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# Achieving Freedom: Part One

## **How *Not* to Achieve Freedom**

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Stefan Molyneux, MA

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For my beloved wife Christina, who teaches me all that is true, and shows me everything that is possible...

I would like to thank the listeners of Freedomain Radio, whose passion, generosity and participation has made this book – and all the books to come – possible. Thank you for the gift of this time.

Thanks also to my most excellent reviewers and proofreaders: the “Philosopher Kings” at Freedomain Radio.

Any errors that remain are, of course, solely my responsibility.

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*“Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is truth.”*

*- Aristotle*

*Plausibility is a trap for the truth laid by lies.*

*- Yvan Audaud*

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## INTRODUCTION

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This book is the first in a series outlining how we can achieve a truly free society. I will not attempt here to delineate what that society will look like, since I have done that in previous works, and in my podcast series at [www.freedomainradio.com](http://www.freedomainradio.com) – and also because no matter what your political persuasion, I am sure that you agree that a society based less on coercion and more on voluntary negotiation is an ideal to strive for.

Before we start talking about how to achieve a stateless society, I think that it is important to spend some time talking about how *not* to achieve a stateless society.

For the past several hundred years – really since the late 18th century – intellectuals, priests, philosophers, academics and activists of every stripe and hue have been striving with all their considerable intellectual and moral might to place theoretical and practical limits upon the power of the state.

The original American experiment was at least intellectually founded upon the ideal of creating a government by and for the people, with the express knowledge that the state was a dangerous servant and a terrible master.

It is hard to think of other examples in history where so many checks and balances were placed upon centralized political power – and it is also impossible to think of a more dangerous and powerful government than the modern American leviathan.

The abysmal failure of such a noble experiment should give all moralists pause.

If the smallest possible government has grown into the largest conceivable government – within a few hundred years – it is hard to imagine what kind of theoretical system could conceivably control state growth in the future.

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## TRIPLE THREAT

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Traditionally, three approaches have been taken to reducing the power and size of the state. The first is *political action*; the second is *academic education*; the third is *religious partnership*.

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## POLITICAL ACTION

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This approach takes as its fundamental axiom the idea that if the general citizens were educated enough, and motivated enough, and insistent enough, then the natural democratic process would shrink the size and power of the state. Candidates such as Ron Paul would gain enough of a popular mandate to stride into Washington, wrestle the entrenched special interest groups, flush out the sewage of accumulated corruption, and take back the government for the people!

To this end, libertarians of all persuasions have either directly participated in or supported the pursuit of political action, usually from a grassroots level. The political process is considered either to be a practical way of gaining – and thus diminishing – political power, or at the very least a “bully pulpit” from which to communicate to a wider audience the libertarian ideals of small government.

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## ACADEMIC EDUCATION

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This second approach – often allied with the political approach – is based on the belief that *if* knowledge about the efficiency and virtue of the free market can be researched, peer-reviewed, published and communicated clearly and widely enough, the general population will forsake their desire for statist solutions to complex social problems in favor of voluntary and free market solutions. In a similar manner to the political approach, the growth in state power is perceived to result from a *deficiency in knowledge* among the general population about the free market – just as the political approach assumes that state power increases as a result of a deficiency of *political* knowledge among the general population, such as a detailed understanding of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Federalist Papers, and so on.

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## RELIGIOUS PARTNERSHIP

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At the true heart of the libertarian movement, however, sits a well-worn altar. Religious faith is the very bedrock of the anti-government movement – in particular, the anti-*Federal* movement. Ron Paul is a fundamentalist Christian who rejects evolution, the Mises Institute is specifically Catholic, Bob Barr is also a fundamentalist Christian...!

It is not exactly that the libertarian movement is *populated* by fundamentalists, but rather that libertarianism can be considered an off-shoot of Christian fundamentalism.<sup>2</sup>

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## FOLLOW THE...

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What these three approaches have in common, of course, is *money*. Political activism raises tens of millions of dollars in an election cycle – while free-market academic economists take home an income in the six figures, along with tenure, months off in the summer, plenty of travel, and extended sabbatical leaves.

However, the *real* money in libertarian circles comes from religion. Religious organizations raise billions of dollars a year, and are happy to spend that money funding compatible causes. Americans gave an estimated *\$93.18 billion* to religious organizations in 2005.<sup>3</sup> A large proportion of that money is dedicated to the pursuit of religious goals – one of which is the shrinking of the Federal government through libertarian activism.

The only way that this money can be gotten ahold of is through the perception – well reinforced by libertarians – that not only are these three approaches *effective* in reducing the power of the state, but they are in fact the *most effective* approaches.

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## THE TRACK RECORD...

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It hardly seems premature to compare the goals of libertarianism<sup>4</sup> to its actual achievements. This scarcely violates the basic principles of libertarianism, as it claims to be a logical and empirical approach to determining truth and value in the world.

One of the central libertarian arguments against statist solutions is that they promise endless benefits, but deliver endless disasters. “Look at the welfare state!” libertarians pontificate. “It promised to *reduce* poverty, but since it has been instituted, poverty has only gotten *worse!*”

Similarly, libertarians say, governments *claim* to protect their citizens, while in fact continually attacking their persons and property.

Thus libertarianism rejects theoretical proclamations in favor of *tangible, real world empirical evidence*.

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<sup>1</sup> At a purely anecdotal level, I have also cohosted dozens of libertarian talk shows, and almost every caller has been a fundamentalist Christian.

<sup>2</sup> Although it is true that several prominent libertarians are atheists, they regularly praise religion for its contributions to freedom, or avoid the topic in general. For an example of this, please see <http://www.lewrockwell.com/block/block103.html>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.generousgiving.org/page.asp?sec=4&page=161>

<sup>4</sup> In this book, I will be using the word ‘libertarianism’ to apply to the three central strategies described above. Where I wish to be more specific, I will attach an appropriate word or phrase, such as “political libertarianism.”

To be sure, this is not the only criticism that libertarians level toward statism – what I call the *argument from effect* – they also use the *argument from morality*, rightly condemning the use of force by the state to achieve its ends.

However, since an enormous amount of libertarian literature exists criticizing the “law of unintended consequences,” or the ill effects of state power – the ever-growing gap between what is promised and what is achieved – I think it is more than fair to take the criticisms that libertarianism applies so liberally to everything else and apply them to libertarianism itself.

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## ACHIEVING GOALS

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Libertarianism does not present itself as a philosophy or activist approach that is designed to merely *slow down* the potential growth of the state. Libertarianism has as its stated goal *the reduction of the size and power of the state*.

The formal modern political libertarian movement was founded in the early 1970s – but we can go a lot further back in terms of anti-state activism. In the late 18th century Adam Smith argued strenuously against tariffs, the manipulation of currency, and the interference in trade that was a staple of the government programs of the day.

In the 19th century, we saw the rise of classical liberalism, which was even more assertive in its goal and expectation of reducing the size and power of the state.

Starting in the 1920s, Ludwig von Mises wrote powerful tracts against socialism, and was the first to detail the *calculation problem*, which is that socialist economies inevitably fail to optimize because the absence of the free market mechanism of price always results in disastrous errors in resource allocations.

In the 1950s and 1960s, libertarianism received significant boosts on the academic, political and artistic fronts through the rising popularity of several star economists such as Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek, politicians such as Barry Goldwater – as well as through the novels of Ayn Rand, which introduced millions of people to the philosophy of liberty.

On the fringes, Murray Rothbard published important academic works on the causes of the Great Depression, thundered powerfully against the irrationalities and predations of state power, experimented with various political alliances with leftists, and spearheaded the examination of how a modern society could function in the complete absence of the state.

The rise of the Chicago School of economics provided significant academic boosterism to our theoretical understanding of how free markets work, and why they are so effective.

Tens of millions of people have devoted staggering amounts of time, money and energy to the goal of reducing state power. This goal has been pursued for hundreds of years, has burned through hundreds of millions of dollars, and has received significant intellectual support from religious leaders, academics and popular writers.

What has been the net result of centuries of strenuous effort to reduce the size and power of the state?

*The largest and most powerful governments in the history of mankind.*

Is it entirely unfair to take the charges that libertarians hurl at statist bureaucracies, and turn them against the effectiveness of libertarianism *itself*?

If a statist bureaucracy should be roundly and endlessly condemned for achieving the exact *opposite* of its stated goals – and refusing to change its approach despite that basic reality – can we not reasonably level that same charge at libertarianism as well?

The age of the modern welfare state can be measured in decades – the history of libertarianism goes back centuries – and yet libertarians condemn the welfare state for failing to achieve its goals, while creating endless excuses for their own failures.

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## SHOW ME THE MONEY...

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Libertarians also condemn the state for using moral principles as a mere cover for base money-grubbing. “The government says that it wants to help the poor, but really it just wants to increase your taxes!”

The use of ethical arguments to bamboozle money out of the gullible is considered a vile crime by libertarians – yet their consistent failure to achieve anything even remotely close to their stated objectives is not considered cause enough to rethink their three basic approaches.



As I will show in this book, rethinking our approach to achieving a stateless society will necessarily harm the direct financial and career interests of those who currently profit from the unholy trinity of libertarian addictions – politics, academics and religion.

Free market economists constantly tell us that people respond to incentives. Whatever you subsidize increases – and whatever you tax decreases. Libertarians also tell us that statist bureaucracies will never solve the problems they are created to solve, because if the welfare state were to actually *eliminate* poverty, it would have to disband, throwing everyone within it out of work. It is to the advantage of the welfare state, libertarians and economists tell us, to actually *increase* the numbers of poor people, since that results in increased funding for anti-poverty programs.<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to note that these esteemed thinkers do not say that everyone *except* libertarians responds to incentives – thus we can reasonably assume that libertarian organizations are subject to the same economic principles as every other group. If the funding of libertarian groups increases as the size of the state increases, then we can reasonably assume that those who run libertarian groups are actually being paid to *increase* the size of the state – just as the heads of welfare agencies are paid to increase the numbers of the poor.

I understand and accept that these are not conscious motives – any more than some welfare czar wakes up every morning, rubs his well-oiled moustache and giggles with glee at the reality that creating more poor people expands his political empire. It is not through the malevolence or bad intent of any particular individuals that such things come to pass, but rather it is an inevitable law of economics, since people respond to incentives.

I do not speak theoretically here – without a doubt, the largest political campaign in libertarian history was the Ron Paul candidacy, which raised over \$20 million, at a time when the growth of state power was considered the most dangerous. As the size and power of the state grows, so does the money and attention rolling into libertarianism.

Perhaps you feel that this charge is unreasonable, or even shocking?

Perhaps. However, there is a simple empirical test.

Libertarians would be able to easily destroy any charge of corruption by simply and honestly reviewing and examining their catastrophic failures over the past few decades – let alone the past few centuries.

Sadly, however, such self-criticism and self-examination is not only *not* part of the movement – it is actively avoided and attacked if it ever dares to raise its head.

If libertarians genuinely believe that they themselves are immune to financial incentives, then they are saying that they are excluded from a founding principle of economics. If libertarians can pursue their primary goal in *opposition* to economic incentives, then surely this would be possible for statist bureaucracies as well. If those who inhabit statist bureaucracies always follow *their* economic incentives, then surely that same law must apply to libertarians as well.

When an organization consistently achieves the exact opposite of its stated goals, refuses to examine or change its strategy, continually takes in more money the worse things get, and attacks anyone who questions its fundamental approaches, then by any reasonable standard that organization has become irredeemably corrupt, and must be abandoned by the sane and rational – or at least those to whom the reduction of state power is a real goal, and not just a bait for income.

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## REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

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I have always believed that it is not particularly productive to criticize without providing an alternative. I have never wanted to be an “armchair quarterback” who complains about the decisions and actions of others, and yet remains unwilling to rouse himself to create a reasonable solution.

I have strong opinions about how we can truly begin to build a road to a better and freer future – but first I know that the political, academic, and religious addictions of libertarianism must be shed in order for us to begin down that road.

You have to clear the rubble before building anew.

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*5 It is true that libertarian organizations are not specifically statist in the way that, say, the Department of Education is, but I shall argue in this book that two of the approaches that are taken require the state. This is easy to see in the realm of politics – there is no candidacy in the absence of a state – but I will also make the case that statism is the essence of academia as well. Religiosity will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.*

## UNREASONABLE COMPROMISES

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Libertarianism claims to be a true, rational and empirical discipline. “We should oppose state power, and believe in the virtue and efficacy of the free market not as articles of faith,” sayeth the libertarians, “but because these tenets have been proven both theoretically and empirically.”

As an empirical discipline, libertarianism fully recognizes the reality that theory must bow to evidence. Material facts trump theoretical perfection.

It is strange – and generally seems almost inevitable – that empirical disciplines, particularly in the social sciences, seem to be virulently opposed to their own standards. Libertarians say that socialism is illogical in theory, and disastrous in practice – and also preach that anything which is disastrous in practice must by definition be illogical in theory as well. In other words, it is equally valid to predict disastrous consequences by proving that a theory is illogical – as well as to derive the *illogic* of a theory by starting with its disastrous consequences.

It is not unreasonable to apply the term “disastrous consequences” to a movement that has not only failed to achieve its stated goals over several centuries, but has watched the exact *opposite* of its stated goals come to pass, despite a titanic expenditure of labor, money and time. If the illogic of socialism can at least in part be proven by the disasters of its application, then surely we must admit the possibility that there might be something wrong with libertarian tactics – the approaches of politics, academics and religiosity.

## POLITICS

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As any entrepreneur knows, the great temptation when wooing potential investors is the desire to over-promise results. In my own business career, I was constantly fighting to ensure that the information that we presented to potential investors was a reasonable appraisal of our capacities and prospects, while other executives sometimes seemed more prone to the temptation of inflating expectations.

Entrepreneurs who over-promise almost always end up under-delivering relative to the expectations of investors. The sleazy fall-back position when this inevitably occurs is to mumble something about “market positioning,” and say that the money was spent not in the generation of immediate profit, but rather in the general “education” of the potential market about the value of the product and/or the company. However, when investors press the entrepreneurs to provide evidence of this “market education,” only vague generalities and baseless assumptions can be heard.

In the recent Ron Paul campaign, two general arguments were used to get as much money as possible out of potential donors, which followed the same sleazy pattern described above.

## SUCCESS!

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When potential donors were contacted, it was with the promise that their donations would pave the way to potential electoral success. Various scenarios were put forward as to how Ron Paul could gain the presidency.

## MARKET POSITIONING!

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When the practical impossibility of this was pointed out, the fall-back position was that the Ron Paul candidacy was effective because of its opportunity to educate the general public. There is no podium like a presidential race, it was said, and no better way to get libertarian messages across in the general media.

## NO TESTING!

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Libertarians constantly criticize state agencies for failing to create predictable tests for success, to track progress, and to produce measurable results. If the goal of the Ron Paul candidacy was to get him elected to the White House, then that goal *utterly failed*. Short of spontaneous combustion, a worse failure could not be imagined.

If, however, the goal was to educate people to a greater understanding and appreciation of libertarian ideas and ideals, then we have *absolutely no way of knowing whether or not this goal was achieved*, because no “before and after” surveys were conducted.

It would be relatively easy – and inexpensive – to set up phone interviews with randomly-selected American voters before and after the campaign, to figure out how their general perception of libertarian ideals changed as a result of the Ron Paul candidacy.

This was never done – by a group that *endlessly* attacks the government for its “lack of accountability.”

Of course, endless anecdotal “evidence” is trotted out to “prove” that the candidacy resulted in an increase in the number of libertarian devotees, but that means about as much to a skeptic as a government commercial “proving” the virtue of the welfare state by talking to some people who have benefited from its largesse, and interviewing a department head.

Libertarians – particularly those enamored by free-market economics – constantly talk about the need to keep our focus on the “hidden costs” rather than the “visible benefits.” If the government promotes a job creation program by showing a number of happy workers talking about how they got jobs through this program, the first thing that the libertarian will do is loudly proclaim that we should *really* focus on the many jobs that were *lost* as a result of increased taxation, rather than the few jobs that were created by the government program!

In exactly the same situation, when the silly anecdotes about Ron Paul “converts” are trotted out, and a reasonable person mentions that we should also think about the number of people who were turned *off* libertarianism by Ron Paul – by his religious fundamentalism, his opposition to evolution, his hostility towards and desire to deport “illegal immigrants” – well, suddenly the entire principle is reversed, and no, we must focus entirely on the *positive anecdotes*, not the negative possibilities!

It is truly, truly sad – but also inevitable, when dogmatic assertions are substituted for reason and evidence.

It is also inevitably the case that when people are afraid that they have failed, they tend to resist testing. Libertarians constantly rail against the fact that public schools refuse to submit to objective measures of success – and then, when someone suggests that they should measure the objective success that is claimed for the educational power of the Ron Paul candidacy, well, that is absolutely *wrong*, and a waste of resources, and not to be allowed!

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## ACADEMIA

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Truly the strangest beast in the libertarian landscape is the free-market academic – the man who endlessly praises the ethics and quality of the free market, while himself staying as far as humanly possible away from it!

Such a creature will always tell you that he has joined academia – despite its entirely statist and unionized nature – because he wants to help the world achieve freedom by preaching free-market economics to impressionable students.

“Someone has to teach these kids about economics, and it is better for an Austrian economist to hold the position rather than some hideous statist or Keynesian. At least when I am up on the podium, these kids get exposed to some free-market ideas, which they can then further study, discuss and understand on their own for the rest of their lives. Also, some of the kids that I teach will end up going on to become economics professors themselves, which will further spread free-market ideas to other impressionable youngsters. And so, the world will become freer over time...”

This compelling fairytale is exactly the kind of self-serving propaganda that you would expect coming out of the head of any government agency.

Why is this position so ludicrous?

This argument rests on the belief that great good can be achieved from within the bowels of corrupt privilege. The position of “professor” can only be obtained by joining a state-sanctioned and state-protected union, an enforced monopoly with high and violent barriers to entry. The university system itself is highly subsidized by the state – a *less* free-market environment can scarcely be conceived outside of pure communism.

If a free-market economist can achieve great virtue and do wonderfully good deeds despite being embedded in a violent and corrupt environment, then surely the same can occur in any government agency, or any state-enforced or state-subsidized monopoly. Violence and corruption can lead to great good, if only the right people can be put in place – is that not the fundamental delusion of statism?

Free-market economists dislike statist monopolies because they are immune from market forces, which they claim results in poor quality, shoddy service, endless inefficiencies and the wholesale destruction of physical and intellectual capital. Also, because such a monopoly does not rely on its customers for its income, but rather upon its political connections, economists recognize that its real “customers” are not the end consumers of its products or services, but rather the political masters who control its fate.

Since free-market economists do not gain their salaries from their students, but rather from the approval of other academics, bureaucrats and politicians, we can assume that the universal principles that they apply to other statist monopolies also apply to their own. In accordance with his own free-market principles, an academic economist dooms himself to a life of pitiful quality, shoddy service, endless inefficiencies and the wholesale destruction of intellectual capital – in this case, the tender and trusting minds of his students.

If this rule does not apply to him – if he can provide quality and do good *despite* his coercive monopoly – then he has no right to criticize other coercive monopolies, but rather should abandon such principled objections, and say that such systems can work beautifully, if only they can be populated by the “right” people. In other words, it is not the system itself that he is criticizing, but rather the inhabitants of that system – thus falling prey to the endless delusion that *some* people are immune to the economic absolute of responding to incentives, and so it is those people who can productively use the power of the state to benefit the world.

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## ACTIONS VERSUS WORDS

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It has been my strong and direct experience that people do not in fact judge what you *say*, but rather what you *do*. 90% of communication is nonverbal.

What is your average uninformed student to make of his free-market economist professor? Let us call this tender student “Bob,” and his professor “Doug.”

When Doug endlessly expounds upon the evils and inefficiencies of statist monopolies, what is Bob to think? Is Doug saying that he, Doug, is both evil and inefficient? If Doug is not evil and inefficient, then statist monopolies cannot by definition be evil and inefficient, since Doug belongs to one.

What about when Doug talks about the loss of quality that arises from artificial and violent barriers to competition in trade and services? Does not Doug’s state-protected union at least imply an artificial and coercive barrier to competition? Does that mean that Doug’s teaching is of a pitiful quality, as a result of these barriers to competition?

When Doug praises the efficiencies and virtues of the free-market, what is Bob to make of these assertions? Would he not feel similar to how he would feel if one of his professors endlessly praised the virtues of tolerance and multiculturalism, and then withdrew in the evening to a gated community where minorities were not allowed?

Even more fundamentally – and importantly – what does Bob *really* think will happen if he brings these perfectly valid and sensible questions to the attention of Prof. Doug? If the criticisms that our friend the free-market academic brings to bear on others can be even more directly applied to himself – since he claims to possess such great knowledge about these matters – what will happen if Bob persists in applying the same criticisms to Prof. Doug?

All students who are not functionally retarded understand exactly what will happen if this matter is pressed. The pettiness and vitriol of these foolish professors will erupt like a vicious and acidic geyser. Professors are widely considered to be touchy, superior, evasive – and emotionally volatile, as are all fundamental hypocrites.

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## ACADEMIC VOLUNTARISM

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Free-market academics will often say that they did not invent the system they are forced to inhabit in order to teach economics. This is true, of course, but it is hard to see the relevance of this obvious fact.

First of all, the same argument could be made for every single other special interest group that free-market academics oppose.

Secondly, the whole point of a peaceful revolution of ideas is to teach people to voluntarily forgo the evil material advantages of state power. Academics have all the power that they need to overturn their own unjust privileges – they merely have to get together and decide to voluntarily cancel all of their own statist contracts with the universities.

If this turns out to be impossible, or impractical, then all that these free-market voluntarists have to do is go on strike until the universities cancel those contracts for them.

If we see those who most love and understand the free market recoil from giving up their unjust government privileges, then we can at last understand that education alone breeds neither virtue nor integrity – but, almost inevitably, stimulates only the corrosive spectacle of pompous hypocrisy.

## DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO...

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When a man screams at his child, “Never scream at others!” he is in fact giving good advice, *but is utterly discrediting that advice through his own actions*.

When libertarian academics say that they are largely driven by the motive to teach the principles of freedom to their students, it is reasonable to ask two questions:

1. Are they in fact communicating the value of freedom?
2. What is the evidence that decades or centuries of using statist institutions to teach people about the free market has increased society’s respect as a whole for the free market?

There is no more subtle and powerful way to discredit an idea than to teach its value in theory while rejecting it in practice. This “credibility gap” is easy to see in politicians, who sometimes rail against homosexuality while cruising for gay sex in airport bathrooms. Can you imagine receiving a lecture on the evils of gay marriage from a married gay couple? Would this not be a form of *absurdism* rather than education?

Even if we consider it somehow reasonable for pro-market academics to teach the virtues and efficiencies of open competition while hiding behind the black walls of state privilege, should this not be a topic that they openly address up front? If a gay married couple lectures you about the evils of gay marriage without even mentioning the completely obvious fact that they are both gay and married – would this not be baffling and annoying beyond words?

You may have heard the old saying, “I cannot hear what you are saying over what you are doing” – and it is hard to imagine a situation it applies to more than state-protected academics teaching students about the evils of state protection, and the endless moral and practical values of the voluntary free-market.

## THE PRICE OF ACADEMICS

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Economics is all about empirical measurement and rational theorizing – primarily, it is about the empirical measurement of *price*, as reflected in voluntary transactions.

Since free-market economists base the value of their field on the primacy of empirical measurement, it is hard to understand why studies of students who have taken economics courses regularly show that they actually do *worse* on economics questions a year after their course than people who have never taken a course on economics.<sup>6</sup>

An economist bases his professional credibility on avoiding arbitrary claims, and building his theories from empirical evidence.

When free-market economists constantly trumpet their own wonderful abilities to teach students about the value and virtue of the free-market, it is hard to understand why studies *prove the exact opposite*.

I do not have a problem with people making baseless claims, as long as they are willing to at least look for the evidence to support those claims – even after the fact. Economists have been saying for decades that they enter into academia in order to teach students the value of the free-market. However, I have never seen one study – credible or otherwise – *which even remotely supports this claim*.

Once again, we see arbitrary, self-congratulatory assertions combined with a relentless avoidance of proof. Priests will tell you that prayer works, but will endlessly evade and reject scientific proof to the contrary. Libertarians will endlessly tell you that political action works, but will endlessly evade and reject empirical proof to the contrary.

Free-market academics will tirelessly repeat the mantra that they effectively teach students about the virtue and value of the free-market – yet no libertarian academic study has ever been performed to discover whether this is, or is not the case.

Free-market economists will study the most arcane and ridiculous subjects – yet mysteriously avoid testing the efficacy of the claims they make about their own profession. They rail against politicians who make wild claims that are unsupported by empirical tests – and then, they tell us that they effectively teach the virtue and value of the free-market, and study every conceivable topic under the sun except the validity of that claim.

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<sup>6</sup> For more details on this, please see <http://www.robert-h-frank.com/PDFs/ES.9.1.05.pdf>.

Empirically, free-market economists do not effectively teach people about the free-market – in fact, empirically, quite the opposite is true. They actually teach people that free-market values are *irrelevant*, because they do not live what they preach.

All free-market economists fundamentally teach students is that only hypocrites are drawn to promoting the free-market. Like the gay married couple who tour the country railing against gay marriage, all they do is confuse, frustrate and alienate those with the misfortune to hear their speeches.

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## KISS THE RING...

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Libertarians – and free-market economists – roundly condemn politicians for *handing out gifts that are not theirs to give*. When a politician “grants” a subsidy to a corporation, these lovers of the free-market are very quick to point out that the money is not the politician’s to “give,” since it has been taken from the taxpayer through the threat of violence. We all fully recognize the degree to which those who flock around politicians with the hope of gaining some illicit goodies flatter the vanity and pomposity of those politicians in order to gain their favor.

Ahhh, but how things change when the *free-market economist* is the one with the gifts to give!

People generally go beyond introductory courses on economics because they want to become professional economists – and many of them want to become professors.

If Bob wants to become an academic professor, he knows the degree to which people have to flatter, bow and scrape before Prof. Doug – since without a “mentor,” he will be unable to make his way up through the ranks toward the Holy Grail of tenure. Bob will have to get research assignments, good grades, recommendations, TA positions – all of the goodies that professors can bestow upon “worthwhile” students.

A man who is given an unjust privilege very quickly begins to mistake that privilege for his own virtue. Politicians, kings and bureaucrats are all surrounded by flatterers, toadies and hangers on – all clamoring to grab a wet meal from the bloody buffet of state power.

And what a tasty meal academia is! Six figure salaries, no shortage of time off, a dozen or so hours of classes a week is considered overtime, it is almost impossible to get fired – it is a wonderfully sweet deal for those who can get a hold of it, assuming that they do not mind selling their souls for the privilege of feeding their bodies.

The reason that professors have any power over their students is because those professors hold the key to a golden door – a key that is not given to them voluntarily, based upon the quality of their teaching as judged by their students, but rather because they have weaseled and toadied their own way up the slick rope of unjust privilege.

Free-market academics hold this unjust and bloody privilege in their hands, and dole it out to the meek, eager and compliant – spurning and rejecting the strong, the skeptical and the critical. They thunder their criticisms at politicians for handing out *their* unjust privileges to a grasping and greedy crowd – and then turn and lord it over their own students, imagining that it is they themselves who are so valuable, rather than the unjust privileges that they can bestow upon those who suitably abase themselves.

For free-market economists, you see – just like everybody else – the trials, stresses and joys of the free-market are always and forever for *others* – not for those who praise the free-market while hiding in the statist monopolies of their ivory towers – but for everyone else, who really should use the productivity of the free market to generate the wealth that can be unjustly “appropriated” by free-market economists.

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## FREEDOMAIN RADIO

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It could be argued that becoming an elite educator was at least to some degree very hard to achieve prior to the Internet. Free market economists could not teach in high schools, since there were few if any classes on economics – and it would be very hard to set up a school of economics and try to get paid by offering voluntary lessons to those who were interested.

Free-market economists like to think that people sign up for their classes and submit to their evaluations, because those people love economics, and knowledge, and their way of teaching – rather than because they are hoping to use them to gain their way up another rung on the ladder to the riches of tenure. Since these free-market economists love to preach that entrepreneurs should submit *their* goods and services to the iron discipline of the free market – that *value* cannot be ascertained in the absence of *price*, and price cannot be ascertained in the presence of a coercive monopoly – then surely these economists should be eager to learn their true value in the free-market.

Since professorial tenure is the unjust privilege of a statist monopoly, it cannot fundamentally be a potential value that an economics professor brings to his students – if this is the case, we must call politicians brilliant entrepreneurs for having so much money to “invest” in businesses.

An economist who truly believes that he is worth his six figure income, short work week and months off in the summer should be eager to submit his theory to the free market – especially since he insists that everyone else should do just that! When a state monopoly is facing privatization and open competition in the free market, he *applauds* such a transition, because it will bring efficiency and reduce coercion – and will thus create much greater value. He tells people who tremble before such a precipice that they should be eager to leap off it to a better, more productive and more efficient environment. “You will be happier!” he cries. “These transitions are difficult, but they are the inevitable progress of the free-market, the creative destruction inherent to capitalism – and you should be eager and happy despite your fears!”

Well, fortunately, I myself have proven that you can stimulate people’s interest in higher education without holding aloft the false and unjust prizes of marks, reference letters and tenure!

I have gotten tens of thousands of people interested in philosophy, economics, art, religion and psychology – and I cannot offer them *any* career advancement (or even tax receipts)! I cannot offer them a degree, or tenure, or anything else of that sort! In fact, some of the ideas that I talk about can be actively uncomfortable for people, since I aim to take philosophy out of the ivory tower and put it into action in people’s lives, which can be enormously difficult.

So – free-market economists who believe that voluntarism is a virtue, and monopoly is an evil – I invite you to join me on the Wild West of the Internet, the ultimate capitalist frontier! Take your theories out of the tower and let them loose in the streets! Preach from home, preach to your computer, speak your truths to a hungry and waiting world – light up people’s minds with your passion, your knowledge, your wisdom and virtue!

It is a simple thing to accomplish. All you have to do is resign from your unjust privilege, and submit the quality of your teaching to the test of the free-market you so admire and praise! It costs only a few dollars a month to set up a website and charge people for your lessons. Shorn of the ability to hand out stolen goodies, you will finally see the true value of what it is that you are doing – in the free-market, which you say is the sole final arbiter of real value!

You can charge students what they are paying you now – maybe \$30 or so for a 45 minute lesson. It is cheap to set up a payment scheme over the Internet – I will help you for free, all you have to do is contact me through my website. Instead of reaching a few dozen students, over the Internet you can reach thousands, tens of thousands – or more! If you *really* want to spread the word of the free market to others, and if you are genuinely worth six figures a year for teaching a few dozen students, then imagine how many millions of dollars you can make by teaching tens of thousands of students! Furthermore – now, your lectures evaporate into thin air like water in a desert – with the Internet, your lectures can exist in perpetuity, and people can pay you for lectures that you did last week, last month, or last year!

You can reach tens of thousands of listeners (I have had millions of podcasts and videos downloaded in a little over two years). Thousands of listeners interested in philosophy talk to each other on the Freedomain Radio board and live chat window. I started the website with virtually nothing, and it cost me maybe \$50 a month to begin with – if you charge \$30 a lecture, which is what you are charging now, you will be able to make back those monthly costs with less than two students in one class!

When you talk to other people who are nervous about the free market, you always tell them that although the transitions can be difficult, great happiness and productivity lie on the other side of privatization. When the Soviet Union was going through its wrenching free-market transition, many academic economists went over there, or wrote articles, proclaiming the virtue in struggling through this transition in order to achieve the efficiency and productivity of the free market on the other side.

Academics – free-market academics – surely you understand that it is now time to take your own advice. Surely you have the integrity to live by the standards that you inflict on others. Surely you have not preached a false doctrine for your entire career. Surely you have not “pooh-poohed” other people’s fears of submitting themselves to the discipline of the free-market – only to surrender to your own fears of submitting yourself, your value, to the free-market. Surely you have not trumpeted so loudly from the top of your ivory tower that the transition to freedom and voluntarism is a noble goal, and then when such noble action is offered to you, slither down to hide in the bosom of state monopoly protection.

So – this is my encouragement, if, as you say, you really *care* about transmitting the virtue and value of the free market to impressionable youngsters. You do not want to be the foolish spectacle of the man who says, in matters of extreme importance, “Do as I say, not as I do!” We all recognize that such inveterate hypocrites have been the scourge of mankind since its inception. You do not want to practice the opposite of the virtues you preach. We have all seen such big-haired monstrosities on the pre-dawn television evangelical hour – you do not want to inhabit such polyester hypocrisy.



No, although it is frightening, as you have constantly pointed out to others, it is a great virtue and a great service to step out of statist protection and submit your goods and services to the discipline of the free-market.

I have paved the way for you, at least. I left a successful entrepreneurial career, and a salary of \$160,000 a year, to build Freedomain Radio, which was at the time making less than \$35,000 a year. And I can tell you that you are completely right – the transition to an even freer market, while difficult, is entirely rewarding.

I listened to your advice.

Will you do the same?

If you genuinely believe that you are worth \$20 or \$30 an hour per student, then you should *leap* at the chance to garner your wages from a far wider audience – because people respond to incentives, as you have constantly told us.

If, however, you reject the free market in practice, in your life, and cling to your unjust statist privileges, your oh-so-light work week, your months off in the summer, your paid travel to exotic conferences, your pension, your job security, your unjust prestige – if you tremble to take the medicine you prescribe to others, though you suffer from exactly the same disease, then by all means, sit where you are, enshrined and entombed in your ivory tower – but can you do the rest of us, those of us who are actually trying to educate people in the free market you praise – can you do the rest of us a small favor?

Please – shut up about the free market.

You are an embarrassment.

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## THE CONTRADICTION OF ACADEMIA

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The academic approach to libertarianism is founded on the premise that if people know enough about the free market, they will reject statist solutions and pursue free market solutions.

The very existence of free-market academics utterly destroys this premise. We can assume that such academics know the most about the free market – and yet they explicitly *reject* free market solutions to the problem of higher education!

If a man who has spent most of his life studying the free market wants no part of it when it comes to his own career, then the argument that increased knowledge leads to a desire for more freedom is proven false.



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## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

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If you want to sail from a city on one continent to a city on another continent, and your course is initially off by only one or two degrees, you may end up not just in the wrong city, but on the wrong continent!

The grand ethics, great strategies and life arcs of any organization – or any individual, for that matter – are all determined by the little decisions made at the very beginning of things. It is possible to break free of the fate of prior decisions, but it is a hellish and humbling process.

Modern political libertarianism is almost exclusively a US phenomenon, and the reason is that since its inception, it has been tightly wed to – and dependent upon – the financial support of fundamentalist Christian religious organizations. The United States is the most religious Western democracy – and since libertarianism is an offshoot of fundamentalist Christianity, it is only in the United States that libertarianism has gained any prominence at all.

This was neither innate nor inevitable to libertarianism. Some of the greatest “libertarians” in history have been agnostics, Deists or outright atheists. Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin, Thomas Paine, George Washington – most of the Founding Fathers were scarcely even Christian, let alone “born again” or fundamentalists. Ayn Rand – the writer who brought millions of people to libertarianism – was a strong atheist, as was Murray Rothbard.

However, the great challenge of activism is *money*. New ideas in particular have trouble gaining financial traction, for the obvious reason that they do not serve anyone’s existing agenda.

People give money to intellectual activists because they agree with the goals of those activists. When libertarianism began, who was it going to get its money from? It did not have the income of an Ayn Rand, or the inheritance of a Rockefeller, and a group of professors do not have the capital to found a sizable political movement.

Fundamentalist Christians believe that the government should be limited because there is no authority but God – the synergy between Christianity and libertarianism in this regard was a terrible temptation, because Christians have a *lot* of money, which is exactly what libertarianism needed to get its start.

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## FELLOW TRAVELERS

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The temptation to join together with groups whose philosophy is oppositional, but whose goals are similar, is an idiotic pit that philosophical movements seem forever willing to pitch themselves into. In other sciences, we can easily see the foolishness of this approach. A scientific agricultural expert would scarcely benefit from “joining forces” with a Native American rain dancer, although both claim to have the goal of producing better crops. Would we counsel an oncologist to join up with a witch doctor, since both have the “goal” of healing people?

Such advice seems ridiculous, of course, but what if the witch doctors have all the money?

If you have a new idea, you can either attempt to merge it with existing ideas – thus compromising it, but gaining easy momentum – or you can attempt to carve out a new market for your idea. Those who are impatient for “results” will always choose the former; those who are dedicated to the truth at all costs will always choose the latter.

Libertarians were enormously impatient – and we can all surely understand this impatience – and so did not want to take the long, slow and hard road of carving out a new market for a rational philosophy, but rather took the easy “catapult off a cliff” by joining together with the superstitious irrationalities – and deep purses – of Christianity. In so doing, they subverted the movement completely, turning it into just another special interest group.

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## PREMISES AND CONCLUSIONS

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People are emotionally drawn to conclusions, but intellectual integrity must draw us toward reasoning from first principles. Everyone is drawn to the moral conclusion that “murder is wrong,” because we feel so instinctively that it must be the case. Intellectual integrity demands, however, that we attempt to derive this ethical conclusion from first principles and rational arguments.<sup>7</sup> To take

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<sup>7</sup> My solution to this problem is detailed in my free book “University Preferable Behavior: A Rational Proof of Secular Ethics,” which is available at [www.freedomainradio.com/free](http://www.freedomainradio.com/free).

an extreme example, if the wind blows some sand dunes into the shape of the equation “ $E=MC^2$ ,” we do not grant it a degree in physics. If we imagine an athlete who plays for a team called the “Atoms,” who is asked what matter is composed of – but who mishears the question as “what team do you play for?” – he will reply with the correct syllables, but in no way will have the correct answer.

Libertarians – and other thinkers of course – rightly deride the public-school practice of “teaching the test,” because the regurgitation of rote answers is *worse* than mere ignorance, since it provides the illusion of knowledge which does not in fact exist. If a teacher instructs her students to write the symbol “4” to the right of the symbols “ $2+2=$ ” we would not perceive her as having taught the children any knowledge or principles at all.

In the same way, the statement “a smaller state is better” does not indicate any particular knowledge *at all*, since it is a mere conclusion, rather than an argument from first principles.

In general, if you can teach a parrot to say it, it cannot be considered knowledge.

Coming to the conclusion that matter is composed of atoms as a result of rigorous scientific experiments represents the acquisition of valid knowledge about reality. Blankly stating that matter is composed of atoms because God says so only represents bigoted superstition, and is worse than professing genuine ignorance, since the illusion of an answer almost inevitably prevents further exploration of the question.

When a new, fledgling movement is struggling to gain momentum the temptation to merge with an enormous, well-funded and well-established movement can be overwhelming. The desire to make a “big splash” and quickly add to one’s numbers and income seems like a perfectly sensible strategy at the time. In a similar manner, a man with a toothache may well think that heroin is the answer – and in a way, with regards to his immediate pain, it certainly is! Unfortunately, the heroin only masks his discomfort, while allowing the rot in his body to fester.

Sadly, by the time he realizes that his drug addiction – while it masked his symptoms in the short run – has only added to the disease he was originally trying to combat, he is very likely in “too deep” to stop his compulsive behavior.

For any cause, money – and its attendant power – can be just such a drug.

Libertarianism claims to be an empirical and rational discipline – the metaphysical and epistemological opposite of any religion, and in particular of fundamentalist Christianity. The fact that both cliques want smaller government has about as much relevance as the fact that both Adolf Hitler and my Indian neighbor like dogs – and gives them about as much in common.

When a supposedly rational movement merges with its opposite based on a shallow similarity of goals, it undermines its own rationality. When the oncologist joins forces with the witch doctor, no one imagines that the witch doctor has suddenly become a scientist – everyone understands that the oncologist has simply become irrational. When the oncologist who has joined up with the witch doctor lectures everyone about the necessity for rationality and empiricism, every sane human being in his audience feels the mad contradiction down to his very toes.

Libertarianism did not make Christianity rational – Christianity simply made libertarianism irrelevant. Libertarianism did not turn Christianity into an empirical science; Christianity turned libertarianism into an irrational superstition.

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## THE TRAGEDY OF COMPROMISE

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The true tragedy of compromise is that it only benefits the least rational – always at the expense of that which is higher, more logical, more noble, more honorable, more true.

A noble woman who marries a corrupt and vicious man does not elevate him; she only debases herself – or rather, reveals her own unconscious corruption.

“Compromise” is a standard that is held aloft by the base, as a way of snagging that which is superior and dragging it down.

Impressively rational thinkers like Ludwig von Mises and Murray Rothbard would laugh out loud at a student who handed in a paper on economics which derived its “proofs” from the Holy Bible, ending with the flourish, “...and so we know that my argument is proven because God says so!” I am sure they would be hard pressed to know even what to say about such a mad submission.

Can we imagine either of these two esteemed thinkers – to take mere examples – clamoring to add their name to such a paper, to be sure that they could share the credit?

Of course not – they would move heaven and earth to *avoid* association with such madness!

However, when the thesis is “small government is better” – and when millions of dollars are in play – why then, religious bigotry suddenly achieves the holy glow of sublime intellectualism! Suddenly, scholars like Murray Rothbard spend time rooting around the bowels of Christian madness, scrabbling to find superstitious support for free market ideas – as if those ideas are so pitiful and unsupportable that we need to canvas ghosts and goblins for supporting quotes! “My thesis is true because my invisible unicorn Pam has snorted twice in my head!”

This kind of pitiful, money-grubbing desperation is truly stomach-turning, and lies at the real foundation of why libertarianism has had so little effect, and why it stands idly by, communing with ghosts and counting its money, while the world slides towards slavery.

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## THE GOAL – AND SOUL – OF AN ORGANIZATION

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Libertarians fully understand, when looking at statist organizations, the difference between *stated goals* and *actual motives*.

For instance, when looking at the war on drugs, libertarians are comfortable saying that although the *stated* goal is to get rid of drugs, the actual motive is quite the opposite, since actually getting rid of drugs – were this even possible – would end the careers of everyone involved.

No man works tirelessly to destroy his own income – and no organization is populated by careerists endlessly dedicated to ending their own careers.

When an organization continues to do that which “does not work,” it is a fairly simple intellectual exercise to understand that no organization *ever* consistently does “that which does not work.” If an organization *seems* to be continually failing to achieve its stated mission – but refuses to alter its actions – then clearly it is simply achieving another, unstated mission.

When examining the “evil uncle” of libertarianism – the Federal Reserve – free-market theorists are both gleeful and scathing in puncturing the illusion that it has any interest in actually achieving its stated goal. The stated mission of the Federal Reserve is to create stability both in currency and in the economy as a whole – yet, since the creation of the Federal Reserve in 1913, the US dollar has lost over 95% of its value, and the United States has been wracked by recessions, depressions and artificial booms. The political complicity of the Fed has been proven time and again, as it performs a variety of essential services for its political masters, such as pumping up the money supply before elections and so on.

Libertarians repeatedly point out that although the Fed’s stated goal is to stabilize the currency and the economy, it continues to do neither without changing any of its actions – and therefore its stated goal must simply be a “cover” for its actual goal.

Exactly the same criticism can be more than reasonably leveled at libertarianism itself.

What is the goal of modern libertarianism? Clearly it cannot be to win elections, since it consistently fails at that, and has not changed its strategy. It also cannot be to educate the general public, since it has never measured – to my knowledge – the effectiveness of any of its educational campaigns. Any “goal” which has never once been measured in over 40 years cannot be considered a “goal” at all.

