



Houston Objectivism Society

Vol.7, No. 4 July 1994 Newsletter

August: How Teachers are Taught to Teach Writing

At the August HOS meeting, Janet Wich will present examples contrasting the current "process" approach to teaching writing with the traditional approach. She will identify the premises underlying both approaches and integrate those premises with philosophical ideas.

NOTE NEW DATE: THIS MONTH ONLY, THE MEETING WILL BE THE FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH, AUGUST 6.

Please join us at 6:30 p.m. at Brian Phillips' apartment clubroom, Telegraph Hill Apartments, 6600 Dunlap. The gate code is #1793.

Essay Winners Announced

For *The Fountainhead* essay contest, our local first prize winner is Courtney Van Zandt. Courtney is a second prize recipient in the national contest, and she was a senior last year at J.L. McCullough High School in The Woodlands. Courtney is attending A&M University this Fall.

Our second prize winner is Emily Kennedy, who was a finalist in the national contest. Emily will be a senior at Memorial Senior High School this Fall.

For the *Anthem* essay contest, our local first prize winner is Brittany Perez, a sophomore this Fall at Klein Oak High School in Spring. Brittany was a third prize recipient in the national contest. We are pleased to print Brittany's winning essay in this issue of the newsletter.

Physician's Project

There are approximately six thousand physicians in the city of Houston, and we mailed our pamphlet to two thousand of them. Our costs for this initial bulk mailing was \$1100, but additional mailings will cost \$412 per thousand, due to the labels having already been purchased.

Of the two thousand physicians addressed, twenty one of them responded—a 1% response, which I'm told is typical, although the Objectivist club in Austin achieved a 2% rate among the one thousand physicians in that city.

More than half of the respondents purchased additional copies of our pamphlet and the Self-defense Kit, and seven of them contributed a total of \$161, for additional mailings to other physicians. I am currently completing that mailing.

All of the respondents were given information about HOS, a catalog from Second Renaissance Books and a copy of George Reisman's pamphlet, "The Real Right to Medical Care versus Socialized Medicine."

Brian Phillips contributed additional pamphlets, and, at the last meeting, Donald Granberry purchased one hundred pamphlets, which he is sending to all the U.S. Senators.

In the June issue of *Impact*, the Ayn Rand Institute reported that 50,000 copies of "Health Care is not a Right" have been sent to doctors and donors who are distributing them to health care professionals. "ARI has ordered 25,000 more. Donations to cover costs would be greatly appreciated."

Gerber "Chews" Habeas Corpus

Recent law school graduate Matt Gerber led a discussion on the subject of habeas corpus at the June meeting. But prior to introducing Matt, President Warren Ross announced the winners of *The Fountainhead* and *Anthem* essay contest winners. He also said that the Austin Objectivist club is considering the initiation of a local contest.

Chris Land has started an Objectivist club in the Clear Lake area, the site of NASA. Currently, Chris has approximately twelve people participating.

We welcomed Neil Erian, who attended his first HOS meeting. Janet Wich provided refreshments, which included chocolate cookies and pizza, which disappeared quickly, prior to Matt Gerber's opening remarks.

According to Matt: "The writ of habeas corpus was originally codified in Chapter 39 of the Magna Carta, which declares that 'no freeman shall be...arrested, or detained in prison,...unless by the lawful judgment of his peers by the law of the land.' The legal remedy in cases of arbitrary violations of this clause was a writ of *habeas corpus ad subjiciendum* (literally, you should have the body for submitting), whereby the detainee was to be brought before a judge, who could order the release

INSIDE

June meeting	3
Anthem	4
Graffiti editorial	5
Melanie's Pearls	6
Announcements	8
Yuks	8

of the prisoner if he was being unlawfully held.”

The U.S. Constitution states in Article 1, Section 9: “The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.”

Did the Founding Fathers exercise judicious caution in allowing for the suspension of habeas corpus under certain conditions or should they have made habeas corpus an absolute, not to be breached under any circumstances? This is not merely an academic question, since President Lincoln did it explicitly, and Japanese Americans were incarcerated en masse during WWII.

