

Houston Objectivism Society Newsletter

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INSIDE

Lyceum Conference
Summary
March meeting summary

HOS MEETINGS

April 13- Taped lecture
May 11- Space Day at
NASA
June 8- Context workshop

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Dishonesty, Pragmatism, and Bosnia

by Hannes Hacker

The collapse of the Soviet Union reverberated through its Warsaw Pact satellites and Yugoslavia (which was technically a non-aligned communist dictatorship under Tito). In the Warsaw Pact countries, the reaction was to immediately adopt Western style governments, which in today's context means freer but still mixed economies. In Eastern Europe, the newly freed people promptly smashed the Berlin Wall, advocated some pro-freedom ideas, and even spoke of joining NATO.

But not in Yugoslavia. In that country, the absence of the communist yoke allowed rival Serb, Croat, and Muslim factions to resume centuries of warfare. The Bosnian War is more than ignorant savages fighting for a patch of jungle with bone clubs and poison arrows. Jungle savages can claim utter ignorance, but the people of the former Yugoslavia are the product of a 20th century industrial culture.

The fighters, at least implicitly, have not abandoned the collectivist philosophy of communism. Members of one faction despise all members of the other factions regardless of individual moral stature. These premises are enacted in reality in the form of atrocities against civilians, genocide, and concentration camps.

In *The Virtue of Selfishness*, Ayn Rand wrote that racism is "the caveman's version of the doctrine of innate ideas -- or of inherited knowledge -- which has been thoroughly

refuted by philosophy and science. Racism is a doctrine of, by, and for brutes. It is a barnyard or stock-farm version of collectivism, appropriate to a mentality that differentiates between various breeds of animals, but not between animals and men." The Bosnian War is fueled by essentially the same mentality, but with ethnic and geographic, not genetic, attributes defining the collective.

At the 1996 Lyceum Conference, Dr. Andrew Bernstein compared the relationship of Ellsworth Toohey and Gus Webb to that between the collectivist intellectuals of the 1930s and the student activists of the 1960s. The Tooheys, with a sophisticated intellectual veneer, laid the groundwork of collectivism. Once the culture was ideologically disarmed, unwashed savages -- the Gus Webbs -- stopped circling and began to feed.

The Bosnian War is the ultimate endgame of collectivism stripped of any attempt at intellectual or moral justification. The Gus Webbs have inherited the Balkans.

On November 27, 1995, President Clinton reneged on yet another campaign promise and announced U.S. participation in Operation Joint Endeavor, a NATO lead mission to try to secure peace in the region. He ordered the 1st Armor Division into the former Yugoslavia. The American public reacted with almost universal opposition to Clinton's decision, and many politicians criticized it.

However, the Senate did not invoke the War Powers Act to block the opera-

Philosophy and the Real World Out There

At the April 13 meeting, a video of Leonard Peikoff's speech "Philosophy and the Real World Out There" will be played. In this lecture, Dr. Peikoff explains how the historic philosophic debate over the nature of reality took a radical turn after Kant. Kant, Dr. Peikoff explains, is responsible for the widespread rejection of reality, and the concomitant explosion of irrationalism, in our culture.

Before the meeting, starting at 5:00, Janet Wich will conduct a pamphleteering activity. Members are urged to attend, bringing a letter to a doctor explaining the reason for sending Dr. Peikoff's "Health Care is Not a Right." Here is your chance to meet your 1996 pamphleteering quota before the end of the first quarter! At the same time, you'll be helping to stave off another assault on the doctors by Clinton during a probable second term in office.

The meeting will be held at the recreation room of Kirk Mashue's apartment Clubroom of Kirk Mashue's apartment complex, 6263 Westheimer (between Hillcroft and Fountainview), across from Payless Shoes.

NOTE: We are asking each member who attends to contribute \$2 to help pay for the expenses of renting this clubroom.

tion. In fact, majority leader Bob Dole reversed his stance opposing U.S. involvement in Bosnia in return for White House concessions on the FY1996 Department of Defense budget. The full Senate then passed a resolution condemning the operation, but took no action.

We will see that the attempted justification of the decision to send U.S. troops to Bosnia is dishonest, and its true motivation is pure sacrifice. U.S. involvement in Bosnia represents a theoretical philosophy made real: it is Pragmatism in action.

