for man’s self-preservation and thus for his proper course of

action. In relation to the goal of staying alive, the fact demands specific kinds of actions and prohibits others; i.e., it entails a definite set of evaluations.

For instance, sunlight is a fact of metaphysical reality; but once its effects are discovered by man and integrated to his goals, a long series of evaluations follows: the sun is a good thing (an essential of life as we know it); i.e., within the appropriate limits, its light and heat are good, good for us; other things being equal, therefore, we ought to plant our crops in certain locations, build our homes in a certain way (with windows), and so forth; beyond the appropriate limits, however, sunlight is not good (it causes burns or skin cancer); etc. All these evaluations are demanded by the cognitions involved—if one pursues knowledge in order to guide one’s actions. Similarly, tidal waves are bad, even though natural; they are bad for us if we get caught in one, and we ought to do whatever we can to avoid such a fate. Even the knowledge of the law of gravity, which represents a somewhat different kind of example, entails a host of evaluations --among the most obvious of which are: using a parachute in midair is good, and jumping out of a plane without one is bad, bad for a man’s life.

But this is (or should be) basic stuff.

NOW, UNLESS YOU’RE a university philosophy professor (or David Hume) you don’t simply sit there looking wide-eyed at the world, acting only on the basis of what appears in front of you on the bar. As Aristotle pointed out, our actions should be goal-directed; if we want *the good*—that is, if we want to sustain our lives—then we need to act with that end firmly in mind. A rational man acts with *purpose*: that is, he acts in pursuit of his values. If our purpose is the enjoyment of more glasses of Twisted Hop Ale, for example, (something even David Hume would agree is a value) then we must act in a way that allows us to acquire more drinking vouchers with which to buy them, a fridge in which to keep them, and to sustain our health so that we might enjoy them.

We should act in this way or in that way, in other words, in order to bring into reality certain facts that our (rationally-derived) values tell us are good. Acting in this way is itself good. We might even call it “virtuous” – virtues being the means by which we acquire our values.

And further: we should act not just in order to stay alive. As Aristotle and Rand both point out, the proper human state of life is not just bare survival, it is a state of flourishing – not just life, but “the Good Life.” Rand again:

In psychological terms, the issue of man’s survival does not confront his consciousness as an issue of “life or death,” but as an issue of “happiness or suffering.” Happiness is the successful state of life, suffering is the signal of failure, of death...

Happiness is the successful state of life, pain is an agent of death. Happiness is that state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one’s values...

But neither life nor happiness can be achieved by the pursuit of irrational whims. Just as man is free to attempt to survive in any random manner, but will perish unless he lives as his nature requires, so he is free to seek his happiness in any mindless fraud, but the torture of frustration is all he will find, unless he seeks the happiness proper to man. The purpose of morality is to teach you not to suffer and die, but to enjoy yourself and live.

Such is the nature of a *rational* morality. The fact that the world *is* constituted as it is, means that we *ought* to recognise the value of a rational morality, and *if* we wish to achieve happiness we ought to act upon values derived from a rational morality focussed upon life on this earth.

What the hell else could be as important?

The interested reader who wants for more in book form is directed in the first instance to Ayn Rand’s own book The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism. An insightful online lecture by Onkar Ghate on ‘Religion and Morality’ may also be found (free of charge) at the Ayn Rand Institute site, www.aynrand.org.



Paris Hilton or Mother Teresa?

Who's the better person, Paris Hilton or Mother Teresa?



The issue arose recently with speculation that Paris might play Mother Teresa in a forthcoming film. On his CBS radio show, Penn and Teller's Penn Jillette warned Paris off the idea, saying "You're so much better than that. Don't take the gig. Keep making good wholesome porn films. Just do that. Do what you're cut out for. Don't lower yourself to playing Mother Teresa."

The Catholic League of America was immediately up in arms, calling for Jillette to be sacked from CBS for plumping for Paris (if that's really the right word for supporting a stick insect) over Teresa. Said the League in calling for Jillette's dismissal:

On his CBS radio show, Penn Jillette commented on the rumor that Paris Hilton may play Mother Teresa in a movie. He said Mother Teresa "had this weird kink that I think was sexual" about seeing people suffer and die. He also said that "Paris Hilton is so far above Mother Teresa on the moral scale, she should not lower herself" to playing the saintly nun. After comparing Mother Teresa to Charles Manson, Jillette again said she "got her [sexual] kicks watching people suffer and die."

Now that might sound harsh, but it's all true. Following publication of his all-warts biography of Mother Teresa, Christopher Hitchens pointed out that 'MT,' as he liked to call her, "was not a friend of the poor. She was a friend of poverty."

She said that suffering was a gift from God. She spent her life opposing the only known cure for poverty, which is the empowerment of women and the emancipation of them from a livestock version of

compulsory reproduction. And she was a friend to the worst of the rich, taking misappropriated money from the atrocious Duvalier family in Haiti (whose rule she praised in return) and from Charles Keating of the Lincoln Savings and Loan. Where did that money, and all the other donations, go? The primitive hospice in Calcutta was as run down when she died as it always had been—she preferred California clinics when she got sick herself—and her order always refused to publish any audit. But we have her own claim that she opened 500 convents in more than a hundred countries, all bearing the name of her own order. Excuse me, but this is modesty and humility?

Still not convinced? Then consider this, a classic statement of her moral philosophy: "I think it is very beautiful for the poor to accept their lot, to share it with the passion of Christ. I think the world is being much helped by the suffering of the poor people." Read that paragraph back to yourself slowly. She is not saying the suffering of the poor saddens her, but that their suffering is "very beautiful." She is not saying that poverty and suffering should end, but that the poor should "accept their lot" and "share it with the passion of Christ." The world is a better place for their suffering, she says.

What an unspeakably evil view of life.

Mother Teresa believes that poverty and suffering are "gifts" from God. The sisters in her order, The Missionaries of Charity, are taught that suffering makes God very happy. This is the reason that pain medication

is withheld from patients in their care: suffering, remember, is "very beautiful." This is the morality at the very heart of Christian religion, a religion as you'll recall that has as its moral ideal a man who was tortured for his ideals, and whose very symbol is a symbol of his suffering.

Mother Teresa once recounted brightly how she had told a terminally ill cancer patient, suffering from unbearable pain, that, "You are suffering like Christ on the cross. So Jesus must be kissing you." This is pure sadism, and Mother Teresa was ruthlessly intent on making God a very happy deity.

This same view emerged in Parliament a few years ago from the mouth of the then-leader of the National Party Bill English. Speaking against Peter Brown's 'Death With Dignity Bill, which would have allowed terminally ill patients in unspeakable pain to end their own lives with dignity, English ' had this to say: "Well, pain is part of life, and watching it is part of our humanity."

Fewer more evil sentences have been uttered in that Parliament. "Pain is part of life, and watching it is part of our humanity."

What an unspeakably, unutterably foul reason to oppose someone wishing to end their own life with dignity—"No!" says Bill; God says you must suffer!—and how abhorrently Catholic.

Bill English and MT. What a disgusting pair—but as Hitchens observes, to say these views are unChristian unfortunately would not be true. Ayn Rand observed that a rational morality teaches us not to suffer and die, but to enjoy yourself and live—these perfectly express the opposition position; the Christian position.

And people say that religion has a monopoly on morality.

So should Paris "lower herself" then? And who's the better human being: Paris or MT?

Helping the Poor?

The point about Mother Teresa isn't that there is anything necessarily wrong with helping the poor. The point is that it is an extremely minor and trivial way to help them, and elevating people such as her diminishes the much more profound impact of industrial development and the great men who make it possible.

Funny how even today, 900 years after Maimonides demonstrated that the best way to help a poor man is to fund a business that will give him a productive job, and with it the self-respect and independence that come from productive work, some Christians still think that the best way is to build him a hospital to die in - without even analgesics to ease his pain - when he gets ill from one of the many diseases caused by staying poor.

Michael Dell employs 8600 people in India. Larry Ellison (Oracle) somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000. IBM 39,000. Together, that's around 60,000 workers; with their families, about a quarter million, who in the unlikely case they get sick (people with good jobs do not get sick anywhere as often as the really poor) can afford real medical care, including analgesics - instead of the un-medicated pain dealt to the poor in 'Mother' Teresa's hospital down the road.

So, if you really want to throw some money at poverty in India, invest in Dell Computer, in Oracle, in IBM. The people of India will grow richer, and you will too. Even helping others needn't be sacrificial - harmony of interests, and all that. [Source: SoloPassion. Com]



JEFF PERREN

Environmentalism and Christianity

Roots, Similarities and Differences:

Many commentators have written in recent years about environmentalism as a religious movement (Crichton, Reisman, Schlesinger in the *Wall Street Journal*, and others). Are there any similarities to more prototypical religions, such as Christianity? If so, are there any important differences?

In particular, there are three ideas I focus on here, put forth by more than one commentator.

- (1) Christianity and Environmentalism share fundamental philosophical premises, and their adherents are essentially the same,
- (2) that without the latter, the former can not last and,
- (3) that, therefore, Objectivists should forego focusing on environmentalism and fight Christianity directly.

I examine these ideas and then make some comments about their implications.

The reader should note that in the following exposition I coin a new term, 'viropaganism,' in order to more clearly distinguish the fundamental features of environmentalism as a philosophy or religion from environmentalism as a movement or set of proposals.

At bottom, viropaganism is a form of Nature worship, much like that of the ancient Celts. Its practice is older than any organized religion, including Christianity, which it predates by thousands of years.

Its chief characteristic, metaphysically, is that it views all Nature as both spiritual and physical, with these characteristics fundamentally indistinguishable.

Ethically, its primary principle is that all things in nature are of equal intrinsic value. It preaches that 'raw' nature is best, that any 'undue' alteration by Man is a movement away from that ideal.

Fundamentals and Sources

The modern environmental movement grew out of the writings of several different philosophers.

Though not explicitly concerned with the question, some of Spinoza's writings 350 years ago were and remain relevant, particularly his pantheism. For Spinoza, the spiritual and the physical were in essence one. Rousseau's writings 250 years ago have been

more directly influential, as they have on most of modern society's views on the relationship of Man to society. Though too complex to discuss at length, a few capsule summaries will give the flavor of his views.

As Garth Kemmerling says in *The Philosophy Pages*: "Pursuit of the arts and sciences, Rousseau argued, merely promotes idleness, and the resulting political inequality encourages alienation." (www.philosophypages.com/ph/rous.htm). To quote Robin Chew: "Rousseau's essay, 'Discourse on the Arts and Sciences' (1750), argued that the advancement of art and science had not been beneficial to mankind."

Another writer comments: "In his early writing, Rousseau contended that man is essentially good, a 'noble savage' when in the 'state of nature' (the state of all the other animals, and the condition man was in before the creation of civilization and society), and that good people are made unhappy and corrupted by their experiences in society." (www.lucidcafe.com/library/96jun/rousseau.html).

Finally, from Wikipedia: "[T]o go back to nature means to restore to man the forces of this natural process, to place him outside every oppressing bond of society and the prejudices of civilization."

These represent a fair summary of Rousseau's views. In consequence, Rousseau believed that both science **and** art were somehow 'artificial' and therefore corrupting, since they encouraged man to alter nature, rather than simply live with conditions as they are found. In this, we can see both the epistemological and ethical components that form the basis of much of modern viropaganism.

The philosopher Immanuel Kant admits his debt to Rousseau, and he in turn had a profound impact on Thoreau (writing in the 1860s), just as he did on Emerson and other Transcendentalists (and virtually every philosopher since, for better and—mostly—for worse). Commenting on Thoreau, Furtak writes: "In his essay 'Nature,' Emerson asserts that there can be found in the natural world 'a

sanctity which shames our religions.' Thoreau would agree completely with this statement." Further on he says, "As he sees it, the realm of spirit is the physical world, which has a sacred meaning that can be directly perceived."

Further still, "Thoreau's metaphysical convictions compel him to 'defend nature's intrinsic value...' And, '[T]he entire environment, the 'living earth' itself, has something like a life of its own, containing but not reducible to the biotic existence of animals and plants [Walden, XVII]." Finally, "[H]e also has the distinction of being among the first Western philosophers to be significantly influenced by ancient Chinese and Indian thought." [Rick Anthony Furtak, www.plato.stanford.edu/entries/thoreau, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.]

Around the beginning of the 20th century, the ideas propounded were less fundamental, but there was considerable application of them in the founding of the conservationist movement by John Muir (Founder of the Sierra Club), Gifford Pinchot (First US Forest Service Chief), Aldo Leopold (Founder of The Wilderness Society), and others. More recently, in the last few decades, Arne Haase (one of the founders of 'Deep Ecology') has been highly influential.

Two different views on man's nature and that relationship are found within environmental thought:

- (1) That Man is a part of Nature, but it is his insistence on using reason that separates him from it 'artificially'. That Man should forego emphasis on reason and 'rejoin' nature willingly.
- (2) More recently, that Man will never forego using his reason, that he is therefore a kind of virus on the Earth, and that — since the welfare of Nature is paramount — it would be preferable if his numbers were radically reduced.