To focus debate on this issue, Matt wrote and presented a fictional legal opinion from the Supreme Court, complete with a majority opinion and a dissenting opinion. Matt’s six page legal opinion expertly set out the facts of the case, which contained similarities to President Lincoln’s suspension of habeas corpus. The opinion also cited relevant passages from the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence and presented a wealth of historical material and references by which to argue the case.

The case ruled upon had as its background this country’s second civil war, instigated by a socialist revolt shortly before the inauguration of a newly elected capitalist president. During this period, one Karl (“Red”) Hegel took actions sympathetic to the socialist cause and was subsequently detained for nine months without presentment to a court of law. Although Hegel now seeks redress for wrongs committed by the government during the war, “the government, operating under the Habeas Corpus Act of _____, claimed that its power to detain Hegel was derived from Congressional delegation of the power to suspend the writ of habeas corpus to

the President, so that he could execute the laws in times of public danger.”

Although Matt’s legal opinion dealt with several legal issues, our focus narrowed to the need for the absolute maintenance of habeas corpus vs. the need to temporarily suspend habeas corpus in an emergency.

Proponents of Suspension viewed habeas corpus as a procedural protection, the importance of which derives from that which it is meant to protect—individual rights. If the institution which protects rights is under siege and cannot survive without Suspension, then to negate Suspension is self-defeating: The maintenance of absolute habeas corpus falls with the institution. As Lincoln put it: “Are all the laws, *but one*, to go unexecuted, and the government itself go to pieces, lest that one be violated? Even in such a case, would not the official oath be broken, if the government should be overthrown, when it was believed that disregarding the single law, would tend to preserve it?”

The proponents of Suspension, however, thought that the wording in the Constitution was not qualified enough. They agreed with Charles Pinckney’s original formulation, which specified that the writ of habeas corpus, should it be suspended, should be done so “for a limited time not exceeding ___ months [left blank].”

Proponents of absolute habeas corpus thought that Suspension added nothing to the power of a legitimate government but strengthened the hand of a despot. They argued that if someone were *known* to be such a danger to the government, the evidence would be forthcoming to support legitimate charges. In brief, the law is effective against criminals and treasonable activity, and arbitrary rule can only undermine and discredit law and the gov-

ernment when they are needed the most.

In this view, habeas corpus is not merely a procedural issue; rather, it is the legal implementation of the political principle that people have rights at all, in distinction to the enumeration of those rights. For in demanding that government justify its actions, habeas corpus sets the relation between government and governed as servant and master, respectively. Drop this relation, and the enumerated rights are irrelevant. For an historical example, consider the status of liberty and property or “due process” in regard to the Japanese-Americans. (Perhaps not coincidentally, their incarceration was presided over by then Attorney General of California Earl Warren, the champion of the procedural rights viewpoint on the Supreme Court.)

As a matter of historical interest, Thomas Jefferson addressed this issue in a letter written to James Madison, dated July 31, 1788: *Why suspend the habeas corpus in insurrections and rebellions? The parties who may be arrested may be charged instantly with a well defined crime; of course the judge will remand them. If the public safety requires that the government should have a man imprisoned on less probable testimony in those than in other emergencies, let him be taken and tried, retaken and retried, while the necessity continues, only giving him redress against the government for damages. Examine the history of England. See how few of the cases of the suspension of the habeas corpus law have been worthy of that suspension. They have been either real treasons, wherein the parties might as well have been charged at once, or sham plots, where it was shameful they should ever have been suspected. Yet for the few cases where-in the suspension of the habeas corpus has done real good, that operation is now become habitual and the*

minds of the nation almost prepared to live under its constant suspension.

Threats to Health & Sanity in June

The June 11th meeting of HOS featured two taped speeches by Dr. Leonard Peikoff and two discussions: one on the hierarchy of values and another on the nature of legal justice.

Members first watched the short video of Leonard Peikoff's "Health Care is not a Right," a stirring speech which evoked many emotional reactions from the recorded audience, including a standing ovation at the end. One could only wish that such speeches were informing the public debate via televised presentations.

Members also listened to the audio tape of "Modernism and Madness," Dr. Peikoff's speech at Ford Hall Forum in Boston last Fall (reviewed by Bennett Karp in a past issue of this newsletter), wherein the parallels between modern culture and schizophrenia were explored.