Clinton's Epistemological Chicanery

Before examining the ethical and political aspects of Bill Clinton's decision to send U.S. troops to Bosnia, it is instructive to examine some epistemological underpinnings. First, the advocates of U.S. involvement in the Bosnian War refuse to call it a war. As President Clinton said in his November 27 television address, "Let me say at the outset, America's role will not be about fighting a war. It will be about helping the people of Bosnia to secure their own peace agreement." The most common term used to describe the operation is "peacekeeping". Yet no clear definition of "peacekeeping" is typically given. We are given some ostensive examples: Operation Provide Relief in Somalia, Operation Restore Hope in northern Iraq, etc. This demonstrates Clinton's refusal to think of foreign policy in conceptual terms. (Such range of the moment thinking has dominated American foreign policy for decades, but that does not justify Clinton's adoption of the same mentality.)

A war is armed conflict between two nations or a nation and an internal political entity, but it is not the only form of combat. In military science, there exists the concept of a spectrum of conflict.

Across the line from peace is combat, which can range from the smallest to the largest scale: from a SEAL team operating covertly to a thermonuclear exchange. Also, there are many military operations which, while not combat, are potential combat with all of its perils. Peacekeeping is one such mission.

In military parlance, "peace-keeping" is itself considered to be part of a wider category of missions called, "military operations other than war". This terminology is described as "activities where the military instrument of national power is used for purposes other than the large scale combat operations usually associated with war."¹ These include:

- (1) arms control enforcement,
- (2) counterterrorism,
- (3) Department of Defense support of counterdrug operations,
- (4) nation assistance (or nation building),
- (5) noncombatant evacuation operations,
- (6) "Peace Operations",
- (7) support to insurgencies, and
- (8) foreign and domestic humanitarian relief.²

Since individual rights can only be protected by retaliation against aggressors, some of the above are necessarily combat operations, albeit on a small scale. And in such a context, they are morally justified. The first, second and fifth members of this list are clear examples of proper application of military force. But the eighth consists of "redistributing" the earned wealth of United States citizens and the third is an attempt to regu-

¹ Department of Defense Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations, February 1, 1995, p.V-1.

² Ibid, ppV-7 to V-13.

late their private behavior.

Lumping legitimate and illegitimate applications of military force into the same category is a "package deal" which ignores the foundation of the proper reason for the use of military force by a free country: the protection of its citizens' rights. It gives equal legitimacy to fighting state-sponsored terrorism and controlling the spread of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons as it does to international welfare statism and the "War on Drugs". In other words, it is an attempt to equate military action designed to protect individual rights with overtly statist actions.

Within this ugly framework, Bosnia comes under the umbrella of "peace operations" which in turn consist of "peacemaking (diplomatic actions), peacekeeping, (non-combat military operations), and peace enforcement (coercive use of military force)".³ Notice the attempt to drive a gray area between combat and non-combat. Of all the "military operations other than war", all but this one are defined. As described above, "peacekeeping" is a non-entity which gives a President an excuse to send troops into harm's way on caprice.

President Clinton restated this very contradiction in his television address, "I refuse to send American troops to fight a war in Bosnia, but I believe we must help to secure the Bosnian peace." In the face of aggression, how does one secure peace if not willing to fight?

An objective definition of "peacekeeping" does exist and is used by military commanders jun-

ior to the ones for which the cited publication is written. "Peace enforcement" is a combat operation in which a third party intervenes in a conflict without the invitation of the combatants. (For example, U.S. intervention in the Phillipines during the Spanish American War.) "Peacekeeping" is a similar intervention, but with the invitation of the combatants: the Dayton Accords in the case of Bosnia. It is crucial to remember, though, that in peacekeeping, combat remains an immediate potentiality.

Furthermore, Clinton uses a key foreign policy concept, that of "vital" national interests, dishonestly. Announcing his intentions to the public he said, "In fulfilling this mission, we will have the chance to help stop the killing of innocent civilians, especially children; and at the same time, to bring stability to Central Europe, a region of the world that is *vital* [emphasis mine] to our national interests."⁴

An important clarification is in order. United States interests, like a personal value system, are hierarchical. U.S. foreign policy categorizes them into four levels: Survival, Vital, Major, and Peripheral. A full explanation of all of these is rather lengthy, but threats to American vital interests consist of peril to the life of the nation. Such a threat is not immediate, as they are in survival interests. The Cuban missile crisis and the attack on Pearl Harbor were examples of threats to vital American interests.

In the past, the President has referred to "democracy"-- mean-

ing unlimited majority rule and a form of statism-- as the true American form of government and as something worth defending. Such language used by an adolescent studying civics for the first time is excusable.

