### WHO'S AFRAID OF 1984?

By Jerome Tuccille

Ierome Tuccille's books are too often criticized not for what they are

by for what they are not.

Radical Libertarianism was not the final word on libertarian thought; it was a timely (for 1970) statement of libertarian concepts using left-liberal terminology. It Usually Begins With Ayn Rand was not a factual history of the new libertarian movement; it was a very funny house-cleaning of some dusty, pre-libertarian hangovers. Here Comes Immortality was not a textbook on life-extension research; it was an effective projection of a society that had conquered both death and taxes. What Jerry Tuccille does write is entertaining, popular journalism salted with his own irreverent brand of zany speculation. And if you keep your tongue firmly in cheek, you will be much less likely to bite into it when Tuccille occasionally goes overboard

Who's Afraid of 1984? continues this pattern. Subtitled "The Case for Optimism in Looking Ahead to the 1980s," its approach is twin-edged.

Divided into two parts, Book One is an attempt to refute "Doomsday Past." The doomsday of George Orwell's classic 1984. The doomsday of Paul Erlich's not-so-classic Population Bomb. The anti-technologists. The neo-Malthusians. The "Man is the cancer of Spaceship Earth" crowd. All well and good here, as Tuccille does a splendid job of detailing past doomsday projections and their failure to come about. The Reverend Thomas Malthus's 1798 prediction that by now we would have multiplied far beyond our food-production capabilities. The Paddock brothers' Famine-1975, which in 1967 predicted that by this year at the latest most of India's population would be dead of starvation. (Which is not to imply that the Indians are eating much beyond mere sustenance.) The automation-leads-to-mass-unemployment scare of the sixties. (Even Rod Serling felt obliged to write a Twilight Zone episode about that one.)

The problem here, however, is that Tuccille is not content to show the absurdity of most of the Doomsday Brigade's (as he calls it) claims, but also feels it necessary to tie in the entire phenomenon with collectivism. Tuccille devotes 32 pages of Book One to recounting the goals of the left, from the Progressives through the New Deal and Camelot to the McGovern campaign. His thesis—supported with numerous quotes from leftwing intellectuals and organizations—is that the Doomsday Brigade is the latest attempt of the left to take over once and for all. (A thesis, by the way, which is reminiscent of Ayn Rand's New Left: The Anti-Industrial

Undoubtedly, there is a large element of truth here, but which is cause and which effect? Do not ideologues of any stripe tend to focus on those facts and theories that make their pet formulas look most favorable? If such intellectual opportunism is all it takes to prove conspiracy, could we not find equal guilt among those libertarians who tout economic Armageddon to sell Austrian economic theories and survival foods? Any prediction must stand or fall on its merits, and revealing the vested interests of a theory's followers does not prove the original theory without merit. I fear that Jerry Tuccille's approach here will alienate the very people on the left who might have been ready to consider free-market solutions but who automatically close their minds to right-wing rhetoric.

Book Two ("Here Comes 1984") is, Tuccille informs us, a mirror-image of the society portraved in George Orwell's novel. A society in which the consumer calls the tune and Little Brother better dance. A World Market instead of a World State. A World Without War because the multinational corporations find it bad for business. A "What will they think of next?" society. An Epicurean leisure-class society. A largely libertarian society.

Again, splendid. If, however, you are hoping for more than delightful speculation, alas! It will not be found here. In essence, Tuccille's case for optimism rests on his conviction that human initiative interacting in the marketplace can triumph over all obstacles. But this has yet to be proven. One might say, however, that the burden of proof rests with anyone who tries to prove another route workable.

But just as George Orwell presented the world with what he hoped would be a self-defeating prophesy, perhaps Jerome Tuccille will have gone a fair distance in providing us with a self-fulfilling one. REVIEWED BY

I. NEIL SCHULMAN / LR Price \$7.95

## -AN AFTERWORD FRÓM

Holy Humbug!

I hesitate to unravel James Kiefer's theistic confusions on limited data, i.e., Professor Veatch's review of Kiefer's lecture. But on the whole I think the likelihood of clarification is greater than the likelihood of greater confusion.

Readers who attempted to understand Veatch's summary will, no doubt, have been puzzled. Why is it supposed, by Kiefer and Veatch, that "natural selection can account for the adaptation of various things for various purposes, but never for purposes of knowledge?" There is a hint of how this not-so-rare argument is supposed to work in the startling claim that, our minds are designed for knowledge, would there be the slightest reason to suppose that our minds could yield genuine knowledge.