At the beginning of this HOS meeting, Warren Ross reminded members that pledges are due for our local essay contests for *The Fountainhead* and *Anthem*. Houston has a second place winner this year at the national level for *The Fountainhead*, living in The Woodlands, and the first place winner is from Tyler, Texas. For the *Anthem* contest, the Houston area has three third place winners, from Spring, Bellaire and Sugar Land.

Dwyane Hicks updated members on the Physician's Project, reviewing costs and responses at this time.

At recent HOS meetings, volunteers have answered questions submitted by those new to Objectivism. These answers and discussions are necessarily short and non-compre-

hensive. But they aid participants by illuminating current issues with relevant principles and concretizing the meaning of those principles.

At this meeting, Janet Wich addressed the issue of hierarchy of values: "Why does Objectivist ethics establish a hierarchy of values? Why aren't all values considered equal? How do I establish this hierarchy?"

Janet began by defining hierarchy as a ranking which shows the logical dependence among various elements. Then she showed that, with values, hierarchy is not so much established as recognized by Objectivism. She gave a number of examples of values which serve as means to further values, observing that an endless progression is impossible and that life is the ultimate value, without which, no other values are possible. (For a comprehensive treatment of this issue, see *Atlas Shrugged*.)

Janet elaborated that, for man, rationality is the means of achieving values and that the other virtues are either aspects of rationality, e.g., as with independence, or are applications of rationality in a certain context, e.g., as with justice.

Finally, Janet pointed out that philosophy, being universal to all men past or present, cannot establish personal values, such as career choices, but that philosophical values are nevertheless essential in providing a framework for choosing personal values and for guiding everyday actions.

In the ensuing discussion, Warren Ross noted that some make the mistake of assuming that independence requires that one re-invent philosophy for oneself. This mistake ignores the universality of philosophy and the fact that some previously discovered ideas are true. But mainly, it regards independence as a matter of arbitrary assertion rather than as a reality-based work of the individual mind. The discovery of an

idea necessarily requires independence, but so does the understanding of that discovery. Since subjectivism is so rampant in contemporary philosophy, the false view of independence as whim is not surprising. But in science, where reason still prevails to some extent, students understand that independence is necessary to understand earlier achievements by others. For example, no one would be accused of being intellectually dependent because one was convinced of the validity of Newton's laws.

In another sense, however, the questioner is right: philosophy must be re-invented *epistemologically* by each person if it is to be understood. Without one's own validation, one cannot even claim such material as knowledge, i.e., as something one *knows*.

Jeri Eagan addressed another question for the evening, the subject of legal justice: "What is the Objectivist viewpoint on crime and the purpose of punishment? Should punishment be for rehabilitation? Deterrence?"

Jeri said that an understanding of this issue begins with an understanding of the virtue of justice. Justice is the application of rationality to the character and actions of other men. To benefit and protect one's life, it is just as necessary to identify the nature of men as it is that of physical reality. In the context of an organized society, legal justice serves the purpose of protecting individual rights. Specifically, the use of retaliatory force is placed under objective control, outlawing the initiation of force, so as to free men to treat one another according to their rational judgement. Issues such as punishment and rehabilitation, if applicable, are derivative to this purpose and one's view of man's nature.

As a minimum, imprisonment is segregation of criminals from their

victims and therefore protects people from further violations of rights. In the discussion, the appropriateness of punishment was explored, with one participant noting that the recidivism rate in regard to caning in Singapore was probably very low.

Jeri noted that these issues, as well as rehabilitation, also depend on one's view of free will versus determinism—whether man is regarded as a creature “of self-made soul” or whether man's character and actions are determined by factors external to his control. With the many early releases of violent criminals and the emphasis on rehabilitation, it is obvious that the contemporary acceptance of determinism, in many forms (e.g., attention span disorder!), is having an adverse effect on the innocent. Jury verdicts are also being affected, e.g., in the cases of the Menendez brothers and Lorena Bobbitt.

It has been noted earlier in this forum that the virtue of justice presupposes a valid moral code by which to judge and, that without such a code, legal justice by itself cannot be effective. If people are taught that all values are subjective, then there is no means of distinguishing between the earned and the unearned. One man's arbitrary desire becomes a claim on others: Murder for Nike shoes? “I wanted them.” Health care without funds, insurance or voluntary charity? “It's my 'right'.” If some basic form of morality is not accepted by most people in a society, no amount of police or prisons can act as a substitute.

