

Libertarianism and White Racialism
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In mid-2010, the journal *The Occidental Quarterly* initiated a contest for the best essay on the topic of "Libertarianism and Racial Nationalism." The guidelines included:

In terms of fundamental moral principles, libertarian individualism and racial nationalist collectivism could not be more opposed. Yet many racial nationalists are former libertarians. The purpose of this contest is to encourage the exploration of the connections between libertarianism and racial nationalism . . .

The connection between libertarianism as a philosophy and approach to living and white racial thought and action is an important concern, but thus far it has received little if any concerted attention in white racial discourse, of which *The Occidental Quarterly* has been a central element. I have personally been strongly influenced by libertarian ideas for twenty years or more, and for the last decade white racial concerns have been a significant part of my life both publicly--writing, university teaching--and in the way I have conducted my private life. I've never thought through how these two perspectives complement and contradict and the implications of that for people who, like me, care about the status and fate of white people in America and elsewhere. This essay contest has been a good prompt to do that, and I'll share here what I've come to. I don't know whether I'll enter the contest, however. I don't want the contest to shape this writing in any way--by feeling compelled to stay within the prescribed topic even if it would be best to depart from it, or adhering to the length limitation when that would cut exploration short of completion, or being tempted to write what I perceive will enhance my chances of winning the contest instead of simply telling my truth no holds barred; I want this writing to be whatever it really is, regardless of how that plays with anyone. I'll put this writing on this web site, and then decide what to do about submitting an entry.

Before getting into the connections between libertarianism and racial nationalism, I need to do some defining: what is libertarianism; and what is racial nationalism, and is racial nationalism the best construct, at least for me, to use in exploring this concern. After I do that, I'll discuss connections and implications.

Libertarian Principles

There are four basic principles of libertarianism: a focus on the individual; a belief in the right of self-ownership; a faith in spontaneous order; and antagonism toward the State.

A focus on the individual

Libertarians are individualists as opposed to collectivists or communitarians. Their focus in the first instance is on the individual, the living, breathing human being, distinct, different from every other human being--see this person. To libertarians, labels and concepts--race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, class, old, young, and so on--have reality, they exist, and they are valuable as they point out, describe, and categorize, and provide the bases for analyses, decisions, and actions. But all of them are abstractions, mental constructs, ideas, words and images and associations, and different ontologically, fundamentally, than the concrete particulars that comprise the world, and they should not be ascribed a kind of reality they don't in fact possess.

The libertarian sees a world made up of particulars. Libertarian writer Frank Chodorov on society:

Society . . . is not an extra "person": if the census totals a hundred million, that's all there are, not one more, for there cannot be any accretion to Society except by procreation. The concept of Society as a metaphysical person falls flat when we observe that Society disappears when the component parts disperse: as in the case of a "ghost town" or of a civilization we learn about by the artifacts they left behind. When the individuals disappear, so does the whole. The whole has no separate existence.¹

In the same way, a business firm is specific people--take in each one of them--working within a certain arrangement. An army is these

particular individuals operating under a set of rules that say which ones can order others among them to do things, training for war and fighting and dying in combat. A school is a collection of individuals--some of whom are designated as teachers, others students, others counselors and administrators--engaging in various educational activities.

Libertarians think it is valuable and important to adopt this individual-centered perspective in order to keep their priorities straight. They don't want to proceed as if the whole, whatever it happens to be, is the reality that matters, because, for one thing, to the extent that the collective becomes the dominant perspective, the people who comprise it are likely to be viewed as if they were the concept, the category, rather than as the individuals they actually are. The fact that someone is, say, an Asian female or a white Southerner could come to be considered about all that has to be taken into account about him or her. As well, the category people are slotted into could become so salient, and so defining, that it shapes their thoughts and actions; one of the reasons teenagers, or seventh graders or college sophomores, think and act as they do is because they use their group identity more than their own being to guide the conduct of their lives.

Libertarians don't want categories to take on a reality and importance to the point that they are granted rights that supersede the rights of individuals. Libertarians believe collectivities, groups of people clustered on the basis of a set of criteria or shared characteristics, do not have rights, only individuals do. They aren't easily swayed by the idea of subordinating individual rights to something "higher": social justice, community interest, the will of the majority, or whatever else. Libertarian economist Murray Rothbard:

Society is sometimes treated as a superior or quasi-divine figure with overriding "rights" of its own; at other times as an existing evil that can be blamed for all the ills of the world. The individualist holds that only individuals exist, think, feel, choose, and act, and that "society" is not a living entity but simply a label for interacting individuals. Treating society as a thing that chooses and acts serves to obscure the real forces at work. If ten people band together to rob and expropriate the money of three others, this is clearly a case of a group of individuals acting in concert against another group. If these

ten people presumed to refer to themselves as "society" acting in "its" interest, their rationale would be laughed out of court; even the ten robbers would probably be too shamed-faced to use this sort of argument. But let the scale increase to thousands or millions and this kind of obfuscation becomes rife and succeeds in duping the public.²

Libertarians contend that treating a nation as if it were a person with a will of its own and with an importance beyond that of the mortal beings that live within its boundaries--they are called citizens--obscures reality and justifies treating human beings as expendable objects duty-bound to do its bidding. Libertarian historian Parker T. Moon:

We say, "France sent her troops to Tunis." Those words conceal the facts and make international relations a glamorous drama in which personalized nations are the true actors. If we had no such word as "France," then we would more accurately describe the Tunis expedition in some such way as this: "A few of these thirty-eight million persons sent thirty thousand others to conquer Tunis." This way of putting the fact suggests a question, or rather a series of questions: Who are these "few"? Why did they send these thirty thousand to Tunis? And why did these thirty thousand obey?³

One way to understand libertarians is to see them as having a minority whose cause they espouse, and it is the ultimate minority: *the individual human being*. And that means *every* individual human being; libertarians don't pick favorites. Black and white, men and women, old and young, rich and poor, rural and urban, European and Asian and African and North American--to libertarians, every one of them possesses rights equal to those of every other one; an individual's rights aren't subordinate to something higher or grander. (Or at least that is their orientation as libertarians--as a practical matter, no one is purely a libertarian or any other belief system, or only swayed by ideological or philosophical beliefs; human beings and their motivations are a more complicated, complex, matter than that.) When any individual's rights or wellbeing is sacrificed to a concept of the larger good, however compelling the rationale for doing it may be, it gives great pause to libertarians. To them, human beings are not

numbers or categories or pawns in a chess game. When a soldier dies, he or she is not a "casualty" but rather a dead human being. And that is the case even when the casualties are "light" and the military campaign "victorious"; that is still a rotting corpse, and so is the corpse of the "enemy." Human beings are sacred beings, each and every one of them.

A belief in the right of self-ownership

The right of self-ownership means just what it says: each individual owns his or her self. Human beings' bodies and minds are theirs to do with as they choose, not as somebody or something else chooses. Other individuals don't own you. Your family doesn't own you. Your race or ethnicity or race doesn't own you. The government doesn't own you. The church doesn't own you. A moral or ethical principle doesn't own you. An idea or cause doesn't own you. *You* own you; just as all other individuals own themselves. Nobody has the right to tell you what to do unless you voluntarily grant him or her that right.

But you can be sure that somebody or some group is going to try to sell you on the idea that they own you, and that you should, or have to, defer to what they have lined up for you to do. If you don't buy into their logical or moral argument, they will do their best to coerce you into giving yourself over to them and what they have going. The coercion can take many forms: condemnation, social or professional marginalization, economic sanctions (withholding or discontinuance of wages and employment, expropriation of money or property), jail time, or death. As a practical matter, owning yourself isn't easy, but nevertheless, the libertarians assert, it is your right as a human being, and it is your challenge.