Here is at least one version of how the argument is supposed to work: We know that our senses are informative independently of having any theory about the natural selection of informative sense organs. Thus, the explanation for our senses being informative cannot be that they developed through natural selection. But if not through natural selection and not through "mere coincidence," then through the Diety (or visitors from Mars?). This argument presumes that if one knows something (that the senses are informative) without knowing the truth of some particular historical explanation for the known fact, then that particular historical explanation is not the correct explanation. But this is a silly presumption. And it defeats the theist's own purpose. For one could just as easily argue: We know that our senses are informative independently of having any theory of God's purposes. Thus, the explanation for our senses being informative cannot be theistic. If "mere coincidence" is also ruled

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out, then the explanation must be natural selection. Of course, neither of these arguments are any good. Knowing that our senses are informative has nothing to do with picking the historical explanation for this fact.

Readers interested in examining this version of the argument from design should read the clever exposition in the first edition of Richard Taylor's Meta-

> ERIC MACK Sunderland, Mass.

After reading Veatch's review of Kiefer's Objectivism and Theism, I can only deplore retroactively the appearance of this obscurantist tract in your catalogue. Kiefer's argument for the existence of a God is based on the assertion that "knowledge . . . cannot be accounted for as having come about by [an evolutionary process cumulating the effects of natural selection and chance." This assertion is ambiguous, meaning either that "if we assume that the human mind is a product of evolution, then we cannot prove that it is capable of knowledge," or that "chance and natural selection cannot result in an organized informational system capable of acquiring knowledge." The first of these is true, but irrelevant, since knowledge is axiomatic in the Aristotelian sense. One cannot prove that his mind is capable of knowledge, since the axiom of knowledge is logically antecedent to the possibility of proof. The second is demonstrably false, since the evolution of organization out of chance is a well understood natural process. (See, for example, W. R. Ashby's Design for a Brain or any of a dozen technical books dealing with the theory of self-organizing systems.) Kiefer's argument has other problems. For example, how would his assertion that a mind capable of knowledge can only result from design apply to his alleged God? Design requires knowledge, so if Kiefer's assertion were correct, the mind of our putative designer would have had to be designed in its turn, etc. It is difficult to find a solution more believeable than an infinite regression of Gods, each designed by a predecessor.

Surely, the idea of a God traveling backward in time in order to design his own mind boggles the mind of a mere human . . . .

> ADAM V. REED New York, N.Y.

I must confess. I do not understand wherein lies the validity of James Kiefer's argument that man's conceptual abilities cannot be accounted for solely by natural selection. Natural selection does not mean things happen solely by chance. To assume that ignores the cybernetic relationship which exists between any organism and its environment. The development of the nervous system occurred in bits and pieces over millions of years; we did not all sprout eyes when Darwin stepped forward and said, "Let there be sight!" Nor did we just start thinking when Ayn Rand stepped forward and said, "Man is a rational being" (or whoever it was who said it first)

The structure of the human mind which allows man cognitive abilities developed in stages just as did the structure of the minds of lower animals which allowed them to integrate senses into percepts. And the force of nature which "directed" this development was not some god but the conditions of existence under which we live, i.e., reality.

While no other animal on this planet has developed conceptual faculties as has man, we can see the beginnings of these faculties in higher-order primates such as chimpanzees. This on the basis of recent experimental evidence from Yerkes

No Athenian was ever independent of the length of Procrustes bed; no man was ever independent of the natural forces existing in the universe. (Note to the uninitiated: this is not a deterministic statement, nor does it have anything to do with the issue of free will). And the theory of natural selection is manifested in the laws of genetics is fully capable of explaining the development of any physical structure in the human body. James Kieter is in error.

ROBERT B. Crim Naugatuck, Conn.

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# Readers, Authors, Reviewers

#### **Kiefer Replies**

It is a pity that my critics have not heard the tape they complain of, for all their objections are discussed in it. Had they heard the tape and remained unconvinced (a possibility I am willing to allow for) they might have broken new ground by explaining why my analysis of these objections fails to satisfy them. As it is, I can only reply by quoting most of the tape at them (which space considerations forbid) or by retorting that those who have foregone the luxury of hearing an argument should deny themselves the luxury of condemning it (which diplomatic considerations

Eric Mack has read Taylor's version of the argument, but seems to me to have misunderstood it. Taylor does remark in passing that we assume that our cognitive apparatus is in principle reliable, that we do not infer this reliability from biological theory or from anything else—that it is, as Adam Reed states, "axiomatic in the Aristotelian sense." But he does not offer this as a reply to Psychological Darwinism. His reply is that man's ability to find out truth far exceeds what is needed for survival.