Is the goal of modern libertarianism to communicate the rational value of empiricism and working from first principles? That is impossible, because it allies with Christianity, which is based on the exact *opposite* of such philosophical principles.

When examining the true goal of any organization, all we have to do is look at what has been consistently achieved, rather than what is proclaimed as a purpose. We all understand this in the case of the Federal Reserve – the reality is that the Fed allows the politically-connected to gain massive wealth and power through the manipulation of currency.

The one goal that *has* been consistently achieved by modern libertarianism, of course, is a money grab, largely from Christians.

If the goal of libertarianism is to grab Christian money with both hands, then that goal has been consistently achieved. Since that goal is the true goal of the movement, and since it has been consistently achieved, then *there is no reason to change strategies*.

What is the goal of free market academics? Is it to teach people about the value and power of the free market? Of course not! They could reach far more people by abandoning their tenured positions and teaching over the Internet, or in some other manner. They would also be far more effective as supporters of the free market if they actually deigned to dip their toes into the market system itself, and submitted their value to the arbitration of voluntary price, as they lecture everyone else to do.

No, the *goal* of such academics is to increase their incomes and live comfortable and secure lives by avoiding the free market as much as possible.

By their actions shall ye know them.

Unfortunately, the enormous corruptions of middle age are bred from the petty compromises of youth – just as the mortal tumors of later life are bred from little cigarettes.

At present, libertarianism has created an income and infrastructure that is utterly dependent upon fundamentalist Christian largesse. Like a corrupt cop with a summer home and a yacht, they have formed their entire lifestyles around a predictable amount of income that flows in from the bulging coffers of the superstitious. This income is a drug that they dare not question, let alone stop taking...

The cracks in the thinking have become the crack in the veins.

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## THE ADDICTION

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Like all addicts, the first defense of libertarianism is denial; and the second is hostility. The growth of profitable and self-sustaining intellectual endeavors over the Internet has centrally threatened the moral choices of libertarianism.

I shall mostly speak of my own endeavor here – the philosophy show Freedomain Radio – since that is the one that I am most knowledgeable about.

The power of the Internet to facilitate communication and education has rendered the essentially medieval institution of the University largely redundant – even counterproductive – in the dissemination of new and challenging ideas.

Free market economists know this perfectly well, when they talk about the counterproductivity of laws that make it difficult to fire people. “If you pass a law that makes it difficult to fire someone, all that will happen is that fewer people will get hired.” They point to the high unemployment in France, where termination is very difficult and expensive legally.

If you restrict exit, you also restrict entry – that is a fundamental reality in economics, well known in the profession.

It is also a well-known principle that state controls always lead to more state controls – price controls inevitably lead to subsidies, which inevitably lead to more price controls, and so on.

In the same way, tenure was originally instituted – so the story goes at least – to “protect” professors with radical ideas. Of course, the only reason a statist protection scheme like “tenure” was needed at all was because professors with radical ideas were not already “protected” by their appeal to their students!

A very talented actor can show up to work late and unprepared, and will still get hired, because of his or her appeal to the audience. Laurence Olivier had to put up with Marilyn Monroe being up to six hours late for a movie shoot! Sean Penn can be difficult to work with, but he is popular with audiences, and so his “job security” does not rely upon him being a bland and pleasant person to work with.

In the same way, any “radical” professor need never fear for his job as long as he remains popular with students – assuming, of course, that it is the *students* who actually pay his salary, as should be the case in the free market.

However, because students do not pay the salaries of their professors – at least, more than a few percentage points, anyway – professors do not maintain their job security by actually being good and popular instructors, but must find some other way to hang onto all the goodies they have come to depend upon.

It is highly instructive that even free market economists did not hit upon the solution of eliminating government funding for universities – thus placing the students at the center of the economic equation, and guaranteeing that it would actually be the *consumer* who called the shots, not political connections. No, instead, additional government regulations and controls were called for, just as free-market theory predicted – and which a *knowledge* of free-market theory in no way impeded.

Since it became almost impossible to fire a tenured professor, what happened was not that radical professors got to keep their jobs, but rather that no more radical professors were ever hired – an inevitable consequence that would be well-known by any competent economist in advance. Department heads in universities obviously do not want to hire difficult, challenging and annoying colleagues, since they will have to live with that decision – and with such an ogre across the hall – for the next 30-odd years.

Professors do not have to appeal to their students – I am sure they would experience that is an unbearable humiliation, like any sheltered lords of privilege – but rather they have to appeal to department heads, and other colleagues. This means that no one can really become an economist who challenges other economists to actually *live* by the values they preach. Such a position would be considered a shockingly rude “attitude,” and would be inevitably punished accordingly.

In this way, the fertility and creativity of free market, consumer-driven competition vanishes from academia, leaving in its wake many who are petty, narcissistic, hyper-political, sneering, vain, insufferable, untouchable little minds, obsessed with minutiae, quick to temper and judgment, emotionally retarded, loftily arcing above the “common people,” congratulating themselves and others for a lifestyle they do not deserve – smug lords of a wealth they have not earned, who spend their waking hours preaching the virtues of voluntarism and discipline while they stuff their soulless bodies with goods and prestige bought and paid for by the blood money dripping from the tables of their political masters.

Unjust privilege corrupts and turns rancid the conscience, which regularly erupts in fits of self-righteous anger against those who have found the strength to make more honorable choices, who have struggled through the close darkness to live a life of sunlit integrity in the mountains above.

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## CLOSE COMPETITION

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In any free market, the fiercest competition always occurs between companies vying for the same dollar. Microsoft does not run ads against Pepsi; Apple does not compete with Nike. If you buy a computer, it does not mean that you will not also buy some running shoes – but if you buy a Dell, chances are you will not buy a Lenovo as well.

However, it seems highly unlikely that Dell will ever run an ad saying that those who buy an Apple or Lenovo are *evil*.

When you combine the fierce competition for the same dollar with the moral intensity of ethical debates, you get the ugliest battles of all.

Any new ethical approach that has the effect of drawing time, money and resources away from prior solutions – creating a zero-sum game – and which also condemns those prior ethical approaches as not only unproductive but morally corrupt, will inevitably create an environment of intense fear, anger and hostility.

Moral questions – and more specifically, moral *criticisms* – cut right to the heart of self-esteem, and of our very concept of identity. When a man claims to dedicate his life to the pursuit and dissemination of virtue, and is criticized for moral hypocrisy – and the charge sticks – he is degraded to a *far* lower ethical position than if he had never entered into the arena of moral philosophy in the first place.

If a man spends his life saying that apricot seeds will cure cancer, and then it turns out that he actually knew that they did not, then he has done far more harm to human health than if he had never promoted a cure at all.

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## METHODOLOGY VERSUS CONCLUSIONS

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### ACADEMIA

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Those who have consistently advocated a *methodology* are in a far better position to sustain and grow from criticism than those who have confidently advocated a *conclusion*. The scientist always does better than the dogmatist, because science is a methodology rather than a conclusion, and the dogmatist is only interested in his own conclusions.

Dogmatists are drawn together as a result of their common rejection of methodology. This is why academics, political activists and fundamentalist Christians all gather together in libertarianism – because all of them fundamentally reject *methodology*, and instead trumpet *conclusions*.

Academics reject *market review* in favor of *peer review*, which is a fundamental rejection of free-market principles – what Ayn Rand used to call “social metaphysics.” No competent economist would argue that the true value of a product is determined by whether other managers think it is valuable or not – rather, the value of a product is determined by the free exchange of value in a market system.

The value of ideas is determined in the free-market, through the voluntary exchange of value. Ideas have no intrinsic value – since economics rejects the concept of intrinsic value, because value is in the eye of the beholder. Gold only has value because people want it – prior to the rise of humanity and the preference for currency, it was just another metal lying in the ground.

Free-market economists virulently deride the assignment of price by bureaucratic managers in a socialist planned economy, calling it a mere arbitrary assertion of value. However, the same economists praise as noble and scholarly the assignment of value by bureaucratic managers – i.e. peer review – and reject the true free-market assignment of the price of their labor, which would be what

students would voluntarily pay them for their knowledge – not for their ability to grant degrees and entrance into academia, but for their *knowledge*, and the value of their teaching.

This contradictory conclusion – that value is determined by market forces, and yet value is also determined by peer review – is just another one of the endless series of hypocrisies generated by modern academia. The *methodology* for determining value is free exchange – trade. However, this is steadfastly rejected within academia, because such crass materialism is only for you and me, not for these lords of the intellect. They must be judged by loftier standards, which are the congratulations and conformities they are willing to bestow upon each other.

The methodology of price is thus both affirmed outside academia and rejected within it – the conclusion that academics live by is that their work just has *value*, damn it – and so they should be *paid* for it, by any means necessary, including statist protection and subsidies.

This is one example of rejecting a methodology in favor of a conclusion.

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## RELIGION

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Clearly, theology utterly rejects *methodology* in favor of a *conclusion* – which is that God exists, and priests must be paid.

Religion is so clearly a virus transmitted by culture (and only the first syllable is really relevant in *that* word!) that no sane man alive would ever imagine that he would grow up to be a Catholic, or a Baptist or a Protestant, if he had grown up in the wilds of Borneo, among the pygmies, on a desert island – or in a Muslim family, for that matter.

Religion is fundamentally the scar tissue of emotional trauma – a form of post-traumatic stress disorder – which forms around the fears of abandonment and punishment that children experience if they dare to question the superstitions of their elders.

The conclusion is that God exists – and that is the entire methodology, it would seem. Christians sometimes do create enormously convoluted arguments to “prove” the miraculous nature of Christ’s existence (“Would people have gone to their deaths if they had not witnessed miracles?”) – but it does not really matter in practice what reasons are put forward for the existence of God, since whenever those reasons are disproven, more “reasons” are simply generated on the fly.

In ancient times, all roads led to Rome – in the ancient times that have survived to modernity, all “reasoning” leads to God.

If the superstitious were at all interested in truth – which is a process, not a conclusion – then they would begin their questions from first principles, with reference to sense-reality, strict logic and empirical evidence, just as every other rational pursuit of truth demands.

Of course, this approach is forever rejected, because even the slightest regard for logic and evidence leads one to at least agnosticism. Any reasonable regard for such standards leads one directly to strong atheism, or the explicit rejection of even the possible existence of such things as ghosts, goblins, genies, gods and gremlins.

The conclusion is the entire point – the “reasoning” (such as it is) is all *ex post facto* – invented after the fact. Prayer is considered to be efficacious, claim the religious – when scientific evidence repeatedly proves this to be pure nonsense, the story is simply changed, and the requirement for evidence altered or removed.

This pitiful intellectual dishonesty and manipulation – all these pious and smug lies – is the exact opposite of the empirical and rational pursuit of truth. The idea that any scientific or rational discipline can productively unite with this fog of scabrous falsehoods only shows the capacity of the human soul for self-delusion and base greed.

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## POLITICS

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When you wish to achieve something unprecedented, it is almost never a good idea to choose from existing “solutions.” If you want to attain a goal that has never before been attained, *the only thing that all existing approaches have in common is that they have all failed.*

The libertarian goal of attempting to reduce the size and power of the state is an objective that has never been peacefully achieved throughout history. Governments follow the same growth and demise patterns as virulent cancers. First, they mimic the body’s self-defense mechanisms – analogous to initial government offers to “protect” the citizens – and then they quickly gain sufficient strength and power to resist any attempts to contain or control their growth. Eventually, governments – like cancers – metastasize, and grow so rapidly that they overpower the body politic.



Fortunately, society is not the body of a single person, and so when governments grow to the point of virulent self-destruction, their collapse does not end life as a whole, but rather usually – through financial predations and wars – merely bleeds society to within an inch of its life.

Throughout human history, the goal of reducing the size and power of the state has almost always been pursued through either political or military means. Since politics is merely polite violence, this essentially translates into the proposition that we should use violence to reduce the growth of violence.

To continue the medical analogy, this is not necessarily the contradiction that it appears. As I remember from a painful childhood experience, a small amount of smallpox can keep you safe from smallpox – a judicious application of the disease can in fact result in a permanent cure.

However, when a society has a government, it already has the disease, and thus inoculations will no longer work, just as an inoculation against smallpox does not cure smallpox if it is already present, but rather will just add to its strength.

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## VOTING AWAY THE POST OFFICE

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The political strategy basically runs like this:

*If we educate people enough, they will vote for politicians who will get into office and use the power of that office to reduce or eliminate government coercion.*

What is almost never mentioned in this formulation is the question of *how* these libertarian politicians will enforce the reduction of government coercion.

To take an example, imagine that a libertarian politician becomes President and decides to privatize the Post Office. Let us also say that he has a sufficient mandate from the voters to achieve this, and enough congressmen and senators to sponsor the bill and push it through the legislative process.

It does not take much imagination to understand the sequence of events that will be set into motion.

It takes a fair degree of emotional maturity to recognize the basic reality that other people have their own agendas, and will often work hard to maintain their privileges. Libertarians often view the process of privatization as metaphorically akin to opening a jail – they seem to imagine that the prisoners will cheer and stampede out the front gates, sprinting with all their might to the new horizons of liberty!

Quite the opposite is true, particularly with regard to state industries. Those in state industries view their incomes and careers as just rewards for a life of service and dedication. For them, privatization is a prison sentence which they will fight with all their might.

The moment that privatization is even whispered about, the public-sector unions – all of them, since they will recognize the principle in play – will immediately stage massive protests and work stoppages. They will mount legal campaigns to retain their privileges, block major highways and strangle the provision of essential services. Schools will shut down, power will be interrupted, roads will close – parents will have no place to send their children during the day, and thus will have to take time off work – society as a whole will shut down.

How will the libertarian President deal with this strangulation? Let us say that he wants to open a particular highway that public-sector unions have shut down by parking trucks in the middle of the road. Chanting union workers – men and women, and possibly children as well – ring the trucks. How can this be dealt with? Will he order the police to break through the ring of chanting workers? If they do not use force, then there is a complete stalemate, and the highway remains closed – thus blocking the passage of essential vehicles like fire trucks and ambulances.

The media will have a field day, playing endless images of people dying in gurneys because ambulances are trapped. Photos and videos of riot-gearied police squaring off against chanting unarmed workers arm in arm will be spread all over the newspapers and the Internet, under the caption of “Libertarianism in Action.”

Even if all of this mess can somehow be bypassed, the basic reality is that public-sector unions have very strong contracts in place to ensure the maintenance and increase of their pensions and salaries and job security. Does a libertarian political leader tear up those contracts? If so, is he saying that the rule of law does not apply, or that all contracts with the government are effectively null and void?

If all contracts with the government can be voided on a whim, then he will very quickly find that institutional lenders will be reticent to extend credit to his government, and will call in their debts, as per the details of the lending arrangement.

Now, our libertarian hero is in quite a predicament. Society has ground to a halt, tax revenues have declined catastrophically, since the economy has taken a massive blow as a result of him threatening to privatize the post office – and now he finds it much harder to borrow money to make up the shortfall. Governments are very often on the razor's edge of bankruptcy, sustained in general only by massive amounts of foreign lending. What happens when his new libertarian government runs out of money?

If he is unable to pay the police, or the military, or send out welfare checks, or pay off foreign lenders – what happens to society as a whole? How will people perceive the “success” of this brave new libertarian experiment?

People are rational animals who respond to incentives, and they generally prefer food and shelter in the moment to the achievement of some potential distant ideological objective – and no reasonable person can blame them for this – particularly not libertarians, who make exactly the same choice every day.

Thus people who want to have their children educated, who want to use roads and receive a paycheck, do not have the luxury of waiting for months or years for the problem to be resolved.

Furthermore, the endless images of the violence that will be required to break the power of state unions – just to look at one example – will truly shock and horrify people. Of course, the violence is inherent to statism as it stands, but it is rendered effectively invisible through near universal compliance to the edicts of the rulers. It does not really feel like slavery until a slave tries to escape – and then, most of the other slaves will blame the resulting violence on the one trying to get away.

Finally, since libertarianism is founded on the moral axiom of the nonaggression principle (NAP), can it not be said that a libertarian political leader is initiating the use of force against people who are trying to enforce their legal public-sector union contracts? Certainly a worker who goes on strike is not initiating the use of force; a worker who relies on a legal contract for his pay and pension and job security is not initiating force when he expects that union contract to be legally upheld – even a worker on a picket line is not initiating the use of force, and neither arguably is the worker who parks his truck on a highway as a protest, since by libertarian standards public roads are essentially unowned, and thus cannot be subject to trespassing rules.

A libertarian leader who uses force against such people is actually violating the NAP, which creates an insurmountable paradox if this leader wishes to claim that he is acting against government power on the basis of the NAP. The initiation of force against non-violent people – particularly when there is no requirement for self-defense – is a violation of the most basic libertarian tenet.

Using the initiation of force to counter the initiation of force is an obvious moral paradox, and one that I have never seen any examination of or solution to in libertarian literature, in almost a quarter-century.

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## SUCCESSFUL PRIVATIZATIONS?

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Now, it can well be argued that successful privatizations have occurred throughout history, and this is true to some degree, however they tend to either occur in companies that have a prior history with the private sector, and are populated by usually white collar professionals, such as telecommunications companies – or in dire situations where the government has simply run out of money, as was the case with the Soviet Union. I cannot think of a single example of a successful proactive privatization of a long-established, largely blue-collar public-sector organization. (Given the involvement of organized crime in these unions, it is scarcely surprising that politicians do not wish to risk their lives and families by attempting privatization.)

The net result of any libertarian attempt to use the power of the state to reduce the power of the state would be a total loss of confidence in the current government, a sudden election, and a complete and permanent discrediting of libertarian ideals.

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## A LIBERTARIAN MAJORITY?

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It could easily be argued that by the time a Libertarian president is in office, the majority of society will be pro-libertarian, and so will understand and support even the aggressive and violent actions that will be required to shrink the power of the state.

However, this argument fails at a number of levels. First of all, it does not require a large minority to cause untold havoc within society – even if only 40% of the population is anti-libertarian, we can assume that this large percentage is concentrated in sectors, industries or unions that are directly or indirectly tied to state power. For instance, a significant majority of public school teachers would very likely be anti-libertarian, since according to free market economists, people respond to incentives, and teachers would stand to lose a lot of unjust benefits should their profession be privatized.

The same would be true with regards to all the other public-sector unions, the military-industrial complex – and all industries dependent to a significant degree upon state largesse.

Not to mention the police.



Just as libertarian academics believe that they can use state power to do good – retain the violent privilege of tenure in order to teach the ideals of voluntarism – so does every other special interest group believe that it can use the power of the state to bring greater virtue to society. Attempting to reason special interest groups out of using state power for material advantage is like attempting to talk a poor man out of cashing in a winning lottery ticket.

Anti-libertarian sentiments tend to be concentrated in those areas where people could do the most damage to society. Thus the fact that a Libertarian President was voted in would in no way ensure that the same percentage of pro-libertarian citizens would be even remotely similar in the public versus the private sectors of the economy.

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## A MILLENNIAL CATASTROPHE

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If such a program of privatization were undertaken, libertarianism would become an utterly discredited philosophy for at least several hundred years. For the average non-philosophical population, image trumps argument. The graphic memories and images of the “violence of libertarianism” would remain, for all intents and purposes, permanently embedded in the consciousness of the society.

To take an obvious example of this, just ask the average citizen what he or she thinks of the Industrial Revolution. Almost inevitably, citizens will respond that the Industrial Revolution was a terrible, polluting, child-exploiting time of grim and ever-increasing human misery, which was caused and exacerbated by the greed of the capitalists, and which was only restrained and controlled by the virtues of government.

Or, you can ask people about the Great Depression – and hear a similar reply, which is that the Great Depression was caused by inherent instabilities in the capitalist free market, and was only cured or solved by intense government intervention, climaxing in World War II.

The fact that all of these perspectives are false – in fact, they are quite the *opposite* of the truth – has been proven to be completely irrelevant. Libertarians have been attempting to rehabilitate public perceptions of the Industrial Revolution and the Great Depression almost since they occurred, with functionally zero success whatsoever. Once a potent myth becomes embedded in a social environment, it appears to be virtually impossible to dislodge. It seems interesting to me at least that libertarians spend a lot of effort attempting to dispel social mythological falsehoods about economic matters, while completely accepting the social mythological falsehood of religion. This is just another example of how intellectual compromise leads to complete ineffectiveness and moral blindness in practice.

The violations of the nonaggression principle that would be necessary to curb and reduce state power would be endlessly held aloft as examples of the inherent violence in libertarianism. Attempting to resurrect the virtue and value of libertarianism in the future would be about as easy a task as gaining popular acceptance for fascism or Nazism.

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## REVERSING SELF-INTEREST

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As I have argued in a series of videos on Ron Paul, the government exists fundamentally as a social mechanism for the easy and efficient – though of course morally unjust – transfer of wealth and power. The government does not exist to do good, the government does not exist to keep the peace, the government does not exist to protect the citizens, the government does not exist to stabilize the currency or manage the economy, or anything like that.

As libertarians constantly point out – and rightly, I think – the government exists to grant favors to the friends of those in power, and to punish their enemies.

Attempting to gain control over this evil and violent mechanism, and get it to work *against* its original and intended purpose of transferring wealth from the productive to the manipulative, is based upon the assumption that it is possible to infiltrate an organization, and turn it against its core and fundamental purpose.

Surely, if this is proposed as a theory, the best place to practice the theory would be in smaller and more accessible organizations *first*, rather than attempting to take over the largest, most powerful, most violent and most mythologized institution in society, which is the government.

Just as we must test medical treatments on mice and rabbits, before putting some vaccine into the water supply for an entire population, we should attempt to prove our theories in more localized and testable environments before attempting near universal application. Even the makers of cereal understand this, and do not launch products into mass consumption without asking smaller and more select groups if they like the taste.

We can only hope that the brilliance of libertarian organizers can at some point in the future begin to approach the marketing knowledge of your average cereal producer – or even your average infant, who seems to be instinctively aware that he must crawl before he can win a gold medal at the Olympics.