In the first case, reason is regarded as non-essential; in the second case it is ineradicable, and harmful.

As can be seen by examining the similarities, there are important similarities between fundamentalist Christianity and viropaganism. Both believe there is a 'spiritual' element in reality which is omnipresent and important to recognize. Both assert (in some form) that 'Eden', i.e. Nature unaltered by Man (to any extent beyond that done by other animals) is the ideal state.

But these ideas are shared by other philosophies as well. They were present in some Ancient Greek thought, in Hinduism, and elsewhere — including among the ancient Celts, as noted earlier. It was a central theme in the philosophy of Rousseau, who was far from an Evangelical Christian. Thoreau, influenced in part by the Unitarians, emphasized it as well.

It is an important question whether Rousseau's philosophy — and hence that of Kant, Thoreau, *et al* — is essentially “nothing but secularized Christianity,” (as has been suggested from time to time), but the answer can only be touched on here.

The phrase, ‘secular Christianity, if taken literally, is a contradiction in terms. Christianity is a formal religion, with a two-world metaphysics, based on faith in a powerful deity and in that

Viropaganism is not an outgrowth of Christianity, so much as it is a return to a much more primitive religion that pre-dated it by millennia.

deities dictates as ‘recorded’ in the Christian Bible. (“A monotheistic system of beliefs and practices based on the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus as embodied in the New Testament and emphasizing the role of Jesus as savior,” defines *Princeton WordNet*)

As a short hand phrase, ‘secular Christianity’ may be evocative. It helps emphasize that there are, indeed, fundamental ideas shared between Christianity and avowedly secular (even if mystical) philosophies. It's quite true that Christianity advocates the acceptance of faith and self-sacrifice. But so do Hinduism, Judaism, and other religions.

It is therefore no more sensible to regard viropaganism and Christianity as essentially the same, than it would be to regard Christianity as essentially the same as Hinduism, Judaism, or other religion. To do so is to empty the word ‘essential’ of any useful meaning.

Consider the following analogy. All chemical elements have protons, which differ only in number. Are we to conclude therefore that all atoms are ‘essentially the same’? In one sense, yes... they are all atoms. In another, no... they are different atoms. That numerical difference has many consequences. What is essential is determined by the context, it is not intrinsic to the entity.

There are important differences, too, between Christianity and viropaganism. Many Christians accept the Biblical view that the Earth was made for Man. Viropagans regard this as too selfish. Everything, even rocks, have equal intrinsic worth to a viropagan. Why rocks too? Because they too, say the advocates of this view, have a ‘spirit’ (or, alternatively, are really part of one spirit), just as animals have.

This viropaganist view is much more similar to Hinduism, Native American mysticism, and other similar ‘philosophies’ than it is to Christianity. These, too, form an important historical strand of the viropaganist religion, increasingly in the last 50 years. Since the 1960s, its contemporary adherents have felt much more at home in these religions, than in Christianity.

Observe, not incidentally, that during the greatest growth of the viropaganist religion, beginning in the 1960s and leading up to the 1990s, interest in and the influence of Christianity was at a minimum among the young. What took Christianity's place was the explicitly mystical religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Native American shamanism, and more secular philosophies.

The fundamental that drives viropaganism is

worship of nature, but nature ‘untouched’ by Man. But what does that mean: ‘untouched’? In this context it means unaltered by the actions that result from the use of reason. It's true that some forms of Christianity are indeed equally hostile to reason, the forms descendant from Augustine being the most prominent examples.

But there are two problems with regarding both viropaganism and Christianity as fundamentally equivalent on even this issue.

One is that there is, and has been since the Middle Ages, another strain of Christianity — a pro-reason strain seen among the Jesuits and others. As is well known, Thomas Aquinas is still one of the foremost figureheads of that branch, but there are many lesser figures as well who have influenced Christianity for the past several centuries.

Does the fact that this influence is largely from Aristotle make it any the less relevant when analyzing the fundamental similarities and differences between, or the influence of Christianity on viropaganism? Or, does it simply provide Christianity as a whole with yet more inherent contradictions in what is already a very multi-faceted set of views? It can be validly asked, “When a philosophy contains fundamental contradictions, such that without them it would cease to *be* that philosophy, what criteria are to be employed to emphasize one side of the contradiction over the other?” Fair question.

But the more important difficulty has been alluded to already. There are many other mystical philosophies that, at least in the last fifty years, have been equally influential in American viropaganist culture. (Historically,

this influence goes back further, all the way to Thoreau's time. In the European case, something similar is seen with Rousseau's fondness for native peoples over that of Europeans.)

Should we therefore assert that Christianity is ‘essentially the same’ as Native American religion or that Rousseau was essentially a Christian? This puts us right back in the difficulty with respect to the meaning of ‘essential’ reviewed earlier.

Tactics

The latter two theses are essentially about which approach to ideas and changing the culture is most important.

We might, for the sake of argument, regard Christianity and viropaganism as essentially similar (which, in some respects or contexts, they are). Does it follow that eliminating the influence of the first in modern Western culture will cause the second to “wither and die?”

This assertion is highly questionable. Even if we accept the stronger claim that Christianity, in some sense, caused viropaganism, does it follow that if the former disappears the latter will fade?

There are several reasons to believe the answer is: No. One reason this is so is **because** they have some fundamental similarities. Whether Christianity spawned viropaganism or not, the latter is most definitely here. It has a metaphysics, an (implicit) epistemology, and a very robust set of ethical views. (By “robust,” I don't mean healthy. I simply mean they are forceful and internally consistent, not subject to change without abandoning or radically altering the philosophy as it now stands.)

Even if those philosophical fundamentals are identical, viropaganism can stand on its own without its historical cousin (or, if you prefer, father) to support it. It's grown up. Bad ideas do not require their progenitors in order to be perpetuated. Communism didn't die because the Soviet Union did. The Soviet Union died because Communism did (there, at least).

[As an aside, the common view that Communism was ‘discredited’ because the Soviet Union collapsed reverses cause and effect. It also relies on the view that ‘discrediting’ depends on demonstrating in practical reality that a philosophy wasn't or can't be ‘successful’. But, destroying the practical effect or implementation of a philosophy is not the same as discrediting it. One is an act of removal, the other of disproof in the eyes of (at least partly) rational men.]

In fact, reducing the influence of Christianity — with its multiple strains and therefore mixed results — may well lead to a **rise** in the influence of viropaganism, as the last fifty years

suggests. As Christian influence waned in the last fifty years, viropaganism grew stronger. As the Christian movement (temporarily) regains some fervor, the viropaganists fall out of favor, except in those rare cases where the two are combined.

As one practical point, observe that with the recent American elections of November 2006 — in which the more blatantly and consistently socialistic Democrats gained a majority — environmentalism as a political movement has seen a substantial and very rapid rise, after some years of flagging. One immediate consequence is the reversal of Exxon-Mobil's support for global warming 'skeptics,' in response to pressure from stockholders and others.

It's true that both Christianity and viropaganism are fundamentally anti-realist and anti-reason, and hence inimical to the actual requirements of human life on Earth. But either can continue for centuries without the other, as was true of viropaganism for the epoch before Christianity arose and became dominant. Viropaganism is not an outgrowth of Christianity, so much as it is a return to a much more primitive religion that pre-dated it by millennia.

The Future

The continued growth of either Christianity or viropaganism—or any other form of irrational, ant-real and anti-human philosophy—is not, however, inevitable. Irrational philosophy will only flourish if rational philosophy doesn't—and rational philosophy seems to be on the rise: in India, in China, and even (though to a less obvious extent) in the US.

If this had only been occurring for a few years, it might well be seen as a blip. But there have been substantial positive changes, both intellectual and material, in the U.S. and around many parts of the world, over the past 40 years. That gives one reason to believe that something more fundamental is taking place.

As Objectivism and other pro-reason, pro-individualist, pro-human, and freedom-loving philosophies become more popular, then viropaganism — and all the horrendous practical effects it has produced — will fade into a long overdue and well-deserved obscurity.

Twenty years from now, if current trends continue, viropaganism will join the long list of failed mystical philosophies that became so prominent in American culture over the last generation. Objectivism — based on reason, and with human life and *this earth* as its focus—can help produce that outcome.

Jeff Perren is a professional writer with a background in Philosophy and Physics.

It's Never Going To End

PAUL Z MYERS, PhD



Deepak Chopra is *still* blathering on. I'm afraid that while he can't shut up, I can ignore him, and this will be my last response to his drivel; it's also the last time I'll respond to the *Huffington Post*. Arianna Huffington's online exercise in indiscriminate narcissism is not the direction I want to see liberals taking, and while my voice isn't a significant one, I can at least deny the kook wing of the Left my tiny bit of support.

This time the obsessive small-minded mystic is still whining against science and reason, still railing against his own idiotic imaginings.

But how can anyone seriously defend science as a panacea when it gave us the atomic bomb?

First of all, no one defends science as a panacea. It's not leading us to utopia, it's taking us towards a better understanding of the real world...which, contrary to the quacks who claim reality is what you imagine it to be, is often going to expose uncomfortable truths. There is no paradise. There is no perfection. There's just a world where we have to struggle and compromise, and in the end we all die.

Secondly, the people who whimper about science bringing us bombs (and we've also got a few trolls wandering around scienceblogs damning scientists for that) have got it all wrong. Nuclear reactions are a property of the natural world—they go on in stars, they take place beneath our feet. Science did not invent fission and fusion, it only exposed the nature of the event, explained how it worked, and made this knowledge available to human beings. *People* chose what to do with it. We don't have any choice in what science reveals. What would you have had 20th

century scientists do, intentionally suppress all knowledge of a fundamental property of matter, and all of the unpredictable consequences of that knowledge? And just *how* would you propose to do that, short of destroying the scientific enterprise all together?

Reason isn't the savior of the future. That role belongs to wisdom. With all the threats to human survival that we now face, I resort to a phrase coined by Jonas Salk: the survival of the wisest. Although a great researcher in medicine, Salk had the vision to look beyond materialism. He saw that evolution, as it applies to modern human beings, isn't Darwinian. We no longer live in a state of nature.

Good grief, the inanity, it burns.

No, reason isn't the savior of the future. It's just the absolute bare minimum of what we ought to expect from the people to whom we entrust our futures—it's the *foundation* of everything we ought to do. I don't care what other wonderful virtues Chopra wants to tout; if they are built on irrationality and unreason, they are destructive.

I also don't know what Chopra means by this fuzzy word "wisdom" he's throwing out in his little essay, but he writes as if he thinks it is something completely orthogonal to reason, but of course it isn't—unreasoning people can't be wise, although they may pretend to it, and other irrational people may believe them. He's using the word in an utterly meaningless way, the same way his kind of people use the words "spirituality" or "vibrations" or "quantum", as subliminal tokens for indefinable emotions they might have; it's shorthand for empty pseudo-profundity. It's the hook the con artist uses to persuade his mark to fork over his respect, but it's all a lie.

The rest I have no patience for. Chopra doesn't know what "evolution" or "Darwinian" means, so trying to dissect the meaning he is reading into them as pointless: he's just reciting buzz words, stringing them together like pretty beads on a string. It's all noise from a fool.

Enough.

Paul Z Myers is a biologist and associate professor at the University of Minnesota, Morris. You can find him on the web at his blog, www.ScienceBlogs.Com/Pharyngula.

Foreword to the book

Science vs. Superstition:

The Case For A New Scientific Enlightenment

Foreword to a new book from Policy Exchange, an independent UK think tank, which puts the case for a renewed scientific enlightenment.

Science versus Superstition, edited by Jim Panton and Oliver Marc Hartwich, includes chapters on the precautionary principle, the anti-nuclear movement, genetic modification, climate change and "the century of science, and the culture of pessimism" in which science sometimes suffers.

The book can be downloaded from the internet at www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/libimages/219.pdf.

In contemporary Western society we live longer and healthier lives than in any previous historical period. Science in the 21st century promises even greater longevity and health. We are closer than ever to discovering cures and treatments for some of the most debilitating diseases. Developments in stem cell research (discussed by Deichmann and Spahl in Chapter 6, 'The problem of stem cell research regulation – limiting the individual right to self-determination') and in genetic technology promise the possibility of abolishing genetic diseases and hereditary conditions, as well as the possibility of taking even greater conscious control of our human biology by manipulating our genetic make-up.

Increased standards of living throughout the world are also on the cards. Although the scientific and technological revolutions of the past have brought us close to the eradication of hunger, technologies such as genetically modified crops (discussed by Ridley in Chapter 7, 'Genetically modified crops and the perils of rejecting innovation') have already seen the development of pest-resistant crops, and species of plant able to survive in some of the harshest environments on the planet. An agricultural future which is less land and labour intensive gives the possibility of freeing individuals in the developing world from the land, in

much the same way that the vast majority of people in the developed world have been freed from the dictates of producing food and servicing necessity, allowing them to pursue more meaningful and self-determining modes of existence.