The belief in the right of self-ownership is the foundation of libertarians' fervent *commitment to individual liberty*. Individuals must have the freedom to think and act as in they see fit. Nineteenth-century French libertarian Benjamin Constant pointed out that the term liberty is used in two ways. The first has the emphasis the Greeks gave it, the liberty to participate in public life, to be part of making decisions that affect the entire community and themselves. While libertarians value political liberty highly, they tend to stress liberty in the second sense in which Constant talks

about it: personal liberty, the freedom to live as one chooses, to speak and worship (or not) freely, to own property and do with it as one wishes, the freedom to produce and engage in commerce without outside interference, and the freedom to live one's private life as one pleases.⁴ Murray Rothbard:

The right of self-ownership asserts the absolute right of each man, by virtue of his (or her) being a human being, to "own" his or her own body; that is, to control that body free of coercive interference. Since each individual must think, learn, value, and choose his or her ends and means in order to survive and flourish, the right of self-ownership gives man the right to perform these activities without being hampered and restricted by coercive molestation.⁵

If you want to give your mind or body or money or property to somebody or something, go ahead, it's yours to do with as you want: but you don't have to, that's the point.

To libertarians, along with self-ownership comes *self-responsibility*. You are responsible for the life you own. You are responsible for taking care of yourself, your self. Not somebody else. Not something else. *You*. Libertarians are not very interested in your reasons, excuses, or sad story, or in listening to you pin the responsibility for your status in the world on somebody else. Libertarians fully understand that there are times when circumstances are beyond someone's capacity to manage, but they don't jump to accept the claim that that is what is going on. They look very closely to make sure that whoever is pushing off responsibility for their fate on situations, personal defects, or other people is doing absolutely everything humanly possible to take responsibility for him- or herself. Short of demonstrable maximum effort in that direction, libertarians tend to lend an unsympathetic ear, especially when the pitch coming at them amounts to "I'm so needy [or they are so bad] that things have to be taken from other people and given to me."

A last corollary of self-ownership is you don't have the right to deny others ownership of themselves. Another way to say it, you can live your life as you want as long as you respect the equal rights of others to live as they want. You aren't justified in taking something from other people, or forcing them to serve your needs or give you something, or compelling people to stand aside in

deference to you or yours. Libertarians believe in voluntary exchange and are very down on the use of force (with conning people into doing your bidding considered a slick form of force). They have a particular aversion to outright aggression as a way to get something. They don't get caught up in war fever as readily as some others. Back in the 1950s, a young Murray Rothbard got into big trouble for saying he preferred Soviet leader Khrushchev over President Eisenhower because Khrushchev caused fewer people to be killed. Eisenhower just seems better, Rothbard contended, because he is one of "us" while Khrushchev is one of "them."

A belief in spontaneous order

Libertarians acknowledge that individuals do not exist in isolation and that there needs to be regularity and predictability in people's relationships with one another so that they can harmoniously and productively get on with their lives. But rather than have these arrangements dictated by some higher authority, libertarians believe that people ought to work things out on their own through their voluntary dealings with one another. Contemporary libertarian theorist David Boaz uses the term *spontaneous order* to describe the outcomes of this process.

A great deal of order in society is necessary for individuals to survive and flourish. It's easy to assume that order must be imposed by a central authority, the way we impose order on a stamp collection or football team. The great insight of libertarian social analysis is that order in society arises spontaneously out of the actions of thousands or millions of individuals who coordinate their actions with those of others in order to achieve their purposes. Over human history, we have gradually opted for more freedom and yet managed to develop a complex society with intricate organization. The most important institutions in human society--language, law, money, and markets--all developed spontaneously, without central direction. Civil society--the complex network of associations and connections among people--is another example of spontaneous order: the associations within civil society are formed for a purpose, but civil society itself is not an organization and does not have a purpose of its own.⁶

Libertarians are strong defenders of the free enterprise economic system because in their view it is the embodiment of spontaneous order. To them, markets are much better than government manipulations of the economy. They believe the fatal conceit of government is the belief that smart people can design an economy better than the free market. Let the people work things out for themselves, in all areas of life, argue the libertarians. Don't force people to do things contrary to their own purposes, values, and best judgments. Trust the people.

Antagonism toward the State

As the libertarians see it, there is one major villain in the piece. While they harbor distrust of the collective wherever it manifests, libertarians are downright hostile to the State (libertarians tend to capitalize it), the government. They look upon the State as the biggest enemy to the free, voluntarist society they envision. They consider government--especially the federal government--as the most highly organized, relentless aggressor against the individual. And, libertarians contend, it doesn't matter all that much what form the government happens to take--dictatorial, democratic, they are more alike than different. They all want to manage peoples lives and subordinate individuals to what they have going, and over time they all have the marked tendency to want to do more and more of it. Writes Rothbard, "For centuries the State has committed mass murder and called it 'war,' and then ennobled the mass slaughter that 'war' involves. . . . For centuries the State has robbed people at bayonet point and called it 'taxation.'"⁷

Even as our government is the enemy of personal freedom, it pushes the idea hard that this isn't the case. "Unlike those terrible other places, you are free here in America," is the message. Here, you have a say in how things are run--"government is the people," "democracy," all that. It is true that collectively the citizenry has power in this country. But when it comes down to you as an individual, and that is the libertarian frame of reference, the power balance between you and the government is a vast mismatch. Whether you realize it or not, you are in the position of doing exactly what groups of politicians (in Washington, your state capital, city hall), and the interest groups that influence or, probably better, control them, say, and you very likely have met few if any of these

people. Anything they think up for you to do, you will do, or they will throw you in jail. And a lot of what you will do may be things that you would never do if you weren't forced--like, perhaps, pitch in to help buy an extra tank, or give money to an artist whose work you don't respect, or go to another country and anonymously kill people (its called war), or give your money to that guy down the street you know is a slacker, along with a host of other people you have never even met (welfare). If the government wants 40% of your income (the amount the average wage-earning person pays to the various levels of government), you will turn it over to them. And if you think you are doing that voluntarily because you are part of the "we" who is the government, you are being fooled by the ideological camouflage that has been thrown over the coercive reality of political life in this country,

It would be one thing if government had a good track record when spending your money, but it doesn't. If the government handles it, whatever it is--public schools, the postal service, the welfare system--people don't go, "Oh, the government is running it, so it must be good." One reason libertarians cite to account for government ineptness is the way *unintended negative consequences* plague government-directed initiatives. This term is associated with the late Friedrich Hayek, a free market economist and hero to libertarians. The idea is that, when government sets something up, invariably it fails to take factors and possibilities into account that end up undercutting it.

An example is the welfare system. The goal is a noble one, to lift people out of poverty and help them become self-sufficient members of society. However, unintended consequences of the welfare system actually made the problem worse than it would have been if the government had stayed out of it. One of them was an increased dependency upon the government to take care of them that the welfare system fostered among many recipients, which worked against the desired goal of self-sufficiency. Another was the increased faith among the poor that the government would take care of them. This lessened their fear of what would happen to them if they acted in ways that contribute to poverty. For example, poverty is associated with illegitimacy. If the government will provide you with an apartment and give you a monthly check, you may be less hesitant to bring an illegitimate child into the world,

and be less likely to marry the father because you aren't dependent on his income to support yourself and your child.

