

Houston Objectivism Society Newsletter

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Christmas Party. Details are
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An Interview with Dwyane Hicks

Q. You've spent more than a year in London. What is your view of America from across the pond?

A. It's definitely different, a fact which surprised me. The American influence on the world is greater than I imagined, for good and for worse. Even *The Economist* periodically complains about the Americanization of the world, and it's true. One sees it in the concepts used, policies pursued, clothing worn, music listened to and entertainment watched. In addition, the economic and military power of America is pervasive. The American economy has an enormous impact on everyone, and our military, whether acting independently or as the leader of NATO, is viewed as the big brother of the world, and I don't mean that in the Orwellian sense.

The Bosnian mess is an example of the latter. The Europeans, through the UN, "dealt" with this by advocating persuasion to be used against the force of the Serbians, by putting an embargo on arms to both sides, in an egalitarian way, and by sending inadequate numbers of troops, who then had to stand by to witness "ethnic cleansing" or get angry with the victims who tried to resist. The Europeans only wanted to keep the conflict from upsetting things outside that area, and no carnage was too great for them to do otherwise. Whatever happened, they didn't want to accept any responsibility. This went on for three years, and although they castigated the U.S. for its proposals of using force, they were all delighted when the U.S., via NATO, stopped the whole thing by use

of force. They look to America to set the major framework of the world and keep the peace, and they don't want the cost or responsibility of doing it themselves.

Q. What is the British reaction to the O.J. verdict?

A. I was surprised and pleased that the British reaction was more healthy than the American. From my perusal of American papers by means of the Internet, my impression was that a lot of the focus in America was on non-essentials. For example: Simpson's money distorted the legal process, the jury system needs to be reformed or dropped or, worst, the not guilty verdict, even if Simpson was guilty, was a blow against the racist American legal system. Maybe I should add that this last view is not only non-essential but symptomatic of the real problem. In contrast, the British papers viewed Simpson as guilty, saw his lawyer's tactic, the "race card", as a ruse, which has been used often by prominent black men evading justice, and a legal disaster. The British saw the outcome as a manifestation of racism, not on the part of white America but on the part of a large segment of black America, and they thought that we have a problem which needs dealing with. One columnist even linked the verdict with the welfare system and affirmative action, saying that this trial should cause America to re-examine these policies, which are creating the problem. I thought that observation was astute, especially coming from this country, where the usual opinion is implicitly socialist or concrete-bound in empiricism. One last observation is that British television carried the

verdict live, which tells you something about the British focus on America.

Q. The verdict revealed a deep chasm between the races in America. How are race relations in England?

A. I think it's much better than in America. Intellectually, one sees and hears familiar bromides about "white culture" and "black culture," but blacks, whites and Indians get along much better. There does not exist that overarching hostility that is becoming familiar in the U.S. There is a lot of inter-marriage and inter-dating, and my impression is that it is predominantly not done as an "exotic thrill." The black population here is very international, and maybe that has something to do with it.

Q. Brits seem to have a love/hate relationship with America. To what do you attribute this?

A. That's a big question. In a historical sense, the founding of America was a phenomenon of the English Enlightenment. Even the rebellion against England was guided to a great extent by the political ideas of the Englishman John Locke, who was exploring issues raised by the English Civil War in the 1600's. So England and America have a lot in common. Since the American Revolution, the British Empire, predominantly based on trade, spread British values and its language throughout the world, and the American empire, if you can call it that, has been doing the same thing in this century. English is the lingua franca of the world, and it's because of this centuries long cultural domination of the world by two great powers, and I used the term "domination" in the benevolent sense. But England was going socialist even before WWI, and its resulting status as a

second-rate power, upstaged by its powerful "child", the United States, was only dramatized by WWII, having been brought about before that. The Battle of Britain kept Germany from capturing England, saving it as a staging area for America to fight the war. But from there on, if you look at America's overwhelming share of the troops and resources necessary to win the war, and Churchill's relative lack of influence within the Allies, one sees that England was a side kick to America then and ever since on the world stage, even if it is a nuclear power.

So England shares a great deal of values with America, and the English admire America's power and success. But there's also a lot of envy directed at the usurper of England's role. And of course the full-scale immersion of England into socialism following WWII only made things worse, at a time when America shook off war time controls and started producing wealth again. For British socialists, there is no mixture of feeling about America: they hate it.