Of course, as science develops we uncover as many new problems as we find solutions for the problems of old. However, as it has done since the rise of modernity, it is science itself which gives the greatest possibility of resolving those problems. The apparently looming energy crisis, for example, might be

solved quite readily by a greater investment in nuclear power, which, as Kaplinsky explains, for its proponents is "a source of safe, clean energy with good prospects to meet our expanding needs" (Chapter 5: "A disaster waiting to happen" – why are we so anti-nuclear?). And this is not to mention the newer developments, such as the prospects for nuclear fusion, and other, even more experimental methods of energy production which are already beginning to move from the realm of science fiction to the sphere of social reality.

Even the apparently gravest threat facing humanity at the moment, climate change, is something for which solutions must be sought through science. Even accepting the important arguments made by Hartwich in Chapter 8 ('Climate change – scepticism and science as drivers of progress') – that there is no consensus amongst scientists on its cause(s) or its implications, let alone upon any single set of solutions – the challenge of understanding climate change and developing technologies to prevent its potentially debilitating impact upon human beings, is one of the greatest, and for that reason one of the most exciting, challenges for science in the 21st century.

It may seem paradoxical, then, in a period when science promises so many great and exciting contributions to humanity's future, that we are at the same time beset by a fear, uncertainty, and at times an outright antipathy, towards science; that we are distrustful of the promises science makes, and fearful of the risks it throws up and of the consequences of scientific intervention in the world around us.

One explanation for our contemporary insecurity and risk aversion that has gained popularity over the past couple of decades is that if we are more risk averse; it is because the risks which science itself creates are greater than the risks humanity once faced.

If we are more insecure about the changes science proposes it is because those changes are experienced to be of a greater magnitude, and occurring at a far greater rate than ever before in human history, so it is claimed. In reality, the risks of the present are not greater than those of the past, nor is the pace of change faster. What is novel about the present, however, is that they are often experienced as such, and for this reason, our experience is unsettling.

A second novelty is that our capacity to intervene in the world is far greater today than it has ever been. What this suggests, ultimately, is that it is our own increased capacity to intervene in the world and to manipulate it in the service of our interests which is experienced as unsettling. At the same time that science gives us a far greater capacity to control consciously the natural, social and biological world, we are unsettled and alienated from this very possibility. It is inside this paradoxical state of affairs that we can uncover the cause of contemporary society's sense of uncertainty about science and the promises it makes.

Of course, scientific discoveries have always raised controversy, and the social changes such discoveries have engendered have always been as likely to throw-up opponents as supporters. But those who oppose science today are very different from the kinds of groups and individuals who objected to scientific developments in the past. As Maxeiner and Miersch suggest in Chapter 1 ('The century of science and the culture of pessimism') ecologists have become the new priests who call for humanity to strive less and learn to accept our lot with greater humility. Campaigning organisations of the (once-progressive) left are leading the campaign against industrial society in the name of a romanticised rural idyll; liberals who once believed in a free market (in economics and in ideas!) and in human perfectibility are now calling for greater regulation of scientific intervention, experimentation, and of the pharmaceutical companies who seek to make profits from scientific development.

Just as today's opponents of science come from very different perspectives than former opponents, so too is the form and substance of their arguments historically novel. The arguments which do most to undermine our belief in science today often present themselves not as opponents, but as proponents of science. As both Hartwich and Kaplinsky suggest, for example, the

proponents of ecologism as a solution to global warming, and the opponents of nuclear power, respectively, both present their arguments in superficially scientific terms; but both are equally selective in their use of science, and their interpretation of the scientific data is equally determined by pre-conceived political agendas.

Further, the form of their arguments is not a critique of science as such, but simply a call for greater precaution (as Hanekamp and Verstegen point out in their discussion of the Precautionary Principle in *Chapter 2*: 'The problem of the precautionary principle: The paternalism of the precautionary coalition') and greater external, extra-scientific regulation in the name of "ethics" (as Derbyshire discusses in *Chapter 3* on the rise and institutionalisation of ethics committees). Both approaches, however, ultimately serve to breed a mistrust of science. In the case of the Precautionary Principle, the very foundation of the argument is premised upon the idea that we should hold back from scientific endeavours the outcome of which we cannot predict in advance with certainty, which ultimately means a call to hold back from scientific interventions, as the uncertainty of outcomes is at the very heart of the scientific enterprise. In the case of ethics regulation, the implication is more insidious but equally corrosive.

As Derbyshire argues (*Chapter 2*), the institutionalisation of ethics regulation leads to increasing levels of bureaucratic legislation which delays and potentially prevents scientists from undertaking their research, while the introduction of lay "experts" on ethics committees serves to undermine the authority of scientific knowledge and expertise.

The example of ethics regulation is particularly interesting. Just as in my discussion (*Chapter 4*: 'Anti-vivisection and the culture of misanthropy') of the tendency amongst vivisectionists and research institutions to water down their arguments for animal research in the desire for greater public acceptance of their research, so too has the rise of ethics regulation occurred in an attempt to reassure the public and increase their trust in science. In both cases, however, the actual result is the opposite. Scientific expertise is undermined, the promises of science come to be viewed as dubious, and the motivation of scientists themselves is increasingly called into question.

The chapters in this book are written by a range of individuals from diverse backgrounds – a practicing scientist, a psychologist, scientific commentators and science popularisers, a social policy expert, and myself, an academic working in the social sciences turned pro-

vivisection campaigner. They have contributed their expertise and arguments on a range of topics, from the general tendencies in contemporary science and society, to specific case studies on areas in which science is making huge leaps and bounds while at the same time being increasingly criticised and challenged. The authors are united in their attempt to get to grips with contemporary society's mistrust of science; and their contributions are cohered by a serious attempt to understand and explain that pessimistic tendency, and to develop the arguments we need to begin to counter it.

In making the case for a new scientific enlightenment, we are not presenting some golden-ageist fantasy for a bygone age in which science was trusted, and in which the public were deferential. Nor are we celebrating a naive technological determinism which dreamed of a science that on its own would solve all the problems of the world. Quite the contrary. Founded in London in 1640, the motto of the Royal Society, *Nullius in verba* ("on the words of no one") sums up precisely the spirit of the Enlightenment: that ideas and their proponents must be held up to account, that received wisdom must be interrogated, and that pre-given assumptions must be interrogated and, as they normally were, rejected, to be replaced by a more



*James Panton:
"Ultimately, the problems
discussed in this book are
not limited to science.
Mistrust of science
is a more fundamental
mistrust of ourselves
as human beings."*

rational and open-ended thirst for knowledge and understanding. It is this essential search for truth, coupled with a growing belief in the capacities of human beings to understand the world and to determine their own future, upon which the development of modern science was grounded; and it is in this spirit that the authors of this book have sought to interrogate the state of contemporary science itself.

By invoking the spirit of the Enlightenment, this book recognises the important truth that science exists and is conditioned by the social and political context in which it exists. It can contribute to those conditions, but it does not exist in isolation from them. The attitude that society takes towards science is one of the most important determinants of the possibility that science can have of pushing forward the boundaries of knowledge for the benefit of humanity. The significance of the Enlightenment is precisely that it describes a period of human development which was optimistic about the capacity of human beings to intervene in the world, to develop knowledge and understanding of nature, and in so doing, to change it. The intellectual developments of the Enlightenment went hand in hand with a dynamic period of social transformation, and they inspired a period in which individual and social freedoms were won against the old structures of authority and superstition.

Contemporary society could not be more different. Of course, scientific developments occur, but they lack any real social and cultural validation. The problems which confront science at the start of the 21st century are not *scientific*, at least not in any straightforward way. Rather, they are social and cultural; they are the problems of a culture which is pessimistic about science, and of a society which is insecure about the increasing capacity of human beings to engage in nature and to shape both the world around us, and our own lives. In our post-ideological age, in which politics has moved from debating different conceptions of social organisation towards the more limited horizon of simply managing society as it exists, there has arisen a new fundamental division. The new division is not between left and right, between the free-market or the socialist command economy – these labels have lost all meaning. It is rather a division between those, on the one hand, who are pessimistic about the possibility of, and cynical about the motivation for, human engagement in the world; and on the other, those who see the capacity for such engagement, of which science is one of the highest expressions, as something we should celebrate and pursue. It is a division between a misanthropic sentiment in which human beings are encouraged to feel ill at ease with their own creativity and a humanistic endorsement

of the great possibilities for human progress.

Ultimately, the problems discussed in this book are not limited to science. Mistrust of science is an expression of a more fundamental mistrust of ourselves as human beings. To call for a new scientific enlightenment is not to make a call for a greater faith in science. On the contrary, it is a call that what currently stands as scientific fact must be held up to account, just as much as the current state of science generally must be investigated, challenged, and criticised. The chapters in this book are an attempt to begin that process.

Calling for a new scientific enlightenment means, ultimately, calling for a greater faith in the human spirit and in the capacities of human beings to investigate, to know, and, - where we decide it appropriate - driven by our expanding knowledge and guided by reason and the search for truth, to change the world in which we live for the better.



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science *vs.* superstition challenges the common belief that in today's world there is no such thing as progress which is not dangerous or at least questionable. While many people seem to lack the vision of a genuinely better future, the authors believe that it is time to make the case for a more positive attitude towards the future – a future that is made better through science.

“ This is a brilliant expose of the misanthropy, irrationality, and innumeracy that characterises much of current debate on issues such as GM crops, vivisection, the regulation of science, and the appropriate response to global warming. It shows how suspicion of science – humankind's greatest collective achievement – is rooted in human self-hatred. What the book lacks in length, it makes up for in importance ”

Raymond Tallis, Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences

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Let's Use The Argument From Morality More

For those who are not familiar with him, I highly recommend the articles, podcasts and videocasts of Stefan Molyneux (www.freedomainradio.com). He describes himself as a market anarchist rather than a libertarian, and he produces some great material on philosophy, politics, economics and psychology. One of his main arguments is that the freedom movement should gain the moral high ground, and I hope that I do justice to his argument here.

When we debate with statists and other collectivists, the debate invariably becomes an argument from effect. In other words, do free markets or Governments lead to better health systems, roads, care of the poor etc etc. Although a free society would of course be infinitely better with respect to these and all other outcomes, it is a very difficult argument to win. One reason for this is because there are no free societies around and very few in the past that we can point to as examples, and so there is the "fear of the unknown" hurdle. Then we get asked why there are no libertarian societies if it such a great idea.

And then, no matter how knowledgeable we are, our opponents can always cite various industries in far-flung countries where, on the surface of it and without sufficient knowledge of each specific example to refute it, Government taxes or regulations are claimed to have led to improvements. We can counter with dozens of examples of reductions in the size of Government and taxes leading to economic growth and prosperity, but will invariably have "but look what happened to the poor" thrown back at us. We are constantly told how we are greedy, immoral capitalists who would sell our grannies for a dollar.

Even when we win the economic arguments,

it still seems to make no difference. Very few people outside the Green Party and the Unions would argue that Government is more efficient than the free market, or that private property is theft. But then the debate switches to "the poor" or "kids won't go to school". People believe that schools started in Western countries because the Governments passed education laws and it makes no difference when you point out that children got educated because the Industrial Revolution led to prosperity that stopped them having to work in the fields, assuming of course that they did not die from starvation or disease as infants.

And so, if we continue down this route of arguing from effect, it will be difficult to make huge progress. Government is expanding here and other Westernized countries, and so it could be claimed that we are losing the argument, and some would say that using the argument from effect is contributing to this. No disrespect to anyone, but we don't even score higher than the margin of error in most polls and so maybe a different focus is needed.

An alternative is to take the moral high ground, by using the argument from morality, and smashing the false argument from morality used by statists.

Their false argument from morality is that Government is "good" and "virtuous" because it "provides" a health service, schools, roads etc, even though virtually no-one would argue that these are anything but pathetic. Within the first minute we are always asked in quivering voices "who will look after the poor", "what about

those who can't look after themselves", "we need a caring society". The argument then goes on to say that capitalists are "greedy", don't pay their "fair share", or my favourite, "ruin the environment". Even if true, it's pretty funny to point out that when life expectancy was less than 30 for thousands of years until the Industrial Revolution, people weren't alive long enough to enjoy "the environment".

So let's take the argument from morality and fire it straight back at them, with compound interest.

Ask them if it is right to steal, to be corrupt, to use violence or the threat of violence to get what you want. Ask them if this is how they behave themselves, in their own lives. Do they pay for their shopping at the supermarket, or do they kidnap or shoot the staff if they are not given what they want? And when they take offence at this, ask them why they think that just because some people give themselves titles and call themselves "Government" it's then all OK to behave like this.

Ask them if they think it is moral for the Mafia to take your money with the threat of kidnap or violence. Point out that the police will lock you up and shoot you if you resist arrest if you don't pay your taxes.