Also, school failure and poverty are linked. Research in education has shown that what distinguishes low achievers and dropouts is not that they have lost faith in the payoff of education down the road. Rather, it is that they have fewer fears than the ones who become successful students about their future chances if they don't do well in school. Anything that decreases the fear of school failure--like the welfare system--will increase the rate of school failure. David Boaz points out that the virtues of thrift, hard work, sobriety, prudence, self-reliance, fidelity, and a concern for one's reputation developed and endured in times past because they were necessary in a world where people had to be responsible for their own sustenance or else." The "or else" doesn't hold nearly as much now as before, and we are paying for it as a society. And ironically the ones paying the biggest price are those who are supposedly helped, because being guaranteed a little very often keeps a person from being and doing what it takes to get a lot.

Libertarians grant that while the government isn't good at spending your money, it is very good at selling you on the idea that it ought to. The government effectively makes it seem that what it does is both necessary and inevitable. Take the income tax. Many assume that extracting a portion of people's earnings is something the government has always done. Actually, the income tax is a twentieth century phenomenon, 1915 to be exact, and it took an amendment to the Constitution to get it done. Somehow, we got along without taxes on what people earned before that time, but it is safe to say that few now could even imagine doing away with the practice; we have become that dependent on government. Another example, many economists think a privately run pension system would provide a better return to people than Social Security, but here again, to even think about going that route is scary, and somehow blasphemous, to most Americans.

Libertarians contend that when government takes something over, it tends to crowd out other elements in the society that did, or would, take on the task. For instance, before the development of the welfare state, there was an abundance of private charity through churches and fraternal associations. These activities not only provided assistance to those in need, they were rewarding activities for the ones who gave the help. There was a lot of socializing

involved in these activities. Plus it is gratifying to take responsibility to help one's neighbor. Somehow, when you give your money over in taxes and government bureaucracies take it from there it isn't as rewarding an experience.

With private charity, the beneficiaries of assistance knew where the it was coming from, the benevolence of flesh-and-blood people like themselves who were giving of what they had to help them. The recipients realized that it was, indeed, something being given to them. There was less of the idea that it was coming from an *it*--the government--and that they were somehow entitled to it. Here is another unintended consequence of government welfare programs. When you don't have to look the person in the eye who is taking care of you, and your pride and dignity doesn't get involved, and when you think you automatically have a claim on other peoples' time and money because you have an unmet need or want, you are less likely to do everything you possibly can to avoid asking strangers to bail you out because you can't or won't take care of yourself and those close to you.

Rothbard for all practical purposes advocated a stateless society, and could be called an *anarchic libertarian*. Most libertarians don't go that far: they want some government, but they want its powers to be very limited and circumscribed. Government would protect citizens from aggression by other countries and from individuals and groups within or beyond our boundaries. It would uphold the agreements people make with others and protect them against fraud. So there would be national defense, police, and courts. But that would be it: everything else would be handled by people through their voluntary dealings with one another. To libertarians it all comes down to who makes the decisions about your life, you or the government. Their answer: you do.”⁸

The Classical Liberal Connection

It helps to understand libertarianism if you see it as a form of liberalism. Not the liberalism of the modern day with its faith in government, experts, and social engineering--clearly libertarians aren't there. Libertarianism is akin to the liberalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, what is referred to as classical liberalism to distinguish it from twentieth century modern liberalism. It is the liberalism of Thomas Jefferson, and is

sometimes called Jeffersonian liberalism. I will use Jefferson to draw a comparison between classical liberalism and libertarianism.

In his biography of Jefferson, historian Joseph Ellis notes that early in his life Jefferson developed a strong attachment to the Saxon way of life in England prior to the Norman Conquest. Jefferson idealized the Saxons as people who lived freely and harmoniously without coercive laws and control from on high. This was before the corruptions of feudalism when, in Ellis' words, "men and women had found it possible to combine individual independence and social harmony, personal freedom and the rule of law, the need to work and the urge to play . . ."⁹ The Saxon myth represented to Jefferson a society where there weren't institutionalized and contaminating obligations and regulations. It was a world in which force was virtually absent and government was all but unnecessary. Jefferson was practical enough to realize that America was not the forests of eleventh century Saxony, and that this way of life could not be perfectly replicated in America; but still, he carried this cherished image with him throughout his life. Even though he didn't use the term libertarian to describe it, fundamentally it was a libertarian vision.

Of course Jefferson is best known as the author of the most familiar words of American history: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." This phrase from the Declaration of Independence has become the core element of the American Creed and is at the heart of Jefferson's legacy and appeal through the ages. Ellis:

The explicit claim is that the individual is the sovereign unit in society; his natural state is freedom from and equality with all other individuals; this is the natural order of things. The implicit claim is that all restrictions on this natural order are immoral transgressions, violations of what God intended; individuals liberated from such restrictions will interact with their fellows in a harmonious scheme requiring no external discipline and producing maximum human happiness.¹⁰

Libertarians would probably substitute nature for God, but in essence they share this concept of individual and collective life with Jefferson.

As is libertarianism, classical liberalism was grounded--and still is, classical liberals still exist--in the faith that ordinary people can be trusted to make decisions about how to conduct their lives without government telling them what to do. All his life, Jefferson found government to be a problematic institution; the smaller government the better was Jefferson's attitude. In a letter to Francis Hopkinson, Jefferson wrote that the trouble with the Europeans of his day was that they had been bred to prefer "a government which can be felt; a government of energy. God send that our country may never have a government which it can feel."¹¹ Libertarians would enthusiastically endorse that hope, and mournfully acknowledge that if government is anything in our time it is felt.

Saying all this should not be taken as implying that classical liberalism and libertarianism are to be equated. There are some major differences between the two ideologies. One of them is the way they view tradition. Jefferson sought connection with the Greeks and drew inspiration from them; tradition mattered to him. You aren't likely to hear libertarians talk about tradition, the past, in reverential ways. Another important difference is in the way libertarianism and classical liberalism look upon personal responsibility. Libertarians emphasize responsibility for one's own wellbeing and not infringing upon the rights of others. As for what someone owes other people, it comes down to staying out of their way. Anything beyond that, such as looking out for others or contributing to their welfare or serving their needs or wants, is a matter of choice and not a moral imperative. The same holds true of the libertarians' view of what one owes the society: you can choose to give of yourself as much as you want to, but you are not morally obligated to do so. Classical liberals, in contrast, adhere to a concept of public virtue, which includes an obligation to contribute to the larger whole. It stresses balancing service to one's private interests and service to the public interest. Libertarians aren't about to tell people what they must do for others or the society. And anyway, they contend, it is in the nature of truly free people to do good works. If you are given room to take care of ourselves you will also take care of others. People find it rewarding--or enough to them do, anyway--to take responsibility for things beyond themselves. We don't need to tell them, as the classical liberals do, that they must.

The Ayn Rand Connection

Even though the novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand (her first name rhymes with fine) distanced herself from libertarianism, we can't fully come to grips with this philosophy without reference to the great influence she has had on it. For the majority of libertarians, Rand's fiction was their first introduction to libertarian ideas. Likely in their teens or early twenties, they were inspired by one or the other of her two major novels, *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*.¹² Written in the 1940s and '50s, these two books have sold millions of copies, with their popularity continuing remarkably to this day. Their main protagonists, Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead* (based on the architect Frank Lloyd Wright, whose office Rand worked in for a time) and John Galt in *Atlas Shrugged*, were heroic, self-expressive, prideful, purposeful, independent, rational, and uncompromising individualists who forged their way amid their inferior opposites. These two fictional characters, as well as others in the books who came at life as they did, have served as models to thousands of young people--and older people too--of how to think and be.

Through her fiction, and in a later series of nonfiction writings and lectures, Rand defined a philosophy she called Objectivism (she capitalized it). She distinguished Objectivism from libertarianism, contending that their metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical foundations were quite different, but to most people, including me, the distinctions Rand considered fundamental were either obscure esoteric ones, or they went right by them/me. Whatever Rand called her philosophy, for many she defined the essential elements of libertarianism: personal freedom, free markets (Rand was a fervent defender of capitalism), and government limited to the protection of individual rights through police, the courts, and national defense.