Working on more localized groups to establish – or disprove – the viability of a theory that an organization can be infiltrated and turned against its core purpose would be a *huge* leap forward in basic empirical rationality for the libertarian movement. This movement, which claims rational empiricism as the basis for its theories, should at the very least – or, to be more precise, as the first order of business – submit its own activist plans to the same rational empiricism.

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## A MODEST PROPOSAL...

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If an evil organization can be infiltrated and turned towards goodness – which is the fundamental libertarian proposal with regards to political action – then there is absolutely no need to “start at the top” and attempt to infiltrate and control the vast, lofty and endless power of the modern state.

Instead, the theory can be far more effectively and efficiently tested in a local environment.

For instance, libertarians could join the Ku Klux Klan, and attempt to turn it from a racist and white supremacist organization into an organization that embraces and promotes multiculturalism.

Alternatively, libertarians could infiltrate the Minutemen, who love to grab guns and patrol the southern borders of the United States, and attempt to turn the organization into a group that promotes open immigration.

If this is not to the taste of your average atheist libertarian, he could very easily join a local church – surely happy to accept atheists – and attempt to turn it into a secular organization that promotes atheism. He could join a local Wiccan group and attempt to instill a respect for the scientific method, and a rejection of mysticism and superstition.

What about joining an organization of psychics, water diviners and Tarot card readers and getting them to abandon their irrationalities and become rational skeptics who speak out against such exploitive silliness?

Conversely, if libertarians prefer to stay within their own sphere, why not join a Christian libertarian group and attempt to turn their members into rational skeptics, who speak out against the primitive superstition of worshipping immortal Jewish zombies?

Clearly, this list could go on and on, and we could have quite a lot of fun promoting a variety of grassroots approaches to proving the theory that an organization can be turned against its core purpose – but the reality of course is that we fully understand that all of the above programs would be completely and utterly impossible, and would be a total waste of time, and would achieve nothing except frustration and alienation.

If a rational skeptic joins a group devoted to the pursuit of ghosts and conversations with the dead, they have every right, in a way, to turn to him with surprise, wonder and more than a little hostility, and ask him what on earth he is doing there! ‘If you are so utterly opposed to psychic phenomena, why are you joining a group devoted to the exploration of mind melds with the undead? Surely, instead of attempting to use rational arguments to talk us out of our obviously irrational theories, you should simply join a group that already respects and understands the value of rational empiricism.’

Finally, if you wish to really put this theory to the test, you can take an even more immediate and productive approach, instead of wasting your life trying to turn hateful men in bed sheets into colorblind lovers of genetic and cultural diversity.

If you truly believe that libertarianism – specifically, political libertarianism – is all about achieving real world results, and that its approach is based upon rational empiricism, why not stand up at the next libertarian meeting, and say something along the lines of the following:

“Dear libertarian brothers and sisters – I am highly concerned that we are pursuing a path which has not been validated according to the rational and empirical methodologies that we value so highly. Instead of attempting to gain control of this massive apparatus called the government, and attempting to turn an organization that we call fundamentally evil towards goodness, I would like to propose that instead, we attempt to prove and refine our theories by taking over smaller and more local organizations which we call evil, and attempting to turn them *towards* goodness. For instance, we call the government a criminal enterprise, but we believe that we can infiltrate this criminal enterprise and turn it towards more virtuous actions. I would like to test out this theory, and I’m sure that since we all recognize the value of rational empiricism, I am not alone in this belief – and so I propose that we infiltrate our local Mafia, rise up through its ranks, and then, when we are in charge of the Mafia, we can turn it into an arm of the United Way. If this seems like too ambitious a program – and I can tell by the looks on your faces that some of you believe this to be the case – then we do not have to aim quite so high. We believe that we can infiltrate the government and cause it to reduce its use of violence – thus, if we do

not believe that we can turn the Mafia into a charitable organization, we must by our very theory be able to infiltrate the Mafia and cause it to *reduce* the amount of violence that it inflicts upon the innocent, right? Since we *truly* believe that we have the power to infiltrate evil organizations and reduce the amount of violence they inflict, we should at least be able to gain control over the Mafia and cut its murder rate in half, say – or reduce by some significant percentage the numbers of kneecaps it breaks. By taking this approach, we shall be able to both prove and refine our theory that an evil organization can be infiltrated, controlled, and turned against its foundational purpose.

“Now – with the knowledge that we gain by taking over the Mafia, and reducing or eliminating the violence it inflicts, we shall be that much more effective in taking over other institutions within society, that are far more accessible to us than the federal government – institutions which do not rely upon us having to convince tens or hundreds of millions of people to accept our position! Even if we retain as our goal the eventual democratic takeover of the government, imagine how much greater our credibility will be with the average non-libertarian citizen if we can show how effective we are at taking over evil institutions and turning them towards goodness! If we can take over dozens or hundreds or thousands of evil criminal gangs and turn them against violence, we shall gain so much credibility through this process of virtuous reform that we shall be swept into office at the very next election!

“We always tell those in the government that they should attempt to deal with their own problems, before trying to deal with everyone else’s problems. The late great Harry Browne used to say that the politicians in Washington should attempt to at least control and reduce the prevalence of violence within their own city, before telling other cities and other states and other peoples how to live.

“I think that we should take Harry’s advice, and attempt to reform institutions that we have far easier access to than the government, in order to gain credibility and traction and instill confidence in the general population that we have great experience and empirical success in turning evil organizations towards goodness. Once we have proven our power and amazing abilities in these smaller, less evil and more localized gangs, people will genuinely be able to rationally trust us to take over the government, and turn it towards virtue and goodness. Just as we tell the government to prove its competence and virtue in smaller and more localized settings – particularly those of us who are pro-states rights – so we should also take our own advice, and prove our competence and virtue in reforming evil institutions in smaller and more localized gangs that are infinitely easier to infiltrate and take over, before asking people to trust us with the greatest and most powerful criminal gang the world has ever known!

“I can see by the looks on your faces that you do not think that this is a wise approach, and perhaps you’re right, it could be considered very dangerous, and perhaps we are not quite so confident in our ability to infiltrate and overturn the evils of a criminal gang as we are in our ability to infiltrate and overturn the evils of the largest government in history. No matter, I did anticipate this as a possible objection – though I do think that it shows scant faith in the abilities we claim to possess – and so I have an alternate proposal, which is guaranteed to be virtually risk-free.

“All of us here support the privatization of the Post Office, and believe that we can achieve that by taking over the evil institution of the government and turning it to more virtuous actions – or at least less evil actions.

“Since we believe in that possibility, and our power to achieve it, I have a far better proposal, which gives us the power to work on privatizing the post office without having to muck about with the political process, or rely on tens of millions of people accepting our position, and which will not require a single violation of the non-aggression principle, and which we can start working on today, now, this minute!

“All that we have to do is infiltrate the postal workers Union, take it over, and turn it into an organization that advocates the privatization of the post office!

“Can you not feel the thrill of that immediate possibility? We can begin to work towards infiltrating a corrupt organization and turning it against its core purpose – changing it from a gang dedicated to providing unjust benefits to its members to a noble brotherhood aimed at liberating its workers from the shackles of state power!

“In this way, my brothers and sisters, we do not have to wait for what seems like an eternity for the general social tide to change in our favor, which does not seem to be happening anytime soon. Since we already claim to possess the power to infiltrate evil organizations and turn them towards goodness, we do not need to take control of the government in order to privatize the post office, because we can simply infiltrate the post office union directly, and turn it toward goodness!

“Naturally, once we have proven our abilities in this area, there is no *end* to the amount of virtue and good we can achieve within society – again, without having to wait for the general voting public to catch up with our brilliance and virtue! After we have privatized the post office by using its union, we can move on to the teachers union, and privatize public education using exactly the same methodology! As our successes continue to mount, we will gain a staggering momentum that we can only dream of at the moment. More and more liberty lovers will flock to our successes, since we have broken the paralysis of waiting for the general consensus of democracy! We can set up branches of the movement to infiltrate, take over and reverse the positions of the unions of road workers, energy workers, welfare agencies – even the police union can be infiltrated, and come out against the enforcement of the Patriot Act, or the

seizure of illegal drugs – we can even cause the police union to compel its members to refuse to arrest anyone who violates the tax code – thus effectively ending taxation – all based on our power to reverse the evil tendencies of monopolistic organizations!

“Let us draw up an action plan, and start now! Leap to your feet, brothers and sisters – *who is with me?*”

What do you think the general response to your proposals will be? Do you think that people will be electrified, leap to their feet and cheer your proposal, because they *genuinely believe* that they have the power to turn evil institutions towards goodness?

Of course not.

No matter how stirring your words, and no matter how rational your proposal, your speech will be looked at as a complete *non sequitur* – in fact, you will be revealed as someone who is unable even to turn the Libertarian party towards a more productive, virtuous and rational plan. Not only can the Libertarian party never take over the government and turn it towards goodness – you cannot even influence the Libertarian party towards taking a more productive and virtuous path!

We all understand the scornful, frightened and hostile thousand-yard stares we would receive should we ever stand up at a libertarian gathering and suggest a path of action perfectly consistent with its core principles, but which would actually put those principles to the immediate test.

Making such a speech would be the exact equivalent of attempting to pay a counterfeiter with his own fake bills. He would be trapped, caught, hostile, silenced, resentful. He would not be able to speak out about the forgery he was forced to accept as a real value, because he was responsible for the forgery in the first place.

This counterfeiter only presents his fake currency to others to bamboozle real values out of them in exchange. However, the moment that he has to act as if his fake currency *has* real value, he is caught in his own contradiction, but must generate a sickly smile and pretend otherwise.

The moment that you present to libertarians real and practical ways to achieve the goals that they claim they are capable of, all they will do is stare at you in resentment, and then quickly change the subject and refuse to talk to you again. Some of them will actually giggle and laugh at your naïveté, understanding that you really and fundamentally just do not “get it.”

Why would a group which claims to be so dedicated to turning evil into good recoil from actually putting its abilities to the test?

Why would a counterfeiter who claims that his currency is real recoil from actually accepting it as payment?

Why would you get that resentful thousand-yard stare when you propose to political libertarians an easy and effective way to test the theories they confidently proclaim as proven to others?

Well, it is for the same reason that a priest will stare at you resentfully when you bring to him evidence that prayer does not work.

A priest will tell you that prayer works because his God listens to you, likes you, and will give you goodies, blessings and positive outcomes. In other words, he claims to be bestowing a real and tangible benefit upon you in return for the money that you give to him.

If you order a book online, and receive only an empty box, and call up the bookseller to complain, and he tells you that the book is in fact there, but you are just having trouble seeing it for some reason, perhaps you should go and see an eye doctor – and he refuses to refund your money, but instead offers to sell you another “book,” is it really so very hard to understand that he is not at all interested in selling you books, but rather only in taking your money?

It is the same way with priests of course. They claim that they can “sell” you the tangible benefits of prayer, but whenever those benefits are proven to be illusory, they reject the evidence, or come up with some other untestable “benefit” that they can provide (entrance to heaven, eternal life, or other such nonsense).

The one constant in religion is not the benefits that are promised, which can change from time to time, but rather that *money is always collected*. Unlike the capitalist, the priest does not say, “Here are the tangible benefits I will give you in return for your money,” but rather, “What do I have to promise in order to get your money?”

In the same way, libertarians do not say, “I have proven my ability to turn evil organizations towards goodness, and so I ask for your support to expand my powers to include the government.” This would require tangible proof of this miraculous ability, just as promising the benefits of prayer would actually require that those benefits be proven empirically and scientifically, which is quite the opposite of the truth.

When someone sells an unproven “benefit,” and then specifically rejects any empirical proof of this benefit, he is just another petty and vicious con man – though in the case of religion and libertarianism, they do not only steal your money, but they also steal the real hope and achievement of freedom in the future that we as a species are capable of.

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## FAILURE TO ACT

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No rational moralist can demand of others that which he is not willing to do himself.

Libertarians constantly demand that others give up the financial benefits they receive from the state in order to live with greater integrity.

Libertarians, however, consistently refuse to give up the financial benefits they receive from religion in order to live with greater integrity.

Libertarians demand that others give up their illusions about the state, in order to live with greater rationality.

Libertarians, however, continually refuse to give up their illusions about religion in order to live with greater rationality.

Moral hypocrisy always and forever discredits the ethics being preached. This becomes even more true the closer that the ethics are to rational morality. Like a hand approaching a lightbulb, the closer a philosophy is to the truth, the greater its hypocritical preachers block and darken the spread of light.

In its current state, libertarianism discredits rational morality more than any other creed.

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## LIBERTARIAN MYSTICISM

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If you doubt my argument that libertarians avoid proof because they know they cannot provide what they claim, you can easily reproduce this in another scenario. Open up your Yellow Pages to the section on “psychics,” call any one of them up, and offer to pay her \$1 million to prove her psychic ability statistically. There is absolutely no doubt that she will refuse your offer – which naturally makes no sense at all, since she advertises an ability that she claims to possess, and the Amazing Randi has a standing offer to pay \$1 million to anyone who can prove his or her psychic abilities in a scientific and statistical manner.

If I put an advertisement in the Yellow Pages offering my services as a Greek translator, and someone calls me up and offers me \$1 million if I can prove my ability to speak Greek, surely I should leap at the chance!

If libertarians bring in tens of millions of dollars by claiming they possess the ability to infiltrate evil organizations and turn them towards virtuous actions, and then someone comes along with a practical and immediate proposal to prove their ability to do so, and they steadfastly refuse this test, and feel resentment and hostility towards such a proposal, and then return to promising freedom from the government in return for donations of money, we can all basically understand that this is just a vicious and exploitive con, a false promise of illusory freedom in return for cold cash.

Just as religion promises untestable rewards in the hereafter – and steadfastly avoids any rational tests of its promises – so political libertarianism promises a magical future liberation from state power through its ability to infiltrate and overturn the evils of powerful organizations – yet steadfastly resists any rational tests of its promises.

The reason that libertarianism and Christianity are so united is because fundamentally, they are the same. Both cults exploit people’s desire for freedom and virtue for the sake of money, saying whatever is necessary to get that money, changing whatever story they need to change in order to get that money, lying through their teeth and avoiding empirical tests – claiming the truth and steadfastly evading the requirement for evidence – continuing to claim efficacy despite ever-increasing failures. The whole mess is a disgusting and virulent virus that uses the worst kind of fraud – *moral* fraud – to sell the hope of real freedom in the future for the sake of petty riches in the present.

It is time that those of us interested in real freedom grew up and stopped believing in pathetic, ridiculous and exploitive fairy tales.

There is no God. There is no heaven. Jesus is not coming back to save you. Satan does not live in your bedroom closet. We are not evil because a rib-woman listened to a talking snake – and Jesus, if he even existed, was nothing more than an insane epileptic with delusions of grandeur, the product of a primitive and brutal time in our history when endless child abuse, infanticide and mental illness was the norm.

Gods, ghosts, gremlins and goblins do not exist.

And political, academic and religious libertarianism stands in the way of real human freedom. Modern libertarianism is not a hard-to-open door that leads us to a higher mountain of human freedom, but a petty con game of simpleminded exploitation, a door to a cliff edge that only drops us onto the distant rocks below.

## SO – WHY DOES LIBERTARIANISM EXIST?

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Once we begin to understand how not to be free – and how freedom will never be achieved – we can begin to understand why people endlessly charge off these cliffs – and we can begin to design a better path, a more productive, rational and empirically proven path toward human freedom.

We must first understand that we are heading in the wrong direction. When we understand that, we can stop going in the wrong direction, and look at a map. Once we understand the map, and where we actually are in reality, we can begin to plot a path in the right direction.

## LIBERTARIANISM AND EXPLOITATION?

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Unlike religion, libertarianism is not usually inflicted upon helpless and dependent children. It is generally adults who are drawn towards libertarianism – at least from the teenage years onwards.

It cannot be pure propaganda that swells the ranks of political libertarianism, but rather those who get involved in this nonsense must be gaining some benefit.

In other words, when someone donates to the Libertarian cause, what is he really buying?

Is he buying political success? Of course not. Libertarianism has been pathetic in terms of electoral success. Call me a crazy entrepreneur, but I cannot imagine spending tens of millions of dollars on a plan for decades, failing completely to achieve anything even remotely close to my stated goal, and calling it any kind of “success.”

Is he buying the dissemination of libertarian ideals, with the goal of achieving freedom through greater knowledge? Of course not! Not only has this failed, but even the libertarian free-market economists steadfastly reject the freedom of a market economy in favor of clinging to unjust privilege – so even if everyone in the *world* got a PhD in free-market economics, the world would only become less free, since an advanced degree in Austrian economics only promotes the pursuit of state unions and the evil protection of an unjust monopoly.

So – what is he buying? When a man donates his time, money and energies to libertarianism, what does he actually *receive* in return?

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## PROGRESS AND ILLUSION

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Why would a priest be able to offer a man the illusion of the love of God that does not exist?

If a man is truly loved, what use would he have for the pretend love of a pretend ghost? That would be like the richest man in the world repeatedly responding to Nigerian email offers of inheritance “payouts” – he already has *real* money, so why would he want to spend time pretending that fake money was real?

If a man is truly loved by a virtuous companion, and is surrounded by affectionate and trusted friends, what on earth would some otherworldly imaginary ghost have to offer him? People who have enough to eat do not respond to promises of fictitious food; a thin man does not get his stomach stapled, and happy people do not take antidepressants.

A prerequisite for the pursuit of religion is the feeling of being unloved – but we can go even further than that.

If a man feels unloved, but believes that he is lovable, then he is like a man who is currently poor, but believes that he can achieve riches – such a man will not become a thief, because he genuinely believes in his ability to earn money.

A man becomes a thief because he no longer believes he has the ability to make money through the exchange of real value. He steals because he totally loses faith in his ability to earn.

A man becomes interested in the love of ghosts because he feels fundamentally *unlovable* as he is – the *reality* is that he cannot be loved, and so it is only through fantasy that he can attempt to replicate the illusion of “love.”

If a man feels that he is unlovable, it is probably for quite a number of good reasons. He may be a liar, or he may be abusive, or addicted to drugs, alcohol or hyper-sexuality. He might be vain, insecure, self-hating, pompous, creepy, hypocritical, misogynistic, nihilistic – he might be any random handful from the grab bag of human iniquity.

If a man feels that he is unlovable, he has one of three choices.

First, he can accept that he is unlovable, give up his desire for love, and retreat to a life of bitter solitude.

Second, he can change his actions to become more lovable.

Third, he can refuse to either change himself *or* give up his desire for love – he can continue to lounge in the squalid pit of his bad habits, but pay someone to *pretend* to love him.

Given the difficulties of the first two options, most people will pay a *lot* of money for the third option.

This is the foundation of a good deal of hypocritical and ugly economics in the world.

The desire to gain the fruits of virtue without actually having to go through the trials of becoming virtuous is at the root of *massive* amounts of financial transactions in the world. The hundred billion dollars a year donated by Americans to churches is just such a payment for approval and “affection” without the necessity of achieving true courage and virtue.

Academics want to have their six-figure salaries without actually having to go through the hellish challenges of submitting their value to the free-market.

Religious addicts want to feel “loved,” needed and “special” without having to go through the highly challenging process of psychological individuation.

False approval is the emotional heroin of the lazy.

Going to a church for love is like going to a prostitute for love – all it does is make you less lovable – and so more in need of religion.

The purchase of unjust rewards is common to all the three spheres of libertarianism that we talk of here – it is obvious in the religious sphere (“God loves you!”) – how does it show up in the academic sphere?

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## ACADEMICS AND THEFT

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Psychologists use the term “entitlement” to describe people who strongly believe that they are entitled to that which they are not willing to earn. A mother who does not earn her son’s respect – yet still demands his obedience – feels “entitled” to her authority. A man who has become poor through laziness feels “entitled” to an income.

Academics feel “entitled” to a six-figure income – and all the other goodies that come with their position – yet strenuously oppose the free market test of value that they so strenuously insist that others submit themselves to.

A man steals a value when he gives up the belief that he can earn it. The academic’s desire to hide behind the high walls of unjust state privilege arises from his certain knowledge that he is decidedly *not* worth a six figure income, let alone all the other goodies. He knows this truth deep in his very bones, in the very bedrock of his soul – yet he refuses to consciously accept it, and so implicitly pursues and supports the stolen privilege of state protection.

It is certainly possible for an educator to make six figures or more by teaching people, but that requires a submission to the free choices of his potential consumers. If a man believes that his teaching is economically valuable, he should go and make his fortune on the free market – however, it is a very difficult and sometimes humiliating process to bring that which gives you the greatest joy – and which you believe you are good at – to the general indifference of potential consumers.

A central reality of a free economy is that consumers really do not care about you at all. They do not want to visit your blog, they do not want to download your podcasts, they do not want to interact with you at all – they have their own full lives, with their own self-interests, and they do not care one little bit about you, and what you want. I do not say this as any form of criticism, of course, as there are doubtless 10 million entrepreneurs the world over who would love for me to pay attention to them. I simply do not, because my time is limited, and I already have enough of what I want in almost every area.

In particular, it is very humbling to attempt to create a new market – especially in the field of education. If you decide that you want to open a restaurant, then you already know that people have to eat, and often like to eat out, and there are plentiful business models and oodles of information on how to run a successful eatery.



If you are an accountant, and want to set up your own business, you at least know that people need accounting services, and that it is merely a matter of competing with the next fellow. The same goes for any other traditional profession you could name.

It takes a rather special strength of character to attempt to create a market in an entirely new medium, in a format that people are not used to paying for – and with endless competition from other free media to boot!

Like any artistic medium, attempting to educate combines a deep and personal emotional investment with a near-universal indifference to your product. For those who have not developed much of a strong hide, and the ability to withstand and surmount the humiliation of that indifference, the prospect would seem overwhelmingly daunting.

In particular, the fragile egos of hothouse academics, who have endless students clamoring for their approval, and who cannot be fired, and who barely feel even the slightest whiff of a breeze from the free market – submitting their vanity to the general indifference of market forces would – I am sure – be entirely unbearable.

