

(Letters, continued)

The only justification I can see in polygamy (minus Mr. Gross' requirement of equal value-response) is in its temporal nature—as a phase of fulfillment on the way to the more complete expression of values one enjoys in a monogamous relationship.

Anne Wortham  
Elmhurst, NY

MR. GROSS replies: In answer to the important points my critics raise:

1. I intended my article to be narrow in scope, dealing only with the problems of polygamous marriage. I did not present my full view of love and sex, by any means. Nor did I mean to imply that a highly valued romantic-sexual relationship (which is how I define "marriage") requires a formal contract, long-term commitment or church-state sanction. It does not. Indeed, such "bonds of wedlock" are more likely to strangle love than to preserve it. I refer readers to Harry Browne's superb book *HOW I FOUND FREEDOM IN AN UNFREE WORLD* (Macmillan 1973) for a full-dress libertarian approach to love, sex and marriage.

2. Every person's code of values defines

certain broad limits to his emotional responsiveness. As in the example used in my article: Dagny Taggart's code of values makes it possible for her to respond romantically to such men as Galt, Rearden and d'Anconia—and impossible for her to thus respond to creatures like Wesley Mouch. Basic attitudes and life-view must be reasonably similar for marital partners to stay in business. That is *not* to say that a man must possess the same virtues in the same degree as Galt for Dagny to react romantically to him. Such identity is clearly impossible—and not even desirable, from Dagny's viewpoint. The people one loves must share the same *basic* values, perhaps, but variances in their expression of those values, as well as differing interests, personalities and experiences make it impossible for any two people to be loved in the same way or to the same degree. Such diversity of interests, backgrounds and personalities is one of the most potentially rewarding aspects of polygamy.

3. A selective thing, is love, but *not* exclusive. Love of blueberry pie doesn't preclude love of apple pie. Just so with people: a person *can* love more than one other person, and without treason to any of them, since *all* of one's emotional responses are caused by the same hierarchy of values. Love *is* selective, however; it is the response one grants—discrimi-

nately—to people (note the plural) who exhibit qualities one finds attractive. To argue for polygamy is hardly to advocate promiscuity, wherein romantic attraction is largely dropped as a criterion of selection. In fact, I contend that a polygamous person may be *more* selective, more discriminating, than any monogamist, in that he can be *eclectic* in his relations to others, as contrasted to the *exclusive* commitment to one person present in monogamy, which often forces people to strangle interests not shared with the other spouse. A polygamist need make no such sacrifices to marital "fidelity." He is *free* to discriminate among partners to find one who best satisfied his needs at any given time—not frozen into an emotional/intellectual/sexual status quo wherein his freedom to select and discriminate is defined (and limited) by his spouse's range of interests and capabilities.

I am single—not polygamous or even monogamous yet. Nor am I bisexual or homosexual. Mr. Castanza and Ms. Wortham imply that I have an overriding commitment to some such "depravity" (by their evaluation) which has warped my thinking to justify my "indulgence." Not so. I really did mean what I said in my article: I'll leave polygamy for the heroes and the damn fools. But I wish them luck. ☐

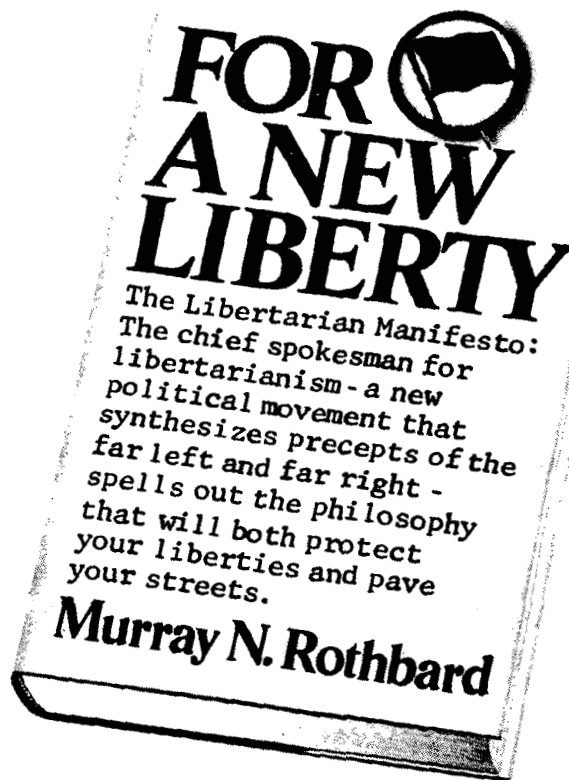
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