To some extent, things changed with Thatcher's championing her understanding of capitalism, and England stopped stagnating and was re-invigorated. But the philosophical framework of socialism is very much alive in England. I see the same fundamentals identified by Ayn Rand, like altruism and collectivism, present in England as in America but even more so. One can see the operation of those fundamentals in action, varying the effects, as if the two countries were labs for the student of Mill's Rules. And this is still a very Christian nation, much more so than is America, and you can see that influence in Parliamentary debates, in people's manner on the bus or in the billing policy of the plumber

who visits your flat (sorry, apartment for you Americans).

Q. What are English politics like?

A. They're very much like American politics, but with some radical twists. The Labour Party is currently being turned into a Democratic Party in order to get elected after a sixteen year absence. For example, their new leader, Tony Blair, has been in the process of getting rid of Clause Four of their platform for the past year. Clause Four explicitly calls for nationalization of everything. His party is trying to emulate Clinton's rise to power, even with visits to London by Clinton's advisors and visits to America by Blair campaigners. This past year, I've heard the same kind of evasive themes in Blair's speeches that I heard in Clinton's before he was elected. As Clinton was a "new kind of Democrat," Blair is creating a "new kind of Labour." It's so transparent that the better newspapers commonly compare the courses of the two candidates. And they compare the pragmatism of George Bush with that of John Major, which is valid. One can learn a great deal about British politics by listening to Peter Schwartz's tape on American politics, "The Politics of Pragmatism."

Q. Is Thatcherism still alive?

A. The Conservatives are split into two camps, with Major's camp currently dominating the Thatcher camp.

The Thatcherites are pro-free enterprise, but their theoretical base is definitely not that of Ayn Rand. Thatcher herself said that Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* is what they were about. And Rand called Hayek "an example of our most pernicious enemy" in *The Letters of Ayn Rand*.

Whatever good points Thatcherites occasionally make in terms of practical policies, they suffer even more from the lack of a moral base.

The Major side of Conservatism is explicitly pragmatic, and they advocate a "managed economy", even ridiculing Thatcherites as believers in "free market dogma." They seem to take their cue from Edmund Burke and therefore see their role as the elite which selects and makes available those innovations "proper" to English society while "protecting" English people from any loss of heritage. They could support Thatcher when England was getting too stagnant but can withdraw that support when England is becoming too "Americanized." They talk a lot about being good stewards of England, as if they were feudal lords taking care of the land on their manorial estate, which many of them are. Not surprisingly, many of them embrace environmentalism, I think, as an extension of this worship of heritage, patronizing rule and the status quo. In this respect, they are led nauseatingly by Prince Charles and his father, the Duke of Edinburgh.

Q. Is environmentalism as influential there as it is in America?

A. Yes, and that aspect mixed with their worship of anything old is a constant constraint on people's lives. A major problem in London is lack of freeways and just good streets. But the attitude in seeing traffic jams is, incredibly, that crowded roads should be gotten rid of, not expanded or developed into freeways.

Any government plan for an improvement in something is hamstrung by every kind of worshipper of the status quo.

Let me tell you what happened

in regard to repairing an old subway tunnel. Unlike most of London, one subway line serves east London, the part you can see at the beginning of *The Eastenders* on television, and it has a tunnel going beneath the Thames. A year ago, it was announced that the tunnel was leaking water and that it was going to be shut down for repair for six months. On the day that repair was to begin, the organization English Heritage, which has governmental authority to prevent work on "works of heritage", halted work on the tunnel.

The tunnel is one hundred fifty years old and is made of common brick to form the shape of an arch. Repair was to consist of blowing concrete onto the surface of the tunnel, which would seal the leaks but prevent anyone from seeing the brickwork. English Heritage claimed that this was a loss of national heritage. Mind you, no one can see the brickwork except for the solitary driver of the subway trains. Passengers cannot see out of the train because the tunnel is not lighted. And if they could see out, they would see only black fungus covering brick whizzing by at about forty miles an hour.

The issue was examined for six months by the Environmental Secretary, who then passed on the issue, without a decision being made, to a local government body. It decided that a reformed plan of operation could go ahead, which would not entirely cover up the brickwork but would finish up in another seven months. Finally, the work would be done for 24 million pounds instead of the original 12 million. Meanwhile, subway service on the east end is shut down for another seven months. This is in a city where cars are impractical, and the only alternative is the bus system.