Thus, why did free-market economists endlessly pursue state protection? Why, in order to avoid puncturing their puffed-up vanity by actually submitting their products to the general indifference of the free market!

Protectionism makes industries weak, economists are always telling us.

The same goes for economists.

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## LIBERTARIANISM AND THEFT

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Now we can more clearly see what a libertarian adherent is *really* paying for when he gives money to the cause.

What he *really* buying.

First of all, we can be certain that your average libertarian is concerned about liberty. At some level – most likely emotional – he feels unfree.

Let us be as generous as possible and assume that this lack of liberty is not psychological in origin. It certainly is more than probable that our libertarian-to-be is not exactly free in his own personal life, and is choosing to project his lack of freedom onto society as a whole, but that is a topic for another time.

Concern about the state of the world, and the future of society, initially shows up as *anxiety*. All of us in the freedom movement began our journey at least to some degree with a sense of unease about the current state and future direction of the society and world that we live in.

Anxiety is certainly not a universally negative state – we have all felt it in our cars when we fear we might be lost, which is actually a very good thing, because it allows us to turn to our wives and ask which way we should go. Anxiety is an early warning system, designed to help us avoid upcoming dangers, and so should be listened to, respected, understood and rationally acted upon.

For instance, if a man feels lonely, and unworthy of love, but still wishes to have love in his life, he is going to feel anxiety. That anxiety is going to propel him – if he listens wisely to himself – into action. A woman who wishes to have children, but remains single in her early 30s, may wake up one day, look in the mirror, and realize that she needs to change something significant in order to get what she wants. This may propel her to look more critically at her own relationships, and the types of men that she gets involved with, and her own history, and her own deepest desires – it can launch her into an entirely productive journey of self-discovery, enriching and deepening her experience of life.

The libertarian-to-be looks at the world and feels growing anxiety at the growing lack of freedom.

In the world as a whole, there exist a large number of organizations that circle the world at low altitude, so to speak, sniffing for pockets of anxiety. When they catch the delicious scent of growing unease, they slowly waft down, perch on the shoulders of the nervous, and whisper a terribly dangerous offer:

“The unease you feel is very real. The world is in a bad state, and it really needs to be fixed,” they murmur seductively. “Give us your money, and we will fix it!”

We can easily see this kind of predatory behavior on the part of churches – the difference is that churches generally get ahold of *children*, and actively and abusively inflict the unease that the children – as they grow into adulthood – will spend the rest of their lives paying to be “cured” of.

The two ingredients that such corrupt organizations offer to the anxious are (a) a predefined external path of action, and (b) a bill.

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## THE PATH!

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If a lonely man comes to a church, the priest will doubtless tell him that he is lonely because he has not accepted God, or Jesus, or Baal, or Allah, or the Seven Shining Paths, or other such fictions.

He will then tell the man that in order to cure his loneliness, to alleviate his anxiety, he needs to give the priest money, and to do what the priest tells him to do. The *priest* holds the key to solving his problems – and his obedience and cash will open the door.

This is a mere ritual, which does nothing to actually deal with the underlying anxiety, but distracts and exploits the lonely man, by offering him the comforting illusion that his problem is being dealt with.

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## LIBERTARIAN DENTISTRY

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If you have a toothache, and you go to a dentist, and he provides you a powder to sniff which will solve the pain of your toothache, and you go home, sniff the powder, and feel wonderful, will you not feel grateful to the dentist for solving your problem without any bloody, unpleasant and painful surgery? Even though you have friends who repeatedly tell you that painkillers do not solve infections, and that you really need a root canal, you make the choice to “deal” with the pain without having the surgery.

In fact, after making this choice, you start to preach that anyone who submits to dental surgery is an exploited fool who is unnecessarily taking the hard road, probably due to some kind of masochism.

As time goes by, though, you find that your tooth begins to twinge unpleasantly, and so you go back to the dentist, who gives you more white powder, and tells you to sniff twice as much. Magically, your pain goes away – and so you roll your eyes even *more* when you hear of someone who has undergone painful surgery to correct a toothache.

Unfortunately, as time wears on, your teeth really *do* begin to hurt, to the point where sometimes even a dangerous amount of powder does little more than blunt the growing pain. The people you know who had the surgery you so scorned are actually doing fine; they are not addicted to medication, and their teeth are healthy.

So you go to another dentist, who examines your teeth and says that half of them are rotten, and a series of very difficult and unpleasant surgeries need to be performed. He also tells you that you will have to stop taking your pain-killers for at least two months before he can operate, otherwise they will interfere with the anesthetic.

So you go home with good intentions, and throw out all of your white powder. However, in the hours that follow, the most terrible withdrawal symptoms slam repeatedly into your body – vicious migraines, nose bleeds, endless vomiting. The physical pain of withdrawal combines with emotional eruptions of your long-repressed anxiety to produce a physically agonizing panic attack, and you literally feel like you are dying.

Pale, shaking, you dig your medication out of the trash and snort some sweet relief. Immediately, the pain subsides and you feel somewhat better...

However, you never are quite able to stay off the cocaine for the two months required to clear it from your system in order to get your teeth fixed. Your life devolves into an endless spiral of pain, decay and addiction.

This is what happens when you go to a priest rather than a philosopher.

This is what happens when you go for libertarianism rather than self-knowledge.

Sophists will only treat the symptom, not the cause – and so you end up addicted to the treatment, while the underlying cause gets continually worse.

Even more sadly, after a certain amount of time in this addictive spiral, it becomes practically impossible to *stop* treating the symptoms, because the underlying cause has become too painful.

## EXTRAORDINARY CLAIMS, EXTRAORDINARY EVIDENCE

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When a man joins libertarianism, he is gaining a predefined and seemingly-credible path to liberty. If he gives the Libertarian party money, and follows its rules, then he will be taking the most certain, most effective and most productive steps towards freeing the world.

As the saying goes, extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence – to say that giving money to a political organization is *by far* the best and most productive way to free the world is an extraordinary claim when you really think about it. The whole world over, citizens who are interested in controlling the power of the state constantly try to use political activism to reduce its power – and consistently, that power continues to grow.

To put this claim in context, libertarians say that communism will never work, and cite as evidence for that claim the empirical reality that communism consistently fails both economically and politically. If a communist system were found to have high economic growth and great personal liberty, the anti-socialist theories of libertarians and Austrian economists would be entirely thrown into question, since this is considered to be impossible.

However, when the track record of libertarianism itself is subjected to the same scrutiny, you hear the endless excuses from libertarians that you still sometimes hear from Marxists and socialists. When judging an opposing political and economic theory, the consistent failures of that theory are considered proof of its errors. On the other hand, libertarianism must never ever be judged by its universal and consistent failures. Socialism is proven wrong because it never works in practice, because it never achieves the goals it claims – libertarianism, on the other hand, must *never* be judged by its absolutely abysmal track record of constant, universal and perpetual failures!

Marxists will always blame factors external to the theory for its consistent and persistent failures. The failures do not indicate fundamental flaws with the theory itself, but rather with specific environmental variables. Communism was supposed to be implemented in an advanced industrial country, Stalin took over communism and corrupted it, Western powers worked against the success of communism, things weren't as bad as they were portrayed, the system never had a chance – endless excuses are invented to explain away the endless practical failures.

Time and again, with irrational and bigoted ideologies, we see a constant refusal to examine or accept the evidence of failure. Libertarians have the truly astounding gall to criticize government programs for their endless failures – and take those failures as certain evidence of the corruption of the state – yet endlessly ignore and excuse their own endless failures.

**Libertarian:** “The government fails everywhere and forever because statism is irrational in theory and evil in practice.”

**Philosopher:** “If perpetual failure indicates the irrationality and impracticality of a theory, does that not indicate that libertarianism is an irrational and impractical theory, since it perpetually fails?”

**Libertarian:** “Libertarianism does not fail – how can you say that? We educate people!”

**Philosopher:** “Well, that is like saying that the government does not fail because it educates children in public school – it does not matter whether you educate people or not, it only matters whether or not you achieve your stated goals, which is a significant reduction in the size and power of the state.”

**Libertarian:** “Well, that is a very difficult task, because the government educates the children, and controls the media, and has all this money, and controls the currency, and has all these weapons, and so on and so on.”

**Philosopher:** “Ah, but you do not state that government programs fail because of environmental causes, but rather you cited those perpetual failures as evidence of a corrupt and immoral theory. If you can excuse your failures due to environmental reasons, then you cannot condemn government failures for moral or philosophical reasons.”

This is a central reason why libertarianism and statism are locked in an eternal and doomed embrace, because they are identical in the avoidance of responsibility for failure.<sup>8</sup> This externalization of responsibility is common to all immature and exploitive ideologies – just as it is common to all immature and exploitive people.

Just as governments always blame outside causes for their own failures – capitalists, the free market, the evil Muslims, the nasty drug dealers and so on – so do libertarians always blame outside causes for their own failures.

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*8 I certainly do not mean to imply that libertarianism is morally equivalent to statism; libertarianism does not violate the NAP, while statism is based on such violations.*

## A PRIVATE SECTOR EXAMPLE

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If we look at the Ron Paul campaign, we can see that over \$20 million and hundreds of thousands of man-hours were spent for the ostensible purpose of getting a Libertarian into the White House, or at least creating positive responses to libertarian ideas in the general population.

I would like you to picture working for Microsoft, and asking for \$20 million to launch a new product into the American market – let us say that it is a robot called “Paulbot.” Clearly, since you are asking for money from a highly demanding private corporation, your business proposal would have to contain a wide variety of market studies, consumer analyses and competitive research. You would have to make empirically verifiable predictions about the degree of market penetration you would achieve through your product launch – and you would also have to provide Microsoft detailed and verifiable projections about the return on investment they could expect from the money that they were spending.

The more unusual and novel the product, the more conservative Microsoft would be in its initial investment. You would never get the entire \$20 million up front – you would first have to prove your business case in a far smaller environment. You would perhaps get \$100,000 – at most – to prove the appeal of the product in test markets. Assuming that you were able to achieve your stated goals within that smaller test market, you would begin to slowly get additional funds to expand the marketing program.

If you did not build into the budget of your product release plan any methodologies whatsoever for testing the viability of your initial claims, Microsoft executives would laugh you out of the room, as a rank and foolish amateur who has no idea whatsoever how business actually works. In fact, they would not be entirely amiss to suspect you of nefarious and dishonest motives, by asking for an enormous amount of money that you could spend as you please, without even thinking about providing objective feedback on the success or failure of your program.

This is how things work in the free market. It is enormously telling that a political organization entirely devoted to the virtues and efficiency of the free market did not do *any* of the above when raking in tens of millions of dollars for the launch of their own product called Ron Paul.

Those who resist standards of proof are those who know their claims are false. This is the root of the dishonesty at the base of political libertarianism, just as it is in academia and religion. Academics resist the proof of their value by avoiding the free market like the plague; religion avoids the endless proofs against the existence of God; and political libertarianism – that worshiper of the rational discipline of the free market – avoids any proof or measure of the success of its claims.

This is how we know with complete and serene certainty that academics know they are virtually worthless, the religious know that God does not exist, and political libertarianism knows that it is a con game which can never provide the values it claims.

## FAILURE?

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Of course, we can only really call libertarianism a “failure” if we accept the premise that libertarianism is fundamentally about reducing the power of the state, rather than accepting the truth, which is that libertarianism is fundamentally about promising to reduce the power of the state in return for money – or, to be even more precise, about selling anxious people a way of alleviating their fears without actually having to deal with the root causes.

We will now turn to an examination of the root causes of anxieties around freedom, so that we can begin to build the case for a rational and productive approach to freeing the world.

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# PART TWO: ROOT CAUSES

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## THE EFFECTS OF ETHICS

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A deep understanding of the nonaggression principle (NAP) creates a significant moral divide, with those who initiate the use of force on one side, and those who reject the initiation of use of force on the other. (For more on this, please have a look at my book on Universally Preferable Behavior, available for free on my website.)

Those who initiate the use of force can rationally be called *evil*, while those who actively support the initiation of the use of force – who justify it morally – can be called *corrupt*.

It is also reasonable to accept that a man cannot be responsible for knowledge he does not yet possess. We can easily understand that while a modern doctor who does not prescribe antibiotics for a virulent infection is grossly negligent, a medieval doctor who had no access to antibiotics cannot be held to the same standard.

Between these two extremes lies a kind of “gray area.” When antibiotics were first being introduced and tested, it would have been irresponsible for a doctor to prescribe them for every conceivable ailment (as remains the case today) – however, after a certain amount of testing and verification had been completed, the balance tipped towards prescription.

A man who has never heard the argument that taxation is force cannot be morally condemned for his ignorance. A baby is not “un-educated” – rather he is in a state of “pre-education.” I do not know Mandarin – this does not make me a fool, or ignorant in general, but rather it is merely the case that I lack the knowledge to speak Mandarin.

The same is true in terms of moral knowledge. I only came to a deep understanding and a consistent theoretical application of the NAP in my philosophy in my 30s – close to 20 years after I began to study philosophy. This does not mean that I was morally corrupt or evil in my 20s, but rather that I was in the pursuit of knowledge that I had not attained as yet. I did not have exposure to some of the more consistent moral arguments in favor of a stateless society, although I must confess that I did on occasion feel a certain amount of unease with the Objectivist approach to certain issues, particularly in terms of ethics.

It was through an acceptance of this unease that I began to develop more original approaches to the issues I found lacking in other philosophies. I certainly make no claim to originality in all these areas, all that I can say for sure is that these ideas were new to me, whether they were new to the world is not something I can really speak to, since I prefer the generation of new ideas to the comparison of those ideas with every other school of thought.

A man cannot be considered immoral for failing to understand that taxation is force – the crux of the issue arises when he is *first* exposed to the argument that taxation is force.

This argument is emotionally trying. The fundamental alienation that spreads in the soul of a man who begins to understand that taxation is force is hard to bear.

When a powerful and foundational moral argument is introduced to a man in adulthood, the emotional recoil that he experiences is really based upon what has been *missing* from the moral discourse of his society.

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## THE LIBERTARIAN DIVISION

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Libertarians of all kinds are constantly making the basic moral argument that taxation is force, and that the government is a violent institution. As moral theories go, that this is not exactly quantum physics. Problems such as abortion, “lifeboat scenarios,” homesteading, capital punishment and so on are all highly challenging and controversial – the fact that we pay taxes because we are threatened with jail is not.

Why, then, is this basic fact still so endlessly denied, evaded, fogged and rejected within society?

One of the central problems with pursuing an illusory solution to a genuine challenge – religion, academia, political action – is that it avoids the necessity of elemental self-criticism.

In the business world, this process is called a *post mortem*, or a strict and stringent review of even a successful project, to create a list of “lessons learned,” and so pursue a program of continuous improvement. Unsuccessful projects are analyzed in great detail, and improved practices are put into place to help avoid such catastrophes in the future.

Coming from the business entrepreneurial world, it is truly shocking to me to see the degree to which libertarians avoid performing any kind of *post mortems* on their projects. The same is true of academics and priests, of course.

The most astounding statements are made with no empirical evidence whatsoever – “Ron Paul can win!” “Educating the public will bring about political freedom!” “Religious beliefs are an essential component of human liberty!”

Even statements made in private, to me personally, are wild assertions – again, with no empirical evidence or reasoning *whatsoever*. I have been told that libertarians dare not speak about their atheism openly, for fear of alienating Christian supporters – on the assumption that such an alienation would be disastrous for the freedom movement. But how is this known for sure? What logical reasoning or empirical evidence is brought to bear on this assumption?

When I was a young man, I attended the National Theatre School in Montréal, Canada for two years, studying playwriting and acting. I had the juicy role of Cornwall in *King Lear*, and I vividly remember one rehearsal where we evil characters got news of a disaster. As dedicated method actors, we all turned our attention inwards, and thought about dead kittens and sad movies. The director stared at us with shock, horror, and anger. “How the hell am I supposed to know that you have just received the worst news of your lives?”

I tried to explain to him – and how earnest I was – that if I change my inward thinking, it will communicate itself to the audience in some magical and unconscious manner.

His lip curled in scorn, and he asked, “So let us say that I have paid \$20 to come and see this play, and I am in row 200 in the theater, how is it that I’m supposed to psychically commune with you to understand that your slightly drooping mouth indicates some sort of inner horror?”

All of us actors resisted this crass and coarse showmanship, preferring to imagine that some movie camera was virtually up our noses, and could catch the slightest change in our facial expressions. The next time we rehearsed the scene, again, we went inwards and summoned up visions of bad news in our distant histories. The director leapt up, grabbed the chair that he was sitting on, and threw it across the stage.

He whirled to us, and said: “Do any of you not understand that I am pissed off right now? If you were in row 200, would you still be able to somehow figure out that I am pissed off? I don’t care if you do cartwheels or start juggling, just do *something* when you hear, as these characters, the worst news of your entire fucking *lives*!”

Strangely enough, this advice followed me very productively into the business world. Whenever a disaster occurred – and troubles come not as single spies, but in battalions, in the entrepreneurial world – I would sometimes hear in my ear this director’s commandment that when something bad occurs, the important thing is to do *something* – in a way, it does not even really matter what, because *anything* is better than standing and staring.

I suppose that I have brought some of this energy to the libertarian world, and constantly feel surprised – which itself is telling – that an intensely pro-business movement so studiously avoids criticism and the exploration of alternatives in the face of disaster.

It took me quite some time to really begin to understand what is going on in the world of libertarianism that inevitably produces this avoidance. I resisted for quite a long time the inevitable conclusions – the analysis that I talk about in this book – but then I basically thought:

“Okay, let us say that I the Chief Operating Officer at a big company, and I have a division called Libertarianism. This division has been making claims for decades about its ability to increase the size of its market share, to the point where it actually has a dominant majority in the market. However, when I look at the actual performance results of this division, I see that the market – government power – has actually gotten massively larger, while the market share – libertarian votes – has actually shrunk to near insignificance, relative to government power.

“This Libertarian division has been sort of a pet project of a doddering CEO (his name is Christian, of course) for quite some time, and it has not been subjected to any of the rigors and disciplines of the free market, because it has received funding from Christian regardless of whether it even remotely achieves its goals. As the COO, I cannot overturn the decisions of the CEO.

“This Division is full of very, very smart people, with PhDs and MBAs and all sorts of connections and amazing writing abilities, and rich experience in marketing and advertising – and so it is not a lack of intelligence or ability that has made this Division so wildly disastrous. This division is full of people who keep talking about how a lack of market discipline and consequences for one’s actions, end up creating lazy and inefficient organizations – so they even have the theoretical understanding of what has caused their own current state.

“Furthermore, this Division has ended up telling our CEO – Christian – whatever he wants to hear, because he is the source of their funding, not the market that they claim they are trying to take over.”

If I were a business executive faced with this problem, it is not too hard to figure out the best course of action.

First of all, I would do whatever I could to stop Christian from funding this Division, because if he continues to fund it, all of the energy and talents of these brilliant people will be entirely wasted, because people respond to incentives, and he who pays the piper calls the tune, and it is essential to turn the attentions of these employees to the actual market, rather than this doddering executive.

Secondly, I would continually remind the people in this Division that they had not in fact achieved any of the goals that they had set for themselves – or, if they had achieved them, there was no way of knowing, because nothing was being tested, measured, reported on, and there were no *post mortems* whatsoever for any of the failed projects.

As long as Christian kept funding this Libertarian Division, I would be fully aware that the likelihood of instilling any responsibility for the actual achievement of goals, and creating any initiative or desire to change tactics or existing approaches, would be impossible. There would be no point attempting to hire people with greater discipline and focus to join this group, because such people would simply be ignored, scorned, and protected from their own failures. This Libertarian Division, like everyone else, knows exactly on which side its bread is buttered.

I would spend some time trying to get this Libertarian Division to stop taking funding from Christian, by writing about how bad Christian’s business judgment was, and how his money was creating an environment of laziness, pontificating, self-congratulation – and utter futility.

Of course, since I am a rational and empirical businessman, I would not beat my head against this wall for too long. After a certain amount of time, if no progress was being made, and if the heads of this Division simply stopped responding to my e-mails and phone calls, then I would take another approach – you could call it writing a book, if you like.

I could scarcely criticize the heads of this Libertarian Division for failing to be self-critical and empirical, and continue to beat my head against the walls of their indifference and hostility. I would put my criticisms out there, and see what response came back – if those criticisms were ignored, and I were personally attacked repeatedly by employees of this Libertarian Division, then of course I would accept that reality is what it is, and take another course.

Since I was unable to stop Christian’s funding, and since I was unable to get the leaders of the Libertarian Division to review their failures and alter their course of action, I would take the next step in attempting to rescue the goal that we all supposedly share.

I would appeal to the greed of those who wish to spend their lives in pursuit of something which can be achieved, and who wish to add to the practical and achievable virtue in the world, and who wish to begin laying the foundations for a human liberty which can in fact be won.

If a friend who is eager for an enjoyable, productive and positive work environment tells you that he wants to join the post office, what would you tell him?

Surely, you would tell him that joining the post office is a terrible decision, because 40% of post office employees are ex-military, a stifling and soul crushing union controls everything, there is no free market discipline or opportunity, and everything is politics and abuse and futility and annoyance.

It is not likely that you will be able to talk people out of being postal workers if they are only a few years from retirement, or are heavily invested in their careers, or who actually do not want to have anything to do with the free market, but rather want to sit around on their unionized asses, eating doughnuts and bitching about their supervisors.

Thus, to deal with this Libertarian Division, I would focus my efforts not on cutting off Christian’s funding, which is impossible, or on trying to talk longtime division employees out of ditching their overfunded privileges – but rather, the best thing that I could do for the company as a whole would be to try to prevent as many people as possible from acting under the delusion that joining the Libertarian Division would bring them any real happiness, or efficacy, or the contentment and self-esteem that comes from tangible achievement.