But Clinton was a Rhodes scholar. In addition, the Chief Executive of the world's most powerful nation has its best military minds at his disposal to clarify the specialized definitions of foreign and military policy. Such misuse of words can only be explained by dishonesty. Clinton cannot hide behind stupidity or ignorance for his actions on Bosnia.

During the Cold War, Europe was of vital national interest to the United States. The NATO alliance served the mutual, vital national interests of both the European powers and the United States. It kept the prospect of conventional war with Soviet Russia on European soil, and thus was of benefit to the United States. Without the United States, the combined armies of Europe would have been no match for the Red Army. But when the Soviet Union vanished, so did American national interest in Europe. From a United States perspective, the NATO alliance was a means to an end: a forward line of defense against communist aggression. It never was, nor is it now, an end in itself.

In his speech, Clinton said, "We're all vulnerable to the organized forces of intolerance and destruction, terrorism, ethnic, religious and regional rivalries; the spread of organized crime and weapons of mass destruction and drug trafficking. Just as surely as fascism and communism, these

⁴Official White House Press Release, Speech given on November 27, 1995, downloaded from AOL.

³ Ibid. p. V-11.

forces also threaten freedom and democracy, peace and prosperity." This is basically a restatement, in less explicit terms, of the "package deal" mentioned earlier. But by using the word "vital", he has repackaged it: he has tied it to the life of the nation itself. In Clinton's view, America faces a harsh alternative: sacrifice for Europe or die.

A Sacrificial Lion

Clinton's dishonesty begs a question: how does his policy treat an honest man? Unfortunately, an answer is available in the example of Colonel Gregory Fontenot, who granted a Wall Street Journal reporter an extensive interview which was published on December 27.

INTELLECTUAL ACTIVISM

On April 19 HOS member and President of The Association for Objective Law Michael Mazzone will speak against zoning in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Michael's talk is being sponsored by Association of Objectivist Businessmen member Pat Powell.

Zoning officials in New Mexico recently tried to shut down Pat's business. Approaching residential development had rendered her concrete business an "incompatible land use". While Pat obtained a two-year reprieve, her battle is far from over.

Michael's talk is part of her effort to educate business owners and other property owners of the evils of zoning, and introduce them to a moral defense of property rights.

Colonel Fontenot is a combat veteran: a battalion commander in the Gulf War. He is also the former director of the School of Advanced Military Studies at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Colonel Fontenot identified, with only trivial error, the essence of the Bosnian War. In an address to his troops, he told two of his black soldiers, "It'll be interesting to hear what you two see, because the Croats are racist... They kill people for the color of their skins." At least implicitly, Colonel Fontenot understands that collectivism is at the root of the Bosnian War.

Colonel Fontenot understands, as does every trooper in Bosnia, the combative nature of the mission. He refuses to try to have his reality and eat it, too. In the same address to his troops, he used Pattonesque language to describe the best way to wear a submachinegun, "It's the casual, yet I'll kick your a-- if you f-- with me look."

When asked about being criticized by both the local savages and our British allies for his aggressive stance, Colonel Fontenot responded to the British and the U.N., "The U.N came in doing 'I'm OK, you're OK,' and was housebroken in a couple of weeks. I'm not going to be housebroken." To the local savages' concerns he was more direct: "Tough sh--," he said. "They don't think I trust them - and they're right. These are people who kill women and children and attack their neighbors. They're offended by me? Hell, I'm offended that I had to come here because of all their fighting."

In his November 27 speech, Clinton also talked tough. He said, "Anyone-- anyone-- who takes on

our troops will suffer the consequences. We will fight fire with fire -- and then some." Colonel Fontenot's remarks, as blunt as they are, seem to echo Clinton's.

But Clinton is dishonest, and his reaction to Fontenot reflects this fact. (Bear in mind that this colonel is at most two levels of direct command removed from the Oval Office.) A command investigation was opened on Colonel Fontenot, and he was seriously considered for relief of command. He was not relieved, but publicly reprimanded⁵. Such is Clinton's response to honesty in his ranks.

The Ledger of Sacrifice

In Vietnam, the hawks had some semblance of a cause: anti-communism. But there is nothing even to fight against in Bosnia. This war embodies the essence of Kantian altruism: sacrifice for its own sake.

The sacrifice involved in sending troops to Bosnia is multi-faceted in that it is much more than U.S. service members being placed in the line of fire for nothing. This is not to trivialize the dangers they face, from mine clearing to snipers to potential guerrilla attacks - the list is endless. Theirs is only the first sacrifice.

The second, wider aspect (i.e. of military tactics) of sacrifice is apparent if one asks one question: why send an Armor division? An obvious, but incorrect, answer is that tanks are the most aggressive form of land power available.

