

Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

Volume 24, Issue 5, Stairs
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A Call for Natural Selection

By Dan Conley

I was actually regaining my faith in humanity. My high school philosophy that everyone was a moron was actually losing strength. Then apparently somewhere the idiot equivalent of the Bat Signal went off, ordering the best of the best of the worst to step up their activities so that I would once again lose my childhood illusion that maybe the majority of people *aren't* wasting my air.

Nothing new, really. Just a few choice reminders of the classics to refresh my memory. Remember back when that woman spilled McDonald's coffee on herself and sued? Well she needed skin grafts because of it, and so I'm inclined to agree with her complaints. But then, sometime around 1997^{1,2} a woman went through a Burger King drive-thru and ordered two cups of coffee. She then pulled over and took out a thermos of her own and started pouring the coffee into it.

Do you see where this is going? Her aim was a little off and so some of the hot drink landed in her lap instead. She was burned, had to go to the hospital, blah blah blah. While the thought of suing because you can't correctly put liquid from the small cup to the big cup is bad enough, my standards have gotten so low that I normally would have just let this go with a sigh and a shake of the head. What *really* got me chuckling were her reasons.

"[Her lawyer] said when the flap lid of the cup opens, it fails to form a continuous seal around the cup's rim."

This is why she spilled coffee on herself. Because when you open the lid coffee can come out. I'm sorry, I missed the part where that wasn't the

objective. Usually, one opens the lid of a cup because they'd like the (scalding hot) liquid inside to come out. Granted, not many people aim said liquid at their crotch, but I would say this is a flaw in the genetic makeup of the pourer, not the cup design.

But wait, there's more. Another one of her complaints is that the employee who handed her the coffee *did not tell her* that the coffee was hot. Common sense³ aside, there was still the CAUTION – CUIDADO – HOT – CALIENTE and so on written in large, friendly letters all over the cup, just like there has been since the original "hot coffee lawsuit." I'm assuming she has ordered coffee sometime in the past nine years and so would have seen these warnings. Therefore I'd say that, once again, the focus of her complaint should be herself, not Burger King⁴.

Ok, fine, I eventually got over the stupidity of the coffee thing. With perfect timing I then saw another news headline: "Banning Toy Guns: New York is considering it." Through a trail of links I read about various deaths because of toy guns, toy gun "buy-backs," kids expelled for carrying toy guns, and generally an overuse of the phrase "toy gun."

One of the larger problems everyone had with toy guns (of the squirt, BB, paintball, et al varieties) was that too many of them looked like actual guns. Their point is that in a situation where a police officer has to think quickly they may mistake a squirt gun for a real one. The Oxnard Police Department's website has a "Pick the fake gun" test that I admittedly failed⁵. But New York addressed this issue in 1998 when they made it illegal to sell toy guns that weren't brightly colored, transparent, or had a large brand sticker

1 I'd like to be more specific but my source seems to have decided to unarchive itself. The article *should* be at <http://www.thewbalchannel.com/news/1837818/detail.html>, in case you'd like to look at a blank page

2 I'm just reading about it now because the case has taken this long to go up the court system

3 A nonrenewable resource

4 That would make for an interesting case: "Your honor, I'm suing the United States for raising me to be an idiot. My parents, teachers, television... it's all made me into a total twit."

5 <http://www.oxnardpd.org/toyguns.htm>

prominently displayed. I don't think an officer would have a hard time distinguishing a Nerf gun from the real thing.

I read a lot of stories of fatal or near-fatal "misunderstandings" between kids and guns, some as young as three. A twelve-year-old tries robbing someone with a toy gun, a thirteen-year-old is shot by police, a nine-year-old shoots his seven-year-old brother because he thought a real gun was fake... the list goes on and on. There are three distinct types of examples that I read: three, and only three. It's person-vs-cop, person-robbing, or person-vs-person⁶. Also, in each case someone either points or shoots a gun at someone else.

"No shit, that's the point." I don't care how old you are or what the gun looks like, common sense³ should dictate that you don't point a gun at a police officer! I'd assume that anyone old enough for their parents to give them a gun would either know that tid-bit of information already or get a talk from their progenitors before being unleashed on the world with a Red Rider. Anyone who uses a gun for a robbery is again falling into the "it's the person, not the product" problem along with the coffee woman. The third case is when a small kid shoots someone because they thought the gun was a toy. The "Fact Sheet About Toy Guns"⁷ says that children under eight years old can't tell toys from the real thing with any reliability. Ok, don't give young kids access to toy guns then (real guns should seem obvious); this way whenever they see a gun they assume it's loaded and dangerous and will stay far away from it.

This whole thing started some wheels turning in my head. It seems to me that we have idiot kids who are raised by idiot parents who were raised by idiot parents... If you aren't told not to point your dart gun at a cop, you won't tell your son not to. Then he goes and gets shot because you bought a realistic dart gun for them that the cop couldn't tell was fake. This is all

part of some grand scheme that's gone horribly wrong.