Jeri also noted that a legal system built on an intrinsicist view of values would be no less destructive, e.g., Khomeini's Iran. If “values” are asserted independent of beneficiary and the standard of human life, a legal system to implement such “values” will serve anything but man.

During the discussion, J.P. Mill-

er said that the principle of justice requires that punishment should be linked, to the extent possible, to compensating the victim. And George Marklin noted that an objective legal system restores the relationship between individual cause and effect: Alone on an island, no individual can escape the consequences of his actions. But in a social context, the innocent can be forced to pay for the irrationality of others, unless the law rejoins cause and effect.

At the end of the meeting, everyone enjoyed some tasty snacks provided by Donald Granberry.

Anthem Essay

by

Brittany Perez

Brittany will be a sophomore this Fall at Klein Oak High School in Spring.

Equality 7-2521 lives in a society that has grown backward. After centuries of battling the chains and barriers society has wrought on liberty and happiness, Mankind has forgotten the very meaning of existence. In an attempt to create a model society devoid of social prejudice, violence, and evil, Man worsens the situation by attempting to make everyone the same. While admittedly eliminating most crime and prejudice, the “Utopia” created by the Great Rebirth forgets one essential ingredient in a model world—the individual. Lessons from the past teach us that often it is the individual who starts the bloodshed. We can look at examples such as Adolf Hitler in World War Two and realize that perhaps this is true. Wouldn't a society where everyone is prohibited from diverging from the well-traveled path be the panacea for all social evils? Such was the

idea of the reformers. However, more careful reflection reveals that it is also the individual who causes revolutions. It is the individual who discovers new ideas to better the life of Mankind. It is the individual who accomplishes and succeeds. A society without diversity of thought and the individual can only stagnate. But the World Council dictates that all men must be alike. All men must think alike and toil all their useful years in humble servitude to their brothers at a profession chosen by the Council of Vocations, for no man is better equipped to decide his own destiny than a group of his peers. All men must be brought to their knees because they are nothing. They must wish nothing for themselves and do nothing that may cause them extra joy or pleasure because “They of the half-brain” would not have that pleasure. It is the masses and the will of all men together that matters. But Equality 7-2521 will not stoop. Equality 7-2521 wants to think and to learn. Equality 7-2521 wants to be a man; but it is base and evil to stand alone, so Equality 7-2521 has to reject the ideals of his brothers. To break loose from their holds takes a progression of steps.

Equality 7-2521 thinks he has been born with a curse. His mind is driven to evil thoughts, thoughts and dreams that he can never realize—should never realize. Despite all his efforts, Equality 7-2521 cannot rid himself of his desire for knowledge. When the time comes for the Council of vocation to decide the professions of all fifteen-year olds, he wants to be sent to the House of Scholars so badly his hands shake at night, but he can't face his brothers in the morning for he has committed the Transgression of Preference. He is sentenced to life as a Street-sweeper when the time does come and is happy; he can repent his sins and serve the people as he has been

taught. Soon he finds that a life of virtue can bring him no happiness. He stares wistfully at the trees, the stars, and the earth, longing to discover their secrets. Then he finds the tunnel.

It is left over from the Unmentionable Times. It has to be, because no man alive could have created the liquid stone that flowed over its sides. It is wrong to be there, but every inch of his being cries to stay. So he goes there every night, examining used lab materials and cutting open animal carcasses. He learns more in two years than in his entire formal education. In doing so he defies the Councils and the Will of the People. His evil indescribable, his punishment unknown. He works for the simple fact that he wishes to. But despite his treason, his conscience is clear and untroubled. In his heart he has found the first peace in twenty years.

Equality 7-2521 discovers the secret power of metals. He has denied it before, but now it is impossible not to concede that his knowledge exceeds that of the Scholars. He vows to forget society but soon breaks that vow when he rediscovers electricity. A new energy that has the power to ease the toil of all men has sprung forth from his hands. So excited is he in his new invention that when he is arrested and beaten for returning too late from the tunnel one night with no explanation, he escapes to show his creation to the World Council. When they see the great gift he has brought for all Mankind, his many transgressions will be forgotten, he reasons. He will bring a new power cleaner and better than any before to illuminate every city in the world. Only it has been made by two hands, not 32. It was conceived in one mind instead of many, and what was not done collectively is not good. So the Council rejects it. Equality 7-2521, The Unconquered, flees to the

Unchartered Forest to be devoured by wild animals.