I would do my best to communicate to those who were looking to achieve something great with their lives that the last place they should ever go is the Libertarian Division. It is true that this Division continually talks about its grand plans, massive schemes, inevitable successes and wonderful achievements, but I would continually point out the fact that these only exist in the fantasies of those trapped in the Division. I would continually point out the true facts of the matter, which are that the division constantly wastes money, wastes time, fails to achieve its goals, sits idly by and refuses to reform its approach despite the fact that it is eternally losing ground, gets carpal tunnel syndrome from continually patting itself on the back and publishing self congratulatory articles about its wonderful “achievements,” makes wild statements of both intent and achievement while either ignoring or viciously attacking anyone



who dares to point out the basic fact that *less than nothing has actually been achieved*, and that making up achievements is a pitiful and delusional substitute for actually achieving something in the real world.

You cannot get people to quit the post office who are already there, but you can at least do your best to help people avoid the mistake of joining it.

That, really, is my goal in this book. I may not be able to convince you that the approach I suggest is the best one – and it may not be, for all I know. Like my director said 20 years ago, we have to do something, rather than nothing – and the first step to doing something is to recognize that we are in fact doing less than nothing.

To continue the above analogy, I may not be able to get you to become a self-starting entrepreneur, but if I can at least get you to not join the post office, I have certainly done something worthwhile.

Perhaps in the future people will look back upon the proposals in this book and call them foolish, mad, delusional, ridiculous – and that is completely fine by me! Perhaps all that will come out of this book is the understanding that what we are doing is not working, and that we need to begin to creatively assault the basic problem. I may not be able to prove that the world is round, but if all that I do is convince people that the world is not flat, at least we can begin exploring the alternatives.

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## THE PRESENCE OF ABSENCE

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When you tell someone that taxation is coercion, what is his response? 99 times out of 100, he will not deal with the simple fact that his government is a prison built upon a foundation of force.

Unfortunately, due to the three false approaches described above, libertarianism as a movement has never really tried to deal with the basic fact that *its most simple argument is almost universally rejected*.

When we compare the taxation equals force argument (TEF) to the theory of evolution, it comes up woefully short in terms of general acceptance.

Fundamentally, the only reason that a man rejects the theory of evolution is because he is superstitious, and believes that God blew some dust and made a man in His own image, and that we are descended from that man – surprisingly enough, given that we have belly buttons, and we can assume that God does not, unless we need to start searching for His ancestry as well.

Resistance to the theory of evolution is clearly centered around religious bigotry – what have libertarians done over the past few hundred years to identify the source of the near universal rejection of the TEF?

You would think that this would be job one – there is no more important resistance to overcome for libertarians than the opposition to the TEF. If we cannot convince people that the government is force, the entire libertarian position becomes woefully incomprehensible – a random grab bag of dislike of authority, hatred of outsiders, religious addiction, some crazed desire to return to a mythological past where the Founding Fathers could walk on water – the whole philosophy becomes little more than a nutty fringe element of incomprehensible resistance to – what? Without an understanding of the TEF argument, what on earth are libertarians obsessed with? What is the point?

The basic fact that the libertarian movement has never seriously attempted to answer the question – *why do people reject the fact that taxation equals force?* – is something that is almost incomprehensible, as long as we imagine that libertarianism is about getting people to accept TEF, which it is not – it is all about getting funding from Christians, and jobs for free-market academics.

If we wish to gain any kind of real traction in society – if we do not want to end up wasting our lives spinning our wheels, then we do in fact have to answer that most basic question: *why are our simple arguments so universally rejected?*

There comes a time in every man's life when he has to stop blaming other people.

There comes a time in any movement's life where it has to stop blaming external circumstances.

It is hard to find where in the libertarian movement this most basic question is even *asked*, let alone answered. When I have brought it up, in various environments, I have gotten the most mealy-mouthed platitudes in return, such as, "Well, change takes time," or, "People are dumb," or, "It's really not that easy a concept to understand," and so on.

Again and again, in libertarianism, we see these blind assertions of arbitrary "facts" – without any evidence or reasoning whatsoever.

Naturally, this is associated with the exact same Christian habit, such as, when asking where the world came from, "God made it!"



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## WHY PEOPLE REJECT THE TEF ARGUMENT

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As I said above, and as I have argued in more forceful emotional terms in my novel *The God of Atheists*, the corruptions of the present can all be traced back to the initial decisions of the past.

The decision to ally itself with Christianity turned libertarianism from a social science into a mere mascot for religious bigotry. If libertarians had remained true to the methodology of their discipline, they would have scornfully rejected the financial bait of superstition. Every movement has its price, to be sure, but I do believe that a movement dedicated to rationality, liberty and independence from arbitrary authority should have held out for more than a few thousand dollars and a bag of musty Bibles.

Once the decision was made to join forces with superstition, a key element became immediately scrubbed from the intellectual arsenal of libertarianism.

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## PSYCHOLOGY

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If you do not understand at least some of the basic tenets of psychology, you will be largely unable to break repetitive and pointless patterns.

Psychology is based upon the principle that there are unconscious and opposing forces or personas within the mind. When we look at the body, we can understand the purpose of each of the organs, given enough time and research, and there is nothing hidden within the body that prevents it from achieving its goals – or, if there is, we call it a visible disease, that we can see and hopefully treat.

In the mind, though, there is a kind of invisible cancer called *avoidance*, wherein thoughts which cause anxiety, fear, anger or other kinds of emotional distress can be repressed or ignored.

There is a lot that is controversial about psychology, but three basic principles remain incontrovertible:

1. Early childhood experiences have an enormous impact on personality and brain development.
2. Significant aspects of the mind remain unavailable to our conscious ego (the unconscious).
3. Constantly avoiding or repressing your own thoughts and feelings results in bad mental health.

The relationship between repression and anxiety is very well-documented, and the most basic defense against anxiety is dissociation.

Another well-documented and well-understood psychological phenomenon is that of *projection*, which is the habit of ascribing our own negative qualities to other people or things. One common example of this which most of us who have debated over the Internet are well aware of is the phenomenon of a man coming into a debate with highly provocative or insulting opinions, who then accuses everyone else of being mysteriously “aggressive.” Similarly, people who have an abusive “inner critic” will often project their experience of endless self-attacks into some external form, such as imagining that various people are out to get them, or obsessing over government regulations or currency manipulations, and so on.

If I were a therapist, and libertarianism were a patient of mine, the first question I would ask, as it lounged on my couch, is why it sees corruption everywhere it looks.

After a certain amount of psychological exploration, we would doubtless discover – as is almost always the case – that the corruption that libertarianism sees everywhere in the world (except itself!) is actually rooted in its own hypocritical decisions. This would actually explain why libertarianism fundamentally does not actually *want* to eliminate corruption in the world beyond, because that would be psychologically disastrous to most of those involved in the movement.

If we lose the ability to project our negative traits onto some other person or entity, we actually experience the anxiety, fear and rage within ourselves.

When libertarians decided to take Christian cash, they automatically and unconsciously decided that theirs was a movement that was going to be entirely hostile towards psychology and any depth of self-knowledge.

The reason for this is that all religion is profoundly anti-psychological in nature. The simple reason for this is that God himself is such a primal projection of human nature – fears, desires and self-importance – that in order to preserve the fantasy that God exists somewhere “out there,” religion has to virulently and endlessly oppose the exploration of the self and an understanding of psychology.

One of the main components of achieving deep self-knowledge is the differentiation between “self” and “other.” This sounds ridiculously simple, but it is actually quite complex. I can only really touch on the surface of this journey, but to give a simple example, when we look at a sports fan painting himself silly colors and madly cheering some team, we can easily see that such a person clearly has invested his ego, his happiness and fears, into the uncontrollable actions of others. This is an example of confusing the world, and the people in it, for yourself.

Similarly, when a man gets all choked up and dewy-eyed when a flag is raised, or a song is played, then clearly he is mistaking his own personality and values for some external symbol such as a piece of cloth or some notes of music.

It is really impossible to genuinely know yourself if you keep confusing yourself for people in costume, or people playing a sport, or pieces of cloth or strains of music or a race or a language or a geography – or an imaginary God.

Self-knowledge requires a strong and clear differentiation between who you are, and what everything else is. You cannot accurately identify a cow if you keep thinking that a cow is a “country,” or a “noble soldier,” or “loyalty,” or your “hope for victory,” or a “Jewish zombie who flew up to heaven and eternally judges your brain.”

The growth of psychological and emotional maturity is the slow and often painful process of withdrawing your projections from the world *so that you can see what the world actually is*.

Again, this sounds ridiculously easy, but it is very often blindingly difficult. Most people wander around the world with highly reflective sunglasses on – *but pointing the wrong way* – so that they are only seeing a distorted reflection of themselves, rather than the world itself.

Religion is the most primal projection mechanism of all. We are alive, we possess rational consciousness; the universe is not alive, and does not possess rational consciousness. We are born, the universe is not. We worry about our virtue, the universe does not. We bring truth into the universe, the universe does not bring truth to us.<sup>9</sup> The degree to which religion facilitates the projection of anthropomorphic characteristics into a dead and empty universe is truly staggering when you begin to really see it.

The pursuit of self-knowledge is in many ways the end of religion. By aligning itself with the primitive superstition of psychological projection, libertarianism entirely walled off its access to one of the greatest insights of modernity, which is the discovery and exploration of the *unconscious*.

It is in the *unconscious* that we find the answer as to why people consistently reject the simple and obvious argument that taxation equals force.

The unconscious is an enormous aspect of the mind that processes empirical information with staggering rapidity, and provides value-based responses in the form of emotional reactions.

The causal chain of processing that occurs in the unconscious is unavailable to the conscious mind without a great deal of introspection and self-knowledge. What cognitive psychologists call “core beliefs” only occur to us consciously as feelings. Feelings do result from cognitive associations – a species of logical reasoning, so to speak – but those associations are not easily available to the conscious mind.

We fully understand that if we stick our hand into a fire, a lack of knowledge of neurobiology will not prevent us from experiencing pain. In the same way, a lack of conscious understanding of our core beliefs will not prevent us from reacting emotionally to those beliefs.

In fact, the less we consciously understand our deepest thoughts and feelings, the more those thoughts and feelings have “the ring of truth,” so to speak.

For instance, if we do not understand that patriotism is a collective delusion – the theft of the pride of virtue through the accident of geography – then the warm glow that we feel in the presence of patriotism remains unquestioned for us. As a consequence, when we are evaluating information related to our country, our unconscious tendency will be to automatically accept that which is most favorable to our delusional emotional state, and reject with hostility that which punctures the vanity of our fantasy attachment.

However, once we realize that our attachment to a mere concept (“America”) is empirically invalid and emotionally hollow, we can begin to deal with our emotions as they really are, with regards to ourselves, and our own personal history, and we can begin to un-

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<sup>9</sup> For more information on this, you might be interested in my video/audio series “An Introduction to Philosophy,” available on my website at <http://www.freedomainradio.com/videos.html>.

cover our core beliefs, which are generally formed very early in life, up to the age of five or so, as a result of our early childhood experiences.

Such a process, of course, scarcely benefits those who profit from patriotism.

In the same way, once we understand that there is no God, we go through the natural disorientation and emotional emptiness that our former hysterical “worship” was designed to cover up. In a very real way, this is the inevitable withdrawal that comes when you stop taking a mind-altering drug.

All of the thoughts and emotions that formerly were invested in the fantasy projection of a god now collapse back into the personality, and can be dealt with as self-generated phenomena – not stimulated by some external deity, but created in the personality through personal history and prior decisions.

This is the process known to Jungian psychologists as *individuation*, or the recognition that all internal emotional states are generated by internal phenomena – not by externalities like stained glass, near-naked bleeding weeping gods, bits of stained cloth or strains of music.

The incredible value that results from the difficult process of individuation is an understanding and mastery of one’s own internal state. No longer are you like the hysterical sports fan whose happiness trembles on the spot where a leather ball may – or may not – land. No longer are you like the brain-addled patriot, who takes wild existential pride in the proximity of certain dirt to his mother’s womb. No longer are you the desperate and fearful religious addict, who begs for the favors and fears the punishments of a God that really “lives” deep within his own brain, in his own amygdala and hypothalamus, shouting up from the invisible caves of early childhood.

When you ally yourself with an organization that profits from keeping people in a state of psychological retardation, which flourishes only by provoking the most dangerous and infantile aspects of human consciousness, and which grows only as the self-knowledge of its members shrinks, you are not building a bridge to the future, but rather voluntarily throwing yourself into a chasm of prehistory.

Libertarians know this – unconsciously, of course – and that is why they worship a time *before* the rise of psychology – the golden days of the Founding Fathers, stirring writings and noble paintings, when the Constitution was written with fiery words on the tapestry of history, and a new nation was forged out of the blah blah blah...

On a much smaller level, of course, this is why so many libertarians turned against my show – Freedomain Radio – when I and my listeners began to really talk about psychology and self-knowledge.

This is an indication of the astoundingly rapid processing that occurs in the unconscious. The moment that my show began to turn towards early childhood experiences, practical self-knowledge, emotional defenses and the necessity of withdrawing emotional projections from the world, all the former support I had in the libertarian community mysteriously dried up.

Unconsciously, a sequence flashed with enormous rapidity through the minds of most libertarians, which went a little something like this:

1. ZOMG!
2. Stef is talking about undoing emotional defenses and psychological projections!
3. Religion is based on emotional defenses and psychological projections!
4. Libertarianism is based on religion!
5. Thus Stef is talking about undoing libertarianism!
6. I need a paycheck!
7. ZOMG!

The fundamental reason that libertarians have never asked the basic question – *why do people reject the TEF argument?* – is that the answer lies in the unconscious, and in deep knowledge of both the self and of other people.

In other words, the answer lies in that which unravels religion.

Since libertarianism relies on religion, and religion survives by opposing psychology, libertarians had no choice but to oppose an increase in psychological understanding.

Because libertarianism is so opposed to psychology, it cannot ask any questions which involve the unconscious. As a result, it is stuck in a blind repetition of earlier mistakes, like anyone who resists self-knowledge. It cannot examine the resistance that society as a whole has towards libertarian arguments, because that resistance is unconscious – and so it has to make up empty-headed stories to explain away its endless failures – thus guaranteeing their repetition.

Psychological, emotional and intellectual maturity demands that when we do not know the answer to a question, we state with direct honesty: “I do not know.”

This is not an approach that has ever been part of any religion – in fact, religion is a endless cluster of deluded attacks on every reasonable question under the sun!<sup>10</sup>

This is why no *post mortem* has ever been performed on a libertarian project – because such a *post mortem* would reveal an appalling ignorance as to its failure. Since libertarianism is full of enormously intelligent people, it would not take very long for them to begin to figure out why they were so abysmally ignorant – which was that they had been avoiding the question.

Once they figured out that they were avoiding the question, the next question would be: *why*?

And so, step-by-step, down the magic staircase they would go, to the roots of their own evasions and emotions, their fears and greed, the dark side that is in all of us, and all those other difficult and messy aspects of humanity that scare so many “rational” people.

No, no – muuuch easier to just cash in all those juicy Christian checks and go write another useless article about the Fed.

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## WITHDRAWING PROJECTION: AN EXAMPLE

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The 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq has been called the “Rashomon war” – a reference to a Japanese play where everyone has wildly divergent views of a theft in the woods – due to its ever-changing justifications. None of the “factual” claims advanced to support the invasion held up to any reasonable scrutiny, even before the war began.

Those who do not understand or appreciate psychology will forever root around the surface justifications for such genocidal murders, and remain perpetually baffled and disoriented in this ever-shifting hall of mirrors.

If none of the reasons advanced are the real reasons, how can psychology help us?

If we recall the three fundamental psychological axioms – the enormous effects of early childhood experiences, the existence of the unconscious, and the dangers of repression – some possible sources for the drive to war become much clearer.

George Bush reports that he asked God whether or not to invade Iraq. As long as George imagined that he was communing with some vast interstellar intelligence outside his own skull, the “answer” that he received had the ring of an omniscient absolute.

If George knew even a little about psychology, he would understand that he was not in fact praying to God, but rather “submerging” a question into his own unconscious. Psychology fully supports our general experience that our personalities are composed of more than a single “voice,” in that we often debate with ourselves, experience contradictory impulses and ideas, experience nightly dreams that can be utterly at odds with our conscious values and so on. In fact, it would be impossible to explain the phenomenon of creative writing – with its varied and believable characters, all coming from one mind – without accepting the reality that our personality is a multiplicity of perspectives, rather than a single and unified dictatorship of the ego.

Thus George cannot be praying to God – since God does not exist – but rather he *is asking a question of himself*.

When the “answer” comes back, if George is at all interested in self-knowledge and the withdrawal of projection, he will understand that it is not God telling him to invade Iraq, but rather it is an expression of his own unconscious desires.

With this understanding, George can then begin to examine why he *himself* wants to invade Iraq, rather than operate under the delusion that some eternal and omniscient ghost is telling him what to do.

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<sup>10</sup> Which, according to the Old Testament, orbits the Earth.

Once George can begin to examine his own motives for invasion, he can begin the journey of self-discovery, where he will end up exploring one of the potential scenarios below – or another one, which remains obscure:

- As a result of being abused as a child by his mother, George has grown up with a deep hatred of his father, who did not protect him. This hatred is utterly unacceptable to him – and so, when Saddam Hussein threatens to kill George’s father, Hussein is actually expressing a repressed murderous wish that lies deep in George’s unconscious. By attacking Hussein, George is actually “attacking” his own desire to kill his father. (In fact, Bush claimed as one of his reasons for invading Iraq the fact that Saddam Hussein “threatened to kill my dad”.)
- George’s political ambitions are driven by deep feelings of personal self-hatred, resulting from his early maternal abuse, alcoholic self-medication and general feelings of invisibility and worthlessness. Deep down, he truly hates the American public for enabling these hollow ambitions, and so takes out his rage against them by committing them to war.
- George’s antisocial tendencies were early expressed by his childhood habit of blowing up frogs – childhood cruelty towards animals is a clear sign of sadism. These expressions of inner torture were really cries for help, which went unheeded in his family, and in his society. His inner horror continually drives escalations of sadism and violence, with the purpose that someone, somewhere, will understand and empathize with his psychological agony. Unfortunately, rather than empathize with this pain, the American public rewards him by giving him the power of life and death over millions. Since he has developed habit of acting out violence as a cry for help, he initiates war as the ultimate expression of his truly apocalyptic self-hatred.
- When George was a child, his mother was all-powerful, and abused him emotionally and physically, scratching him violently and screaming at him. Thus George understood that power is always associated with the abuse of the helpless. Furthermore, George’s mother would veer between affection and abuse. Saddam Hussein was a “friend” of the United States, and then became an “enemy,” just as George did with his own mother when he was a child. Furthermore, Saddam Hussein was essentially helpless in the face of US military power, and so George re-enacted the principle “attack the helpless person who was formerly your friend” by invading Iraq.
- Due to the mechanism of projection, George was able to project his own sadism onto Saddam Hussein – which meant that he experienced Saddam Hussein as extremely dangerous. His own increasing murderous rage – which would in fact trigger a war – was projected onto the Iraqi dictator, and so George genuinely felt that Saddam was “about to attack” him – when of course the complete opposite was true.
- The murderous rage that George experienced from his parents was re-enacted against the Iraqi children, half a million of whom died as a result of the US and UK led sanctions against Iraq – started by George’s own father after the Gulf War. Once George continued his father’s role of “destroyer of children,” he could no longer escape the role of “parental abuser,” but could only escalate the murderous destruction of others.

None of the above explanations may be valid, of course – the purpose is merely to highlight the self-knowledge that can be attained when we look *inwards*, into the myths that have created us, and that we have created – rather than stare into the empty heavens and dream of conversations with dead constellations.

## WHY PEOPLE RESIST LIBERTARIANISM

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Once we understand the amazing power of the unconscious, its uncanny ability to process enormous amounts of information virtually instantaneously, we can begin to unravel the mystery of why people reject libertarianism.

### RESISTANCE TO TRUTH

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Prior to the 17th century, all human societies – without exception – were founded on abuse, violence, brutality and a strict and vicious hierarchy.<sup>11</sup> What fundamentally sustained this hierarchy were lies about the nature of power. Mere men were given the label “King,” and called divine, or divinely sanctioned. Other men, wearing what often appeared to be tea-cosies on their heads, were considered to be in direct and constant communication with divine beings, and so their word was the law of the gods.

The average man and woman saw things very differently indeed, deep in their heart of hearts. We can only imagine how many times throughout history men looked at a fat fool in a gold crown and knew that he was a mortal man, just like them, except worse. We cannot know how many peasants kneeled before a sneering priest, squinting up through their lowered lashes, seeing the snot in his nose, and knowing in their soul that he was just a smug and pompous version of their own selves.

In the old story “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” two tailors arrive at a kingdom and promised to make the King a spectacular suit, using a thread with the magical ability to remain invisible to anyone who was not worthy of his position. They began pretending to make the suit, using no thread or cloth at all, but only miming their work. Whenever the king “wears” the work in progress, his courtiers and ministers all express amazement at the beauty of the suit, because they do not want to be revealed as people who are not worthy of their positions.

Eventually, the King is carried in a procession through the town, where everyone cries in wonder at the beauty of the suit they cannot see, until one child stands up, points at the King, and asks in a loud voice why the king is naked.

This, in my opinion, is the best fairy tale *ever*. I really could care less about knights and dragons, but the truth that is contained in *this* story could fill a book shelf.

Embedded in this tale of course is the general fear that people have about speaking the truth, even when it is perfectly obvious – but what is even more delightful, and terrifying, about this story *is the complete absence of violence*.

Everyone says that they can see the suit that is not there because of their own insecurities, their fear that they are not fit for their positions – but what society in history has ever been able to maintain a predatory hierarchy such as an aristocracy without the use of violence? For heaven’s sake, we cannot even maintain a parliamentary democracy without threatening everyone with a gun if they do not turn over half their income!

Openly identifying the violence at the root of mythological power was always and forever sheer *suicide*, throughout our entire evolutionary development as a species. Learning not to see what was blatantly obvious was foundational to surviving as an individual.