Rand's Objectivist philosophy argued for the moral justification of a rigorously rational and selfish (self-ish) life, turning around the negative connotations usually attributed to those qualities. Being highly rational typically rings of a lack of feeling and compassion, and selfishness is, well, selfish, and that's not good. To Rand being unyieldingly rational is to put the faculty in charge of your life that needs to be in charge if you are going to be happy and productive. And, Rand argues, despite what people

tell you, selfishness--being oriented toward yourself and in service to yourself rather than being attuned to and in service to others or the group--is a good thing, not a bad thing. Rand asserts that one's own needs are not subordinate to others', somehow of lower importance or priority. You shouldn't injure others, she said, and certainly you can choose to serve others' wants or needs, give to them or put them first, that is your prerogative. But you do not have to feel you are morally compelled to do so, and you should never be forced to do so against your will; no individual or group has the right to sacrifice your interests to somebody else's without your agreement. Sounds like libertarianism.

Rand's rational egoism is probably best expressed in a very lengthy speech by the character John Galt in *Atlas Shrugged*. Rand said this about Galt's speech:

Galt's statement is a dramatized summation of the Objectivist ethics. Any system of ethics is based on and derived, implicitly or explicitly, from a metaphysics. The ethic derived from the metaphysical base of Objectivism holds that, since reason is man's basic tool of survival, rationality is his highest virtue. To use his mind, to perceive reality and act accordingly is man's moral imperative. The standard of value of the Objectivist ethics is: man's life--man's survival *qua* man--or that which the nature of a rational being requires for his proper survival. The Objectivist ethics, in essence, hold that man exists for his own sake, that the pursuit of his own happiness is his highest moral purpose, that he must not sacrifice himself to others, not sacrifice others to himself.¹³

Ayn Rand was born Alyssa Rosenbaum in 1905 in St. Petersburg, Russia. She came to the United States in 1927, first to Chicago to stay with relatives, and then to Hollywood with the idea of writing screenplays. She took her new last name from the Remington-Rand typewriter she was using, and her first name from a Finnish writer she said she admired (as far as I know, no one has ever been able to identify the writer). While on a silent movie set, Rand was struck by the manly physical appearance of an extra named Frank O'Conner. She tracked O'Conner down and married him, the marriage lasting until the end of her life in 1982. Rand described herself as a "man-worshipper," and was particularly taken with a lean, virile, hard, intelligent, eagle-eyed man. Frank looked every bit the part, although it turned out that looks were deceiving in Frank's case.

However, he was a very gentle and loyal husband who loved and supported Ayn through some extremely difficult times both professionally and personally. As to be expected, Rand's man-worshipping along with such things as the tendency of her female characters to take pleasure in being ravaged sexually by construction worker types did not win her the admiration of feminists, a group whose anger toward Rand was matched by her contempt for them.¹⁴

Rand insisted that she only drew inspiration from two other writers in creating her philosophy of Objectivism, Aristotle and the French writer Victor Hugo. Particularly, she took pains to separate herself from the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche, the late-nineteenth century German philosopher. I think Rand protested a bit too much; I see strong connections between her ideas and Nietzsche's. Certainly there are distinctions to be drawn between her thinking and Nietzsche's. Unlike Nietzsche, Rand was very uncomfortable with the idea of asserting power over others and with force and violence, and there is a contrast between Nietzsche's soaring, passionate individualism and Rand's grounded, reason-directed version of same. But still, I have the sense that Rand read Nietzsche in her youth and--whether she fully realized it or not--a good bit of it stuck. What she edited out was his emotionality and aggressiveness, but the heroic, call it romantic, individualism stayed. To test out my impressions, read some Rand--a good place to start is *The Fountainhead*, and then move on to one of her non-fiction collections such as *The Virtue of Selfishness*.¹⁵ And read Nietzsche's classic book, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.¹⁶ Compare the two writers and decide for yourself to what extent Rand was influenced by Nietzsche.

Since Rand made it clear she herself lived according to the ideals presented in her books, she became an object of attention and emulation from her readers. Often, as these readers got older, they became less enamored of Rand and what she represented. Some were turned off by what they perceived as the emotional coldness and lack of connection to anyone or anything beyond the self as exemplified in Rand's fiction and personal life. Some had problems with Rand's atheism, her haughty and doctrinaire personal manner, and her cult following. (Rand admirers contend vigorously that all of these criticisms are based on misperceptions of Rand and her ideas.) But despite any later reservations they may have had about

Rand and/or her philosophy, or even their outright rejection of her and what she affirmed, my guess is that there is an essence of Ayn Rand that resides solidly at the inner core of many if not the vast majority of today's libertarians.

White Racialism Rather Than Racial Nationalism

In 2001, I published a book on the white activist William Pierce (1933-2002), *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds*.¹⁷ While I don't remember Dr. Pierce using the label to describe his beliefs, I saw him as a white nationalist, and subtitled the book *An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce*. What put Pierce in that category for me was his commitment to a separate white nation in North America grounded in racial principles. Also, when he used the term white, he capitalized it--White. The capital W was to underscore that when he was talking about white people he was not including Jews. In his eyes, Jews were "them," not "us," and more, that Jews were White's primary adversary, one that intentionally weakens the white race, splinters it, and deflects it from its path. In Pierce's writing and work with the organization he founded and headed, The National Alliance, he was explicit about that. He was also clear that he saw blacks and Hispanics as "poison in the well"--the more of them that were around, the more the White race and culture and quality of life were polluted, as it were. Less clear was whether, to Pierce, White meant northern European whites--Germanic, Nordic, Celtic peoples, not eastern and southern Europeans. At least from the examples Pierce used in his writing, it appears White to him meant fair-haired, fair-skinned northern European-heritage peoples.

I think of an essay I wrote on David Starr Jordan (1851-1931), who was a naturalist, social philosopher, poet, president of Stanford University, peace advocate, and eugenicist.¹⁸ Race was Jordan's primary lens in making sense of the world and living his life. Jordan believed that northern European peoples have the highest level of the qualities needed to produce a superior society and culture. "A good stock is the only material out of which history can make a great nation," he declared. He believed the fate of America rests on the blood of its inhabitants. Jordan considered Jews a distinct race within his concept of race, which emphasized biology but included cultural elements, and he was antagonistic toward

them. In 1912, he went so far as to prophesize that unless Jewish power in the world were held in check the result would be nothing less than Armageddon. I don't believe Pierce knew of Jordan--at least he never brought Jordan's name up in any of his writings or in my extensive conversations with him--but I connected the thinking of the two men.

While it is always to some extent a guessing game and judgment call, when I hear or read someone referring to racial nationalism, or to themselves as a racial nationalist, I think "White nationalist," "White living space," "Jews bring us down," "get distance from other races, blacks and Hispanics in particular." What I look to discern is whether this impulse is prompted more by white supremacy or white separatism. Jordan was clearly a white supremacist; he thought that by the standards that mattered most, whites, or anyway northern whites, were better than other peoples. Pierce did too, but his primary perspective was a separatist one: superior or not, whites were different, and it is best that we go off somewhere by ourselves and live our own way. I associate contemporary racial nationalism (which its proponents often refer to as White nationalism, or White Nationalism) with Pierce's frame of reference.