You can find "animal rights" protests in London or people protesting pollution, but no one protested this whole affair, and it was only announced in the papers, not discussed, as if it were just the normal way of doing things. I don't think that people in America would be so complacent about it.

Q. How are general living conditions in England?

A. After one year of being here, I can't pretend to be an expert. But I can make some less than comprehensive observations. I estimate that the standard of living is roughly half that of people in the U.S., although I'm primarily judging from what I see in London, which may be much more expensive. As an indication available to you in America, you might notice the rooms in which people are living in the movie "Four Weddings and a Funeral." Saving in this way on housing and on not having a car is mainly how people get by and one of the reasons that they would like to emigrate, especially the young.

London is very crowded, and the streets are small and eccentrically crooked. It's similar to walking around in a crowded carnival. And while it is quite an international population, I think that people are mannered in a way that I don't see in the U.S. People make a point of being civil and nice. And yet, I think people here are unhappy with their lives in a way that is rare in America. Many people seem only to have a grim determination to get through the day, or the traffic or to their favorite pub. All the Objectivists I've met here want to get to America some day. And the ordinary bloke, upon hearing my accent, speaks of America as the land of adventure, the place of opportunity, etc. But

here, they express an attitude of being locked in, their lives determined.

Q. Is there a class attitude in England?

A. I haven't run across an attitude of class from wealthy people, but I see an envy-ridden attitude from "working class" people often. There is a sense of hatred against an upperclass, and I've seen it even among some English who call themselves Objectivists.

Q. What is the art like in London?

A. The art museums are strikingly schizophrenic, showing superb collections of pre-twentieth century art along with the worst examples of modern art. The Tate Gallery seems to have the best and the worst, with some of the sculpture being exquisite. But in another section, they will be displaying, for example, four glass tanks filled with formaldehyde preserving two dead cows cut up into two sections. Recently when the director of the museum was asked in an interview why so much of their art was hopelessly ambiguous or disgusting, he responded that the museum officials, such as he, were there to tell us what the work of art meant. I was glad to find out that a witch doctor was on call.

There are forty theatres in London, and most of them are playing some very bad stuff, although there has been somewhat of a Rattigan revival. But most of it is just single-issue agitprop. "Apollo 13" is doing very well, which I find hopeful. But as an aside, when I saw it, I had to ask a British friend whether the silent crowd I was watching it with was enjoying it. He said they were, and on the way out I heard nothing but approving remarks.

But the most hopeful sign I saw was the new production of "Pride and Prejudice" on television, which was romantic and a big hit, despite the fact that everyone in England is very familiar with it. The preponderant state of television, however, is terribly anti-romantic. Something like the absurd and nihilistic "Homicide: Life on the Streets" in America would make it here, but something with the integrity of "Law and Order" would not. Serious heroes are not allowed on serial television in England. One has to go see American movies to get a semblance of such a character.

Q. How is the Objectivist club in London?

A. It wasn't active until I arrived, and it's not very active now. I had an organizational meeting for hosting an Objectivist study group. Among the fifteen people who attended, probably five of them said at the meeting or on the phone to me that they wanted a study group which was practical and did not deal with "all that theory." When you hear that from Objectivists and know that "theory vs. practice" is one form of the soul/body dichotomy that Objectivists should be aware of, you get a suspicion that there may be something to this expression "British empiricism." And there was. After we decided to start with *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand*, attendance dropped very quickly and permanently. But we have about six people who are learning a lot and making it worth while.

Q. What about sex?

A. I'm for it.

Q. But are the British?

A. Yes, in the same way as in America but in a somewhat more

lively way. The advertising is a bit more shocking, and then there are the tabloids. "Page three" is an expression here, where that is the page you turn to see the girl nude who is not quite nude on page one. I once read an Alistair Cooke article saying that every English generation discovers and defeats Victorian attitudes on sex. At the risk of repeating that discovery, I think the very emphasis on sex in Britain is a reaction to their being still uncomfortable with it. There's a kind of peek-a-boo attitude that you find in Catholic cultures, where the forbidden aspect of sexuality is emphasized. It's the same appeal I think that people find in Madonna, who would probably not have such a spectacular career without the existence of that attitude of "sex is dirty, so let's enjoy it," which shares with religion the attitude that sex is dirty.

