

It goes without saying that Mr. Holmes is duly exercised over child abuse and violence in the home. And he is a creative type, having written over 17 television scripts and "at least" five "children's classics."

Mr. Holmes's role in X-rated movies transcends art, however, and reaches into the hushed realms of sexology. "I've straightened out a lot of people's lives," he declares. Over-

coming the "hangups" induced by "15 years of Sunday school and a very religious upbringing," he made over a dozen sexual masterpieces, and received "hundreds of letters from people saying I'd helped them, saved their marriage, and improved their sex lives." Alfred C. Kinsey is redeemed!

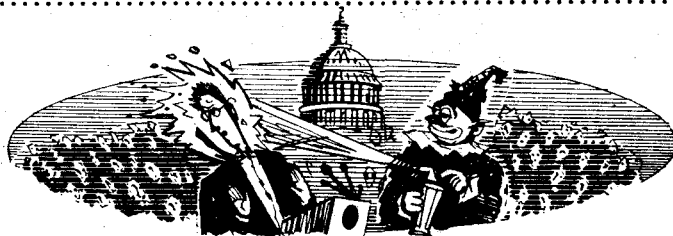
Alas, now Mr. Holmes languishes in the coils of California justice. He

predicted it back in 1977, when he warned of performers and producers of sexually explicit films being victimized by public officials "trying to make political mileage" at the expense of these enlightened marriage counselors.

Of all Mr. Holmes's replies to the *Ann Arbor News* interviewer, my favorite is his assertion of how he might handle vicious anti-porn pro-

testors. In his words he would "shake their hands, buy them a Coke, and talk religion with them. After my upbringing I probably know just as much of the Bible as they do . . . and I believe in God just as much as they do. But I just think they're confused. He [God] probably giggles a lot at all of our hangups." There is the sound of the 1970s for you, replete with unctuousness. □

C A P I T O L I D E A S



PROLETARIAN EVOLUTION

by Tom Bethell

I went to the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting at the Washington Hilton last month and had a good old time. The edifice of Science is less monolithic and dogmatic than it has been for many a decade. Visiting it is even something of a "trip." One day I saw a film called "The Asteroid and the Dinosaur" (Time-Life Video), a 60-minute documentary which was thoroughly enjoyable but which 20 or 30 years ago would have been rigidly excluded from polite scientific company along with the theories of Immanuel Velikovsky, which it resembles.

The big problem, which never seems to come any closer to resolution, is to explain why and how all those dinosaurs (and lots of other beasts, too) became extinct some 65 million years ago. Evolutionary theory as constituted at present is unable to explain definitively the extinction of any species, whether it be modern mammoth or ancient archaeopteryx. As Norman Macbeth says in his excellent little book *Darwin Retried*, all explanations of extinction boil down to elaborate ways of saying that the animal at issue stopped reproducing.

Such explanations used to be couched in terms of *gradual* changes in the environment, but the hot new idea is that an asteroid slammed into the Earth, stirring up a lot of dust

which in turn shut off the sunlight, thus temporarily stopping photosynthesis, vegetation, and, by implication, dinosaur meals. End of plant-eating beasts, and (a few weeks later, we may assume) meat-eating ones, too.

So we have a return to catastrophism—abrupt change. I wonder how many scientists have paused to consider that catastrophism is quite a bit closer to creationism than it is to the old, slow but steady, stodgy uniformitarianism (causal factors operating in the environment are approximately the same as they have always been) that has served the

evolutionary dogma so well since Darwin's day. In the official program of the AAAS meeting, under the heading "Evolution," there occurs the following sentence: "After many years out of general favor, catastrophic causal mechanisms, both internal and external, have once again come to the fore, largely supported by paleoceanographic and geochemical data."

This is quite revealing. Forget that last bit about "data," which is intended to create the impression that scientists just follow the facts wherever they lead and then dutifully and subserviently construct a theory to fit these facts. Not so. There are just too many facts out there, like snowflakes

in a blizzard. So the scientists have to *start* with a theory which in turn guides them to the appropriate factual snowflakes. Within certain empirical boundaries, obviously, scientists find what they are looking for and ignore everything else.

The question then becomes: What forces "shape" the permissible theories at different periods? How is it that hypotheses come and go, falling every so often in and "out of favor," as the AAAS program puts it?

If we knew the answer to this question with any precision, we would be able to predict what was coming next. But it is no more possible to do this than it is possible to predict the skirt-length at Paris fashion shows two years from now. In an analogous way, however, it is fashion that concerns us. Intellectual fashion is the ultimate shaper and determinant of scientific theory. If your theory happens to be out of synch with fashion (as Velikovsky's collision theories were 30 years ago), then it really doesn't matter how many *facts* you amass, you will simply be cast into the outer darkness of non-respectability.