When he realizes he will not be eaten alive, Equality 7-2521 starts his journey farther and farther away from the city of his birth, enjoying his freedom. He recalls that he is the damned—and laughs. Soon the Golden One joins him—the only one he regrets leaving in the forsaken city—the woman he loves. He begins to think about the creed of his brothers. The only joy in life is to be found in collective servitude, collective thought, and collective happiness. These have brought Equality 7-2521 only anguish. Before, he didn't doubt the laws he broke. Now he does.

Days later, Equality 7-2521 comes to a home from the Unmentionable Times. He unearths the work that has been eluding him, and with its uncovering he discards the views of his society in their entirety. He will no longer attempt to live for his brothers or expect them to live for him. He needs no justification or apology for living. His being is that justification. He realizes that what he has called a curse is the "spirit of man and sense of truth within him" that cannot be destroyed no matter how formidable the source of evil.

City Can't Eliminate Gangs by Behaving like One

by
J. Brian Phillips

The following essay was printed in the Houston Chronicle as an Op-Ed piece on Thursday, July 21, 1994. Original material dropped by the Chronicle editor is italicized.

Consider the following scenario: You arrive home to find that you have been burglarized. The police investigate the scene, and proceed

to write you a citation for inadequate burglary deterrence.

You are told that the city has an ordinance which requires home owners to install burglar bars and an alarm system. Violators are subject to fines of up to \$1,000 per day. When you complain that you are the victim, the officers point out that if you had not broken the law your house would not have been robbed.

This scenario may seem ridiculous, but in principle it is precisely what Kim Ogg, director of Houston's Anti-Gang Office, is proposing. The ordinance she has proposed will force private property owners to remove gang graffiti from their property or be subject to fines of up to \$1,000 per day. Ironically, Ogg is embracing the same basic premise held by the gangs which she seeks to eradicate.

Gang members believe that might makes right. They believe that they have as much right to use and dispose of property as those who earned it. They believe that their desires constitute a legitimate claim to the object of their desire.

Ogg agrees with this premise. She believes that she is justified to compel property owners to dispose of their money to remove graffiti. She believes that her desire—eliminating gangs—justifies her means. She believes that city officials have as much right to decide how property owners are to use their property as those property owners. In fact, she believes that her decisions should supersede theirs, and she seeks the power of law to enforce it.

Ogg has argued that property owners will benefit from the removal of graffiti. But even if this is true, it is irrelevant. The cost of her proposed ordinance is to grant city government the power to tell every business owner (and eventually

every individual) in the city how he must spend his money. It would be preferable to see the city covered with graffiti than to allow Houston's City Council such dictatorial power.

In principle, Ogg seeks to replace hundreds of small gangs, scattered across the city, with one large gang—the city government.

The essence of the gang mentality is collectivism, which holds that the individual is subservient to the demands and interests of the group. Collectivism demands conformity to the values of the group. Collectivism holds that individuals do not exist as individuals, but only as members of the group. Whether that group consists of one's race, one's nation, one's "homeboys", or one's community is simply a matter of detail.

Collectivists often claim that their proposals will benefit everyone, but each must do his "fair share" and sacrifice for the "common good". And they are never hesitant to use force to compel those who resist. When force is used to institutionalize sacrifice—*i.e., the renunciation of values*—we must question both the methods and the motives of the advocates.

The elimination of gangs will require the use of force, but that force must be directed at those who are guilty of crimes—the gang members—not the innocent victims of those criminals. To force the innocent to pay for the transgressions of others is a reversal of justice. The innocent are punished for their innocence, their virtue.

The city government is clearly unable to handle the gang problem, primarily because city officials accept the same premises as gang members. City Council routinely passes ordinances which force property owners to use their property in certain ways. That the Council is an elected body does not change the

nature of such actions—they are *simply the actions of a gang, albeit a gang with the power and justification of law.*

If we wish to defeat gangs, we must begin by rejecting the premise upon which they are based. We must reject the premise that individuals must sacrifice for the "common good", that force is a valid means of social interaction, that the ends justify the means. We must return to the principles of Thomas Jefferson—that each individual possesses certain unalienable rights which cannot be violated by anyone, not even the government. When we refuse to be a member of that gang called "the public welfare", we can begin to effectively deal with the Southwest Cholos.