If I'm on to the connotation of racial nationalism--or white nationalism, I'll leave the capital letter off, it seems affected somehow--to the extent that white concern, commitment, and action is equated with it, I see this it as too narrow a self-definition. It leaves out a lot of concerned and active white people who are not best categorized as racial nationalists. And too, if racial, or white, nationalism becomes the generic term for the, call it, white movement, it could get across the idea that this outlook, this way of thinking about and engaging racial concerns, is *the* action, and if you want to get on board with us you need to align yourself with this way of looking at things and this way of going forward. I see that as problematic, excluding and turning away white people who have much to contribute but who don't subscribe to a racial nationalist perspective. I prefer to view racial nationalism as a subset of the larger phenomenon of *white racialism*, one of a number of legitimate responses to white racial concerns. White racialism includes the following, alone or in combination:

- *White racial understanding.* "Oh, I get what's going on and what ought to go on."
- *White definition.* White can be defined as including or excluding Jews (exclusion the most common choice). White can be capitalized to underscore that white means white gentile.
- *White racial consciousness and pride.* Instead of having no racial component to their personal self-conception, or a negative one, people could come to perceive themselves as white, and feel good about it.
- *White racial expression.* "I'm going to integrate my racial identity in the way I live my life." That could play out in one's lifestyle, relationships, work involvements, parenting, and leisure activities--any and all aspects of one's existence.
- *White racial solidarity.* Feeling connected to one's racial heritage and racial brethren.
- *White racial concern* about the status and destiny of the white race.
- *White racial commitment.* "I'm going to look for ways to make positive things happen for my people." Making decisions of whom to support, vote for, give money to--basically private kinds of things.
- *White racial advocacy, analysis, organization, collective action.* Going public to contribute to white survival, wellbeing, and self-determination. Forming or participating in an organization or web site, writing thought and opinion pieces and non-fiction books and monographs, scholarly research and writing, journalistic endeavors, arts and entertainment undertakings (e.g., didactic fiction writing, filmmaking, television programming, video game creation), teaching, presentations, political action, lobbying, running for office, and the like.
- *Racial nationalism, White nationalism.* A separate homeland for Whites. Yes indeed, this is a possible orientation, and a legitimate

one; but again, I see it as but one of a number of possibilities within white racialism.

- *White anger, disdain, disgust, and contempt; white separatism, white supremacy; white racism; anti-Semitism; white hate; white self-defense; white revenge; white vigilantism; and white terrorism.* People who have no time for whites tell them they absolutely cannot think, be, do, any of this list. Oh yes they can. That is their call, not someone else's.

So for me it's white racialism, which can take form in any of the above-listed ways--you can probably think of possibilities I have left out. I'll be exploring aspects of white racialism--including racial or white nationalism--from the perspective of libertarianism, which I'll define next. My thesis is that libertarianism is not antithetical to white racialism--one can be both a libertarian and white racist--but that a libertarian orientation will prompt some forms of white racialism more than others.

Connections, Implications

In the discussion that follows, I will provide examples of how my libertarian outlook has affected my own engagement with white racial matters. As I do this, keep in mind that I am not the embodiment of libertarianism. I didn't internalize the whole of libertarianism but rather only those aspects of it that were, for whatever reason, salient and useful to me; and they were my interpretations of those aspects, I could well have distorted their true, or objective, meaning. And remember too that libertarianism isn't the only worldview that has influenced me: cultural conservatism has, Russell Kirk, people like that; nihilism has, particularly its active (versus passive, or pessimistic) version; existentialism has; and the human potential movement of the 1960s and '70s has.¹⁹ And too, I have been, and am, influenced by my genetic make-up, life experience, personality and temperament, circumstance, and life stage. While my particulars are unique to me, I'm like everyone--no one is purely anything. Human thought, motivation, and direction is always multi-dimensional, and that always has to be kept in mind in efforts to tease out the impact of

any one factor--libertarian thought and predilection in this case--for analysis.

I'll begin with my entrée into white racialism, my book on William Pierce, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds*, written in the late 1990s and published in 2001.²⁰ I came away from my encounter with Dr. Pierce with enormous respect and admiration. What a remarkably capable, effective, and decent human being, and how kind and supportive he was to me personally. What a wonderful educative and formative experience writing this book was for me. But I couldn't connect personally with Pierce's total and unquestioning commitment to National Socialism, and I think my libertarian streak was a big part of that. National Socialism is just too collectivist, doctrinaire, top-down authoritarian, and hero-worshipping for me. All those sincere young men dressed alike marching along with shovels on their shoulders, not to my taste. Do your duty, play your assigned part, bees in beehive, no. Race is everything--it's major, Dr. Pierce helped me see that, but it isn't everything. National Socialism has all the answers--it was well worth my time to study it for the first time, but no, it doesn't have all the answers as far as I'm concerned. There is one good way to think and be--that's not true, there are all sorts of ways. It's all of us against all of them--for the first time I saw things in terms of a collective competition and struggle, but still, I can't bring myself to dehumanize and objectify masses of people enough to go to war, figuratively or literally, against any human aggregate, racial, ethnic, national, or religious. Jews are bad--I came to a realization, for the first time, of Jewish efforts to countermand white gentile cohesiveness and power, but Jews aren't all alike, there are good as well as bad people among them; in fact, if I look at them one by one, the vast majority of them are good people and, on balance, their existence has enriched my life. Hitler is wonderful--it was enlightening for me to study Hitler and his ideas while writing the Fame book, but he has some very bad points, and in any case, he's not on a higher plane of existence than I am, and neither is anybody else. I'll respect people that deserve it, but I'm not fawning over anybody and I'm not on this earth to be in anybody's entourage, and I talk as well as listen, thank you. You see where I'm going with this. I think an implication of libertarianism is that it argues against equating white racialism

with National Socialism (which some white racialists do), or any other ideology, for that matter.

My second book dealing with race, *One Sheaf, One Vine: Racially Conscious White Americans Talk About Race*, published in 2004, reflected an individualistic, libertarian perspective.²¹ The discourse in white racialism tends to be public, impersonal, what's going on in the world, which I think is fine, I'm not making either-or arguments here. However, the *Sheaf* book departed from that. It was about the private, the personal. Unlike *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds*, *Sheaf* is about everyday, anonymous individual white people, how they are doing in their lives and what their racial beliefs and commitments have to do with that. A tacit point of the book is that Pierce counts, public figures count, but so do these people, and really, just as much, we all count, every one of us. *Sheaf* surfaces concerns that might otherwise be overlooked, such as feeling isolated and unsupported as a white person, living with the consequences of racial discrimination in school admissions and employment because you are white, the fear of losing face with others and being dismissed from your job if you are racially conscious and active in the same way as members of other racial and ethnic groups, and being afraid to walk the streets in one's racially mixed neighborhood. To the question of how the world is doing, *Sheaf* added the question of how we are doing--and not just the white people whose statements comprise the book, but you and I too: how are things with us as white people, and what needs to be done to make things better for us as racial beings.

In my third book on race, *Living White*,²² and in numerous articles, there have been considerations of the personal, individual dimension of the white racial issue. An example that comes to mind is a writing on this site called "When They Attack," which offers my suggestions of how to deal with the assaults leveled against racially committed white people. Another example is the writings dealing with personal health and on this site; if we are going to fight the battle to support our race we had best get in the best mental and physical health we can, and to recognize that we are going to die and what life comes down to, with regard to race and everything else, is what we are going to do between now and then. In my writings you'll see attempts to connect the very personal, very

individual, need to find love and peace and honor in our individual lives with racial concerns. Libertarianism supported all of this.

In 2005, I published a book review in the journal sponsoring the essay contest on libertarianism and racial nationalism, *The Occidental Quarterly*. The book is one that I like very much, and recommend here, *The Conservative Bookshelf: Essential Works That Impact Today's Conservative Thinkers* by Chilton Williamson, Jr.²³ Toward the end of the review, I offered these remarks, which I suspect will make more sense in the context of this paper than it did to the readers of the review at that time.