Anyway, catastrophism is back, and this is but a reflection of a more important underlying change in the intellectual climate. In the first place, we are now witnessing (rather late in the day) the importation of leftist ideas into biology. Leftists are inclined to believe (or at least hope) that life isn't regular and steady, but is on the contrary interrupted occasionally by violent revolutions. The



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nineteenth century that Charles Darwin knew was a time of slow-but-steady progress, and nature was perceived as having an "improving mechanism" built into it—natural selection; Darwin, the "discoverer" (i.e., inventor) of natural selection, was also a uniformitarian. By contrast the twentieth century has been filled with Communism, violence, and revolution; catastrophism is fi-

nally in fashion, and natural selection is now regarded with grave suspicion (the fittest survive, yes, but fitness is defined by the survivors).

Left-wing biologists such as S.J. Gould and R.C. Lewontin (note the non-sexist initials in best Science-for-the-People fashion), both of Harvard, suspect that Darwin perceived all those Victorian firms struggling away competitively, with only the fittest

surviving, and proceeded to "discover" in nature Victorian capitalism writ large. Put another way, Social Darwinism, usually depicted as a reprehensible *corruption* of Darwinism, was in fact the progenitor of it. (This I find one of the more intriguing left-wing ideas of recent years.)

In the leftist world view, on the other hand, we have dramatic and revolutionary upheavals in nature

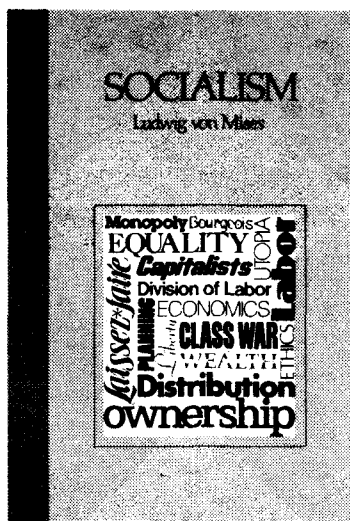
every so often. This is called "punctuated equilibrium," in suitably arcane fashion. Species chug along happily in a parent-offspring chain (not too sexist, we hope!) for a few million years, then . . . look out! Here comes a Leninist mutation out of the womb, who somehow finds Mrs. Lenin to mate with (there's a bit of a problem there—how do you get a compatible Mr. and Mrs. mutation at the same time?—but we'll gloss over that), and as you can imagine between them and their offspring they entirely sweep away the old order and "build a new society," in which New Leninopod lives and multiplies in egalitarian bliss for a few million years until the next revolution occurs.

It seems to me that Gould and his pals have had quite a success with this new "paradigm." I attended a symposium at the conference, with Gould, Ernst Mayr of Harvard, and Ledyard Stebbins of the University of California among the panelists. For a generation or longer the latter two have been select members of the Evolutionary Curia (other members have included George Gaylord Simpson, Theodosius Dobzhansky, and Julian Huxley). Although Mayr has enjoyed almost Papal authority in this field, he seemed this day to be a little on the defensive against the bearded Gouldish upstart: "Theories always change, modify," said the aged but spry Mayr. "I still think we are within the realms of Darwinism, but the theory is maturing." He also said he hoped to hear no more talk of Goldschmidtian hopeful monsters, because there wasn't even a trace of a *hopeless* monster to be found in the fossil record. Good point, but Gould may have been too polite to remind him that there weren't too many transitional forms in the fossil record, either. And if there are no transitional forms (as one or two now believe) then new species must either have started life as hopeful monsters, or been blown in from another corner of the universe, as Francis Crick now seems to be suggesting, or . . . (oh dear) . . . been created by God.

Unless I am much mistaken, there's another and more drastic underlying change taking place. The authority of science itself seems to be ebbing dramatically. In the mid-nineteenth century, science wrested away a good deal of authority from religion and retained it for well over a hundred years. The bishops in their turn ceded it almost without a struggle. (Thomas Huxley reflected late in life that he had been looking forward to a

(continued on page 40)

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Peter W. Rodman

THE DILEMMAS OF CONSERVATISM I.

Reagan the diplomat.

America's intellectual adjustment to the world since 1945 has been full of ironies. Liberals, who had been the most devoted internationalists through most of the century, collapsed under the psychological strain of Vietnam and turned sharply isolationist. Out of guilt at what they had wrought, they regressed to a naive humanitarianism and faith in the efficacy of good intentions. Conservatives, evolving out of an isolationist tradition, have proved to be the most steadfast supporters of American world leadership. But the road has been rocky for them, too. They are patriots dedicated to a strong defense and vigilant against the moral evil of Soviet Communism. But their world view has been more ideological than geopolitical. Neither liberals nor conservatives are by tradition comfortable with the notion of defending a global balance of power against encroachments that cumulatively can endanger our security, of permanent involvement in a struggle with no terminal date and no definitive showdowns.