Melanie's Pearls

by
Dwyane Hicks

The drama of today's television and movies is distinctive only in its dearth of values. With few exceptions, television has sunk to providing tabloid stories about dysfunctional families (portrayed usually as having been brought low by "capitalist" factors), often bent on plots of murder.

Mental illness is enjoying a run at the movies, and "action" movies are presenting amoral protagonists at best, with depth of "character" added only at the viewer's risk.

There are some heroes of the past at the movies, but they are re-examined through a dirty glass: Batman is sick, traumatized in his youth; Wyatt Earp is a killer, loyal only to his blood and not to any principle of law; and every western hero celebrated on the screen of the past is sullied by Clint Eastwood's portrait of a killer in "Unforgiven."

But drama featuring a pursuit of values is not entirely absent, and a few pearls can be found featuring an actress who is a surprising source: Melanie Griffith.

Griffith is, initially, easy to dismiss, with her baby voice and sweet face; but her voice is merely soft, not an affectation, and her slow delivery of dialogue gives weight to her words. What she projects is benevolence and vulnerability but also strength and toughness of character.

Consider "Pacific Heights," where the focus is on the type of married couple usually put down as yuppies. They both work, and they're buying a house which they can't afford unless they rent part of it out. After competently refurbishing it themselves—gentrification, you know—they're ready to live in their dream home as landlords—and to fall victim to California law and a predatory renter.

It is rare enough to find a story which sympathizes with the honestly ambitious; it is almost shocking that owners of property are portrayed as victims of "social justice" and that property is shown as so intimate a part of one's life.

The defense put up by the couple is disastrous while the husband is leading it—he has all the equanimity of a Mexican jumping bean—but when the intelligence of Griffith's character takes over, the revenge is sweet and effective.

Intelligence and character are also showcased in "Working Girl," a drama light-hearted in style but not in content. Who would expect a Horatio Alger story from director Mike Nichols?

Here, Griffith is a provincial from the burroughs of New York. Stereotyped as a secretary incapable of becoming executive material, she has money-making ideas but the wrong accent, hair-do and clothes.

Her boss is a fellow woman, a member of the sisterhood who promises justice and teamwork but steals her secretary's idea for her own credit.

This sets up an opportunity for the secretary, who boldly pursues it while re-shaping the rest of her life in the process; and she does this despite the nay-saying determinism of friends from the old neighborhood.

"Working Girl" also emphasizes, amazingly, ideas as the source of wealth and justice and integrity as important values to prominent businessmen. This movie shows how happy endings are achieved.

"Spying Girl" could be the name of "Shining Through," the most romantically stylized of the quartet. With WWII as backdrop, it features a young woman who takes seriously the values and skills portrayed in romantic movies of the time. That perspective, a command of the German language and her intelligence take her to Germany as a spy in a convincing way.

Her ability to do such a thing rests in large part on her intelligence, which is dramatized effectively in a number of scenes. The most enjoyable is that of a job interview, where without warning she is called upon to demonstrate her powers of observation. The competence with which she does so, under conditions made harder by her own sense of dignity, is a joy to watch.

But the value of personal values is what motivates the young woman and this movie. It is the author's answer to a world which views values as impractical.

A profound comment on values also motivates "A Stranger Among Us," my favorite of Griffith's movies.

For many people, who have not discovered Objectivism, it might appear that philosophy opposes life,

that the mind breeds skepticism, cynicism and a resulting sadness that only the world of religion can counteract. One sees this extensively in the countryside, where a belief in God is often synonymous with an affirmation of values.

In describing America's beginning, in *The Ominous Parallels*, Leonard Peikoff writes: "In every area of thought, the American Enlightenment represents a profound reversal of the Puritans' philosophic priorities. Confidence in the power of man replaced dependence on the grace of God--and that rare intellectual orientation emerged, the key to the Enlightenment approach in every branch of philosophy: *secularism without skepticism*." Wouldn't it be rare if part of that approach were expressed in a contemporary movie?