M1A1 tanks are designed for offensive operations: to destroy other tanks on open terrain at high speeds in all weather and lighting condi-

⁵ "Counseling' clouds Commander's Career", Army Times, January 22, 1996.

tions. The Bosnian terrain is littered with choke points which make it unsuitable for high speed mechanized warfare. Also, tanks are simply not designed to combat irregular forces like the ones in Bosnia.

Speaking strictly from a military standpoint, the nature of the terrain and enemy forces make this mission much more suited to Infantry. Such troops can move quickly by helicopter to where they are needed, strike quickly (with artillery and air support if necessary), and return to their bases. No need exists to clear mines if troops can fly over them. No need exists to rebuild bridges and roads: the Bosnian mission is defensive and reactive. If nobody can move on the ground, the side with air superiority has the advantage.

But Clinton has demonstrated in his words and actions that he has no intention of treating Bosnia as a combat zone. Understanding arguments like those given above require one to be honest enough to acknowledge that this is combat. The President's true mission is altruism. Sending an Armor division to Bosnia necessitates clearing mine fields, building bridges and roads, etc.

At the widest scale, that of military strategy, U.S. troops are being diverted to Bosnia at the expense of American national security. Bear in mind that the 1st Armor Division had been training for peacekeeping for six months prior to Clinton's announcement of this one-year diversion. That means that one-twelfth of America's active duty army-- and one-third of its heavy armor force-- will not see a gunnery

range for at least eighteen months.

Should a conflict erupt in Korea and/or Kuwait, the United States would be inviting a multiple front war if it decided to intervene. A proper response to the recent murder of unarmed American citizens by Cuba is military retaliation. However, even if Clinton had the courage to do so (I have a very active imagination, I will admit), he would do so shorthanded. A similar situation is true if the United States were to actively respond to the recent threats against Taiwan made by Red China.

Here lies a crucial aspect of both Clinton's dishonesty and his sacrifice: U.S. military forces are being used as arms of the welfare state. The true agenda in Bosnia is not enforcing peace. It is not an attempt, however flawed it would be, to have the U.S. act as the world's policeman. It is an attempt to have the U.S. act as the world's welfare case worker.

The second phase of Operation Joint Endeavor is called the "civilian mandate". This "mandate"-- notice the authoritarian choice of words -- consists of spending billions of dollars to rebuild Yugoslavia even while accused murderers routinely pass through NATO checkpoints unchallenged. This rebuilding effort includes, of all things, establishing a banking system and stock market complete with government regulatory agencies to oversee them!⁶ The hard reality at the bottom of the Balkan ledger is that this operation amounts to American lives (at least one thus far), American security elsewhere on the globe, and hard earned American dollars being sacrificed to tribal savages as reward for being tribal savages.

Political Non-Arguments

Three so-called "arguments" for U.S. involvement in Bosnia are prevalent.

(1) Without U.S. involvement, the Baltic conflict would erupt into full scale warfare throughout Europe.

By what mechanism? The Prussian and Austrian empires have vanished, and with them the labyrinthian alliances that fueled the First World War. The Soviet Union and its network of satellites is gone. Today, no ideological or even quasi-ideological insurgency exists in the region: we have seen that the only cause these people are fighting for is blind tribal hatred.

Yet, the American public is expected to believe that this hatred will, by some black magic, transmute itself into a Third World War. If so, why didn't Africa engulf itself in bloodshed after a much more violent tribal war in Rwanda and Burundi? Furthermore, inspect a world map and you will find that not one NATO country even shares a border with the former Yugoslavia. Lastly, given the extreme difficulty faced by the most powerful army on Earth to cross the Sava River to get in to Bosnia, how are these tribal savages supposed to get out to wreak havoc? (As a historical precedent, the Goths needed Julius Caesar to show them how to cross the Rhine. The Bosnian Serbs and their ilk have a similar need of Bill Clinton.)

Even if the Bosnian War somehow spilled over into Europe, why should America care? Many advocates of involvement say, "to preserve NATO." The goal of NATO, the fall of the Soviet Union, has

⁶CBSEveningNews, January 21, 1996.

been achieved. And NATO, as we have seen, is not an end in itself.

(2) The "refugee problem".

The vast majority of people who live in the former Yugoslavia are the true victims of this war, but flight to more civilized nations is not to be allowed them. In this Era of the Welfare State, the words "give us your tired, your poor" no longer apply - these shell shocked civilians would be a "burden".