Interestingly enough, the 1980 presidential election hinged on the very choice between these two classical American philosophies of foreign policy. To this day, Jimmy Carter thinks he lost through the bad luck of the Iranian hostage crisis. That crisis, of course, was *not* an accident. From the beginning, it was the occasion for repeated expositions of the Carter philosophy that "deep social, political, religious, and economic factors" were at work which the United States, alas, could not control; that America itself was guilty of having misused its power; that any government friendly to us was ipso facto unworthy of our support; that anti-Western radicals were simply frustrated idealists to be won over by American goodwill. The result turned out to be an endless series of

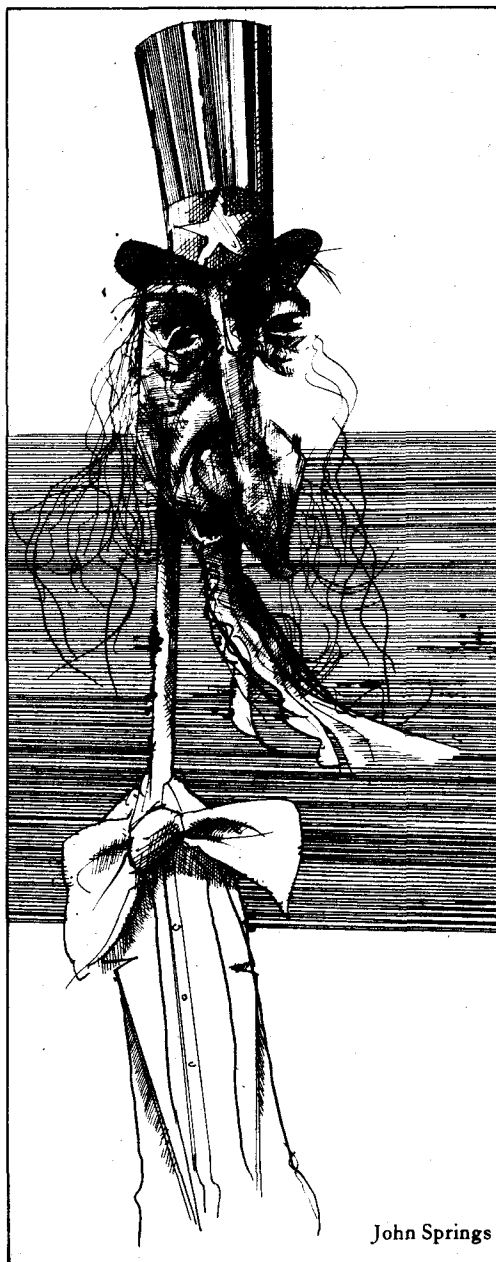
humiliations for the United States. Carter was overwhelmed at home, in short, because he had so clearly lost control of events abroad.

The American people rejected the diplomacy of helplessness and the philosophy that spawned it. They elected a President who was not ashamed of

American power, who was not afraid to stand by our friends and oppose our enemies, and who also had the moral perception to distinguish who our friends and enemies were. In America, the time was clearly right for a more self-confident, vigorous, and assertive foreign policy. The national traumas of Vietnam and Watergate had subsided; the President had a Republican Senate and a conservative Congress; there was broad support for not only a strong defense but also a reassertion of presidential authority in foreign affairs.

Whether the rest of the world would respond similarly to a more forceful American leadership was an open question. Our allies looked forward to an end of American amateurism and weakness. But the new Administration's sophistication would be tested. Inevitably, the United States no longer enjoyed the overwhelming preponderance of power that it had immediately after the Second World War. The considerable power that the United States still possessed would have to be wielded with some finesse, and courage. In a less congenial global environment there would be a premium on cleverness, maneuver, the ability to set priorities, and decisive action. The Reagan team was bound to come up against hard choices that would pull it in different directions, between its mind and its heart.

For foreign policy, properly conceived, is the art of shaping events. It is not simply a matter of issuing eloquent declarations or striking poses. For a superpower, at least, diplomacy should mean foreseeing trends, capturing the initiative, and advancing our purposes, whether in the fluid conditions of a crisis or in the day-to-day conduct of affairs. In the 1980s it would require not only dynamism and philosophical coherence, which the new Administration possessed in good measure, but also a sense of strategy. Or else Ronald Reagan, like Jimmy Carter, could end up the victim rather than the master of events. ➔



John Springs

Peter W. Rodman served on the National Security Council staff in the Nixon and Ford Administrations.