

1980

Free To Choose, by Milton and Rose Friedman

Michael McCarthy

**MILTON FRIEDMAN****ROSE FRIEDMAN**

In November 1980, I voted for Jimmy Carter for president and then went home and read *Free to Choose*. I started the book a Democrat and a standard-issue modern liberal. I finished it a libertarian.

Free to Choose is really a book for burnt-out liberals—burnt out by the failure of our generation's efforts to solve the intractable social problems of our times; for liberals who still care about the liberal agenda but are fed up with the liberal solution.

In Friedman's book I found hope for the future, grounded in something I still held dear: a decent respect for people as people. Discouraged by failure, I was electrified by this book's ideas for success. It gave me my first glimpse of libertarianism as a politics of hope, and that changed my life.

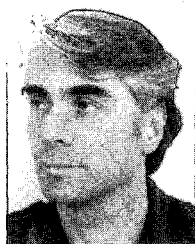
Thanks, Miltie.

Michael McCarthy is reviews editor of the computer weekly InfoWorld and chairman of the Reason Foundation's San Francisco Regional Advisory Council.

1974

Anarchy, State, and Utopia, by Robert Nozick

Tibor R. Machan

**ROBERT NOZICK**

Robert Nozick's famous *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* is now a classic of 20th-century political philosophy. It is a model of philosophical pizzazz. Nozick's book is a dazzler—a philosophical virtuoso, an intellectual feast. It reestablished the academic

significance of the laissez-faire alternative in political economy. The ripple effects are still being felt. Graduate students and young professors of philosophy, political science, and economics are everywhere studying Nozick's ideas and are also steered to the examination of the ideas of other libertarians.

I only regret that Nozick has refused to discuss his work further. He has replied to just one critic—Sheldon Wollin—in a letter to the editor to *The New York Times Book Review*. Better comments and

criticisms—for example, by Thomas Nagel, Amartya Sen, Thomas Scanlon, Robert Wolff, and H. L. A. Hart—have gone unanswered by Nozick. Mostly critical, negative essays appear, and since they are aimed at Nozick, responses, especially from frameworks Nozick rejects, can be dismissed out of hand.

Senior Editor Tibor R. Machan, one of the partners who published *REASON* from 1971 to 1978, teaches philosophy at Auburn University.

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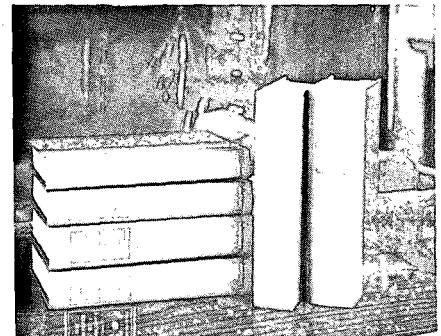
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1981

Wealth and Poverty, by George Gilder

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.



GEORGE GILDER that is true and vital about the economy vis-à-vis the state and vis-à-vis the individual. It did all this with the most elegant prose.

George Gilder is one of the finest minds of his generation, and so in this superb book he included something more important than all the above. He devised a way of thinking about capitalism that, if true, could make it defensible on yet another front. Beyond being effective at increasing wealth, it is, according to Gilder, virtuous. "Not taking and consuming, but giving, risking, and creating," says Gilder in *Wealth and Poverty*, "are the characteristic roles of the capitalist, the key producer of the wealth of nations."

For generations, that aspect of libertarianism that statists have opposed most resolutely has been its adherence to the free market. Statists think capitalism is selfish and morally flavorless. Gilder thinks it is altruistic. If he can succeed in making that case, the major barrier between libertarianism and American conventional thought might well collapse. This alone make his work invaluable.

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., is editor-in-chief of *The American Spectator*.

1968

Whole Earth Catalog

Jim Trotter

Any catalog that could contain information on edible fungi and how to build a log cabin *and* could draw fine distinctions between Murray Rothbard and Ayn Rand has to be great. I read the first *Whole Earth Catalog* while living in a one-room cabin in the mountains. Already an anarchist, I was drawn to a reference about a school of thought that included "bushy-haired anarchists," "Ayn Rand freaks," and maybe the best economics around. From the accompanying list of libertarian

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