Q. Do you and Jeri get homesick?

A. No, we're having a very interesting and enjoyable time. The only thing we couldn't find here was pancakes, and then we found a store which sells the batter and maple syrup. I don't miss American television, Dan Rather, the constant offering of false alternatives that American news and politicians present. And I enjoy a kind of intelligibility in the English newspapers that is lacking in the States. As I mentioned in a previous article, Europeans actually use such words as "socialism." They rarely advocate the right things, but the newspapers seem more disposed to identification and explanation. The only thing we miss is friends in Houston.

Q. Have you visited other countries?

A. Yes, Ireland, Holland, Ger-

many and France, so far.

Q. Quick impressions?

A. The south coast of Ireland is spectacularly beautiful, but Ireland is just now making remarriage legal, provided you've been divorced for five years. And the Black Irish come from the Celts, not from Spanish soldiers shipwrecked from the Spanish Armada. The IRA is literally composed of murderers and Clinton is no friend to the Irish or peace. Even in Northern Ireland, Sinn Fein gets only 10% of the vote.

Holland prides itself on its toleration. But while they allow the open use of drugs illegal elsewhere, it takes an act of their legislature to allow the stores in Holland to close thirty minutes later than before. Does that tell you something about missing essentials?

If you've read Anne Frank's Diary, the visit to her house in Amsterdam is very plain and very moving.

The Rotterdam Port is fun to tour.

In Germany, pedestrians do not cross on a red light, even if no traffic is coming. If you wear tennis shoes, old ladies will frown at you.

In France, we could not find a rude waiter. After seeing a terrorist arrested on our subway car, I would not want to mess with French personnel in the special forces. Paris was a surprise to us because we enjoyed exploring it and the people. On the other hand, their unions are still explicit communists.

On Europe as a whole, a long battle is being fought over whether the European Union will be a collection of countries with no trade restrictions or whether it will be one German dominated welfare-state. Thatcher was fighting for the former, but Kohl and Mitterand were bringing about the latter. With Chirac in France not supporting the German position now, the issue is again problematical.

HOS Awards Essay Winners

by Warren S. Ross

HOS awarded three prizes in essay contests this year: two prizes (1st and 2nd place) for *The Fountainhead* essay and one prize for Anthem.

The first place winner in *The Fountainhead* contest is Kedran Garrison. Kedran was a Senior at Brazoswood High School last school year, and is currently a Freshman at Wakeforest College in North Carolina. Kedran was a National Merit finalist, and besides our prize she won a scholarship from R. J. Reynolds, for which she had to write five essays.

Kedran credits her writing ability partly to Mrs. Carolyn Huff, from whom she learned a great deal in her Senior AP English class. Mrs. Huff had students read British literature for homework, but then write essays every day in class. Mrs. Huff worked on coherence of the essays, emphasized making points in the essay instead of merely writing fluff and filler, and showed the students how to ask the kinds of questions that get depth out of a work of literature.

Kedran herself worked very hard on *The Fountainhead* essay. She read *The Fountainhead* after her Junior year. Then, in preparation for entering the essay contest, she reread the book and made extensive notes. She wrote and rewrote the essay to polish it. Kedran's essay is reprinted in this issue of the newsletter.

The second place *Fountainhead* winner is Amy Gentry, who is a Senior this year at Stratford Senior High School. Amy credits Dr. Judy Black -- whom she had as a Sophomore and now again as a Senior -- with improving her writing. Amy's favorite subject is English. She enjoys writing and does it a lot. Amy is President of the Writing Club at Stratford and Editor of the newspaper.

Amy began reading Ayn Rand in the 8th grade -- starting with *Atlas Shrugged!* She has continued reading Ayn Rand's works throughout high school, and says she has read everything Ayn Rand has written.

The prize winner in the Anthem contest is Sylvia Chiang, a Sophomore this year at St. John's School. Sylvia credits Mrs. Theo Coonrod, her English teacher, with helping her writing. Mrs. Coonrod has students write repeated drafts of essays on literature they read. Mrs. Coonrod critiques first drafts, identifying needed grammatical and stylistic improvements. Sylvia also credits Mrs. Coonrod with promoting the contest to students at St. John's. Mrs. Coonrod suggested that all students try to enter the contest.

Sylvia is on the Yearbook staff at St. John's, plays piano and violin, the latter in the St. John's String Ensemble.