Ask them if they think it would be acceptable for you to demand money off them to hire soldiers to kill people who you have no quarrel with. Then show them how much of your tax goes to the military (more so in other countries than here).

We need to point out that the Government takes money and regulates our lives with the threat of violence – there is no virtue in that. It is not moral.

And then we have the idea of democracy, which virtually no-one realizes is not the same as freedom. Put 10 rapists in a room with a woman and let them vote what they should do for the rest of the day. The rapists will have a clear mandate and the will of the majority will prevail.

I'm not saying that we never use the argument from morality – it can be seen in many Libertarian press releases. But I wonder if maybe we should use it more.



Dr Shaun Holt is a qualified doctor MBChB (hons) and pharmacist BPharm (hons). He founded New Zealand based medical trials company P3 Research and has completed over 50 major New Zealand based clinical trials.



"That's me, there"

Ethnic Fundamentalism In New Zealand

Dr Elizabeth Rata, Faculty of Education, University of Auckland

Address to the Skeptics Conference, 30 September, 2006

Ethnic fundamentalism is a form of 'secular religion', - an oxymoron that resists criticism. My task is to interrogate the beliefs of those who insist that ethnicity plays the primary and determining role in creating the person. Are such beliefs merely old-fashioned and discredited racism in a new guise?

Introduction

I describe ethnic fundamentalism or culturalism as a 'secular religion' because this particular way of understanding what ethnicity means shares a number of important features with religion. First, it is a set of beliefs about human nature. Second, those beliefs are unchallenged and unchallengeable. Third, ethnic fundamentalism rejects doubt and has a difficult relationship with reason (despite Benedict's recent speech).

The need to keep beliefs that are not exposed to the challenges of doubt, reason and judgement away from politics is the reason why the separation of church and state, the separation of science and religion are at the heart of democracy. Democracy is peaceful battle. It can work only if its battles are fought with reason not with blind faith. Reason is the democratic method. Those forces that enter the political arena without a commitment to reason are deeply subversive of democracy. One such is ethnic fundamentalism.

This morning I want to describe five beliefs of ethnic fundamentalism in order to show how the politicisation of ethnicity is subverting democracy in New Zealand. But before I do I need to clarify my terms. 'Ethnicity' refers to a combination of culture - what we do and how we understand ourselves, - and genetic inheritance (or race). Ethnicity became popular in the social sciences in the late 1960s and spread rapidly into common usage. It was an attempt to 'edit out' the increasingly discredited term 'race' from our vocabularies. However changing a word does not change the concept. Ethnicity does not mean culture only. It has a genetic, biological, i.e. race, component that does not go away simply because it is an uncomfortable notion for the social constructivists amongst us.

The confusion which dogs these words was vividly demonstrated in the responses by Pita Sharples and Willie Jackson to Don Brash's latest musings on the complexity of identity. According to Pita Sharples (as quoted in Monday's Herald when describing what it is to be Maori. 'Culture is not about the amount of blood you have, it is about beliefs, customs

and aspirations.' Well, that is true, but to be eligible for the Maori electoral roll and to claim tertiary Maori scholarships, one does in fact need the blood. It is disingenuous of Pita Sharples to ignore this fact. Willie Jackson, on the other hand, did refer to 'whakapapa' as 'what determined being Maori, the ability to link genetically to a Maori ancestor'. Put both these explanations together and we have a more complete understanding of ethnicity. It is about identifying with a particular social group in order to live a certain way - ie culture) and it is also about genetic or racial inheritance being the means to classifying oneself with that particular group.

Interestingly I have noticed in recent months that the 'softer' term 'diversity' is increasingly favoured in light of 'ethnicity's inability to shrug off its genetic or race component. However, softening the words, first by replacing 'race' with 'ethnicity', then by replacing ethnicity with diversity doesn't however change the concept itself - the idea of identifying with a social group on the basis of genetic ancestry. - Not that there is anything wrong with that in itself.

Now - I want to turn to what the problem really is but first I need to describe the five main beliefs of ethnic fundamentalists or culturalists. The first belief holds that our ethnic or racial identity is our primary and determining personal identity. This denies the fact that identity in the modern democratic world is individual identity. The modern person is the autonomous, self-creating, self-directed, independent individual who makes choices (even the choice not to exercise choice and not to be independent). This privilege of choice was not available to our ancestors who were locked into the birth-ascribed identities of traditional cultures. It is not available today to the millions who live under neotraditionalist elites - these are theocracies and oligarchies (such as the Tongan elite) who use traditional beliefs as political controls on others while themselves enjoying the fruits of modernity.

We modern individuals make choices about which identity matters the most to us, - which identity is the one that we will invest with

enormous subjective meaning. An example is the well-educated professional class of the 1980s who chose to identify in ethnic terms, - and referred to themselves with considerable pride as 'pakeha'. Not all settler-descendants chose to do so. The interesting question, and one I don't have time to discuss here, is why a particular group within the post-war new middle class chose an ethnic identity. Previously of course, the term 'pakeha' was one used in the main by Maori to describe those who arrived from Britain and their descendants. It is unusual to find a group, particularly a relatively privileged middle class group, who take on an ethnicised identity as the identity of choice. It does appear however, that, since the early 1990s there has been a silent retreat from that process.

For many people, the meaning of who they are is intimately tied to the idea of ethnic belonging. There are those who choose their primary social identity to be pakeha. Others, with Maori ancestry, choose Maori identity as their defining subjectivity. From a democratic point of view the right to choose a determining identity, including an ethnicised one, must be supported. It is the same for those who wish to define themselves in religious terms. As long as such identities remain private choices, practised in association with others of like minds, there is no problem however much one may dislike the emphasis on a primary identity that is genetically based. It is the right of an individual in a democratic country to make that choice.

Second, the belief that the ethnic or racial group is primordial - existing from the beginning of time and known through the mythologies that are regarded as histories - that the group is distinctive and separate. This denies the universal human reality of migration, genetic mixing and social mixing. It certainly denies the New Zealand reality.

Third, the belief that how people live and understand their lives (culture) is *caused* by who they are (their ancestral descent or ethnicity/race). Who we are in terms of the ancestral genetic group *causes* what we do and the meaning we give to our actions. (i.e. culture). It is a belief that has taken on its own life in education. Such cultural determinism is behind the idea of kaupapa Maori research, 'Maori maths', 'Maori pedagogy', 'Maori research' and so on. It is currently being extended to the idea of a Pasifika pedagogy. The equivalent in India is the idea of Vedic science the Hindutva fundamentalism that made huge roads in India during the 1990s

and is roundly criticized by the philosopher, Meera Nanda. According to this belief how a person thinks, behaves and relates to others is caused by 'blood' or in more acceptable terms, by 'spirit'. It is biological determinism or racism dressed in intellectual garb.

Fourth, the belief that an ethnic group indigenous to an area is autochthonous, that is, the group is 'of the land' in a way that is qualitatively different from those who arrive later. The important point here is that – as a consequence of this fact – the first group claims a particular political status with entitlements not available to others. It is 'blood and soil' ideology, located in mythological origins and seductive in its mystical appeal. By separating those who are 'indigenous' from those who are not – in terms of political recognition, a fundamental categorisation occurs which then becomes built into political institutions. Such a categorisation principle can be extended – why not have a number of 'classes' of citizens – those who arrived first, those who came a little later, while those who have only just arrived, - a most unfortunate class indeed. In time it is quite possible that these 'classes' could become rigid caste divisions.

The fifth belief is that because of the claim of the primacy of ethnicity as the mechanism for classifying social groups, individuals should be classified as members of ethnic categories and that these groups should be the bearers of political rights and be recognised in the public and political sphere. This means that membership of an ethnic category takes precedence over citizenship as a person's primary political status. This is perhaps the most serious of all the beliefs in this racial ideology because of its implications for national cohesion and democratic government. It is where ethnic fundamentalism becomes a major problem for us all.

Since the 1970s, the world-wide shift to identity politics has led to the politicisation of ethnicity. This means officially classifying and categorising people according to their ethnic or racial heritage. It is now pervasive in all areas of state and public activity in this country, particularly and most dangerously in education, including those places which should be the bastions of disinterested science, the universities. New Zealand is not alone of course. In fact I have chosen a UK example of how ridiculous the process of ethnic classification can be because it is an extreme version – though we are not far behind.

The example is taken from the United Kingdom's Department for Education and Skills' Race Equality Scheme. The document makes use of a plethora of terms. Within the space of a few pages the reader can find: ethnic groups; Asian backgrounds; Chinese

and Indian (in the UK); White British; ethnic minority groups; Black Caribbean pupils; Black and Asian students; Black British; Asian British (all on the same page); minority ethnic groups; pupils from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds; BME which is explained in a Glossary at the end of the document as meaning Black and Minority Ethnic; BEMG which is said to refer to Black Ethnic Minority Group; Traveller; Irish heritage; Gypsy/Roma; individual minority ethnic groups; Black young people; White British young people; Black young males; and Ethnic Minority and ethnic diversity; Black, Asian and people of mixed ethnic origin.

I need add here that I am talking about **politicising ethnicity**. I am not talking about the social reality – that we do have diverse communities where we meet as Maori, as Irish, as Hindu, as Muslims, as Rotarians, as Anglicans, as inline hockey players, as Plunket parents, as alienated youth, as Skeptics and so on. For some people, ethnic identity is extremely important and for these, associating with others of the same ethnicity to practise the culture of the group is necessary for their well-being. For others, such identification is much less so. Like religion, like lifestyle identities, maintaining close ties with others whom we regard as 'like us' can provide psychological security and stability in a complex world. I have no quarrel with this and fully support the wonderfully vibrant celebrations of diverse cultures (some ethnic based, some religious, some life-style) that occur throughout the country. This includes Maori television, Chinese New Year celebrations, theatre and music which has its origins in Europe, contemporary youth culture, and so on.

What I do consider a serious problem is politicising these forms of social classification so that ethnic categories become a means for the public recognition of people. Individuals are treated by government and its agencies, including schools and hospitals, as members of their ethnic group. This is so serious because the democratic political arena is where we meet as New Zealanders, as equal citizens of a united nation. That public arena is textured by the contributing communities certainly, but it is the place where we unite – as a social group that is also a political entity – because if we don't – why have a nation – New Zealand? The New Zealand nation exists because it has both a site – the state – and a subject – the citizen.

Obviously we want to recognise the social reality that New Zealanders are descended from a range of ethnic ancestries and, as a result, contain groups who do wish to maintain a range of different cultural values, beliefs and practices. That is their democratic right. However, while retaining those links with our various histories we also need to identify

with the larger New Zealand social group that is present and future oriented. The past does matter but so too does the future.

Since the 1970s, we have worked systematically, particularly in education, to demolish the political and symbolic structures of nationhood. These are the tangible and intangible forces that create and maintain social cohesion and a sense of belonging to the nation 'New Zealand'. Without a common national identity what is to stop New Zealand going the way of other fragmenting nations?

That there is considerable uncertainty about how to classify 'New Zealander' is demonstrated by the response to the census last year. Here a number of people insisted on recording New Zealanders as their ethnicity. Of course this exacerbated the problem. It turned a term that refers to national identity into one that refers to ethnic identity - reducing 'New Zealander' to just one of a number of ethnic categories in the process. However it did show that there is considerable frustration about politicising ethnic categories when the political category of a democracy is citizenship of the nation.

The problem is that when we politicise ethnicity – by classifying, categorising and institutionalising people on the basis of ethnicity – we establish the platform for ethno-nationalism. There are sufficient examples of ethno-nationalism in contemporary times, let alone horrific examples from history, for us to be very wary of a path that replaces the individual citizen with the ethnic person as the political subject.

Interestingly the process of ethnic politicisation is one driven by small well-educated elites. In Rwanda for example, the ethnic doctrine 'the Mahutu Manifesto' of 1953 was written and promulgated by eleven highly educated individuals identifying politically as Hutu. Even the killing weapons in the 1994 genocide, the machetes and scythes, were deliberately chosen and imported in their tens of thousands to represent the glorious new peasant ethnic republic that was about to dawn (once its 'enemies' had been eliminated). The raw material of the ethnic ideologies that fuelled the violence in Bosnia and Serbia was supplied by intellectuals. Pol Pot began his killing campaigns immediately on his return from study in Paris.

In New Zealand we are obviously not far down the track towards ethno-nationalism. However we need to recognise that the ideas which fuel ethnic politics are well-established and naturalised in this country and that the politicisation of ethnicity is underway. The idea that people should be recognised in government institutions, such as schools and universities, by their ethnic category, is part of such racial ideology, part of the

ethnic fundamentalism that is so difficult to challenge because if one does so one is labeled racist or anti-Maori (despite the opposite being the case). (I would make a distinction here between ethnic categories that are permanently institutionalised and policies that are temporary and needs-based – pragmatic responses to needs that do characterise certain groups at particular times, - needy groups defined sometimes by ethnicity, sometimes by gender, and sometimes by life-style.)