In "Stranger," Griffith is a New York detective living on the edge, psychologically as well as existentially. She's a cop who takes unnecessary risks, a habit which puts her partner, who is also her lover, in the hospital.

"We're in lust, not in love," she tells him with a laugh. It is apparent that she doesn't take love or the danger of the job seriously. For these and other reasons, she is the least appropriate detective to be assigned to a murder case involving Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn, a sect which takes everything very seriously.

For the detective, all values are relative and optional; for the sect, values are absolute with no options. Her life is too empty; their lives are too full. When brought together, their world-views are contrasted in both interesting and funny ways.

Ostensibly "Stranger" is a murder mystery, and Griffith's athletic toughness as a cop is exciting.

But this movie is concerned with values, not mystery. Despite

her competence, the detective's superficiality and lack of values are made manifest in contrast to the values of the sect. And yet this is a cult, and its mores are examined critically. The detective falls in love with a future religious leader, and he with her, to the extent possible.

But what she takes away from her encounter with the sect is not love nor, primarily, a murder case solved. She takes away the knowledge that she doesn't have to join a cult in order to have absolute values, and she thereby regains her life.

Melanie Griffith has appeared in a number of movies—certainly not all of them at the level of these four. But her selection and her ability to make real these roles says something about her values.

CALENDAR of HOS Events for 1994

July 31: Understanding
Objectivism, Lecture 11

August 6: Theory of
teaching—Janet Wich.

August 7: Understanding
Objectivism, Lecture 12

August 21: Libertarianism:
The Perversion of Liberty

August 28: Libertarianism:
The Perversion of Liberty

September 4: Libertarianism:
The Perversion of Liberty

September 10: Guest speaker.

Announcements

§ Attorney Michael Mazzone has addressed several audiences recently. He spoke to the Italian-American Lawyers organization concerning the Attacks on Christopher Columbus and their Wider Implications. In addition, Michael spoke to the American Corporate Council Association on the issue of mandatory pro-bono work. "Money Matters," a Saturday KPRC radio show hosted by Steve Drake featured Michael talking about legal issues. Finally, the July, 1994 issue of the Texas Bar Journal quoted Michael in an article questioning the constitutionality of Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA).

§ Dwyane Hicks has purchased several copies of Dr. George Reisman's new pamphlet, "The Real Right to Medical Care Versus Socialized Medicine," for the Physician's Project. Let him know if you would like a copy. Also, "Ayn Rand Was Right" bumperstickers are available for \$3.00. Two people inquired about HOS this month because of these stickers. A few "Self-Defense Kits" are also available, as described below.

§ The Objectivist Health Care Professionals Network (OHCPN) is an organization dedicated to the restoration and preservation of freedom in health care through the spread of the philosophy of reason. Their "Self-Defense Kit" is available from OHCPN, 500 Metropolitan Ave., Suite 453, Brooklyn, NY 11211. The price is \$7, payable to Salvatore J. Durante. OHCPN publishes *The Forum*, available for \$15, payable to Pamela L. Benson, at *The Forum*, P.O. Box 4315, South Colby, WA 98384-0315.

§ "Health Care is not a Right", by Dr. Peikoff, is available as a computer file if you would like to send it to someone. It can be obtained by calling my computer at 879-0444,,22,22,22; provided that procedures posted with the article are followed.

Yuks *by Warren Ross*

... the strongest of all our convictions is that two contradictory statements are not both true at the same time, ~~except when we want them to be...~~

Portion of First Draft from Aristotle's Notes, with Corrections



**PHILLIPS
EXTERIOR
SERVICES
INCORPORATED**

666-6968
Brian Phillips Dawn Phillips

HOS President	<i>Warren S. Ross</i>	HOS Executive Committee:
Editor:	<i>Dwyane Hicks</i>	<i>C. J. Blackburn</i>
		<i>Dwyane Hicks</i>
		<i>J. Brian Phillips</i>
		<i>Warren S. Ross</i>

The Houston Objectivism Society Newsletter supports Objectivism and the Ayn Rand Institute; however, we do not purport to represent or speak for the same. The Newsletter is published bimonthly for members/subscribers for a fee of \$15 per year.