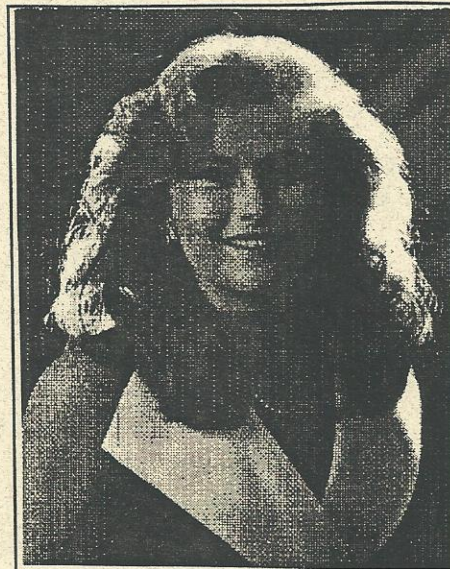
Sylvia's essay is also reprinted in this issue of the newsletter.

Individualism in *The Fountainhead*

by Kedran Garrison

To be great is to be an independent individual. A man who is not, who is subservient to the whims and wishes of others, will remain mired in the level that all masses must perforce inhabit: mediocrity. This concept of independence and conformity is powerfully articulated by Ayn Rand in her novel *The Fountainhead*, a story of modern architect Howard Roark struggling against the fear and hatred of conformists who deal only in menial mediocrity, never rising above their need for approval. The contrasts between Roark and the other characters provide much of the philosophical ammunition for Rand, who eloquently urges that individuals never yield to conformity and calls men to live life as men, reaching taller and prouder for the highest pinnacle.

One of the chief characters used by Rand to contrast Roark's independence is Peter Keating, a fellow architect who attended college with Roark and interacts with him the rest of his life. While the independent Roark is unquestionably sure of himself, the conformist Keating perpetually looks to the opinions of others. The difference, at bottom, is Keating's reliance on other people and Roark's reliance on himself. At their graduation ceremony, Keating, "star student... president of the student body... most popular man on campus" garners many honors and for a "cold and empty" moment wonders if he is "as great as this day proclaimed him to be." Having no standards by which to judge himself, save those of the crowd, Keating is reassured only by other people's assurance of his "glorious future."



Kedran Garrison

Roark, on the other hand, friendless, expelled, and futureless, maintains a knowledge of this worth that allows him to think for himself and defend his unique architectural vision. To the dean who expelled him he politely says "That's true-- I don't care whether you agree with me or not." Disagreeing with the dogma that "everything beautiful in architecture has been done already... we can only attempt, respectfully, to repeat," he states that "I set my own standards... and stand at the end of no tradition." Roark can make this claim because he is an individual, that is, an enclosed body maintaining a mind and spirit disparate from his surroundings. Keating, however, possessing no values but society's, is akin to a cell lacking a membrane, so that there is unrestricted passage into and out of that cell. Keating is not an individual but a liquid mirror reflecting those around him.

This one profound difference be-

tween Keating and Roark causes a myriad of other differences in their personalities and lives. For example, Keating's conformity makes him weak, cowardly and manipulative. Employed by a prestigious firm, he maneuvers his way into the hierarchy and depends as he did in college on Roark for his designs. He masks Roark's designs with conventional features and wins a reputation for "brilliance," but he reproduces other's work to the point where he can create no longer; his career will flounder when Roark does not help him or men stop "worshipping" the ancient masters he copied. Because exposure of incompetence and loss of prestige terrify him, he must live his life always considering what the Architect's Guild, high society and prominent critics think of him and his work. In fact, because friends and family convince him that his future will be destroyed, he denies himself the "only thing [he] ever really wanted," a marriage to the awkward and careless Catherine Halsey, who despite her gracelessness made him feel "clean and happy" and gave him "a sense of certainty he felt so rarely." Such self-abnegating incidents occur again and again, until Keating in effect loses his self, possessing no inner creativity, strength, or security.

Not so Roark. He grows only more strong, and his fierce refusals to conform contribute to his slowly-growing acceptance. His structures are "such as had never stood on the face of the earth," and he never betrays his creative integrity. He has strength and courage, as shown when the penniless, desperate architect fre-

quently turns down commissions. In one instance he closes his practice after turning down the biggest offer of his life, the Manhattan Bank Building. The bank directors will accept his design if he will accept a "slight alteration in the facade," but Roark cannot build if even the "smallest part committed treason" to the idea that "constituted the life-source" of the building. To him, that which was good, high, and noble "was only that which kept its integrity." Another reason he refuses to compromise is, as he labels it, pure selfishness. He works for the joy of creating, for the sheer jubilation that comes from mastering land and materials, molding them into triumphant, glorious structures. He is too selfish to compromise his structures, copy others' work, or sell out to public opinion. Unlike Keating, Roark knows what he desires and lets himself have it; he trades public acclaim for personal exaltation.