Ethnic fundamentalism itself must be challenged, not only because of its potential threat to democracy but because the challenge itself is democracy in action. All ideas, all movements should be required to account for themselves through rational debate.

My main purpose this morning has been to contribute to such a debate, to identify the beliefs of ethnic fundamentalism and to ask why should ethnic identity be more fundamental, more primary, more determining of our lives, than national identity? This is a decision we make for ourselves. We choose what matters to us. Yet for several decades, the decision has been, under the bicultural banner, to prioritise ethnicity. The problem with that approach is that we can't change who are ancestors are.

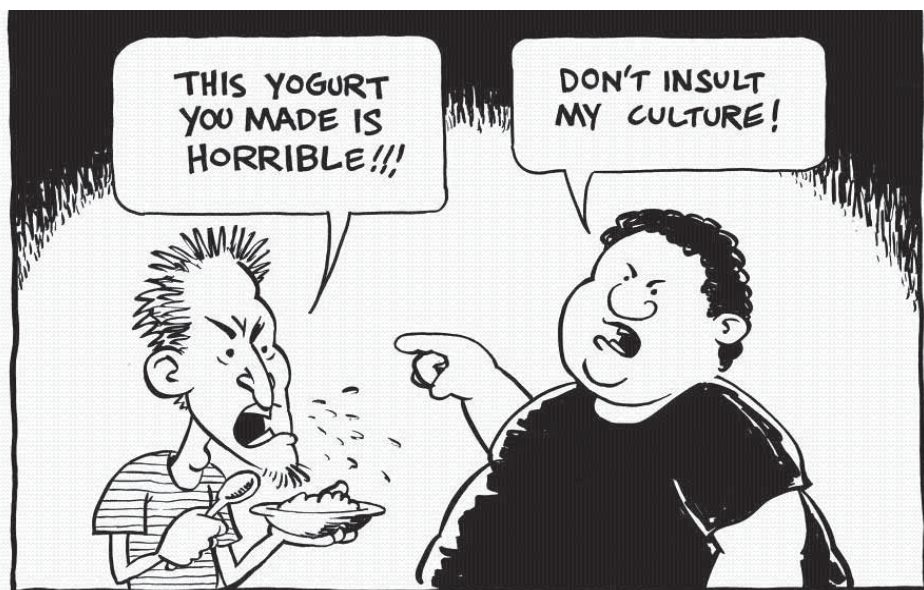
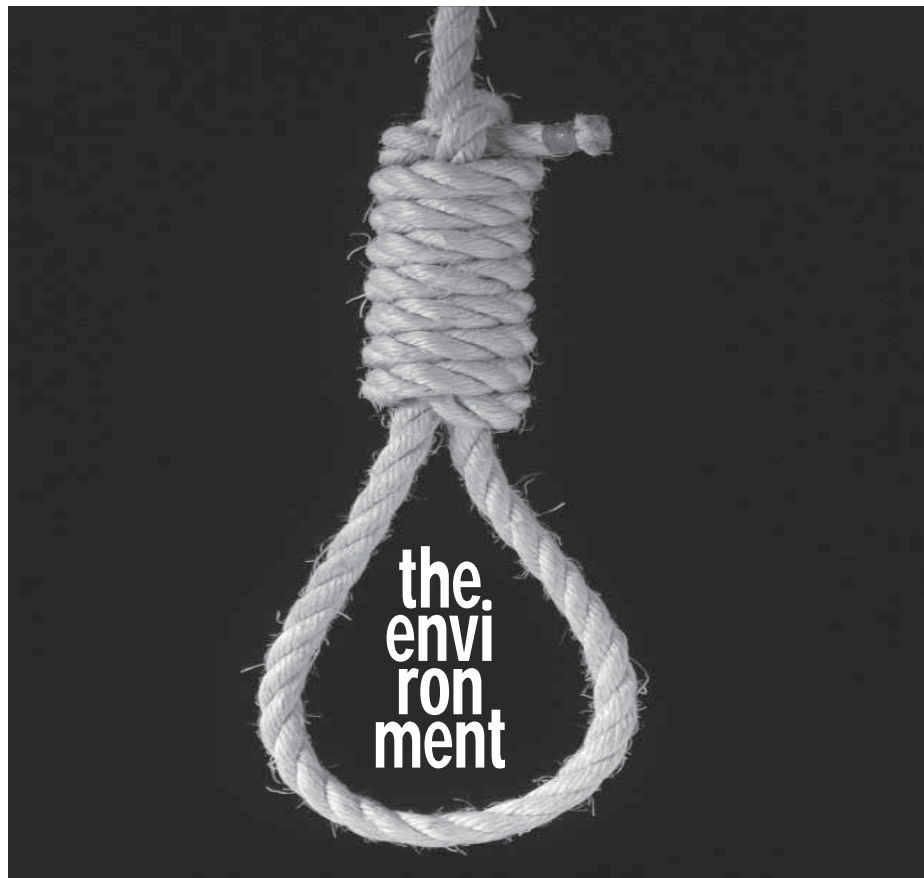
Ethno-nationalism is the antithesis of democratic nationalism because the former creates its political categories from the past while democratic nationalism has one political category – that of citizenship, a category that quite rightly looks more to the future than to the past in order to include individuals of all ethnicities, religions and lifestyles.

Ethnic fundamentalism is no better, no worse than the myriad of other fundamentalism that some individuals impose upon themselves (or have imposed upon them) to give their lives meaning. It becomes a danger to liberal societies regulated by democratic politics is when ethnicity is politicised. By politicising ethnicity, by basing this manmade system of classification and categorisation on historical rather than contemporary group membership, we set ourselves on the path to ethno-nationalism. We shall reap as we have sown.

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Never Mind One's Cultural Identity

As far as I can recall, following my arrival in America I was intent on becoming American. It just felt like what I wanted to be. Except for some features of the country's politics, I didn't think about this as some higher calling but as a personal preference.

I had learned something about what being an American meant from reading a great deal of translated American pulp fiction, to tell the truth, not from listening to professors of American Studies (of which there hadn't been any back then, so far as I know). What seemed plain is that when one decides to live in a country, it is best to get acclimated, integrated, as much as that's possible. I didn't wish to sound like Zsa Zsa, that was for sure. So, I listened to popular disk jockeys in Cleveland instead of hanging out at Hungarian cafes where folks talked in heavy accents a great deal about the good old days back "home" before World War II.

When, more recently, it began to be fashionable to stress one's ethnic or cultural or racial identity, I was puzzled. To start with, what kind of identity is it that one acquires by accident? So, I was born in Budapest and heard a lot of gypsy music, ate paprika csirke and palacsinta. And, yes, I liked these things and still do. But how significant a part of me is there in that? My idea from early on was that what's important about one's identity is what one contributes to it oneself. Who one is shouldn't be a matter of happenstance but of purposive action. I liked to read and think about philosophy and religion, so if someone wanted to know who I was, I'd tell them about that. Or, in a less serious vein, about things I liked to do such as traveling and playing tennis. Some collage of these aspects of my life, of the things over which I have had some say, some choice, seems to me to make me who I am—not so much how tall I am or where I was born.

As I got to hear more and more about ethnic and racial pride, I was even more puzzled. How can someone be proud of being, say, Caucasian or black or gay or Asian? What had one to do with such things? Perhaps one might be glad of being tall or of having lived among other members of one's ethnic group if, indeed, this had amounted to a good experience.

And one could certainly refuse to be ashamed of being black or white or whatever one could not help being. Even more, one might feel some affinity with others who were being

picked on for attributes one shared with them and be willing, even, to unite with them to resist such treatment.

But proud? Doesn't pride require some worthy achievement from oneself?

In my neighborhood newspaper, there is someone who writes mainly about Hispanics, and in nearly every column Hispanics are urged to feel special for being Hispanic. Why so? What is special about that? Doesn't feeling special for being Hispanic or Hungarian American or black or tall suggest that others aren't as special and worthy of feeling similarly about themselves? I have never liked the idea of a chosen people because it suggests that the universe or God picks some to be inherently, undeservedly superior to others.

When I am told, "Hey there are some other people from Hungary you must meet," I respond, "Why exactly? Do they play tennis, love philosophy, or like the blues?"

The idea of ethnic or cultural pride, it seems to me, suggests something close to an insidious form of prejudice. Without having done anything worthwhile whatsoever one gets to be satisfied for belonging to a group. Just whom is one kidding anyway? (Maybe quite a lot of people, come to think of it, since there is a lot of this stuff going around.)

Don't get me wrong. There is much to be said for many cultural traditions that one can pick up simply by living in certain communities as opposed to others. (Of course there is a lot to be said against some of them as well!) All that's well and good—some of these things are indeed pleasant, delightful, entertaining, and so forth. But why should one feel proud? Surely, unless one has written some great Hungarian or Rumanian or Italian symphony or novel or poem or has otherwise made a valuable contribution to a culture, being proud of that culture is laying claim to something undeserved. (I have a hard time even saying "I am proud of what you have done" to my children—as if it were my, and not their, doing for which credit is due! Instead, I want to stress that I am very pleased with them, glad they have achieved a good thing. My kids may have

been influenced by me, but their achievements are not mine, so I shouldn't pretend they are.) I suspect that there is something rather sad behind all this collective pride. It is probably fear of being considered selfish if one simply prefers certain features of one culture over those of another, so one claims that these are collective accomplishments instead. Saying I will do something or enjoy it simply because I like it suggests that my likes should matter to me, and that's something widely discouraged.

Who, after all, are you to do what you simply like? It has to be a superior thing for one to prefer it. Otherwise one should be fair and like everything equally well.

But this is silly. Each person has the right to assert his or her likes, tastes, preferences even if these have no special merit, even if they haven't been proven to outshine some alternative. Why? Because suiting oneself is a good thing.

Surely if suiting others is commendable, suiting oneself must be also. And about this at least most of us have a clue, so I believe one should go for it without apology.

None of this means one has to attribute to these preferences something glorious, something especially worthwhile that will then pit one against others who prefer things of their own. Indeed, if simple individual preferences gained moral standing as far as they went, much of the acrimony among different cultures would perhaps subside.

If you cannot unite behind some practice or tradition as being superior to that of others, if it really is just what some of us prefer as distinct from what others prefer, why fight about it?

Maybe, also, many people fail to take pride in their modest achievements, so they feel the need to attach themselves to the great achievements of members of their ethnic or cultural or racial group. But that breeds the clashes that have torn the world apart for centuries. I think a healthy dose of individualism can produce more modest ways of achieving self-satisfaction and sap us of the need to impose our ways on others who have different preferences. It's a bit like haircuts or favorite colors—they are pleasing but nothing to make a big deal about.

Tibor Machan is the author of a number of works on philosophy, and is professor of Business Ethics at Chapman University, California. He writes regularly at TiborMachan.Blogspot.Com.



CAROL POTTS

EDUCATION

Montessori Movement Celebrates 100 Years of Success

On the sixth of January this year it was precisely 100 years since the first Montessori school was opened by Dr. Maria Montessori in the slums of Rome, an event marking the beginning of what rapidly became a global education and social movement.

The occasion was marked by a conference in Rome earlier this year, beginning a year of celebrations for children and schools around the world. (More information about these celebrations can be found on the net at www.montessoricentenary.org.)

Dr Maria Montessori's innovative approach was that "Education should no longer be mostly imparting of knowledge, but must take a new path, seeking the release of human potentialities." What followed worldwide has been called the "discovery of the child" and the realisation that:

"...mankind can hope for a solution to its

problems, among which the most urgent are those of peace and unity, only by turning its attention and energies to the discovery of the child and to the development of the great potentialities of the human personality in the course of its formation."

Montessori principles are rooted in a social movement intended to champion the cause of all children, in all strata of society, of all races and ethnic backgrounds, within and beyond educational institutions.

The Montessori movement spread from that

first *Casa dei Bambini* in Rome to quickly spread right around the world (with Montessori classes starting even in New Zealand within three years of that first school in Rome), and attracting the support of people as diverse as Bertrand Russell and Alexander Graham Bell, Cary Grant and Bing Crosby, Thomas Edison and Mahatma Gandhi, Helen Keller and Princess Diana, Jean Piaget and Sigmund Freud, Buckminster Fuller and the Dalai Lama, Vanessa Redgrave and Ayn Rand.

Montessori is now the single largest method of education in the world, with over 22,000 schools in more than 100 countries. The Montessori movement however is far broader, and works to assist children and their families in a variety of settings. Montessorians serve as advocates for all children - championing the rights of the child in society.