The amazing thing about the fairy tale above is that it describes how afraid people are to speak truth to power – and yet it *itself* remains afraid to speak truth to power, because it blames the fear of the people on the *internal* state of insecurity rather than the *external* threats of torture and beheading. It also shows the insecurity as radiating outward from the King – in other words, the people are insecure because the King is insecure. It is certainly true that no King can rationally feel that he deserves his position, but it is certainly not true that people were insecure because Kings were anxious and insecure, but rather because their Kings were sadistic and genocidal.

### THE RATIONAL FEAR OF TRUTH

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Many of our desires and fears are hardwired into our brains, down deep in the neurological cortex of our minds. Our sexual desires, our fight and flight mechanisms, our desire for water when we are thirsty, food when we are hungry and rest when we are tired – this

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<sup>11</sup> For more on this, please visit [www.psychohistory.com](http://www.psychohistory.com).

constellation of passions, needs and emotions are not learned, but rather innate – babies do not learn to cry when they are hungry, but are born with that ability, as countless red-eyed parents can attest.

We have a natural aversion to that which is highly likely to bring about danger. Natural selection has done a wonderful job of picking those out of the gene pool who do things that get them killed.

The brutal power structures that dominated almost all of human history used endless violence to maintain their rule, but always had to at least provide the appearance that the violence was caused by the immorality – the “disobedience” – of the ruled. Throughout history, mock trials have been the norm, which drape the veneer of justice over what is, essentially, a Mafia hit.

The lies required to sustain the illusion that murder is virtue are virtually without number. The obvious irrationalities of the rulers are recast as the “rationalities” of gods. The obvious hypocritical double standards of power are “justified” according to the divine right of kings. Any citizens who attempt to break the chains that bind them are slaughtered wholesale, and then labeled “dangerous” to the other citizens – a mind-bending reversal of what is actually true! Societies wracked by dictatorships, wars, plagues and famines are called “ordered,” while even the thought of a voluntary society *not* run by genocidal criminals is called “chaotic” and “anarchic.”

Since the dawn of our species, people have been endlessly slaughtered for speaking the simple truth about the violence of those in power. In addition, anyone who listened to such speeches – or was even in the same family, or in the same house – was also tortured and butchered.

Is it so shocking to think that the same instincts that compel us to run from a bear would also compel us to fear and shun those who speak the truth about power?

A bear can be out-run – thugs with clubs in the name of the King cannot.

Furthermore, those at the peak of the pyramid of bloody power always sent spies radiating out through the community, attempting to root out those who might be open to the truth about power. These oily beasts would curl up to peasants, speaking subtle treason and looking for agreement. Any slave who hesitated to repel their words would be dragged into the street and dismembered.

Revolution was impossible; the truth was suicidal, and virtually everyone who whispered about the iniquity of power was a slaughtering spy.

When the truth about power enters into a conversation, Stone Age defenses rise from the base of the brain, creating near pathological anxiety and hostility. In a moment, a civilized coffee shop becomes a firelit cave, and all the shiny pleasantries of modern democracy shatter before the emotional percussive of a falling club – revealed in the hands of the ruler only the moment before it lands on the skull of the foolish listener.

These associations are not conscious. This unbelievably rapid sequence of thought is imprinted below the awareness of the ego we know and love so well.

The greater the danger to life, the more automatic and unconscious the response to that danger needs to be. If you accidentally put your hand into a fire, your spine will detect the pain and jerk your hand back before the signals reach your brain.<sup>12</sup> If an unexpected noise reaches your ears while you are sleeping, your brain will yank you awake, your fight or flight adrenaline already pumping.

We are ringed by automatic sentinels that reason not from the reason of the present, but rather from the imminent deaths of history.

If you are not aware of the depth and power of the unconscious, then you will introduce the topic that taxation equals force with no understanding whatsoever of the degree of stress, anxiety and hostility that your words evoke in others.

The person that you are talking to will probably not have any greater understanding of what is happening to him than you do. The hostility that he feels will arise in him as if out of nowhere.

It is a well-recognized psychological phenomenon that most people will almost automatically and immediately invent conceptual reasons for unexpected emotional distress. First comes the shock, or the fear, or the anger – and then comes the “explanation,” *after* the fact. Almost everyone reasons *ex post facto*, in reaction to unexpected emotional distress. Almost every argument you will ever hear is a form of emotional self-management, designed to keep the real truth at bay – not from you, but rather from the person who is arguing.

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<sup>12</sup> Biologically speaking, of course, your spine is only using you to make another spine, and so its self-interest makes perfect sense.

When a man hears that taxation is force, his unconscious hears all of the implications contained in that statement immediately, at light speed, and leaps into action to protect him from being tortured and killed.

The unconscious does not have a calendar. The unconscious has never heard of the Bill of Rights, or free speech.

The unconscious is a fierce guardian, blind to time.

This aspect of our unconscious developed in a time when we saw people who spoke the truth – or listened to the truth – slaughtered on a whim.

Those people who with open and snowy innocence spoke the truth as it occurred to them fill half the unnamed pits of our genocidal history. They did not survive to pass their mutations along.

Those who feared the truth, and feared those who spoke the truth, *did* survive – to teach their children to fear and shun the truth, and to see those children who did not taken and murdered.

We are still so early in the development of our species that the world is not run by truth, or reason, but by the *unconscious*, by the blind and beautiful pit bull of history that will kill and die to save its master.

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## ANGER IN THE FACE OF TRUTH...

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When you speak the truth to a man – let us call him Meletus – he experiences a sudden stab of fear and irritation. He does not want to be in this conversation, but he also cannot leave it, because in the past – our collective past – that would have indicated guilt. You have put Meletus in a difficult situation, and he resents you for it.

Meletus does not believe that he is a slave, for to believe that he is a slave would be to consciously understand the true nature of political power, which is the threat of overwhelming force against the legally disarmed.

Asking Meletus to admit that he is a slave, and to accept the argument that taxation equals force is true, is the direct equivalent, to his unconscious at least, of attempting to throw him into a tank full of sharks.

Historically, slaves were never allowed to point out the violence of their rulers, or to consider themselves slaves at all, since that was just another way of pointing out such violence. Thus Meletus must make up justifications for his rulers *because he is frightened of the truth of their violence – because throughout history accepting or speaking that truth got people killed.*

Thus, you provoke anxiety in Meletus – anxiety that he cannot consciously admit to himself, since that leads down the path to real physical danger. You have also provoked a feeling of humiliation in him, by creating fear and anxiety within him that he has to avoid.

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## LEVELING

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Most adults, when they experience humiliation, attempt to “level up,” by creating an impression of false superiority. Since Meletus feels “put down” relative to you, he will strive to put you down in return, to restore his feeling of “self-esteem.”<sup>13</sup>

How many times do libertarians experience condescension from those they bring the “TEF” argument to?

How often have libertarians been portrayed – in word or in deed – as naïve, oddly resentful, out of touch, or as pointless mavericks, hopeless theorizers and ungrateful citizens?

How many times do libertarians have to be lectured to about the “social contract,” and the “free-market of democracy,” and the “right to leave if you do not approve,” and so on?

How many times do libertarians have to see their arguments against violence reframed as arguments against voluntarism?

How many times do libertarians have to see their arguments for voluntarism reframed as arguments for violence?

Apparently, that number, in the absence of psychological understanding, appears to be functionally infinite.

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<sup>13</sup> For more on this, see just about any Doctor Phil show you can find.



## THE FEAR OF OTHERS

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Deep down, everybody knows that what is called “society” is little more than a series of violent mythologies designed to keep the powers that be aloft.

Biologically, people are designed for conformity with the group rather than integrity to the truth, since conformity encouraged survival, and integrity mostly got you killed.

When you ask a man to admit the violence and mythology of what he calls “morality,” it is not the rulers who primarily make him afraid, but rather it is his peer social group – his friends, acquaintances, work colleagues and family.

I say this based on 25 years of experience – I am sure you have had exactly the same experience – which is that I have been arguing for voluntarism and freedom for decades, and have never once been attacked, sanctioned or even goosed by state agents.

No, it is always and forever only my fellow citizens who attack the truth – who attack *me*, rather, since the truth cannot be “attacked,” but only accepted or disproved.

When I posed a series of rational and empirical questions and criticisms of the efficacy of the Ron Paul campaign, I was not audited by the IRS or cornered by men in black. Rather, it was the libertarian community and the Ron Paul supporters who turned against me.

Everyone knows that when you begin to question the philosophical and moral assumptions – often unconscious, to be sure, but even more dangerous because of that – of your peer social group, they will turn on you most savagely.

Every Christian knows that if he begins to persistently question the existence of God, he will be rapidly ejected from his supposedly-loving peer group. And he also knows, deep down, that he will be ejected not because he is wrong, but rather because he is right. Meletus decided to attack Socrates, rather than any of the other thousands of Sophists infesting the culture of ancient Greece – because Socrates was *right* – not necessarily in all his conclusions, since no one achieves that, but rather in his fluid, empirical and rational methodology for approaching the truth.

Everyone knows that what they consider necessary conformity is actually just enslavement to error.

Everyone knows that it is not the *state* that keeps us in chains; we keep each other in chains. The state merely profits from our willingness – eagerness even – to attack each other.

It is far cheaper to keep slaves when the slaves eagerly police themselves.

Religion is fundamentally not a belief in an invisible God, but the fear of attack by the peer group.

Statism is fundamentally not the belief that the government is virtuous, but the fear of attack by the peer group if one dares to say otherwise.

Libertarianism is fundamentally not the belief that political action, religious affiliation and academic education will bring freedom, but rather the fear of attack by the libertarian peer group if one dares to question these axioms.

## ON A PERSONAL NOTE

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I came relatively late in life to the libertarian movement – I had nothing to do with it until my late 30s, less than three years ago.

Like most people who come to a new movement which seems compatible with many values they already hold, I took what libertarians said mostly at face value. When they talked of their genuine desires to free the world from statism, I thought: *excellent*! When their articles exploded many of the mythologies I had long suspected as false (“Lincoln freed the slaves!”), I was thrilled! I dug deep into libertarian literature with great excitement and optimism.

I suppose it was because I brought other, more disciplined and empirical skills and experiences to the table – my entrepreneurial endeavors in a variety of fields – that I slowly began to become *uncomfortable* with the libertarian habit of making baseless claims, and then becoming resentful when asked for evidence.

I had seen enough sleazy salesmen in the business world to know a con when I saw one.

In my mind, I began to divide the libertarian world into the “end of the world nut jobs” and the more rational empiricists. I placed most of the religious libertarians into the former category, but reserved places of honor within my mind for the various scholars and activists who seemed more rational.

I accepted the fact that a few of my early articles were edited to remove any content that may be conceivably offensive to religious sentiments. These articles were not about religion, and so I did not mind particularly that a few sentences or paragraphs were struck out before publication.

As I began to podcast, very early on I discussed the empirical and rational arguments against the existence of gods. The fact that my articles were still accepted within the libertarian community despite my outright, vocal and strong atheism, gave me some comfort that religion was not a core topic for libertarianism.

However, when I began to talk about psychological motives, personal history and the effect of early childhood experiences on later thoughts and feelings, I began to feel a certain *chill* shiver through the libertarian community.

Rumours began to spread that Freedomain Radio was some sort of cult, which “commanded” people to leave their families – despite the fact that of the roughly 50,000 people who have listened to the show, about 20 have separated from abusive families – or about 0.04%.

I was also called “dictatorial” for asking abusive or aggressive people to stop posting on the FDR forum – about 30 in over two years, or less than 1% of the total membership – pretty good for a forum which deals with such volatile topics!

I have also been accused of “driving” the conversation in particular directions, i.e. towards psychological and relationship issues - which is a truly astounding claim, coming as it does from those who claim a deep understanding of the free-market!

For those who do not seem able to grasp how the free market really works, I will provide a brief explanation.

I do not have the capacity to “drive” the conversation. I did deal with some family and psychological issues, starting at about podcast 70 – but if people were not interested in those theories, the topic would have been entirely dropped! I also did podcasts on Shakespeare, which proved to be fairly uninteresting to the vast majority of my listeners, so that topic has not come up again.

The same libertarians who endlessly argue that it is *impossible* for a corporation to impose its will upon consumers in the free-market, and impossible to gain a dictatorial monopoly – also say that I somehow “control” and “dominate” my customers. (It is interesting to me that not one of these criticisms has ever come from entrepreneurs who have actually worked in the free-market, but rather only from religious, political and academic types – for fairly obvious reasons.)

The simple fact is that I follow and talk about what my listeners are most interested in – just like any other entrepreneur. Every Sunday, at 4 PMEST, I ask my listeners what is uppermost in their mind. For at least 18 months, I can scarcely think of a single topic that has been philosophical or economic in nature. Empirically, objectively, people want to talk about personal ethics, immediate relationships, and the deep struggle we all face to live with integrity in our own lives.

I do not interrupt listeners who are asking about economics and “order” them to talk about highly personal issues – as if that were even possible! Like any good entrepreneur, I let my *customers* drive the provision of services.

If I did not, there would be no show.

I once talked to a libertarian radio talk show host who tried to do a three-day series on personal relationships, only to have to abandon it after less than 2 days, due to listener indifference and outright hostility. As a listener wrote: “I listen to your show to find out what’s wrong with the government, not for dating advice!”

That is the awesome power we show hosts wield!

One of the most popular segments in Freedomain Radio was “Ask a Therapist,” where my wife answered questions about personal relationships and mental health. Those who call in to the Sunday show almost exclusively ask questions about personal relationships and mental health. When a listener contacts me for a conversation, it is almost always about personal relationships and mental health.

These are just the facts of market demand – and it is entirely ridiculous that so-called free market “experts” believe that I can somehow magically control my customers. For the sake of all that is rational, I run a *charity*, and so am far more dependent on the kindness of strangers than most organizations that provide fee-based products or services!

It is also an astounding monument to hypocrisy that I have been accused of “controlling” my donators by atheist libertarians who refuse to challenge religious libertarians! If I am not dependent upon the voluntary goodwill of my donators, but can somehow magi-

cally control them, then why are libertarians so afraid to confront religious donators? Why is it that libertarianism has to endlessly appease its religious supporters, but I am somehow in total control over my donators?

Welcome to the wonderful world of psychological *projection*!

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## PSYCHOLOGY AND ME

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I have been fascinated by psychology since I was in my teens; in my early 30s I went through a few years of very intensive psychotherapy, which I found immensely positive – my wife practices psychology, and runs her own clinic, and was – to her eternal credit – the one who began pushing me towards a psychological understanding of the potentials and challenges of the freedom movement.

I did not at first understand why libertarians – who claim that empirical and rational social sciences such as economics are perfectly valid – would be so hostile towards an empirical and rational social science such as psychology. In my own naïveté, I assumed that this was largely because of a lack of understanding of psychology, rather than any innate hostility towards it.

Through my show, I continued to explain the basic tenets of psychology, and participated in a number of listener conversations where I think the value of psychological understanding and deep self-knowledge was more than amply demonstrated. Through Freedomain Radio, people got out of bad relationships, and often into good relationships – they liberated themselves from unproductive and dead-end careers, and revitalized their own work environments. People achieved real freedom in their lives by leaving salaried employment and starting their own companies – and this resulted not from economic explication, but rather a psychological investigation of their own resistance to freedom, which often brought them up against the limitations of their personal relationships.

It was during this phase of Freedomain Radio that I began to hear the first mutterings and accusations that I was running some sort of cult. Several people who were participating on the Freedomain Radio board became volatile and destructive – after attempting to negotiate with them in the hopes of achieving more rational and positive behaviors, I realize that this would be impossible, and I banned them.

Although some people experience my banning of abusive and destructive people with dismay, it is perfectly consistent with my approach to relationships, which is that you try to negotiate and get what you want out of people – and offer them the same opportunity – but if you are unable to come to an agreement on mutually beneficial behavior, you are in no way obligated to continue the relationship.

I do not view this as an entirely subjective process, of course, since I believe that verbal abuse, name-calling and passive aggressive provocations, for instance, are not negotiable.

If I host a weekly dinner party, where anyone can drop by, I do have the right to ban people who disrupt the productivity and pleasure of the conversation through verbal abuse.

It is my house after all, and it is testament to the psychological distress of certain libertarians that they rail against my exercise of property rights, while claiming property rights to be a sacrosanct value.

The issue of the Ron Paul candidacy arose shortly after this time. Even before I knew that Ron Paul was a fundamentalist Christian, I criticized political action as merely the illusion of progress, and the draining of resources that could be used more productively elsewhere.

Most libertarians placed enormous hopes in the Ron Paul candidacy, and doubtless experienced my questions, criticisms and empirical tests for success as irritating, if not enraging – certainly the comments that I received on my videos were spectacularly hostile, and if I had run my private e-mails through a profanity filter, I would have largely been looking at near-endless rows of asterisks.

I simply could not understand why money was being hurled at a “solution” without any hint of a project plan, testable milestones and empirical verification of claims – probably as a result of my free-market experience as an entrepreneur, in both the software and artistic fields. The fact that libertarians were wildly enthusiastic about burning through tens of millions of dollars – not to mention countless man-hours – without once seeming to consider how else these resources could be used – struck me as more of a collective stampede off the cliff of delusion than a rational and disciplined approach to the effective allocation of time and money.

I began to get more suspicious when I saw the “dual-answer” approach to potential donators – those who were concerned with winning were told that Ron Paul could win, while those who were skeptical of that possibility were told that Ron Paul was “educating people.”

Again, I had seen enough of this nonsense in the entrepreneurial world, and spotted these manipulations pretty quickly.

Then, I saw exhortations to donate to the Ron Paul campaign – with mad claims that he could still win – when it had become, for all intents and purposes, impossible for him to do so.

To me, this began to look very close to outright fraud.

As I examined the good Doctor's candidacy, I began to really see the seedy Christian underbelly of the libertarian movement: Ron Paul's rejection of evolution – from a man well-trained in the scientific method, and so unable to claim backwoods ignorance – along with the crassly exploitive money-grubbing, hostility to rational questions about the efficacy of this candidacy, an increased and almost hysterical pandering to Christians (for the sake of donations of course), and a general abandonment of restraint, reason, evidence and plain common sense.

Principles were hurled overboard like heavy crates from a sinking ship – the collective hysteria of “now or never” gripped people in its feverish fist, creating volatile and hostile “us versus them” aggression and paranoia. “If you are against Ron Paul, you are against freedom!” – a chilling echo of Bush's “He who is not with this is against us” – showed just how far down the well of superstitious collectivism the movement had plummeted.

Those few of us who resisted the pressures of these aggressive delusions were soundly and repetitively attacked for raising rational questions during a time of general hysteria – and after the hysteria had begun to subside, we were not praised – or even recognized – for predicting the futility of the campaign in advance. Instead, *ex post facto* justifications were invented about the value of educating people through the campaign – again, with little to no empirical evidence.

You could also see the gruesomely irrational spectacle of Ron Paul openly saying on the Colbert Report after he lost so spectacularly that he never had any chance at all – while on the very same show, a few months earlier, he had said that there was a reasonable chance that he just might win.

Of course, this is the kind of ridiculous reversal common to those unable to admit their own corruption. If you say after you have lost spectacularly, that you really thought you *could* win, then you look kind of deranged, and largely out of touch with reality. If a man claims to genuinely believe that he can win Olympic gold in long-distance running, but cannot even struggle around the track once, clearly he is delusional about his own abilities. Thus it is inevitable that Ron Paul would reverse his estimation of his own chances after his spectacular failure – and without any reference to his prior “optimism” – because Ron Paul is a politician, just like every other politician. He goes to Washington and gets money for his constituents; he says whatever he needs to say to maximize his “credibility” and income in the moment, and he makes wild claims while steadfastly rejecting empirical evidence.

How could it be otherwise? *He is a fundamentalist Christian.*

As the success of Freedomain Radio continued to grow, I was for quite a while rather surprised at the general indifference – and outright hostility – of the libertarian community towards the show. Given that libertarianism is supposed to be all about voluntarism, surely the voluntary nature of the show would meet with their approval. Surely, given that libertarians are constantly claiming that the poor will be educated in a free society, Freedomain Radio would be a wonderful example of just that – since I give everything away for free, and rely on voluntary donations, those who cannot afford to pay for instruction can still receive it.

Surely, since the Ron Paul supporters were so devoted to educating people about liberty, after the failure of the Ron Paul candidacy, they would at least acknowledge the value of a show that continues to grow and spread arguments for freedom!

When a voluntary organization educates tens of thousands of people without charging a penny, surely that is a wonderful example of the benevolent free market in action. In my rather deluded optimism, I pictured at least some excitement within the libertarian community about this radical application of free-market ideals, innovative use of technology and pursuit of a highly unusual business plan. I imagined that people would be curious about the success of Freedomain Radio, and cite it as an example of the power and benevolence of voluntarism, as well as a practical example of how people can be educated who cannot afford it.

It's not like I am some entirely non-credible fringe nutter – I studied English literature, economics and psychology at the undergraduate level, and hold a Masters degree in History from an Ivy League university. I got an ‘A’ on my thesis on intellectual history, based on primary sources on Plato, Locke, Kant and Hegel. I have been a successful entrepreneur who co-founded and sold a fairly large company, and I have also written and directed a successful play for the theater. I have lived in England, South Africa and Canada, and travelled throughout North America, Europe and China for business.

As the success of the show continued to grow, and the number of podcast downloads started to run into the millions, the indifference and hostility of the libertarian movement as a whole started to become truly incomprehensible to me, and I decided to sit down and try to figure out what the implications were of this avoidance.

I am very glad that I did this, because I learned an enormous amount about the movement whose goals I care for very, very deeply.

This book does not result from my hostility towards libertarianism, but rather from my love of freedom, and my desire to build a rational and empirical plan to achieve it.

We cannot go through the church to achieve a free society, because on the other side of the church is always a graveyard.