The ethics of altruism creates a conflict among men, if they accept that they must sacrifice for other men. Such ethics applied to politics makes any refugee a threat. His need becomes a mortgage in those around him. As was published in this newsletter regarding Haiti, "When Bill Clinton speaks of 'America's interests', it is this conflict to which he refers. But it is a conflict which need not exist - it is a conflict created by an improper ethics."⁷ In another revolting display of international welfare statism like Somalia and Haiti, the U.S. is about to sacrifice its security, its servicemen, and its prosperity to keep so-called "unwants" out of foreign welfare states like France, Germany, and Britain.

In a proper social system--Laissez-faire capitalism--the alleged conflict among men that allows this argument to even be uttered would not exist. A domestic economic policy based on individualistic ethical principles would never allow such a foreign military policy perversion like Bosnia. The innocent victims would be given the sanctuary of liberty and nothing more. The

victimizers, if not punished, would be left to perish. Instead, the opposite is true: the victims are "threats to America's vital national interests" and the victimizers are rewarded with effortless stock markets.

(3) By not sending troops, the U.S. will appear weak to its enemies, thus endangering the lives of servicemen everywhere.

If the measure of strength is the willingness to sacrifice one's interests, one's values, and one's mind; then Bosnia is an exactly such a test of willingness to commit suicide. Consider the analogy of a child on a playground faced with a host of minor bullies. This child is physically strong, but misguided. He sees that he can fight off any three or four of the bullies at once, but none of them will ever challenge him directly. Instead, the bullies torment every other child on the playground.

The protagonist of my analogy feels he should act, he should defend the innocent, he should do something. He is more concerned for the welfare of the victims than his own. This has not only been Clinton's policy, but it dates back at least as far back as the First World War.

But the victims are many, the bullies are few, and he is one. He cannot protect all of the victims, so he decides to attempt to defend as many as he can on a case by case basis. (Clinton said this explicitly in his speech, "We can't do everything; but we must do what we can.")

One day, he fights valiantly to defend one victim while ignoring several other victims. Then, at the point of exhaustion he has expended the last of his resources; and the least significant and most cowardly

bully steps from the crowd, hits him blindsidedly and defeats him utterly, physically and spiritually. The child has payed the bitter price of sacrificing his self-defense to defending others.

But Presidents are another matter. When the "toys" of sacrifice are U.S. Army divisions of 12,000 strong apiece, the price of defeat is large scale death - often of the very innocents one purports to defend.

Consider present reality. While America has been "demonstrating strength" in Bosnia, an insignificant Cuban louse will get away with the murder of innocent U.S. citizens.

The Politics of Pragmatism

Clinton's policy is the philosophy of Pragmatism in action. Pragmatism holds that there are no absolutes, so why bother with principles such as honesty? And if there are no absolutes, nothing can be known with certainty, and man must act at the range of the moment. Ayn Rand described the Pragmatist approach to truth as, "that which works, and its validity can be judged only by its consequences".⁸

Such an epistemological approach leads to inevitable ethical consequences. As Dr. Leonard Peikoff pointed out in the *Ominous Parallels*, "... pragmatists - despite their repudiation of all systems of morality - are compelled, if they are to implement their approach at all, to rely on value codes formulated by other non-pragmatist moralists."⁹ He points out that most pragmatists are altruists by default, not deliberate

⁷ Brian Phillips, HOS Newsletter, November 1994.

⁸ Ayn Rand, "For the New Intellectual", *For the New Intellectual*, p. 34.

⁹ Dr. Leonard Peikoff, *The Ominous Parallels*, p. 128.

choice.

Understanding the nature of Pragmatism allows one to understand Bill Clinton and Robert Dole, two pragmatists who have adopted opposite political philosophies with equal inconsistency. Dole, the conservative, grew up in the 1940s; and Clinton, the liberal, grew up in the 1960s. Both absorbed passively the predominant culture and politics of their day. Both are equally willing to compromise any principle for the deal of the moment. The result is all too plain in Bosnia.

On Bosnia, Bob Dole is Bill Clinton's political counterweight. He had the political power in his hands to stop the Bosnian fiasco, but he did not. The War Powers Act requires the President to justify a combat operation (actual or potential) within 24 hours. The Senate, then, has the political power to stop the operation by withdrawing funding after 90 days. In other words, for any protracted combat operation such as Desert Storm or Joint Endeavor, the President does not have unilateral political power to assert his arbitrary wishes.