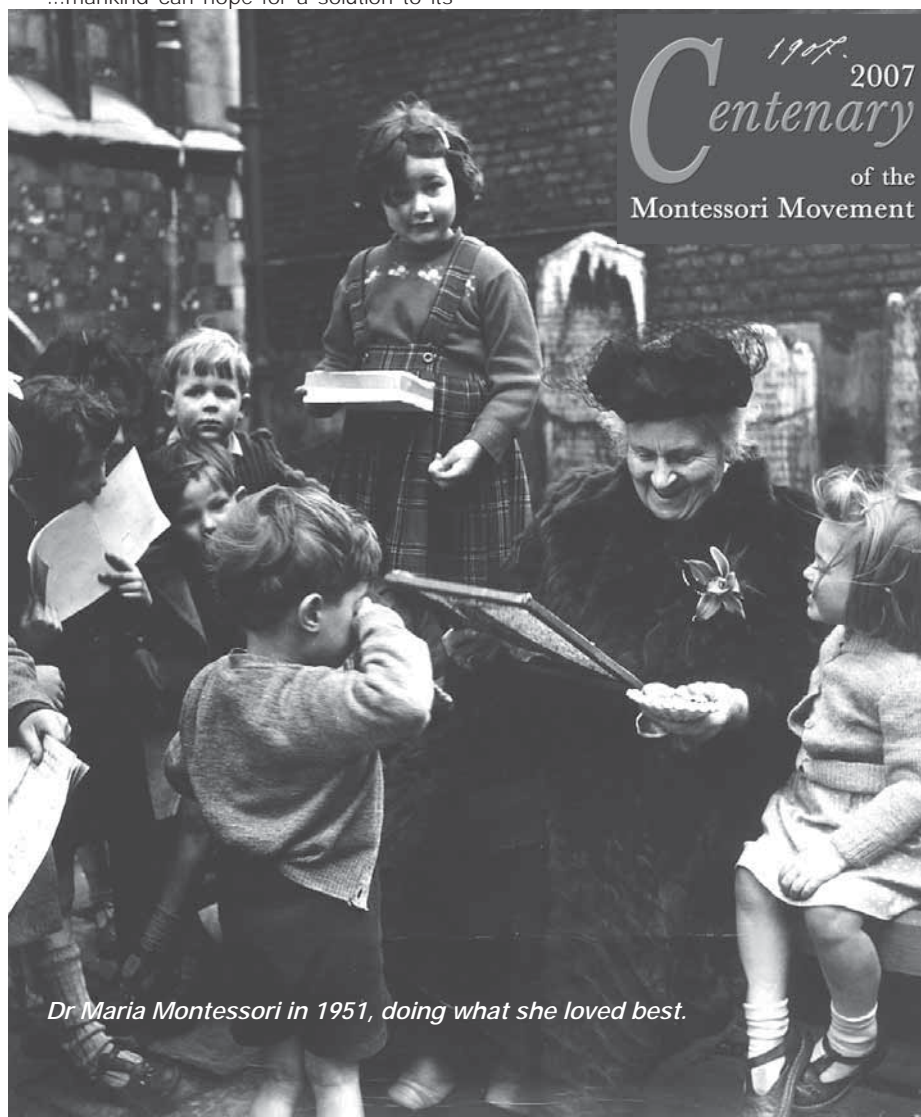
Montessori education follows a number of principles validated by current educational research:

- Children are individuals profoundly affected by society and the immediate environment.
- Every child is born with creative potential, the drive to learn and the right to be treated as an individual.
- Specially prepared environments, in school and at home, help to develop the child's natural potential.
- Children must be given freedom to work and move around within suitable guidelines that enable them to act as part of a social group.
- Children should be provided with specifically designed materials, which help them to explore their world and enable them to develop essential cognitive skills.
- Mixed age groups encourage all children to develop their personalities socially and intellectually at their own pace.

The efficacy of Montessori teaching methods has most recently been demonstrated by the results of a study published in the US journal, *Science* (September 29, 2006) which indicates that children in Montessori schools have improved behavioural and academic skills compared with a control group from the mainstream system.

The authors concluded that, "when strictly implemented, Montessori education fosters social and academic skills that are equal or superior to those fostered by a pool of other types of schools." (The study is available at <http://www.montessori-science.org>.)

Its efficacy can perhaps be seen too in the



Dr Maria Montessori in 1951, doing what she loved best.

achievements of Montessori 'graduates.' One thing that links Amazon, Google and Wikipedia – apart from their enormous success – is that the founders of these companies all received a Montessori education.

Asked in a TV interview about the reason for their success, Google founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page told interviewer Barbara Walters "it was their going to Montessori school where they learned to be self-directed and self-starters. They said that Montessori allowed them to learn to think for themselves and gave them freedom to pursue their own interests."

One-hundred years on, Dr Montessori is still setting children on the path to success.

Carol Potts is the Head Directress at Titoki Montessori School, Torbay, and the prime mover in NZ's Maria Montessori Education Foundation, which is setting up AMI Montessori teacher training to New Zealand. You can find the Foundation on the web at www.mmef.org.nz.

New Zealand readers can find your local Montessori school at the MANZ site, www.montessori.org.nz/memberschools.shtml, and set your own children on the path to success.



Torbay Montessori School Joins In International Celebrations of 100 Years Of Montessori

The Montessori centenary year in New Zealand began with a National Open Day to commemorate the opening of the first *Casa dei Bambini* (Children's House) by Dr Maria Montessori in San Lorenzo, Italy. Montessori centres and schools around NZ opened for the day, and present and past parents, children and staff joined in to celebrate.

Titoki Montessori School in Torbay was just one of the many schools in New Zealand who opened their doors, celebrating one-hundred years of Montessori education with 'A Day in 1907.' The day had everything from games and artifacts courtesy of MOTAT to an authentic Punch & Judy Show, and featured a family picnic in nearby Stredwick Reserve. The local Girl Guides attended, and the Guides worked towards their heritage badge whilst cooking traditional pikelets alongside a pictorial history of their own movement.

A display of one-hundred origami peace cranes – made by the children at

Titoki – acknowledged Dr Montessori's passionate quest for lasting peace through education. The war years encouraged Dr Montessori to pursue this aim, and as a result she was nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize—and in 1950 she became the Italian delegate to UNESCO.

Maria Montessori said, "Love is a gift to mankind which must be treasured and developed to the fullest possible extent, for it is this that unites each and every one of us, and only in this way can we bring about a good, caring, peaceful world."

Talking about the day, Carol Potts, Head Directress at Titoki Montessori School said, "It was an emotional sight indeed as the children released 100 helium-filled balloons into a blue cloudless sky. It is humbling to be part of such a large movement that has served children so respectfully for the past 100 years; a philosophy of education that is still flourishing today speaks volumes."



Montessori children in Torbay today help celebrate the opening of the world's first Montessori school 100 years ago.

RealBeer.co.nz

The Free Radical Beer Column

Real Ale for Real Drinkers

The phrase “Real Ale” invokes feelings of patriotism and pride in English people which were once reserved for their Empire and cricket team.

Real Ale is a particular style of draught ale that is neither filtered nor pasteurized and undergoes a secondary fermentation in a vented cask. The cask will contain living yeast and the beer is served with a very light natural carbonation.

Also known as cask-conditioned ale, this is what people are generally referring to when they wrongly talk of “warm and flat English beer”.

Requiring greater care and management than conventionally kegged beer, a well made and correctly served real ale is a thing of beauty but most rare in the colonies.

The combined tyrannies of climate, history, regulation and a brewing duopoly have ensured that until comparatively recently, a real ale drinker would have considered New Zealand a completely dry zone.

Fortunately, that rather dire situation is beginning to change with three quite different venues now serving real ale to British ex-pats and Kiwi locals alike.

The iconic Auckland brewpub **Galbraith's Alehouse** opened in 1995. It is situated in a historic building which had previously been the Grafton Public Library for 80 years. Before it became the Alehouse, this fine building contained a rather disreputable country and western night club – as if there was any other kind.

The mirror ball is thankfully gone and instead there is a surprisingly spacious brewery producing an average of 3,000 pints a week.

Named after owner and brewer Keith Galbraith's mentor, **Bob Hudson's Bitter (4%)** pours an appetizing nut brown with a thick, solid and persistent head. It has a medium sweet body with orange notes followed by a lovely long finish.

The popular **Bellringers' Best Bitter (4.5%)** was named after a group of regulars who were

bell ringers at the nearby church of St-Matthew-in-the-City. Darker and bigger than Bob, it has plenty of strong fruit, marmalade and caramel flavours. The hop finish is stronger and longer to ensure the balance.

Bitter and Twisted (5.3%) is Galbraith's Extra Special Bitter. Designed in 1998, it has a huge floral nose with a massive rich malt body and long, smooth, bitter finish.

The darkest real ale on offer is the **Grafton Porter (5%)**. Using a complex grain blend and two types of hops, the porter is pitch black with a strong toasty nose. The beer has plenty of chocolate and roasted notes in the body before finishing with some cleansing bitterness.

The pub is spacious and usually pleasantly busy with a diverse crowd enjoying the ales. Galbraith's also sells the best pork pies in the country (and I like pies).

Englishmen Martin Bennett and Stephen Hardman came to New Zealand on different planes but quickly reached the same conclusion: both were disappointed with the “bland, sweet, cold and fizzy offerings” found in most pubs around Christchurch.

Together they opened the Twisted Hop microbrewery in a central city redevelopment to brew real ale. The pub uses native timber and sections of exposed brick to produce an interior which is clearly modern but with a knowing nod to the building's long history as warehouse.

The three regular beers are served from traditional handpumps at 10 degrees – the slightly colder temperature is the only concession to the local palate.

The **Golding Bitter (3.7%)** is rightly billed as a light and aromatic session beer with a fresh and fruity nose. It is softly full flavoured with some juicy late hop bitterness.

The generously hopped **Challenger (4.4%)** is a well balanced, full-flavoured pint with a firm body, plenty of orange notes and deep bitterness from the increased use of English style hops.

The Twisted Ankle (5.9%) is a very dark strong ale. The darker colour and mocha foam almost makes it look like a chocolate milkshake. It has an appealing malty almost smoky nose while the smooth palate is filled with notes of milk chocolate, molasses and liquorice. Mind your feet after a few of these!

The boys in the brewery periodically produce specialty offerings including an American style ale, a raspberry beer and even plum duff in a bottle!

There is a final more unusual producer of ale nestled at the bottom of Mount Taranaki (these days better known to the world as Mount Doom). George Busby runs the **Wassail Brauhaus** - New Zealand's only Bed, Breakfast and Brewery which sees his unique range of ales included in the room price.

The idea began as a way to move George's home brewing out of the kitchen but gradually evolved into a two storey cottage nestled in native bush with a small brewery attached to the ground floor.

George cheerfully serves the beers (including a pale ale, best bitter and dry stout) for the private consumption of his guests in the comfort of the cottage's lounge. His beers are not sold anywhere else.

The **Wassail Brauhaus** is an excellent bed and breakfast in its own right but the addition of an in-house brewery makes it unique. The quality of the beer is matched only by the exceptional hospitality of the hosts.

New Zealand is no longer a desert for real ale drinkers. There are oases of ale to be found and enjoyed when you know where to look.

Neil is a Wellington-based beer writer. He can be found on the web at www.RealBeer.co.nz.

He cooks that crystal meth cuz his shine don't sell

Feb 16, 2007 10:26

The humble photo opportunity is the meat and drink of modern journalism.

Just like the food you eat, it can be modelled as a pyramid. At its vast base would be the pictures of the businessmen in suits grinning stupidly as they shake hands with the awkwardly self-conscious recipient of an unfeasibly large cardboard cheque.

Up the top, at the sharp point, you will find the booty call. Criminal booty. One or more law enforcement officers face the camera, each one of them solemn and lantern-jawed, chest just bursting with pride, surrounded by the spoils of a criminal enterprise come undone.

This picture below comes from the archives of the *Sylva Herald* in North Carolina, showing the 'shine being decanted onto the road. What a great little newspaper it is. Had a group of kids not exploded a pipe bomb at their high school, and had one of them not been due

to give the salutatorian speech at their class graduation, I might never have passed their way. Now I drop in every few months. It is presently so cold there, the waterfalls are frozen.

The rivers freeze solid and the brightest kids in the school blow up buildings. Who wouldn't feel like a bracing slug or two of something neat on a cold winter evening? The *Sylva Herald* is a little coy about the circumstances of the moonshine bust. Readers are merely given the reference details should they feel

sufficiently inquisitive to visit the library and pull out a dusty copy of the original story.

Illicit distilling has a history both glorious and ignoble. Our own Hokonui tale sits more on the side of the angels than sinners unless you believe that alcohol itself is the devil's cup. At least they made something worth paying for. In the 1870s, *NZ Geographic* reports, whisky in New Zealand was imported mostly from Scotland and Australia and was frequently so watered down it was said "A dram was often offered a chair as it didn't have the strength to stand up."

When it comes to alcohol and drugs and prohibition, read the history books. It looks like a fool's game. As generally law-abiding as I am, I can't disagree with the news release the Mild Greens issued at the beginning of the year. They tore into the head of the Northland police organised-crime squad, who had declared to the Northern Advocate that his team expected to find and seize a record number of cannabis plants this growing season. Over the past five years, cannabis-plant seizures had been steadily increasing, he said, and then he got to the bit that lit the fuse for the Mild Greens.