For those with the eyes to see, religion is a spent force fundamentally, surviving only on the fading momentum of the past. The younger generation is far more intelligent and skeptical than we ever were, and no movement can succeed in gaining their allegiance that abases itself before the superstitions of their elders.

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## RATIONAL LIBERTARIANS

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There are many noble and brilliant libertarians within the movement, who respect empirical evidence and reasoned arguments, who reject the existence of God – and even the validity of political action – but in general they remain “secret doubters,” who are afraid to speak their minds for fear of attack or rejection, or perhaps from a misguided belief that “infighting” is bad.

This has always struck me as a rather odd perspective for lovers of liberty to possess.

Surely, freedom is first and foremost the freedom to speak one’s mind openly and honestly, with reason and evidence as your guide. If we self-censor within the freedom movement because we are afraid of disapproval, attack or the appearance of discord, then surely we are missing something essential and elemental about the concept of freedom.<sup>14</sup>

Either libertarianism is a rational and empirical social science, or it is a cult devoted to grabbing money from the superstitious.

If libertarianism is a rational and empirical social science – as I believe it is – then it is time to clean house.

This means ditching religious money, and the easy and sleazy money-grubbing of promising political solutions to political problems.

It also means a basic recognition of the reality that using the statist protection of academia to teach people about the free-market is worse than useless – it actively discredits the values it claims to promote.

Libertarianism recognizes that the state is corrupt because its proclaimed values are always undermined by special interest groups, who trumpet their high motives while grabbing cash from the public purse.

The fact that lofty ideals are so susceptible to base financial self-interest is a central libertarian criticism of the state – and rightly so!

Since the state exists as an idealistic cover for base money-grubbing, to overturn state power, libertarians must inevitably accept that people are capable of overcoming their immediate financial incentives for the sake of pursuing and achieving a higher moral goal.

Libertarians will say to highly-subsidized farmers that those farmers should be willing and able to give up their funding – and take the short-term financial hit – for the sake of a better world in the future.

Fundamentally, the power of the state cannot be broken if people cannot be convinced to place moral ideals above immediate financial gain. If people are not willing to suffer through the transition from a statist society to a free society – with all the immediate financial losses that will occur for literally tens of millions of people – then the power of the state will never be broken – or even limited – but rather will endlessly increase to the point of collapse, whereupon it will start all over again.

If libertarians are not able to put their own high moral ideals above their immediate financial gain, they have zero moral right to demand or expect this from others. How can a libertarian tell a farmer that he should live without state subsidies, and take the short-term financial losses for the sake of a better world, when libertarians themselves are completely hostile to the idea that they should live without Christian subsidies, and state protection, and take the short-term financial losses for the sake of a better world?

Well, you might say, but state money is taken at the point of a gun, while Christian money is voluntary.

There is some truth in this, but there is much more falsehood.

Christianity – like any cult or superstition – has only survived for thousands of years because it indoctrinates helpless and dependent children, frightening them with tales of eternal vigilance from sky ghosts, eternal punishments for mere thought, the innate evil of

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*14 This reminds me of a prominent libertarian I met once who had unbelievably bad breath -- as my wife pointed out, it seemed odd that in a movement devoted to freedom, nobody felt free to point out this basic fact.*

original sin, the need to beg for forgiveness for the sin of breathing – and all other varieties of mental tortures that children are utterly unable to evade or resist, as a result of their dependent status.

Libertarians endlessly rail against the pro-state propaganda of public schools, bewailing the fact that children have false ideals inflicted upon them against their will.<sup>15</sup>

However, they call Christian money purely voluntary, as if children do not have the false ideas of religious superstition inflicted upon them against their will.

If you doubt that religion is a virus passed down through intergenerational propaganda, all you have to do is imagine the odds that a child raised in a remote Afghanistan village by Muslim parents, with no exposure to Christian tenets whatsoever, will end up as a note-perfect Baptist. What about a child tossed ashore from a shipwreck on a desert island? With no exposure to religious teachings whatsoever, is it likely that he will end up as an Orthodox Jew, and grow his sideburns into corkscrew curls?

Of course not.

We can debate whether or not the religious impulse is innate to the human soul – but the specific forms of religiosity are certainly not, as is evidenced by their variety and localized reproduction around the world.

Religion is the scar tissue of abusive childhood indoctrination and terrorizing – to say that the money that abused children pay to avoid the reactivation of the guilt and fear that was imprinted upon them as helpless dependents is purely *voluntary* – well, that is to continue the exploitation of those children, by reinforcing the propaganda they will doubtless inflict upon their own children in turn.

Religious indoctrination is child abuse; the “charity” that religious organizations collect as a result of this indoctrination can scarcely be called benevolent voluntarism.

We fully recognize that a child who was raised in Stalinist Russia did not “choose” to become a communist – as he doubtless did – but rather we would be sympathetic towards him, as the victim of vicious and authoritarian propaganda.

There is functionally *no difference* between statist propaganda and religious propaganda – the first is inflicted through the impersonal power of the state; the second is inflicted through the personal power of the parents.

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## THE COMPANY ONE KEEPS...

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It is a fair truism to say that a man is judged by the company he keeps. When a radical, frightening and unprecedented idea arises in the intellectual landscape, most people will immediately look for cracks, inconsistencies, hypocrisies, like water attempting to find its way through a wall.

The more unusual the claims, the higher the standard of integrity needs to be. Most of the central tenets of libertarianism are unusual, frightening and unsettling to the vast majority of people – as a result, those people will look for any excuse to reject libertarianism as a whole.

There is no shortage of nutty ideas in the world, and most of us feel very comfortable rejecting, say, the basic beliefs of those crazed and broken souls who cut their own testicles off and killed themselves in order to merge with some comet shooting through the sky, and ride off to heaven in a blaze of flowing light.

Similarly, with regards to Scientology, I am comfortable dismissing the philosophy – such as it is – as a whole, once I understand that the thesis rests to some degree on the premise that mankind arose from lizard men crashing to Earth several million years ago.

If you are a competent mathematician, and you are handed a 100 page proof, and you find a massive error on the first page – something along the lines of “3 + blue equals unicorn” – do you really consider it necessary to grind your way through the remaining 99 pages, and discover and elucidate every single error?

Of course not.

Life is short – which is why a woman looking for a gentleman does not go on a second date with a man who brings her to a strip club.

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<sup>15</sup> Harry Browne said that if there was only one thing he could change about statism, it would be the privatization of public schools, since their propaganda was the greatest barrier to the spread of libertarianism.

The requirements for integrity and rationality rise in proportion to the newness and scariness of the ideas being presented. Old ideas gain a kind of mossy momentum, and just *seem* true to people who grew up with them, no matter how nutty they are in reality – this of course is the basis of conservatism.

If I put out a podcast claiming that my neighbour can walk on water, bring people back from the dead, was born of a virgin, and can heal blindness by touching eyelids, people would assume that I was either joking or insane – but add 2,000 years and a bunch of funny hats to the equation, and suddenly it all seems perfectly reasonable.

This is another reason why libertarianism's association with Christianity has turned the movement into a shallow, ineffectual and greedy joke.

When a man is exposed to a new idea, he generally does not delve deeply into its internal consistency, but first and foremost looks at the company it keeps. If a man claims to be able to read minds, but is confined to an insane asylum, surrounded by people who believe they are Napoleon, or can fly, or are Jesus – are you likely to spend time, effort and money validating his claims?

Add to this scenario the fact that the “mind reader” vehemently denies that he is in an insane asylum, and no one will take his claim seriously at all.

In an increasingly secular society, when a man comes across libertarian claims, the first thing that he often does is look at the company that libertarians keep.

If he finds that libertarians hold in great esteem and high regard those who reject the theory of evolution, believe that people can come back from the dead, that virgins can give birth, and that the world was created in six days by some invisible being – and crawl all over each other in a mad stampede to take money from such deluded fools – then he will inevitably be drawn to the rather intelligent conclusion that the standards of proof, evidence and rationality within the libertarian movement are not particularly high, to put it mildly.

Either he is going to come across libertarians who believe all of this superstitious nonsense – in which case, how is he going to take anything they preach seriously? – or he is going to come across those who hold libertarian beliefs, and who are atheists.

In this case, his interest may actually be piqued – which methodology, he wonders, will win this battle? Will it be the rational empiricism of the atheists, or the delusional superstitions of the theists?

Ah, sadly, almost at once he will find that the atheists claim to hold the theists in high regard, and praise the superstitious for their devotion to truth and virtue!

This will all seem to be far too complex and ridiculous a riddle to even bother trying to unravel – how on earth can rational empiricists proffer such rank praise to the superstitious?

If he decides to spend another few minutes thinking about libertarianism, he will undoubtedly conclude that the majority of its funding comes from religious organizations – and a moment's research will confirm this fact.<sup>16</sup>

“Ah,” he will say, “so these supposed ‘rationalists’ have just sold out to the highest bidder, which in this case happens to be the Christians.”

He will understand that, like any politician or cowed employee, libertarians of all kinds are simply bowing to those who pay the bills.

Not only will such a potential convert to libertarianism roll his eyes in the face of such pompous hypocrisy, but he will also understand that integrity to the truth is completely optional for libertarians – and in fact, if he spends even a few additional minutes researching the subject, and finds out that there appears to be no self-criticism within the movement at all of this bottomless betrayal of reason and evidence – then he will quickly understand that the subjugation of reason to religion is not a topic that these heroic libertarians feel safe even discussing.

After this sad journey into pathetic compromise and self abasement before the deep pockets of deep prejudice, will our potential friend view libertarian theories as a whole as trustworthy? If libertarians slavishly praise – for mere money, no less – religious bigotry and rank irrationality, will he assume that their theories will be monuments to the highest and most challenging forms of integrity?

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<sup>16</sup> For instance, you can have a look [here](http://www.mediatransparency.org/recipientgrants.php?recipientID=51); most of the donating organizations are financial supporters of organized religion: <http://www.mediatransparency.org/recipientgrants.php?recipientID=51>.

Also: <http://www.mediatransparency.org/recipientgrants.php?recipientID=1174>



Of course not.

He will understand that libertarians as a whole are actually *more* corrupt than the religious – because the religious at least do not praise the abstract principles of reason and evidence, but rather worship the whims of faith.

It is one thing for a witch doctor to do a rain dance; it is quite another for a climatologist to do a rain dance. The witch doctor at least does not claim to respect the scientific method, and has not been trained in rational empiricism.

We would not trust a supposedly-rational climatologist who did a rain dance because a witch doctor offered him a few beads – in the same way, the average citizen will recoil from the hypocrisy of libertarianism, recognizing that it is a ridiculously self-contradictory discipline that praises science and superstition equally, but always defers to superstition.

Those with the stomach to dig a little deeper into the movement will wonder how those who claim that government power always leads to evil deal with the complex problems of living within a statist society. As soon as he sees how many academic professors there are in the libertarian movement, I am sure that he will be intrigued as to how this contradiction is dealt with.

“Wow, these people claim that state power is evil, and always leads to evil – yet they live lives almost entirely subsidized and protected by the state – what ingenious arguments have they devised to justify this astounding contradiction?”

Sadly, he will find no ingenious arguments, merely sniggering assertions that it is a wonderful thing to use state power to teach libertarian concepts – in other words, that evil *can* be used to do good!

“But that is amazing!” our friend will think. “Is it not the case that everyone who uses state power believes that he or she is able to use this awesome violence to create good? Do not those who run the welfare state genuinely accept that while charity would be preferable, it is regrettably necessary, given the current circumstances, to use state power to help the poor? Do not those who run the war on drugs genuinely believe that while a voluntarily drug-free society would be preferable, it is regrettably necessary, given the current circumstances, to use state power to prevent drug use?”

The list would go on and on within his mind – the endless, woeful litany of those who condemn the use of violence in the hands of others, but believe that in *their* hands, such violence can be turned to the service of virtue!

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## A UNIVERSAL CONTRADICTION?

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I would like to briefly address the criticism that is sometimes leveled at me with regards to profiting from state power, which is that in my entrepreneurial career, there were times when I competed for and won sales contracts with government agencies, and cashed those checks, which contributed to my own income.

This of course is a perfectly fair question, and I would like to do what I can to address it.

First of all, it is impossible to live within a modern statist society and not do business – either directly, or indirectly – with the government. Even if I had avoided government contracts, I would have ended up doing business with private companies that do a lot of business with the government, and would have received the same “blood money,” except with a middleman.

Secondly, at no point that I can recall was the income from government agencies more than 10% of total revenues. In fact, towards the end of my tenure as a Chief Technical Officer, we began to move away from government contracts, because they were rarely as profitable as private contracts.

Thirdly, we as a corporation were taxed at a very heavy level, and I do not think that recovering money that is taken by force is a particularly egregious moral problem. For instance, I also wrote up, submitted and defended tax credits that we were entitled to under Canadian law for doing original research and development in the software field. I was perfectly happy to get that money back, and used it to expand the company.

Fourthly, during the time that I was occasionally pursuing and winning government contracts, I was not a public advocate of the value and virtue of a purely free-market. I was not at the time even an anarchist – I was a typical Objectivist minarchist, in that I believed the government was required for the military, the law courts and the prison system. In the ideal society that I believed in at the time, there would still be government contracts that would still need to be pursued and won through free-market competition. I no longer hold these beliefs, and it was not particularly long after I became a fully fledged anarchist that I left the business world completely, and set up a purely voluntary, ultimate free-market business called Freedomain Radio, which relies on no government contracts, gets no special government tax breaks, and receives of course no government subsidies of any kind – or even offers tax receipts for charitable donations. I cannot imagine a more voluntary business than the one I am running now, which is about as consistent with my values as I can conceivably get without building a time machine and vaulting forward 200 years into Libertopia.



Fifthly – and I think most importantly – I strongly believe that there is an enormous difference between competing for a government contract on the free and open market – without state protection or direct subsidization of any kind – and joining a state protected and state enforced union which violently prevents competition, subsidizes about 90% of your salary, and will throw anyone in jail who dares to fire you.

For me, this is the difference between working for Federal Express, and occasionally delivering government packages – and voluntarily pursuing, grabbing onto and holding at all costs a senior position in the Post Office union.

Conflating these opposing approaches to the challenges of living within a statist society makes a mockery of both intent and integrity.

## EMPIRICISM AND THIS BOOK

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I would like to finish this book by briefly pointing out a criticism that may be floating around in your mind, which I wanted to openly address up front.

I have put forward some heavy criticisms in this book, and many of those criticisms are founded upon my opposition to those who make wild claims without empirical proof.

You may be thinking – and I do not fault you for that all of course – that I myself have made a rather large number of wild claims without providing empirical proof.

For instance, when I say that libertarianism has an innate hostility towards the discipline of psychology – and in particular, the exploration of the unconscious – because of its financial dependence upon Christianity, what is my proof for such an assertion?

This theory certainly fits and explains the consistent facts of my considerable experience over many years, and I do think that I have made logically consistent arguments as to why those who take their bread-and-butter from the insane can never consistently advocate sanity, but what is still missing is the widest objective and empirical proof for my assertions.

Unfortunately, I do not have the money to run a large study of libertarians, to discover their attitudes towards and knowledge of psychology, and compare it to those with similar educational, familial, cultural and economic backgrounds – although I do think this would be an utterly fascinating study!

As a result, I do not claim that my assertions are proven even to the relatively lax standards of your average social science.

However, as I consistently say in my books and podcasts, there is absolutely no reason for you to take my word for anything.

If you doubt the empirical proof of what I say, my suggestion is this: sit down with the libertarians that you know, and ask them about psychology – their attitude towards it, their knowledge of it, their competence with its concepts, and their ability to apply it.

It *could* be the case that over 25 years, I have just run into an entirely unfortunate set of Objectivists and libertarians, who are almost universally and bottomlessly opposed to the basic concepts of psychology. I think this is statistically almost impossible, but it certainly could be the case. I have attempted to theorize as honestly as I can from the empiricism of my own somewhat substantial experience in this realm, but I would never have the temerity to suggest that you substitute my experience for your own.

When you sit down with your libertarian friends and colleagues, why not ask them how many books on psychology they have read? I have found libertarians as a whole to be voracious readers, who devour books on a wide variety of subjects and topics, but I have found them to be woefully ignorant of even the basic concepts of psychology, and have learned over the years that it is the one subject that is almost universally avoided.

Secondly, you can ask your libertarian friends – with all due sensitivity, of course – if they have ever been in therapy. Therapy is not at all that unusual a pursuit for people who are attempting to do great and challenging things with their lives, just as athletic coaching is common for those wishing to rise to the top of their game. Since libertarians set enormously high goals for themselves – the reduction of state power, the liberalization of the economy, and so on – the personal and emotional stresses that arise from pursuing – and eternally failing at – these goals is something that therapy would help alleviate.

Thus it should be entirely possible for you to find at least a few libertarian friends who have gone to therapy – and, if they have successfully completed a therapeutic program, they should not be horrified or embarrassed to talk about it, since they would have come out of such a process with greater empathy towards themselves and others.

If you cannot find any libertarian friends who have gone into therapy, then this would be some empirical evidence for the truth of my propositions. If you cannot find any libertarian friends who have read much – or any – psychology (as an offshoot of Objectivism, Nathaniel Branden does not really count), then this also would be empirical evidence for my theories.

Do you think it hypocritical that I do not provide an excess of empirical evidence for my criticism that libertarians do not respect empirical evidence?

Again, this is an assertion borne out of my own extensive personal experience, and data that has been posted above, but there is no reason whatsoever for you to take my experience and information at face value, of course.

If you disagree with me that libertarians avoid empirical evidence for the truths of their propositions, all you have to do is ask your libertarian friends about the evidence that they have seen for a variety of libertarian goals, such as:

- Political action is the most effective way to reduce the power of the state.
- Academic education is the most successful way to establish the credibility of libertarian theories.
- Ron Paul successfully spread the word about libertarianism, and brought many more people to the cause than he drove away.
- As a result of the Ron Paul campaign, many more people are interested in libertarian ideas.
- The Ron Paul candidacy was the best of many alternatives that could have been pursued to credibly disseminate libertarian ideas.
- Libertarianism's association with – and financial dependence on – fundamentalist Christianity is a highly beneficial way to convince people of the rationality and empiricism of libertarian ideals.

If they can provide empirical studies and evidence to support the above libertarian axioms, I would be highly grateful if you could e-mail these to me, so that I could retract everything that I have said in this book, and grovel apologetically before those I have unjustly accused.

If this empirical evidence exists, and all of the above has been established through independent verification and research, then libertarianism is a complete, futile and hopeless disaster, for one simple, sad reason:

*If we are doing the best that we can possibly do, and we are continuing to fail so disastrously, success is utterly and completely impossible.*

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## WE CAN ONLY HOPE WE ARE SCREWING UP

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I hope that this book has not given you the impression that I do not believe in the pursuit of liberty. Quite the contrary – I desperately yearn for, believe in and avidly pursue the goal of achieving universal human liberty, though in a way that I believe has never been tried before – an approach that I will talk about in my next book.

If the freedom movement is making catastrophic errors, then there is hope for human freedom, because those errors can be analyzed, honestly admitted to and corrected.

If the freedom movement is not making catastrophic errors, then there is no hope for human freedom, because if the best that we can do is complete failure, then there is actually little point even trying. We may continue to pursue liberty as a hobby, or a way of killing time before we fall into inevitable fascism, but we should not at all delude ourselves that we will alter the eventual outcome one little bit. We may be rank determinists, and pretend briefly that we have free will, in order to play around with the concept, but we recognize that it is a childish delusion that we sometimes regress into, so to speak.

If we are only doing a few little things wrong, then the same analysis applies – if we are driving directly off a cliff edge, but can only turn the steering wheel a single inch either way, we will still go off the cliff edge, the only difference being that our tire marks might be a few feet one way or the other.

If, however, the freedom movement is making a large series of utterly disastrous decisions, then our failures can be turned into hope, change, and true effectiveness.

It really comes down to this:

*If we are willing to put our own petty egos and vanities aside, and focus on what we really should be focusing on, which is doing **whatever it takes** to ensure that the world becomes truly free, then we can be the foundation of the freedom of the future.*

*If we are willing to stop doing that which does not work, pause and look inward and look critically and really rebuild what it is that we are doing from the ground up, empirically, rationally, with the constant feedback of perpetual post mortems – if we dedicate ourselves to continuous improvement, we can truly build a bridge to the future brick by brick, knowing that although it may take generations, we shall get there as surely as a rain drop will hit the ground.*

*If we are willing to rebuild this movement from the ground up, letting go of the financial incentives of enslavement to superstition, and building a new constituency of truly rational and empirical souls, then we shall create a movement that will not be constantly tripping over its own contradictions.*

*If we are willing to let go of the mistakes made at the beginnings of libertarianism – and all the mistakes that followed – then we shall be able to look to the future, instead of always being dragged backwards into a worship of the past – and we shall be able to gain the allegiance and respect of a new generation of secular thinkers, who will bring a shining rationality into the world that we can as yet only dream of.*

*If we are willing to accept that we shall not see the liberty that we want within our own lifetime – if we accept that what we are engaged in is a multi-generational project – we will finally be able to quit the useless and feverish pseudo-activities and mindless busy work that is born of impatience.*

*If we accept the clear historical lesson that all significant leaps forward in human liberty – from the elimination of slavery to the expansion of the rights of women and children to the growth of the market system itself – were all multigenerational projects, and that those who began them did not live to see their completion – then we can give up our mad random sprinting and snatching at thin air in the hopes of achieving something substantial, but rather with patience and dedication, we can sit down and work out a plan based on historical evidence, the modern understanding of the human psyche, a rejection of bigotry and superstition – a plan that will **work**.*

I do believe that I have the bare outlines of just such a plan, but I will not talk about it in this book, because I think that we all need to mourn the loss of false hope before rolling up our sleeves and starting to build the reality of future freedom, brick by brick.

## AFTERWARD

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I do thank you for taking the time to read this book. If you are interested in exploring these ideas further, you might enjoy some of the earlier Freedomain Radio podcasts, which are available at [www.freedomainradio.com](http://www.freedomainradio.com).

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