However, poor philosophy will lead to poor policy, and Bob Dole proved no exception. He reversed his opposition on Bosnia to pass a portion of a one-year defense budget, sharing Clinton's deal-of-the-moment mentality. He justifies this decision by saying that he "supports the troops." By doing so, he dusts off a Gulf War cliché and equates it with selling out the troops for a budget deal. He said in public that Clinton's decision to commit troops created a national interest in Bosnia, revealing a primacy of consciousness metaphysics.

Conclusion

Many Americans approach complex issues accepting a philosophical canyon: attempts at ethical and political acumen based on utter metaphysical and epistemological ignorance or evasion. The solutions to problems such as Bosnia begin not in politics; but, as we see, ultimately in metaphysics. The answer to the question, "Does America have a national interest in Bosnia?" cannot be answered with politics as a primary.

Bosnia will no doubt be added to the litany of questions that crowd the mind of anybody who ponders 20th century American military policy. "How can Bosnia be happening?" "How could Vietnam have happened?" "Why, knowing the grisly outcome of Verdun, did the United States decide to enter the First World War?" Etc.

The answers are not self evident, as many in today's culture like to believe. This being a philosophical article, I want to conclude by saying something more than the obvious (that American involvement in Bosnia is evil and should not happen). Bosnia, if in a negative sense, serves as yet another example of the importance of philosophy in human life.

March HOS Meeting Summary

by Sean M. Rainer

For the second time in as many years HOS members were treated to a slide show presentation by Pete Jamison. Last year Pete covered architecture; this year's presentation was titled "Art Trends in the 20th Century." No less than four new people attended the meeting in Kirk Mashue's apartment complex.

Before Pete took the floor, Warren Ross led a follow up exercise to last year's workshop on essentials. The exercise consisted of reading an article on crime and discussing it, using the method outlined at the previous meeting and in Ayn Rand's works, in an attempt to get to the essentials of the article. The exercise proved to be a good refresher and Warren has suggested doing it again in the future.

Pete's presentation consisted primarily of a brief survey of the last 100 years in art, with emphasis on painting and sculpture. That period can be divided into five basic schools: Impressionism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Cubism and Abstract Expressionism.

The first break from the completely representational paintings was Impressionism. During the mid-19th century many painters came to believe that it was "more important to retain the impression made on the artist than the actual representation." In other words, the artist's task is not to depict the object as it appears in reality or as "cold data," but as it appears in the artists' blurred conscious or as "sense data." Pete listed a few key similarities of

(continued on page 10)

Lyceum Conference Summary

On the weekend of February 9-11, Lyceum International hosted a conference featuring Dr. Andrew Bernstein, Mr. Richard Salsman, and Dr. Gary Hull. More than 45 attended the conference at the Sheraton Grand.

Summaries of the three courses follow:

Dr. Andrew Bernstein **“Ayn Rand’s Fictional Characters as Philosophical Archetypes: Part Two”**

by Sean M. Ranier

In what might be considered an encore performance, Dr. Andrew Bernstein presented a course on Ayn Rand’s fictional characters at Lyceum in February.

The purpose of this year’s lecture was to show that and how each character in Ayn Rand’s novel is an expression of and a variation on the theme of the novel in which he appears.

Besides giving even further evidence of Ayn Rand’s extraordinary integration, the talk facilitated a discussion of both the themes of two of Miss Rand’s novels and a cursory lesson on some philosophical history.

To prove his thesis, Dr. Bernstein focused primarily on the minor characters of

The Fountainhead and *Atlas Shrugged*. The point would be to obvious, it seems, if one only studies the major characters. By looking at the minor ones, even those that make only cameo appearances, the idea that each character *no matter how minor* is an expression of the theme becomes clear.

The theme of *The Fountainhead*

is independence versus dependence, or first handedness versus second handedness. Of course Howard Roark and Peter Keating make this point, but what about Steve Mallory and Gus Webb? As Dr. Bernstein pointed out, these characters too represent the novel’s central theme.

Gus Webb is the crude, unkept, non-conformist protégé of Ellsworth Toohey. He is portrayed as a nihilistic thug and a Communist. With Webb, Miss Rand is making the point that second handedness takes many different forms.

Conventionally, a man like Gus Webb might be looked upon as an individualist. But according to Objectivism, independence is a primary orientation towards reality not towards other men. Webb lives in reaction to, in fact *against*, the value judgments and standards of society. His life is utterly dominated by the thinking of others. Moreover, as Dr. Bernstein noted, Webb is a particularly ugly second hander because he is not just rebelling against others values, but against their most rational values, e.g. civility, productivity, etc.