Keating and Roark's positions have profound implications for society. Keating's behavior, coupled with an altruistic philosophy stressing the common, average man, will lead to a collectivist society in which "none may rise too high above... the common human level." Servile, quivering men will "direct all efforts to satisfy the desires of his neighbor," building "a world where the thought of each man will not be his own, but an attempt to guess the thought of his neighbor who'll have no thought of his own but an attempt to guess the thought of the next neighbor." They will be unhappy as Keating is, giving their souls to gain acceptance, restricting themselves to levels where they can be praised. They will enshrine mediocrity so that they may achieve it and then hiss and snarl at greatness because it is a reproach.

Eventually, though, man's capabilities will be reduced to so small a spectrum that he will not even recognize greatness; "the sound perception of an ant does not include thunder." This entrapment happens to Keating after only a decade. He is broken, tired, and unable to equal even his earlier mimicry. He is caught in a downward cycle, thinking that if he were more selfless, he would be happier, but the more of himself he gives away, the more miserably dependent he becomes. A society that shares his weakness for conformity will become a world where the "individual is held as evil, the mass as God," so that all human potential is warped by an ugly, horrible, mean-spirited mass insisting on mediocrity.

Howard Roark is the hope for such a fate. He is a creator who creates only for himself. He is a selfish, arrogant but life-giving individual who "does not exist for any other man... and asks no other man to exist for him." He is strong, and because he respects the noble and heroic in man, he refuses to pity or have compassion, giving people only a "command to rise." In a world of his creed "what a man is and make of himself" is the standard for "personal dignity." Roark's independence can save the world from cringing dependency. It is crucial, though, that he never compromise, for a compromise in values is the first step towards complete conformity, and were Roark to compromise, it would signify an understanding and toleration of some mediocrity or limitations. It would be a debasement of the perfection Roark seeks. He demonstrates his knowledge of this point by, among other things, his stand concerning Cortlandt Homes, a housing development he designed. Huge

alterations are unlawfully made to the building and Roark, having no other recourse, dynamites the structure rather than see it maimed. He has a right to demand the perfection he put into the design, and since he is denied, he feels he has a right to destroy the structure simply because he created it. He endures a strenuous trial for his act of destruction but wins, retaining his strength and vision, giving hope to humanity; the pursuit for perfection and integrity is made easier by his example.

The Fountainhead is a novel more about man as he could be than man as he is, and yet there is enough of Roark in all men to make the novel realistic. Our country was founded on the concepts of freedom and individualism that allow such strong, gifted men as Roark to rise and stretch the boundaries of human potential, but in the last few decades our country has been tending towards a more collectivist state. The effects are startlingly similar to the phenomena Rand describes: The state taxes the competent and subsidizes the incompetent, society places great emphasis on volunteerism and funding those less fortunate, (as Roark states, "I do not recognize anyone's right to one minute of my life") and people begin to live for the fulfillment of other's expectations. For genius and integrity to thrive we must return to a more independent life in which the rights of self are affirmed and people exist for themselves, having not compassion but respect for each other. We must reach upwards by recognizing that it is most heroic to live life without regard to standards that will constrain us.

Courage Alone Prevails

by Sylvia Chiang

Anthem, by Ayn Rand, paints a startling portrait of a bleak, backward society where collectivism has taken over. The people of this world function merely as robots-- complete with mechanical sounding names-- working solely for the good of the entire community. Collectivism has polluted their minds to the point where no one even knows of the word "I," the utterance of which will result in public execution. This situation has created fear that "[a]ll men feel and non dare to speak [of]." Equality 7-2521, the narrator of the story, triumphs over collectivism because he-- unlike his fellow brothers-- is unafraid to think for himself. His boldness fuels his search for both knowledge of emotions and knowledge of science; and through his struggle, he finally acquires the most important knowledge-- knowledge of himself.