Cannabis is still the base funding for other drug and criminal offending.

"Bollocks", exploded the Mild Greens.

It is the prohibition of cannabis that is the base funding and every one knows it. You don't need to be Einstein to see the connection between cannabis and crime is its 'legal status' and police are being simplistic and deceitful about 'drugs causing crime'.

I'm on the side of the argument that doubts the efficacy of prohibition. Don't like the harm done by drugs, including the most widely used - alcohol - but don't have any faith that prohibition will fix it. I sometimes wonder if the Police truly believe it in their hearts either.

But a burning pile of weed makes a hell of a photo call.

David Slack can be found on the web at www.PublicAddress.Net/Default,IslandLife.sm. Employ him to write your speeches at www.Speeches.Com.





Scaring Smokers Into Submission

How do you like the new pictures on cigarette packets designed to scare smokers into submission? How do you like the picture (above) of a cigarette case designed to cover up the government's health warnings?

Dr Richard McGrath is currently engaged in a battle with the guardians over this issue in the pages of the NZ Medical Journal.

Says Dr McGrath: "The original article that annoyed me went as follows":

Regulations should ban the sale of cigarette pack covers of health warnings

For New Zealand to meet its obligations under the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control, further modifications of health warnings on cigarette packets are required. The Ministry of Health has already begun this process² and a likely outcome is the adoption of graphic health warnings. This outcome is logical, given the strong scientific evidence base for such graphic health warnings.

In a 2003 article, two Australian authors described plans from the tobacco industry's own internal documents suggesting that the provision of covers for packs bearing warnings may be used in the future to counter the impact of warnings on smokers. This "future" has arrived overseas with one tobacco company even having marketing on these pack sleeves (i.e. the Marlboro man on sleeves in Hong Kong). Closer to home, we recently purchased two cigarette-pack sized cardboard sleeves in Australia (Figures 1 and 2). These can be used by smokers to cover the graphic health warnings that are now legally required on Australian cigarette packs.

There now appear to be moves to stop the use of these sleeves by the Federal Government legislation in Australia. However, to avoid this additional step in the future, New Zealand should ban all sleeves and other similar measures (such as stickers or other containers sold for this purpose) when the new graphic warnings are introduced. Ultimately, the best cure for chronically irresponsible tobacco industry behaviour in New Zealand⁹ is to adopt a new regulatory framework that removes the tobacco industry out of the driving seat.

Nick Wilson, George Thomson, Philippa Howden-Chapman, Louise Signal
Department of Public Health, Wellington
School of Medicine & Health Sciences
Wellington

McGrath's reply:

Cigarette pack covers (of health warnings) and individual freedom

In response to Wilson et al (www.nzma.org.nz/journal/119-1243/2251/) who advocate banning the sale of cigarette pack covers, may I cite the *Bill of Rights Act 1990* which guarantees individuals and groups of individuals (such as tobacco companies) freedom of expression.

The ability to market and advertise tobacco, and the right to market and sell sleeves or even stickers which cover up health warnings on cigarette packs, is under threat from government busybodies who want to run our lives for us at our expense.

Although I don't smoke, and detest the habit, I acknowledge the right of adults to enjoy tobacco. People should be allowed the freedom to learn from their mistakes.

Richard McGrath

General Practitioner, Masterton

Shot back the respondents:

Cigarette pack covers (of health warnings) and the public good

Dr McGrath wrote—in response to our letter published in the 13 October 2006 issue of the *Journal*²—that the *New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990* 'guarantees individuals and groups ... (such as tobacco companies) freedom of expression'. He appears to suggest that this right might extend to selling 'sleeves or even stickers which cover up health warnings on cigarette packs'.

So as to provide some context for his statements, we note that Section 5 of the *New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990* reads:

Subject to section 4 [Other enactments not affected] of this Bill of Rights, the rights and freedoms contained in this Bill of Rights may be subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

In practice, this means that limits on tobacco companies' freedom of expression *may* 'be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society' for the public good. One of the limits on that expression is section 32 of the *Smoke-free Environments Act 1990*, as currently amended. This section provides the power to regulate to require health warnings that effectively communicate to consumers (and potential consumers such as children).

We suggest that limits on selling 'sleeves or even stickers which cover up health

warnings on cigarette packs' is very likely to 'be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.' Besides the rights of consumers to get information, such action can be justified from a 'freedom maximising' perspective, given that addiction to nicotine is freedom-eroding for smokers. That is, there is evidence from developed countries that the great majority of smokers regret having started smoking.

George Thomson, Nick Wilson, Philippa Howden-Chapman

Department of Public Health, Wellington
School of Medicine & Health Sciences
Wellington

Orwellian indeed! McGrath replied:

Cigarette pack covers (of health warnings) and individual freedom: the debate continues

Thomson *et al* (www.nzma.org.nz/journal/119-1247/2371/) advocate restrictions on free speech and expression as a means of lowering the rates of tobacco-related illness. Unfortunately, once the state starts to infringe the rights of individuals for the "greater good", there is a tendency for this infringement to increase over time.

As long as cigarette smokers continue to suffer the health consequences of their freely chosen actions, there will be a push from the so-called public health movement for more and more draconian social control, until ultimately the government outlaws tobacco altogether and persecutes those who manufacture, sell and consume it.

In a 1996 article from the *BMJ* (www.bmj.com/archive/7070nd2.htm), the author cites high-ranking Nazi health officials active in the anti-tobacco movement either committing suicide, being imprisoned or, in one case, being executed for crimes against humanity.

Without wishing to cast aspersions on the character and motivation of Thomson *et al*, I suggest that their proposed bans on cigarette packet covers and the like are the thin end of the freedom-eroding wedge. Forcing adults to do what health bureaucrats say is best for them, in the apparent belief that they need protection from their own stupidity, is incompatible with a free society.

Richard G McGrath
Medical Practitioner, Masterton

The debate continues. A range of cigarette pack covers can be viewed (and purchased) at www.redlineinternationale.com/kuverz.htm. Proposals for importation will, no doubt, be welcomed.



Pure Perigo!

Speech delivered in Auckland to launch The Peaceful Pill Handbook, Feb 11, 2007.

Is Banning Free Speech the Next Step in the Voluntary Euthanasia Debate?

GOOD AFTERNOON EVERYONE. I would commend or recommend that you read this book while you can because it is yet to be determined what its fate might be here in New Zealand, just as its fate still hangs in the balance, as I understand it, in Australia.

The book has an interesting history. It was launched in Toronto last year; it was printed in Australia, but given a classification by the Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification of Restricted Class One, which means it can be *printed* in Australia, it can be *distributed* in Australia—in an opaque sealed envelope—but *it may not be brought into or taken out of the country*.

That's not good enough for the Australian Attorney-General Mr Ruddock. He wants the thing banned altogether for corrupting the old—and usually it's corrupting the young that you get the old hemlock treatment for—and so it's gone to appeal. There was a meeting last week, which I gather didn't make a decision. More information is being sought and a decision is pending—probably going to take place tomorrow—so this might be illegal in Australia tomorrow. *[On 24th February the Australian Classification Review Board declared that by unanimous decision the book was banned forthwith - Ed.]*

As yet, nothing has happened here, except Dr Nitschke was dragged out by customs and questioned about the book launch, and where were all the books, they asked? So the authorities know that it is here; they obviously have a sense that it's subversive, and of course the Medical Council has complained to the Ministry of Health about Philip's workshops. The terms of the complaint were so dire, I fully expected to arrive here after one such workshop and have to step over bodies, in which I would have said, "That obviously went well."

In New Zealand of course, Section 14 of our Bill of Rights says that we have the right to publish information and opinion of any kind, in any form. And that's terrific ... the only thing is, the Bill of Rights also says that anything in this Bill can be over-ridden by any other piece of legislation. In other words it doesn't mean a damn thing. And thus we saw the

spectacle of the magazine *Cigar Aficionado* being banned under the government of Jenny Shipley, because it contravened the anti-smoking legislation, and naturally the anti-smoking legislation was deemed to take precedence.

So there will always be an excuse. You can quote Section 14 of the Bill of Rights and say, "What's the problem?" and will be given some other reason, some other piece of legislation—the advocacy of suicide or some such—which is supposed to be illegal.

So you cannot rely on the Bill of Rights.

DOWN THROUGH THE AGES in fact, the main enemies of free speech and of freedom generally, have always been politicians and priests. Even some of the greatest advocates

Down through the ages in fact, the main enemies of free speech and of freedom generally, have always been politicians and priests... The arrogant presumption on which the politicians and priests proceed is that they own your life. That is the root of the problem.... But the best advocates of free speech throughout history would be your free thinkers, your atheists, your agnostics.

of free speech hedged their bets. John Locke was a Christian and a fervent advocate of free speech ... except for atheists. He didn't think it was a good idea for atheists to have free speech. John Milton, he was a great advocate of free speech too ... except for Catholics. He thought Catholics shouldn't be allowed free speech because they were enthralled to a foreign power, the Pope. Actually here, he may have had a point.

But the best advocates of free speech throughout history would be your free thinkers, your atheists, your agnostics. People like Voltaire and Robert Green Ingersoll, who didn't hedge their bets at all; they fought explicitly for the right of people to whom they were opposed to express their point of view

as freely as they could express their own. And you know the famous maxim of Voltaire: when he was engaged in a theological argument by letter with a priest at one point he wrote to the priest,

"My Dear Monsieur L'abbé, I detest what you say, but I would gladly lay down my life for your right to say it."

And that later was paraphrased somewhat by one of Voltaire's followers into the very famous maxim, "I disagree what you say, but will defend to the death, your right to say it."

Would that there were more Voltaires and Ingersolls on the scene today.

The arrogant presumption on which the politicians and priests proceed is that they own your life. That is the root of the problem

with politicians and the priests and all the other do-gooders who presume to tell you what you may or may not do with your own body, and with your own lives. They own it—or their god owns it—or their church owns it—or your neighbour owns you – or the government owns you. *Anybody except you owns your life, they say.*

That is the fundamental presumption that we must challenge at root.

WE'VE MADE A LOT of progress. The extent to which we've become civilised is the extent to which we have acknowledged and upheld individual sovereignty, each person's sovereignty over his or her own life. But there are many areas in which there is a lot

of work still to be done, and clearly voluntary euthanasia is foremost among those.

In the last two decades in this country there have been two attempts in parliament to legalise voluntary euthanasia. Both have failed. Notwithstanding the fact that on each occasion public opinion broadly supported the proposed changes, the politicians (they who believe they own your lives) would not allow this to proceed.

Who knows now how long it will be before the third—and hopefully successful --attempt is made? And we know of course of the tragic circumstances surrounding Philip in the Northern Territory where, for a few enlightened months, it was possible, *legally*, for people to despatch themselves with dignity, by a flick of the switch, which they had to initiate. And that was overturned by religious bigotry.

SOMEHOW WE'RE IN THRALL to this notion, which we get from I think the Christian religion, that we are put on this earth to suffer. If you are enjoying yourself, then you are obviously doing something bad. So you'll suffer. And if you fall ill and it's painful, then you must enjoy it! Don't even think of removing yourself from the scene. How dare you! Whose life is it?

Religion, I think, has a lot to answer for.

Now personally, speaking personally, for me the decision pertains to more than just being

terminally ill. I have said on radio on many occasions, and I say it here publicly today in front of this audience, that unless the moment picks me, catches me unawares (which would be great), "I am going to pick my moment," whether I am terminally ill or not. Because, though I am healthy at the moment and love life, at the moment, I've no intention of lingering through some long period of decrepitude.

There comes a point as far as I am concerned where, if the quality of life slips below that point, then I'm out of here, and that's whether I have a terminal illness or not. And it's not because I don't love life, it's because I *do* love life, and to linger through a long period of decrepitude in my book is an insult to the life that I love. I will not insult my life that way.

Just so you know, I am even more radical than Phillip, you see ??!

The book, I note, has been condemned as providing ready access to suicide methods—and actually, when Jack sent me a copy and I read it, I thought, "I don't think it does that." You read this and you realise how bloody hard it is. I thought, "Okay, here is going to be a simple solution, so when I do pick my moment all I'm going to have to do is pop a pill. Phillip will kindly provide me with it, as my payment for speaking to you today." Then I read it. "Oh god, you put it in the too hard basket."

And the simplest method involves getting a

substance which is illegal here, so you have to go to Mexico, I understand, but then you can't bring it back, because it's illegal here. So when you go to Mexico, you had better be ready to do it then in Mexico, which is probably not what you intended at all. It's ridiculous! So that is the overwhelming sense I was left with. *Why should it be so hard? How dare they!* These politicians and priests, how dare they presume to make it well nigh impossible for me to despatch myself with dignity, and for anybody else who wants to do the same thing to do so. How dare they!