Steve Mallory, on the other hand, is one of the “good guys.” However, there is only one way to be independent: focus on facts. The difference with Mallory (and likewise with Henry Cameron) is that he has not integrated this on an *emotional level*. Mallory was the brilliant sculptor who was rejected by society and led to alcoholism.

On an intellectual level, Mallory had to be focused very clearly on reality to produce the kind of exceptional work that he did. Emotionally though, on some level, Mallory really did care what others thought of

him. Mallory is a mixed case. In contrast to Roark, who shrugs off society’s rejection, similar rejection leads Mallory to despair. Ayn Rand shows us in his character the fate of someone who does not fully integrate first handedness.

Dr. Bernstein used this same method to examine the minor characters of *Atlas Shrugged* as well. The theme of *Atlas Shrugged* is the role of man’s mind in existence. Dr. Bernstein used as examples such characters as Simon Pritchett, the Hegelian philosopher who replaced Hugh Axton, Mayor Bascum, the pull-peddling businessman who took a Platonic view of life and morality, and the nihilist wife of Hank Rearden, Lillian. Just as with *The Fountainhead*, Dr. Bernstein explained how each of these characters was an example of the book’s theme.

In addition to his main talk, Dr. Bernstein had a side discussion of love at first sight in Ayn Rand’s novels. Dr. Bernstein noted several examples throughout Miss Rand’s fiction in which characters make a moral judgment of other characters without ever exchanging a word. While this idea was met with some resistance, Dr. Bernstein did make a strong case for its validity and pointed out that Miss Rand called this a “stomach reaction,” noting that it is by no means the last word in moral judgment.

Dr. Bernstein is often considered a foremost authority on Ayn Rand’s fiction. Many people took advantage of his knowledge by during the question and answer period. With his unique speaking style, Dr. Bernstein both educated and entertained conference goers.

Mr. Richard Salsman
"The Economy De-Mystified"

by Warren S. Ross

This course started well. Mr. Salsman structured the course around a few basic principles from price theory. He presented the basic laws of supply and demand, and showed how they were the means of predicting commodity prices, wages and interest rates in a free market. Salsman showed how prices change when there is an increase/decrease of supply/demand. Using this theory, he also demonstrated how enormous increases in supply of goods and services are possible (he gave gold as an example) while still keeping prices relatively constant.

This theory was then applied to many issues in contemporary political and economic debate. Salsman showed the consequences of minimum wage laws and compulsory union bargaining. Both policies coercively set wage rates above the free-market level, thus causing the supply of labor to exceed the demand for it (unemployment). He showed how unemployment insurance and other welfare payments constitute subsidized unemployment by artificially lowering the hours of labor supplied.

Salsman integrated price theory with the concept of "time preference" -- the value that an individual places on goods obtained in the present over goods to be obtained in the future. He showed how time preference determines the supply curve for loanable funds, and hence how it ultimately (along with the demand curve for loanable funds) determines the level of interest rates. This theory was used to demonstrate the futility of the Federal Reserve Bank's attempts to coercively ma-

nipulate interest rates. Using this theory (and a wealth of well-chosen statistics), Salsman also blasted some modern fallacies, such as the Phillips curve (which says that there is a necessary tradeoff between inflation and unemployment).

My problem with the course came from the sheer quantity of material presented. Referring to his hefty course handout, Mr. Salsman said that his wife had asked if economics could be demystified in fewer pages. A simple listing of some of the other topics covered will give the idea: monetary inflation vs. price inflation, historical price of gold and quantity of gold production, the pyramid of ability, the declining value of the dollar, monetary vs. real vs. "earned" wages, trends in U.S. labor productivity, the "misery" index, historical interest rates in the U.S. and England, the business cycle and the structure of production, history of U.S. deficits and the illusory problem of deficits (in his view), taxes and productivity, the Laffer curve, the balance of payments. These were a wonderful collection of topics...for a semester course. I could not integrate them all during a three-day conference. I was subdued by the crow. And I think the integration around a few basic principles suffered toward the end of the lectures, although it was implemented well for the first half of the presentations.

I personally hope that Mr. Salsman will convert his conference material into a longer course or a book (I admit that I have not yet read his book on gold), so that his pro-capitalist ideas can be digested by those of us eager to make sense of the economic world around us. A number of books already present the theory quite well (e.g. the excellent book by Carl Menger that was required reading for last year's presen-

tations by Mr. Salsman). The integration of the theory with historical data would be a useful addition to the literature.