The Conservative Bookshelf got me thinking more about where the individual fits into conservatism. Williamson's presentation focused on the collective: religion, culture, ideas, public issues, what it is all about, what we are, what we do, what we should do. Where does that leave me? I ask myself--this mortal, finite, human being sitting here in front of this computer screen? And where does it leave you, the person reading this right now?

It has been important to me to have encountered the writings of people--[libertarians] Frank Chodorov, Murray Rothbard, and Frank Meyer come to mind--who, at least at one point, in the 1950s and '60s, were associated with conservatism but who focused on the individual rather than the collective. These three weren't writing about abstractions—Western man, conservative ideology, God's rules, and the like. They were writing about me, the one trying to put a good life together here in Burlington, Vermont. They didn't write about my obligation to align with some pre-ordained plan. They wrote about how free I am, and how capable, to manifest the person I really am beneath all the conditioning I've undergone in my life.

I consider it healthy for me to have engaged both the collective-focused visions of writers [that Williamson discusses] such as William Buckley and the individual-focused visions of these writers I've just mentioned. Meyer wrote about fusing the collective- and individual-centered visions. I prefer to allow them to remain separate and to clash and compete and come together and fall apart within my mind as I confront the choices and take the actions that comprise my life.

Williamson includes the [libertarian] economist Friedrich Hayek and his arguments for a free enterprise economy, which

emphasizes personal freedom, and the [libertarian educational and social critic] Albert Jay Nock book has a more iconoclastic approach than the others, but Williamson doesn't include books by the Rothbard-Chodorov-Meyer sort. That's his call, and, indeed, these writers don't fit into the paleoconservative frame of this book. These years, they'd be classified as libertarians; them, not us, to conservatives of whatever stripe. I'm just saying that if all I take in is about the big picture and my duty to carry on this pattern or way or to abide by something or another or defer to whatever or whomever, I feel hemmed in and get edgy. I admire [conservative theorist] Russell Kirk immensely and have profited greatly from his writings. But at the same time I picture him as a pudgy guy in a dark suit with a vest sitting at the head of the dinner table, and that's just not me.

I care about the destiny of the West, I really do, but the truth of it is I spend most of my time thinking about friendship, love, sex, pleasure, honest expression, my mental and physical health, and finding a rewarding way to get through my day-to-day activities. And the truth of it is I'm going to attend to people whose work or life example informs these personal concerns. So tonight I'm not going to read *From Union to Empire* [by conservative historian Clyde Wilson]. I'm going to pick up where I left off in a biography of the French film director Francois Truffaut and watch a video of his film "Jules and Jim." And, if there's time, I going to start Simone de Beauvoir's personal account of Sartre's last years, *Adieux*.

All to say, I don't equate white racialism with right-of-center political and social ideologies. I have the concern that the white racial movement has done just that, and in the process limited itself and turned away many people who might have joined the cause.

My libertarian impulses support the general conclusion that people come in all shapes and sizes, and that there are many acceptable ways to get through life. This general point applies to concepts of masculinity and femininity. I was asked to write a review a couple of years ago for a newsletter of *The Occidental Quarterly* on the book *Real Men: Ten Courageous Americans To Know and Admire* by R. Cort Kirkland.²⁴ As it turned out, the review was never published

in that venue--you can read it on this site, however, in the writings section.

Real Men is made up of profiles of ten men from the American past that Kirkland considers to be real men: "I picked the men profiled in these pages by asking two questions: What kind of men do I want my sons to become? What kind of men do I want my daughters to marry?" He notes these ten men possessed "bravery, tenacity, rectitude, loyalty, faith, chivalry, obedience to God and just authority, and devotion to duty." They "embodied the traditional Christian conception of manhood defined in chivalry. They were honorable and honest, generous to varying degrees to foes, and solicitous and protective of women, children and animals. They did not brook insults, and they understood that some things were worth dying for. They had guts."

Indeed, this kind of man sounds admirable. But I have the concern that the white racial movement is too locked into a particular conception of what it means to be, well, anything, including a man. This is what I wrote in the review, and again I have the sense that it will be more understandable if not acceptable in this context than it was to the editor that rejected it at the time.

As I read the profiles, I thought about what all this was saying about my father, slight of build, manicured, deferring, who ten hours a day, six days a week, stood on his feet with his arms raised cutting people's hair, his shoulders throbbing as he got older, and rode the bus home every evening to be with my mother and me. And while there were repeated references to the ideal of a "Christian gentlemen," I couldn't pick up the difference between a Christian gentleman and just a gentleman, and I wondered about what this book was saying about me, a non-Christian.

Kirkland's contrast between rough-and-ready, head-of-the-table real men and today's metrosexual softies plays well, but he offers a simplistic and inaccurate characterization of the manliness of contemporary men based on a few media images. Indeed, boys, and men as well, should consider these ten lives, but not with the uncritical adulation reflected here. Rather, they should carefully analyze and assess these men, and think through how what these men represent fits with who they are and their particular circumstance. And they should take into account the orientation and biases reflected in the list ([fighter pilot POW in Vietnam] Rocky Versace and not anti-war activist

Tom Hayden, [pro football coach] Vince Lombardi and not [homosexual] playwright Tennessee Williams).

If we are going to talk about real men, we're going have to talk about real lives, right here and now, yours and mine. You're 34, selling insurance for Aetna, dealing with hate stares from your ex-wife and her new husband when you pick up your daughter on visitation days, a thyroid condition is sapping your energy, and deep in your heart you think Christianity is Semitic voodoo. You're never going to be a Swamp Fox [the nickname of Francis Marion, an army officer during the Revolutionary war and one of the book's real men] or a Christian gentleman. But you can try your best given the hand you've been dealt in life to do the honorable thing, day after day, year after year, win some, lose some, whether or not anybody ever acknowledges it, until the day you die. And if you do that, for my money you are a real man.

The tendency to look at the world through a traditional conservative perspective to the exclusion of other outlooks, and, I offer, to live in a world of abstractions rather than life as actually lived, leads too many white racialists to think that this "ride 'em cowboy" man is the only way to be a real man. If you try on other perspectives for size, libertarianism being one of them, and get down to earth and look at actual men, it stretches the range of acceptability and worth in what I consider to be healthy ways. One of the problems with white racialism is that it is a turnoff to women. Part of that aversion, I believe, is their view that the white movement is a bunch of posturing, loud talking men locked into an outdated concept of masculinity and, by extrapolation, femininity, the kind who can be seen drinking alone at the Sheraton. Contemporary women don't want to be the woman these men seem to want, and even more fundamentally, they don't want to be around this kind of man period. The result is that white racialism is for all practical purposes a stag party. Libertarianism might help free that up.

Another writing I submitted, in 2008, to *The Occidental Quarterly* in 2008 that was never published fits into this discussion, an essay/review of the book *Gay Artists in Modern American Culture: An Imagined Conspiracy* by Michael S. Sherry.²⁵ You can read it in the writings section of this site. The Sherry book was a way for me to address the issue of white racialism's posture toward gays.

Basically, I haven't been able to get with the anti-gay sentiment pervading the movement, and I believe my individualistic, libertarian take on things has a lot to do with that. After reading what I wrote, the TOQ editor at the time was concerned that the piece was going to play unfavorably with his readership, and after going back and forth with him for a time on how it might/should be changed, I withdrew it. It is on this site. I'll quote extensively from this writing that never made it into TOQ--see what you think.