Now I was reminded at that point (and I couldn't remember who said it, but someone did say and was absolutely right), that "the world will only finally be fully civilised when the last politician is strangled with the guts of the last priest."

And so, the *Peaceful Pill Handbook* is a useful guide, a reference work for those whose intention it is whenever the moment comes to choose that moment and to exit with dignity.

I salute its authors and their work. I think they are magnificent: they are modern day heroes.

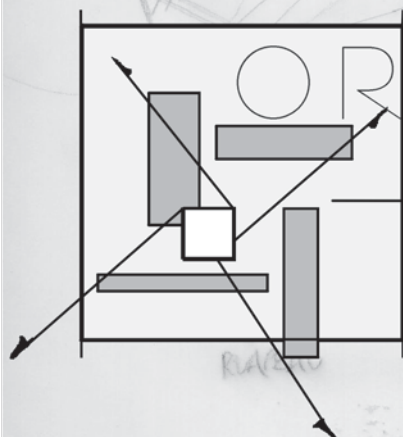
And with that, it gives me great pleasure to declare the *Peaceful Pill Handbook* officially launched.

Lindsay Perigo is Editor Emeritus of 'The Free Radical,' and still NZ's leading libertarian luminary. Join him at his online home, SoloPassion.com

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Ayn Rand, R.I.P.

(Feb 2, 1905 - March 6, 1982)

Ayn Rand died twenty-five years ago on March 6.

Editor Emeritus Lindsay Perigo remembers Rand with two timely tributes.

AR = Ayn Rand: Audacious Revolutionary!

Last week I retraced the steps of my organisation Sense of Life Objectivists (SOLO) in its seven years of existence. Let me reminisce today about the day Ayn Rand died, twenty-five years ago. I was presenting *Morning Report* on New Zealand's National Radio that day, and it fell to me to read the announcement of her death. As a recent, awe-struck young convert to her ideas, I found it difficult to report to the nation that her valiant heart had stopped beating.

Much water has flowed under the bridge since then, and I find myself asking, just what do I make of this unique woman now? Back then, I routinely carried a flaming sword on her behalf. I had all the unbridled zeal of a new convert, unable to understand why the rest of the world didn't "get it" straight away, all too ready to damn it as evil and stupid. Now, I get that way every third Tuesday only, or when reading something by Hayek. But Ayn Rand still means the world to me.

She was everything I ever wanted—and want—to encounter in another human being. Bored by trivia, exasperated by prattle, laser-fast in penetrating the core of things, sizzingly passionate about her values, exultantly enamoured of greatness, devastatingly dismissive of mediocrity, shudderingly contemptuous of the air-headed Lillian Rearden-type preoccupation with "respectability," fearlessly defiant in her pursuit of the truth ... she was to me what Roark was to the boy on the bicycle. She rumbled the stars, and gave me the courage to face a lifetime on an earth crawling with maggots in human guise.

I had nearly got to meet her a year earlier. I was in America in my capacity as a New Zealand broadcaster, under the auspices of the United States Information Service. I could nominate whom I wished to meet and interview, and they would try to make it happen. I nominated Ayn Rand. The good folk at the USIS did their best, but we were told that, though not averse to the proposal, she was too ill to do interviews. In hindsight, I think I'm glad of that. I would assuredly have made a fool of

myself. I was not yet persuaded of the entirety of her case, and would doubtless have said very silly things. Likely I would have provoked one of her legendary explosions. Yet, to have had the privilege of gazing directly into her big black eyes, of being dazzled first hand by that luminous intelligence ...

I am content to have been alive when she was, to have been a part of a generation influenced by her epoch-changing ideas, to be part of a generation imparting her total passion for the total height. We haven't heard the last of Ayn Rand by a long shot. *Her* shot will be like another in the history of the country she loved ... heard around the world. When this unspeakable Age of Nihilism finally collapses, its destruction will be in large measure her achievement.

May SOLO help speed the day.

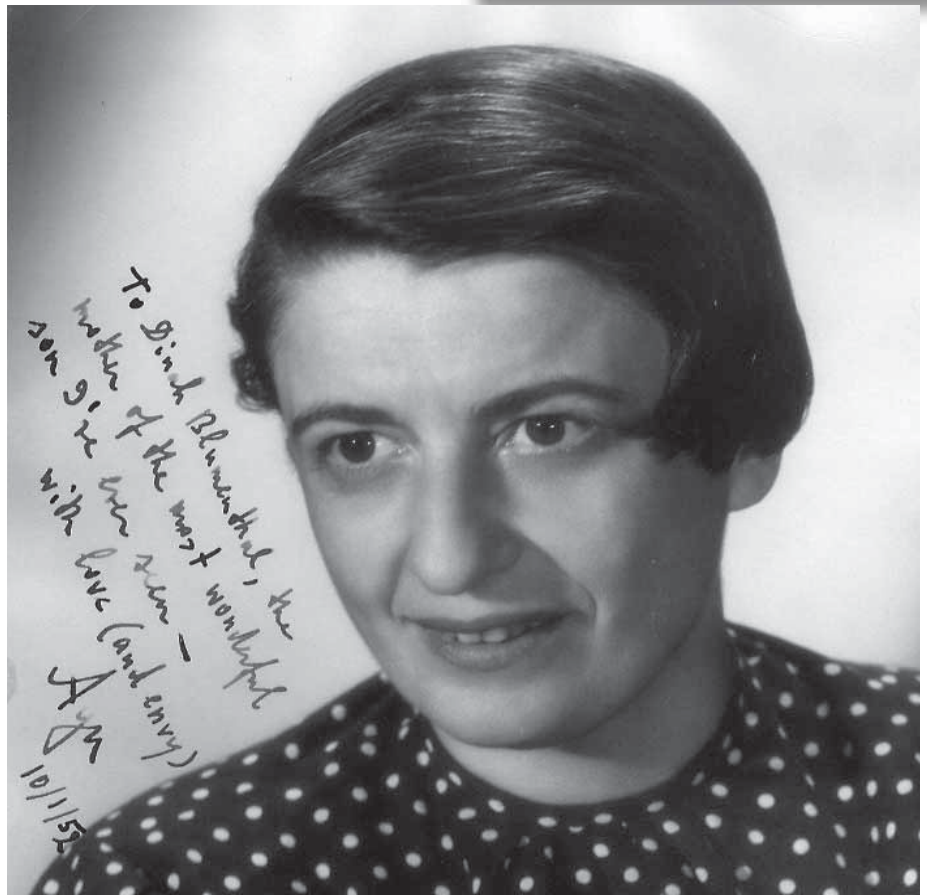
Ayn Rand: Immortal Heroine!

A tribute penned by Lindsay Perigo, and published with nine signatures attached in Wellington's Evening Post, shortly after Ayn Rand's death.

For your magnificent achievement in formulating the philosophy of Objectivism;
For your incomparable literary epics, *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*;
For your untiring battle against mediocrity, triviality, the cult of the parasite and the second-hander;
For your fearless advocacy of reason, individualism and laissez-faire capitalism;
For your unassailable exposure of the moral bankruptcy of all forms of collectivism, mysticism and altruism;
For your unflinching commitment to the heroic, the perfect—the total passion for the total height—and your own embodiment thereof ...

We salute you!

May all lovers of freedom pause and acknowledge their debt.



Nanny Is Uncool

Has Nanny State become uncool? TFR editor emeritus Lindsay Perigo spotted former MP Mark Peck on Mark Sainsbury's show recently bemoaning the fact that "he doesn't expect the push from his Smokefree Coalition for a tobacco tax hike to be successful," poor dear. The chief reason for his pessimism, he says, is the "Nanny State" argument, which he said is "huge" and was the cause of Finance Minister Michael Cullen calling the proposal "political suicide."

Get that? The "Nanny State" argument, and this is according to a whiny, lemon-sucking life-hating, professional puritan of the genre, is "huge." *Huge!*

Says Perigo, "This confirms something said to me personally by Green MP Sue Kedgley—that the "libertarian argument" had a reach, including to MPs, way beyond what the actual number of Libz voters in NZ would suggest."

Does this mean we're winning? Has the soft fascism of Nanny State really become "uncool"? Has it?

Answers on a postcard please. Just make sure the edges aren't too sharp.



NSR for review and correction by official government representative

Nursery School Rhymes

Homophobic, use 'woolly' instead

Encourages racism replace with 'RAINBOW'

~~Baa baa black sheep, have you any wool?~~

Excludes females, use 'Yes oh, Yes oh,'

~~Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full!~~

Implies hierarchy, replace with '3rd world' and 'Americans'

~~One for the master, one for the dame,~~

To be replaced with 'not fully matured human'

~~And one for the little boy who lives down the lane.~~

~~Humpty dumpty sat on a wall,~~

Could cause children to fall off walls. Change to

~~Humpty dumpty had a great fall.~~

'Humpty dumpty was not short or tall, Humpty dumpty dropped his ball.'

~~All the King's horses,~~

~~And all the King's men,~~

Men are not owned by anyone. Implies slavery, change to 'fully paid workers with dental plans.'

~~Couldn't put Humpty together again.~~

Appears to be failure. They 'Give Humpty's ball back to him.'

Amusing Appeasing

National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

Comb-over Make-over

National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

Attitude Platitude

National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

Donald Duck

National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

Banker Wanker

National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

Droid Void

National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

Dry Wet

National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

Don John Boy

National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

Don Neville

National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

Gone by lunchtime
Never really there

National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

"One law
for all..."
All things to
all men.

National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

Spine Slime

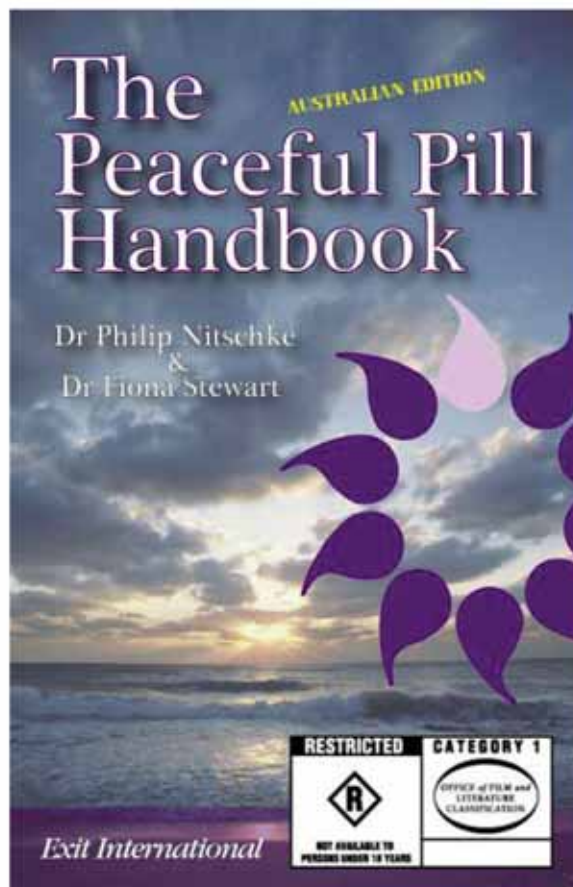
National



NEW ZEALAND
Labour - Lite

The Peaceful Pill Handbook

by Dr Philip Nitschke & Dr Fiona Stewart
January 2007



Dr. Philip Nitschke is a tireless fighter for human rights. He uses his intelligence combined with his resourcefulness to continue to fight for the right to choose. In the face of mounting governmental opposition, he continues to fight for individual freedom

Neal Nicol - Author, Between the Dead and the Dying Dr Jack Kevorkian's Life and the Battle to Legalise Euthanasia

Handbook Contents

1. End of Life Considerations
2. Suicide and the Law
3. The Peaceful Pill
4. The Exit RP Test
5. Hypoxic Death & Exit Bag
6. Carbon Monoxide
7. Cyanide
8. Introduction to Drugs
9. Drug Options: Morphine
10. Drug Options: Propoxyphene
11. Drug Options: Nembutal
12. The Peanut Project
13. Overseas Options
14. After it's All Over
15. Concluding Comments

In the *Peaceful Pill Handbook* Dr Philip Nitschke draws upon the latest scientific research on end of life choices to share a range of practical and useful strategies that everyone can understand.

By applying Exit's 'Reliability - Peacefulness Test' to each approach, *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* enables readers to compare for themselves the benefits of various options such as Nembutal from Mexico, Helium and the Exit Bag, prescription drugs, carbon monoxide, cyanide and, of course, the DIY 'Peaceful Pill.'

This unique focus serves not only to prevent unnecessary and unwanted mistakes and harm, but upholds people's right to make informed choices in this most sensitive issue.

To ensure that readers know fully where they stand and that responsibility for actions can be taken, *The Peaceful Pill Handbook* also provides a thorough outline of the legal aspects of various approaches. The over-arching paradigm of the book is to ensure the seriously ill and the elderly maintain their respect, dignity and sense of control.

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