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## BOOKSBOOKSBOOKS

# 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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## BOOKSBOOKSBOOKS

publications I opted for *The A Is A Directory*, which turned out to be a key libertarian sourcebook that helped me complete my economic education. Here I found economic analysis to fit with my anarchist philosophy.

The current issue of the *Whole Earth Catalog*, with its greater formality, has become genteel and mainstream. But it still offers a cornucopia of information that underscores the many ways individualists express themselves.

*Jim Trotter is a businessman. In 1968 he was a rioting student.*

## 1970

### Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers, by Tom Wolfe

Thomas W. Hazlett



**TOM WOLFE**

The 1960s were beautiful, man, because it was the time when the intelligent, compassionate, oh-so-right upscale crowd found poverty, racism, injustice—and especially their *victims*. It was a match made in Heaven, which is to say, on Manhattan's Upper East Side. The '60s were righteous, you see, 'cause the good, loving, liberal New York elite got down with the *bad*—the revolutionary, no time for jive, in yo' face mo' fo', don't give me no sheeeeeiiiiit, brothers and sisters from "the people." It was ugly. But the existence of God was conclusively proven when he placed one little scrivener, Tom Wolfe, in the middle of that gala Black Panther fundraiser in the la-di-da duplex of Leonard and Felicia Bernstein *circa* January 1969.

It was the magic moment when both sides achieved climax. Never have two social classes so shamelessly fondled each other for (independent) mutual advantage; never has a writer been so savage, so word-picture perfect, so brilliantly illuminating in recording the double foul. Richard Nixon, Spiro Agnew, Mayor Daley, General Hershey, George Wallace, and Curtis Lemay all tried and failed; it was the Truth's Eyewitness, Tom Wolfe, who brought the '60s to an end.

*Contributing Editor Thomas W. Hazlett teaches economics at the University of California, Davis.*

*"The most formidable  
weapon against errors of  
every kind is Reason. I have  
never used any other, and I  
trust I never shall."*

—Thomas Paine

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—The Staff of

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