What to the following individuals have in common? Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Franz Schubert, Gustav Mahler, Henry James, George Santayana, Walt Whitman, John Cheever, Oscar Wilde, W.H. Auden, F. O. Matthiessen, Jack Kerouac, Rudolf Nureyev, Tennessee Williams, Gore Vidal, Cole Porter, Ian McClellan, George Frideric Handel, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Samuel Barber, Thornton Wilder, Dirk Bogarde, Edward Albee, Jasper Johns, Paul Bowles, Truman Capote, Montgomery Clift, Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, Hart Crane, Herman Melville, James Dean, Philip Johnson, Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, John Cage, Ned Rorem, Andy Warhol, Christopher Isherwood, Jean Genet, Johannes Brahms, Van Cliburn, Franco Zeffirelli, Hubert Selby, Anthony Perkins, Robert Mapplethorpe, Terrance McNally, and William Inge.

All of them were or are artists—broadly defined, Philip Johnson was an architect. As far as I know, they are all white gentiles of European heritage. And all of them are reputed to be other than strictly heterosexual in orientation. And all of them are mentioned in Michael S. Sherry's worthy book, *Gay Artists in Modern American Culture: An Imagined Conspiracy*. Sherry is a professor of history at Northwestern University and is himself gay. (Disclosure: I'm heterosexual).

Increasingly over the last few years, and without doing it consciously, I have engaged the work of gay artists and attended to their life examples. I feel I have been uplifted by this encounter and that I am better off, both personally and professionally, for the experience. . . . I'll draw from Sherry's book to list five things that draw me to gay art, and discuss their significance with reference to white racialism: a shorthand term for the people and organizations and ideas and ways that have been a big part of my life for the last decade, and that I care very much about. . . .

The quality of the art. Look over the names that lead off this review—Michelangelo, da Vinci, Henry James, and on

through the list. That represents some great art, and simply, I don't want to die without experiencing at least a fair sampling of it. These past few days I read a collection of John Cheever's short stories. Great writing; I was moved, transported. Earlier in my life I was in a modern dance company and am very interested in dance. Dance doesn't come better than that choreographed by Merce Cunningham and Paul Taylor. And so on. I don't want any movement I'm associated with denigrating the artistic accomplishments of people because of their sexual orientation and concerns about their political and cultural directions and thereby discouraging people from experiencing them, and I worry that white racialism does that.

The insights I gain from it. Sherry quotes social scientist Donald Webster Cory, who argues that, as outsiders, gays "see this stream of humanity, its morals and mores, its values and goals, its assumptions and concepts, from without." Often those on the margin bring a fresh, call it anthropological, perspective to the ways and possibilities of a culture. Tennessee Williams has said that the cruelty and hurt gays experience results in greater sensitivity, and prompts them to look deeper into themselves and the human spirit. In recent months I have been immersed in the films of the Japanese director referred to above, Yasujiro Ozu. (And yes, I think I can love my Western heritage and my race without closing myself off to the art and wisdom of other peoples.)

The late Revilo P. Oliver, a classics professor at the University of Illinois and a prominent and highly respected defender of the Western heritage and white racist, wrote of the need to be "a man who is willing to learn from the accumulated experience of mankind." "He must strive," Oliver asserted, "to observe dispassionately and objectively, and he must reason from his observations with full awareness of the limitations of reason. And he must, above all, have the courage to confront the unpleasant realities of human nature and the world in which we live." Indeed, it is not just Western heterosexuals that can help us confront the realities of our nature and the world in which we live.

It brings me back to the reality of my life. Recently, I watched an interview with the French director Bruno Dumont ("Humanite," "Twenty-nine Palms") that was one of the features on a DVD of one of his films. From watching Dumont's films, I pick up that he is gay. The interviewer asked Dumont what matters to him in his life. Dumont

answered that making good films matters greatly to him— he gives his all to his work. But still, what matters most of all to him, Dumont said, is his own existence. In gay art there is an emphasis on the private, the personal, and I have found that to be, for me, a healthy counterbalance to the public, impersonal thrust of the white racist movement. The writings, the discourse generally, in white racialism is predominantly about it, the fate of the West or the white race, immigration, government policy, what they said and did over there. And that is all fine and good. But at the same time, it's rarely if ever about the person expressing whatever it is, or about you and me, how we are doing.

I read the contemporary novelist Chuck Palahniuk (*Fight Club*, *Choke*), whom I presume is gay. Palahniuk reflects a nihilistic perspective (nihilism is very much a part of the Western intellectual tradition). He deals with issues that confront people in their everyday lives like dealing with noise pollution, and the anger we feel and our desire for revenge. Palahniuk attacks rigid emotional restraint and foot-soldier loyalty to work and family and the state and the cause (whatever it happens to be). He writes about the body and sexuality, and about having fun. He writes about pissing in the soup of the big shots, the top dogs, the I'll-do-the-talking guys. Does this, in good part, come out of Palahniuk's sexuality, out of the fact that he has lived in a world that has said "get back," "get down," "not you" to people of his kind? My guess: yes, it does. Is this kind of irreverence a dimension of the Western heritage—yes, I think it is. The West, America in particular, has been about telling the pompous to f--- off. Palahniuk wrote the following inscription on my copy of his book *Lullaby*:

To Robert—

This is your life!!

[signed]

Chuck Palahniuk

I can relate to that and still care deeply about white people.

It emphasizes gentility and softness and kindness. I'm a sensitive, introspective, artistic type of person and have drawn inspiration from the American painter Robert Henri

(1865- 1929), whom I believe was gay. Henri exemplified and wrote about the artist's way, as he called it, where one's total life, including his vocation, is conducted artfully, from that impulse; or another way to say it, where one's life is one's art. [See the thought "On Living the Artist's Way" on this site.] I find Henri's formulations appealing generally, and that they fit me. But I don't think Pat Buchanan would take to Henri, or perhaps, me. What gay artists seem to be saying is that there is room in this world, including the white racialist movement, for both me and Pat Buchanan. Or is that inaccurate?

A concern of mine is that white racialism equates acceptability, legitimacy, and morality with normality, with normality defined as being like the person doing the talking. Columnist Joseph Sobran is a superb writer. But still, nobody is above critique and criticism. I worry that some people get a pass in the white racialist movement, and that Sobran is one of them. In a 2003 column, he wrote about his kind of people, those who "aren't easily bluffed" by gays. "When the abnormal claims to be normal," Sobran informs us, "their instinct is to respond not with arguments but with jokes ("Did you hear the one about the straight Episcopal bishop?"). Even Stalin couldn't stamp out gay people. More powerful than armies is a wisecrack whose time has come." Frankly, there's a smugness and nastiness in some spokesmen for whites that is getting old for me. More, if we are perceived as smart-ass bigots we are going to stay on the periphery of American life.

Gay artists promote reflection and self-criticism. I think it fair to say that self-analysis and self-criticism are not hallmarks of white racialism. Rather, it is more the idea that we know the truth—there's no doubt about that. Our task is to get others to see things our way, the right way. Gay lives and creations shake up that certainty. They prompt us to think about the degree to which white racialists link the wellbeing of Western culture and white people to certain immutable and unquestioned orthodoxies: with reference to religion, ideology, politics, sexuality and gender relations, art, lifestyle, work and leisure, and schooling. As for the philosophical perspective associated with this journal, is paleoconservatism overly collectivist, authoritarian, male-dominated, closed-minded, exclusionary, and intolerant of anybody who is different from its central spokesmen? The answer may be that white racialism and paleoconservatism are none of that, but the challenge, as I see it, is to calmly and maturely consider these questions.