Throughout his quest for individualism, Equality 7-5 displays more and more daring in showing his feelings in a society which forbids unhappiness. He recounts how, as a child, he disliked school and constantly fought with his peers. The narrator first commits the Transgression of Preference when he acknowledges friendship between himself and another man: He has defied the law which states men must not "love any... better than the others." The narrator continues to "sin" when he increasingly acts on his affection towards a girl he calls the Golden One. At first he "dare not speak [her name] above a whisper. For men are forbidden to take notice of women...." Then, however, he talks to her, touches her, and finally loves her. In

his admiration of the Golden One, this human man "for the first time... know[s] fear, and then pain." Ultimately, he concludes that his love for all men shall no longer be unconditional, but will have to be earned.

Equality 7-2521's fearlessness also prevails in his effort to understand science, which society has deemed "evil." He uncovers an underground tunnel-- and even though he knows the law forbids it-- he secretly visits this place every night in order to experiment with objects he has found and study manuscripts he has stolen, eventually discovering electricity, a lost technology. Despite fully comprehending that the "nature of [his] punishment, if it be discovered, is not for the human heart to ponder... [he] feel[s] no fear in [his] heart." The narrator further exhibits his courage when, in spite of all the lashes he receives, he protects his new knowledge by refusing to answer the officials' questions about his whereabouts when they discover his nightly disappearances. Due to his tremendous bravery, the narrator does not fear searching for knowledge, however much danger the search may involve. For example, his first encounter with a house-- something he suspects may contain evil things-- "stirs no fear within [his] heart;" instead, he beckons knowledge to "come to [him]." This bold man's insatiable curiosity makes him yearn to know, but without his courage, he would never have the ability to act upon this desire.

Finally, Equality 7-2521's struggle against collectivism results in his discovery of his own, individual being. After escaping the

city, he flees into the Unchartered Forest, which "disposes of its own victims. This gives [him] no fear either." Here, this man learns for the first time his natural instincts-- hunting, building fires, and surviving-- which reveal part of his true human self. At the end of his journey, the narrator formulates his own bold, new ideas about individualism, including the concept that the thought, will, and freedom of a man constitutes his treasures. As he finally discovers himself, the narrator gives himself a true identity-- an appropriate name, Prometheus, an allusion to the mythological creator of mankind, a rebel who stole fire for them. The Golden One praises Prometheus's boldness in this way: "Your head is high, but our brothers cringe. You walk, but our brothers crawl." It is this fearlessness that sets him apart from the others and allows him to discover the true meaning of the word "I."

Unafraid to think for himself, Prometheus has not only gained wisdom but also cast off the iron chains of evil collectivism. Although his search for individualism has ended, his efforts to create an individualistic society have only begun. Optimistic and determined, he plans to steal back into the City once more to recruit his "chosen friends" to join him in shaping a bright, new world in which each man will live and work for himself. Even if he does not see his dreams fulfilled, Prometheus has already won his victory, for out of so many, he alone holds the true key to happiness-- individual freedom.

HOS Meeting Summaries

by J. Brian Phillips

Analyzing the News October 9, 1995

The October HOS meeting was hosted by Jim Brents and featured an analysis of several news events, including the closing arguments of the defense in the O.J. Simpson trial, the Treasury announcement of the re-design of the \$100 bill, and the aftermath of hurricane Opal.

After viewing news coverage of these events by the major networks, attendees compared and contrasted that coverage. As the evening progressed, it became clear that the networks could, and did, give sig-

nificantly different coverage of the same event.

For example, in its coverage of hurricane Opal, CBS stated that Panama City was largely destroyed and it could take up to 2 years to rebuild. In contrast, ABC correctly stated that about a dozen homes were destroyed and 100 damaged. Depending upon which report one watched, vastly different conclusions could be reached.

Inaccurate reporting of the facts was only one of the ways in which the networks can impact a viewer's conclusion about a particular event. Selection of which facts to present,

where in the broadcast a report is aired, and comments by reporters and experts can greatly impact the coverage. Leading off a broadcast gives a story more importance.

Throughout the discussion, attendees used several principles in their analysis of the news coverage. As Warren Ross noted, the news media is how we learn about most current events, and our ability to apply the proper principles in our evaluation of that coverage influences our ability to understand the world in which we live and decide which actions to take.

Time constraints prevent the net-

HOS Thanks Members for Contributions

HOS gratefully acknowledges all member contributions to essay contest prizes. Listed below are this year's contributors. Each of you has made it possible for HOS to fulfill its mission of promoting Ayn Rand's ideas in the Houston area.