Dr. Gary Hull
"Art as Indispensable to Philosophy"

by J. Brian Phillips

On Saturday, Dr. Gary Hull presented a course entitled "How to Use Art to Improve Your Consciousness". Dr. Hull began his presentation noting how effortless world class athletes often make their performances appear. Of course, to achieve such a high level of skill, such athletes must engage in tremendous practice and effort to automatize the knowledge necessary to perform their sport. This is true of every skill--conscious effort is required to automatize skills. Then, the subconscious can feed one information so that one can act without conscious thought. The greater the efficiency between the conscious and subconscious, the more effortless the performance appears.

Life, Dr. Hull said, is an activity which requires both theory and practice. Philosophy provides one with instructions, and one must practice applying those instructions in order to automatize them, to make them "second nature". Art can be used as a training device to automatize one's philosophy. "If you want to live your life like Pete Sampras plays tennis," Dr. Hull said, "practice, practice, practice, with art."

Art stylizes one's consciousness, and each particular art form focuses on a different skill. For example, painting focuses on integration and differentiation, while literature focuses on conceptualization.

Dr. Hull then showed students a

painting titled "Musical Instruments". He proceeded to list a series of questions one should ask when viewing a painting. Those questions, formulated by Dr. Dianne Durante, include: What does your eye first go to? Where is the light most prominent? Which objects are emphasized and which are deemphasized? What kind of color contrasts are there? What kind of mood is created by the colors?

To illustrate his point, prior to showing the painting, Dr. Hull had had students look around the room and list what they saw. After viewing the painting, and presenting the list of questions, Dr. Hull had students repeat the exercise. Many students found that their first list focused on entities, while the second list focused on attributes and distinctions.

The visual arts, wrote Ayn Rand, teach a man to see more precisely, to find deeper meaning in the field of his vision. A well crafted painting teaches one to perceive in the same way one reasons, in terms of essentials. Dr. Hull noted that the truth or falsehood of an art work's metaphysics isn't an issue in this regard. Even though our senses function automatically, what we notice, what we focus on, and how we process our percepts is volitional.

One of the primary functions of art is to allow one to experience "one's type of universe", that is, to provide emotional fuel.

Dr. Hull likened art to the tab on a file folder. Art condenses a vast sum of philosophical abstractions into a perceivable unit, thereby training one to sharpen his perception.

Dr. Hull also noted that Dr. Durante is currently working on questions for sculpture.

Meeting Summary

(continued from page 7)

Impressionists: a belief that the beholder is more important than the object beheld, the nature of impression is subjective and brush strokes must express sense data. The Impressionists are marked by their curious style of dotting the brush on the canvas to create a slightly blurred look, thereby "depicting" sense data.

Still, it wasn't until Expressionism that artists began to actually change reality in their paintings in an effort to "objectify inner experience," i.e. transmit moods into reality. The Expressionists, Pete said, were heavily influenced by Freud and Marx. Thus, there is a deliberate de-emphasis of the individual in their works. An artist that Pete classifies into this school is Vincent Van Gogh.

The next step beyond Expressionism was Surrealism. This paradigm relied on the expression of imagination as gathered from dreams. These paintings depict outright rebellion against logic and attempt to make the philosophical point that fantasies are actually a "higher reality." This time, the Freudian influence is overt and explicit as objectivity is subordinated to fantasy. Moreover, in this camp there is an attack on all concepts of talent. Salvador Dali is an example of a Surrealist.

Next came Pablo Picasso and the Cubists. The Cubists believed that the human senses were limited and therefore flawed. It was up to the painter then to give a view of things as they "should" be seen. What this meant to the Cubists was giving different views of the same

object *simultaneously*. For example, since one can not see the back of a person when standing face to face, it was the artist's job to paint both the front and the back in the same painting.

Finally, modern painting abandoned any pretense of representation (or talent) in Abstract Expressionism. This is the class of painting one might label "Modern Art." Of course, the term "art" here is used loosely since there is no obvious material objects (e.g. a solid colored painting). Objective content is defiantly thrown out the window, sometimes right behind the paint brush since, as Pete said, some modern artists prefer to paint with their shoes.

Pete pointed out that the history of art and art theory not surprisingly follows closely the history of philosophy over the past several hundred years. "As philosophy goes, so does art," Pete said.

Unlike the previous two times that Pete delivered this presentation, he did not end here. Instead, Pete concluded with the suggestion that there is still a healthy source (and audience) for good art in the culture. Everyone in attendance received a complementary package of catalogs from businesses who sell (and presumably have a market for) good art. Pete used these and a number of other examples as evidence for his bullish outlook on the future of art.