I offer a slightly different reply: Natural selection produces and accounts for adaptive physical behavior. Nature, in Darwinian terms, selects rabbits who run when the wolf approaches. But the selection is independent of why the rabbit runs. It may run because it believes that the wolf will kill it, or because it believes that the wolf wants to play tag, or because it is an unconscious automaton physically programmed to do so. True belief, false belief, or no belief-all that matters for survival is the running. Psychological Darwinists ask, "Why do men have the ability to discover that nightshade berries are poisonous?" and answer, "In order to survive!" But if a belief that nightshade berries are the property of the elves, or a dislike for the taste of nightshade berries, or a purely physical aversive reflex, would accomplish the same thing, then the Psychological Darwinist answer misses the point. It is like the question, "Why do firemen wear

red suspenders?" If it is the color that we are asking about, then the traditional answer, "To hold their pants up!" is simply irrelevant.

Some persons, considering the great variety of complex situations which men encounter, and the ingenuity which they sometimes use in dealing with them, deny that it would be possible, even in principle, for any automaton to behave like that without accompanying and controlling conscious thought. (This is the analogue of arguing that no non-red suspenders can hold up pants. Behaviorists, in this parable, are color-blind.) I am accustomed to refer these persons to books such as R. Ashby's excellent Design for a Brain: The Origin of Adaptive Behaviour. Ashby's position on consciousness may be inferred from this quotation. "Throughout the book, consciousness and its related subjective elements are not used for the simple reason that at no point have I found their introduction necessary.... Such an observation... gives us no right to deduce that consciousness does not exist. The truth is quite otherwise, for the fact of the existence of consciousness is prior to all other facts.

Dean E. Wooldridge is also good—see his The Machinery of the Brain and his Mechanical Man: The Physical Basis of Intelligent Life. Robert Crim says that Darwinism can account for any physical structure in the human body. Just so. If all physical human behavior (which is what is relevant to biological survival) can be accounted for without reference to consciousness, then Psychological Darwinism is in ruins. I welcome the support of Reed and Crim on this major

I take it as obvious that if adaptive behavior does not require thoughts at all, then it does not require true thoughts.

Some persons object as follows: We know that man's mind is suited to the pursuit of truth. Nature could have made us otherwise, and still fit to survive, but she didn't. If you ask why she happened to give us reason rather than reflex as our primary tool of survival, I will shrug and say, "She flipped a coin." The whole question of Psychological Darwinism is a distraction, anyway. We don't need a theory of our origins from

which we can infer the trustworthiness of our minds. The trustworthiness is an axiom!

To this I reply: It is true that we do not need to hold a theory that implies that our minds are trustworthy, but we do need to reject one that implies that they are not. Determinism, as Dr. Branden points out, is such a theory. That a man's belief's are determined does not imply that they are false. They may be true, just as answers provided by a coin (heads for "yes," tails for "no") may be true. But we assume, not that our beliefs happen to be right, but that they are trustworthy, that we have evidence about the nature of reality. A coin's answers to yes-no questions will sometimes be right, but will never be trustworthy, will never constitute evidence. If determinism is true, we may often have true beliefs, but can never have trustworthy ones. On these grounds, Dr. Branden, as I read him rejects determinism, and on the same grounds I reject Psychological Darwinism and other non-theistic accounts of the origin of man's mind. Those who have difficulty following the structure of my argument should study his. They are strict parallels.

I remind readers that my lectures are called Objectivism and Theism—that my argument is not that logical positivism implies theism, but that Objectivism implies theism. Those wishing to refute me must show where the parallel between my refutation of atheism and Dr. Branden's refutation of determinism breaks downmust find a flaw in my argument and show that it is not the analog of a flaw in his. (Those who think him wrong about determinism are not among those to

whom my argument is primarily addressed.) I am asked, "Who made God's mind?" Theists hold, of course, that God's mind, unlike human minds, is eternal and uncaused. For the most part, they also hold that all of reality is related to God in such a way that it is logically impossible for him to be mistaken about it, just as it is self-contradictory to say that a man falsely believes himself to exist, or to be thinking, or to be in pain. (The illusion of pain is a painful illusion.)