Contributors this year:

Vern & Margaret Alway
Joe & Molly Blackburn
Jeri Eagan
Neil Erian
Donald Granberry
Clark Hamilton
Paul Sean Hill
Frank Krull
Elbert Marks
Kirk Mashue
Michael Mazzone
Johnnie McCulloch

J. P. Miller
Steve & Elizabeth Miller
Bob Peterson
Jeffrey Remboldt
Keith Robertson
Yaromir Steiner
Alan Wenger

We especially acknowledge Jim and Sandi Brents, who for the last two years have been in charge of all logistics for the Anthem contest -- writing and mailing letters to teachers, writing flyers, researching additions to the high school mailing list. Thanks Jim and Sandi!

Finally, it is appropriate to give special thanks to the members who have contributed consistently over several years. HOS has given \$9000.00 in prize money to students since 1988, and

this enormous investment in promoting Objectivism would not have been possible without the support of members who come back year after year donating money to the contest. To recognize those members, we are creating an honor society for the members who have contributed in at least five years since the contest began. Members in this distinguished group are:

Joe & Molly Blackburn (8 years)
J. P. Miller (8 years)
Elbert Marks (8 years)
Warren Ross (7 years)
Ron Shoemaker (6 years)
Kirk Mashue (5 years)
Yaromir Steiner (5 years)
Bob Peterson (5 years)
Alan Wenger (5 years)

works from presenting all of the information relevant to a particular story. Their reports should essentialize the story, i.e., present the important and explanatory facts. Attendees saw that this was seldom done, and in fact, many very important facts were ignored and never mentioned. In the report on Hurricane Opal, for example, reporters did not make it clear that damage was limited to buildings on the shoreline. The result was the impression that damage was extensive throughout coastal communities.

In some reports, a false representation of one side of an issue was presented, thus misleading viewers. Integrating other knowledge, and across fields, with the news reports was used repeatedly by attendees to determine the accuracy and objectivity of a particular report. It was also noted several times that the overall structure of a story, i.e., what is presented and how, influenced the viewers' conclusions.

A report on birth defects cited a ratio of 1 defect per 60 births by women taking excessive amounts of vitamin A. But the report failed to mention what ratio was normal. Thus viewers really don't know the meaning of the ratio.

Journalists are not immune to

bad philosophy. In fact, they are among its most prominent practitioners. But by using the proper principles, we can avoid becoming their victims.

1996 HOS Planning Meeting November 11, 1995

On November 11 HOS members met to establish the schedule for 1996. At the meeting, several changes in the format were announced. The 1996 schedule includes six original presentations by HOS members, two presentations by professional Objectivist intellectuals (either taped or live), two social activities, the annual planning meeting, and the Lyceum Conference.

In addition, each original presenter will have a co-chairman, or buddy, to assist in the preparation of the meeting. These changes were made to relieve Warren Ross of the tremendous burden placed upon him by the previous format, and to make more use of the professional materials available.

Prior to the planning portion of the meeting, Janet Lee Wich announced the results of the 1995 pamphleteering project. Members

sent approximately 70% of the pamphlets pledged. Though members fell short of their goal, Janet optimistically noted that this represented an increase of 700% from the previous year. Sandi Brents won a \$25 gift certificate for Second Renaissance Books for sending the most pamphlets. Janet will have her 1996 HOS dues waived for sending the second most pamphlets.

The following is the 1996 HOS schedule:

Dec: Christmas Party

Jan: Theory of Humor by Chris Land

Feb: Lyceum Conference

Mar: The History of Art by Pete Jamison

Apr: ARI lecturer

May: Field trip to NASA

June: Identifying Context Workshop by Brian Phillips

July: Objective Care of the Body by Dr. Harry King

Aug: Tape lecture

Sep: The Real Meaning of Vegetarianism by Steve Miller

Oct: Analyzing the Presidential Candidates by Clark Hamilton

Nov: Annual planning meeting

ANNOUNCEMENTS

§ Enclosed with this newsletter is a membership application. The application also contains space to make a pledge for the 1996 *The Fountainhead* and *Anthem* essay contests. A stamped envelope is also enclosed as a convenience for members.

§ Also enclosed is an invitation and map to the annual Christmas Party to be held on December 9.