This would not have been written if I hadn't been influenced by libertarian ideas (and yes, nihilism, existentialism, Eastern thought, and the human potential movement). The question is, does my outlook help or hinder white racialism. I think it helps. Others, you, may think it hurts. I think we ought to assess and deal with gay as individuals and groups one at a time. I think it is possible to be both a white racist and gay. You may disagree. Libertarianism tells us that we should re-think the issue, and however we come out on that, I believe that is a good thing to do.

As for racial nationalism, or white nationalism, don't look for a lot of libertarians among its adherents. Last night in preparation for this writing I read an article by a racial nationalist that discussed what was going to happen "once a White Nationalist regime emerges," and bringing churches "into compliance with the new order."²⁶ "Regime" and "compliance" talk doesn't ring very well with libertarians. In the section on libertarianism, I linked it to Jeffersonian liberalism. Jefferson's Saxon ideal, a social and political arrangement grounded in freedom resonates better with libertarians than one grounded in race. Freedom includes freedom of conscience, deciding on truth and meaning for yourself and not having the State, or any group or individual, impose a particular orthodoxy. It includes freedom of identity, deciding for yourself who you are, and resolving where race fits in to that is a big part of that process. Libertarians are uncomfortable with anyone being told who he or she ought to be or must be. The Jeffersonian ideal, to call it that, includes freedom of association, which means white people would be allowed to live and work and form communities of their own. This is consistent with the libertarian commitment to spontaneous organization--let people be with whom they want and in the way they want. Libertarians are disposed to favor what the Founders created, a constitutional republic with prescribed and limited government prerogatives. The American political system is an experiment in human freedom; it is--or was, anyway--an opportunity for people to create good lives and good social arrangements. The first ten amendments of the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, protect personal liberty.

Libertarians cherish individual autonomy, integrity and dignity, which very much includes their own. They don't take well

to deferring to what their betters have figured out they are supposed to be thinking and doing. Metaphorically, they decide for themselves what musical instruments to play, and they form their own bands, and they decide when and where and how to perform. They will respect you if you deserve it, but they won't look up to you or defer to you. If you come on as a big shot and know-it-all and drone on too long, they'll leave the room. They aren't strongly represented on the planning committees for awards dinners. (For an example of a libertarian, see the thought on this site, "On Steve Ditko.") Libertarians may decide to be racially conscious and active, but it will be on their terms, or terms they work out with you, but it won't be on your terms alone. At least at this point, the racial nationalist orientation and its adherents don't line up well with libertarian ways of conducting life's business.

Libertarians can serve the cause of white racialism. They might be less zealous than some others, and less involved in organizational activity, and they may do things that seem out of alignment with the movement. Libertarian comes as close as any label to characterize me, so I'll use myself as an example. I've criticized paleoconservatism, focused on the personal dimension of white racial concerns, praised "soft" men, written favorably about gays, and walked out of the last conference of a white racial organization I attended and never came back. But still, I'm racially conscious and committed; one doesn't have to be an ex-libertarian to be that. There isn't just one way to be racially involved. To the extent white racialists hold on to that notion they will remain marginal and ineffectual.

I'll close this writing with something I did this past month. It was a paper I wrote about education, *A Needed Paradigm Shift in Education*, which is in the writings section of this site. The main thrust was not about race, but it included this:

Today's political correctness [in schools and colleges]. . . can be understood as a campaign to diminish the power of white gentiles and keep them self-distaining, deferring, atomized isolated, unorganized, discredited, and disempowered, and to so with their own cooperation (which has been remarkably well achieved). . . . Instead of looking at political correctness' elements from the perspective of their impact on minorities as we are encouraged to do, assess them from the perspective of

their effect on white gentiles; in every instance it is negative. White racism, for instance, is really about white gentile racism--Jewish racism isn't the referent here. White gentile religion, Christianity is defamed. Racial integration and non-white immigration dilute European (gentile) power and solidarity. Feminism drives a wedge between white gentile women and their men and discourages childbearing (no white gentile population in the world is reproducing itself--literally, white gentiles are on the way to extinction). Multiculturalism de-Europeanizes, "de-WASPs" America. Diversity justifies discrimination against white gentiles in hiring, school admissions, and grants and contracts. This thrust discourages, demonizes, and suppresses positive white gentile consciousness, interests, leadership, organization, and collective action, political and otherwise. In schools, white gentile children were taught the sins of their people, slavery, imperialism, the slaughter of the native peoples in America, the Holocaust, and to all but obsessively attend to and serve the interests of other peoples while having no concern for the status and fate of their own. An image that comes to mind: white gentiles cheering on the slaughter of their own in the film "Inglorious Basterds." Imagine a Jewish audience glorying in the depiction of the humiliation and murder of "bad Jews."

This excerpt wasn't so much motivated by white racial concern per se but rather a concern for individual human beings. I don't want to see anybody get messed over, whoever they are, whatever race they are, and I see white people getting messed over and I feel pushed from within me to do something about it, and I'm doing what I can given my capabilities and the possibilities in my current circumstance. Writing those words, I pictured individual white boys and girls and young men and women in today's schools being used and hurt and kept back and pushed down. That's what went through my mind, and my libertarian bent had a great deal to do with it. And now the libertarian in me says to you: do whatever you do for whatever reasons you do it and I'll do the same, and let's see how things turn out.

Endnotes

1. Quoted in Murray Rothbard, *For a New Liberty* (New York: Macmillan, 1973) p. 40.

2. Ibid., p.38.
3. Ibid., pp. 38, 39.
4. Quoted in David Boaz, *Libertarianism: A Primer* (New York: The Free Press, 1997) pp. 14,15.
5. Rothbard, pp. 14, 15.
6. Boaz, pp. 16,17.
7. Rothbard, p. 49.
8. A good overview of libertarianism is contained in Charles Murray, *What It Means to Be a Libertarian: A Personal Interpretation* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997). Also see, David Boaz, editor, *The Libertarian Reader: Classic and Contemporary Writings from Lao-tzu to Milton Friedman* (New York: Free Press, 1997).
9. Joseph Ellis, *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Knopf, 1997), p. 35.
10. Ellis, p. 9.
11. Ibid., p. 105.
12. Ayn Rand *The Fountainhead* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943); Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* (New York: Random House, 1957).
13. To read Galt's speech, see Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, pp. 936-993.
14. A readable, and revealing, biography of Rand is Barbara Branden, *The Passion of Ayn Rand* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1986).
15. Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism* (New York: New American Library, 1964).
16. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1967).
17. Robert S. Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds: An Up-Close Portrait of White Nationalist William Pierce* (Bloomington, Indiana: 1stBooks Library, 2001).
18. "David Starr Jordan," in Robert S. Griffin, *Living White: Writings on Race, 2000-2005* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2006), pp. 74-85.
19. Some books that will get you into these areas if you are interested: Russell Kirk, *The Essential Russell Kirk: Selected Essays* (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2006). I've looked at nihilism through the work of Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima. See, Roy Starrs, *Deadly Dialectics: Sex, Violence, and Nihilism in the World of Yukio Mishima* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994). Walter Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (New York: Plume, 1975). A leading theorist in the human potential

movement was the recently deceased George Leonard. See any of his books, including *Education and Ecstasy* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1995).

20. Griffin, *The Fame of a Dead Man's Deeds*.

21. Robert S. Griffin, *One Sheaf, One Vine: Racially Conscious White Americans Talk About Race* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2004).

22. Griffin, *Living White*.

23. The review was published in *The Occidental Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 2, Summer 2005.

24. R. Cort Kirkland, *Real Men: Ten Courageous Americans To Know and Admire* (Nashville: Cumberland House Publishing, 2006).

25. Michael S. Sherry, *Gay Artists in Modern American Culture: An Imagined Conspiracy* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

26. Greg Johnson, "The Christian Question in White Nationalism," *The Occidental Observer*, May 14, 2010.