> JAMES KIEFER Bethesda, Md.

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#### A Word To Our Readers

- As the result of egregious crypto-bureaucratic confusion, the "Suiten Fuer Violoncello Solo" was substituted for the Bach Magnificat in the June installment of "Introduction to Musical Listening." The Bach Magnificat is available on DG ARC-198197 and on Turnabout 34173. All of Dr. Hospers' superlatives in reference to the "Suiten" were meant, of course, for the Magnificat. Our apologies to Dr. Hospers and our readers.
- In the book world things happen at a very rapid pace. Books come in and go out of print quickly and unexpectedly; prices change with ever increasing frequency. (And, unhappily, the changes are usually UP!) Thus our Back List, which appears in each LR, has changes made on it right up until our printer rolls his presses. So that we may give you the best possible service, please refer to the latest Back List when placing your order. Thanks.
- COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics) is an organization working to decriminalize the world's oldest profession. COYOTE welcomes the support of all (especially women) who believe that the sexual activities of consenting adults are not any of the State's business. Membership in COYOTE is \$5 per year. If you want to fight the Mrs. Grundy State, write Margo St. James, Chairmadam, COYOTE, PO Box 26354, San Francisco, CA 94126; or call (415) 441-8118.
- The LR Book Service is pleased to announce that we now have in stock the paperback edition of Robert Heinlein's Time Enough for Love. Consequently, we are discontinuing the hardback edition. The LR price for the paperback is \$1.95.
- Readers interested in Asian anarchist/libertarian activities and history will want to have a look at Libero International, a new bimonthly publication of CIRA-Nippon, a Japanese federation of "autonomous libertarian groups." The digest-size, English-language magazine covers, on a "fifty-fifty basis," current anarchist/libertarian activities in Japan, Korea, and China and "the facts about the energetic libertarian history of Asia." The first issue includes a biographical essay about Kotoku Shusui, the founder of modern Japanese anarchism, and articles about anarchism in China and Korea. Subscription information is available from Libero International, CPO Box 1065, Kobe, Japan 650-91.

- From time to time, we learn of job opportunities with employers who are specifically seeking libertarian-inclined individuals. These range from clerk-typist jobs to foundation directors, from editorial positions to shipping clerks. Jobs in all sections of the country have come to our attention. In addition, LR on occasion has job openings, both full-time and part-time, in our Washington offices, which we would of course prefer to offer to qualified libertarians. If you are seeking work now, or plan to be in the future, and would like to send us a brief resume of your qualifications, we will hold it on file and attempt to match it with job opportunities as they come to our attention. All correspondence will be held in confidence, of course.
- Things to Come: In September's Essay Review, Roger MacBride offers his thoughts on Nock's Jefferson and Dumas Malone's The Story of the Declaration of Independence. Also in the works are reviews by Susan Love Brown of Race and Economics by Thomas Sowell, The Balancing Act by George Roche, and A Theory of Racial Harmony by Alvin Rabushka—and Poul Anderson's reasoned consideration of Christopher Evans' Cults of Unreason.

REVIEWERS FOR THIS ISSUE: Douglas R. Casey is a Washington, D.C. investment broker. His review of Common Sense Economics is reprinted with permission from the Inflation Survival Letter. Solveig Eggerz is a freelance writer and a Human Events contributing editor. R. Dale Grinder holds a doctorate in American history and recently spent a year at the Institute for Humane Studies preparing his thesis for publication. Stanley Lieberman is director of the Information Processing Department at the Research Laboratories of the Bendix Corporation. Leonard P. Liggio teaches history at City College of New York. James J. Martin is a leading revisionist historian. Robert Masters is a freelance writer who has recently removed from the wilds of New York City to the more hospitable wilds of Washington state. Jeff Riggenbach is a book critic for the Los Angeles all-news radio station KFWB. Murray N. Rothbard, Professor of Economics at the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, is an LR associate editor and editor of Libertarian Forum. He is currently doing research at the Institute for Humane Studies. J. Neil Schulman is co-editor of New Libertarian Notes. Mark Skousen is managing editor of the Inflation Survival Letter and a doctoral candidate in economics at George Washington University. George von Hilsheimer is an authority on special education, a Ph.D. candidate in psychology, and author of How to Live with Your Special Child. Mark S. Wells is general manager of the LR Mail-Order Service and holds a BS in finance from the University of Arizona.



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