Back when humans ran around in loincloths, pedaling their cars by foot and using dinosaurs to cut their grass⁸, we didn't have the medical treatments available to cure incredibly sick patients or those born with serious problems, such as conjoined twins. In that harsh world anyone who was physically unfit simply died. Since then we have advanced to be able to keep almost anyone alive for much longer. There's a reason that 18 year old guys have to masturbate to pictures of "hot asian sluts fingering themselves while blond Catholic schoolgirls with astigmatism watch and..." – we used to be dead soon thereafter and so our sex drives told us we had better start the humping now^{9,10}. Through the Miracles of Modern Medicine we have now turned this from a survival necessity to the driving force behind the Kleenex Corporation.

As a cynic, idiots have always made me question whether keeping more people alive was a good thing. I know that keeping people alive as long as possible – especially those with no control over their fate – is a good thing; I said I'm a cynic, not heartless. But those among us who don't mind the thought that our great-great-great-etc grandfathers were monkeys believe in something called a "gene pool" which people are made out of. Darwin said that nature is survival of the fittest; we've made it so that almost anyone can survive, leading me now to associate survival not with living but with gay men walking around naked on their birthdays¹¹.

A group is only as good as its weakest member. As a species, we've continually reset the high bar at this lowest level until we wind up with news stories like the ones I've been reading. To the entire human race: you are the weakest link, good-

Ah shit, now I'm spewing pop culture references. Somebody hand me a Super Soaker, I see a cop coming this way.

6 Actually, one case involved a neighbor shooting a father and his two sons while they played with a paintball gun in their backyard. I'm not sure exactly what the hell he was thinking, so I'm excluding it

7 http://www.irol.com/avc/Fact_Sheet_About_Toy_Guns.html

8 Disclaimer: may not have actually happened

9 Because of God's sense of humor, women for some reason hit their sexual peak around 35; I've been told this can cause some interesting marital situations

10 Although this is an "automatic code of survival", which our objectivist friends would say doesn't exist. I guess humans procreated back in the day by reasoning that there's this thing pointing out of the men and they had better shove it places until something happens. *shrugs* Works for me

11 I lost interest after the first series, so that's what I base my opinions on. An interesting side note: each tribe gets a supply of condoms in their survival chest: "But I *can't* live without it!"

The Racism of “Diversity”

By Peter Schwartz, for the Ayn Rand Institute

President Bush faces an ideal opportunity to take a principled position on the issue of racial “diversity.” As his administration ponders whether to support the legal challenge, now before the Supreme Court, to the University of Michigan’s affirmative action policies, he should go further and raise a moral challenge to the entire notion of “diversity.” Instead of timidly wavering on this question, in fear of being smeared by Democrats as racist, President Bush should rise to the occasion by categorically repudiating racism—and condemning “diversity” as its crudest manifestation.

It is now widely accepted that “diversity” is an appropriate goal for society. But what does this dictum actually mean? Racial integration is a valid objective, but that is something very different from what the advocates of “diversity” seek. According to its proponents, we need “diversity” in order to be exposed to new perspectives on life. We supposedly gain “enrichment from the differences in viewpoint of minorities,” as the MIT Faculty Newsletter puts it. “It is the only way to prepare students to live and work effectively in our diverse democracy and in the global economy,” says the president of the University of Michigan. Minorities should be given preferential treatment, the university’s vice president says, because “learning in a diverse environment benefits all students, minority and majority alike.”

These circumlocutions translate simply into this: one’s race determines the content of one’s mind. They imply that people have worthwhile views to express because of their ethnicity, and that “diversity” enables us to encounter “black ideas,” “Hispanic ideas,” etc. What could be more repulsively racist than that? This is exactly the premise held by the South’s slave-owners and by the Nazis’ Storm Troopers. They too believed that an individual’s thoughts and actions are determined by his racial heritage.

Whether a given race receives special rewards or special punishments is immaterial. The essence of racism is the idea that the individual is meaningless and that membership in the collective—the race—is the source of his identity and value. To the racist, the individual’s moral and intellectual character is the product, not of his own choices, but of the genes he

shares with all others of his race. To the racist, the particular members of a given race are interchangeable.

The advocates of “diversity” similarly believe that colleges must admit not individuals, but “representatives” of various races. They believe that those representatives have certain ideas innately imprinted on their minds, and that giving preferences to minority races creates a “diversity” of viewpoints on campus. They have the quota-mentality, which holds that in judging someone, the salient fact is the racial collective to which he belongs.

This philosophy is why racial division is growing at our colleges. The segregated dormitories, the segregated cafeterias, the segregated fraternities—these all exist, not in spite of the commitment to “diversity,” but because of it. The overriding message of “diversity,” transmitted by the policies of a school’s administration and by the teachings of a school’s professors, is that the individual is defined by his race. What, then, is a more loyal adherence to that message than the desire to associate with members of one’s own race and to regard others as belonging to an alien tribe?

If racism is to be rejected, it is the premise of individualism, including individual free will, that must be upheld. There is no way to bring about racial integration except by completely disregarding color. There is no benefit in being exposed to the thoughts of a black person as opposed to a white person; there is a benefit only in interacting with individuals, of any race, who have rational viewpoints to offer.

“Diversity,” in any realm, has no value in and of itself. Investors can be urged to diversify their holdings—but for the sake of minimizing their financial risk, not for the sake of “diversity” as such. To maintain that “diversity” per se is desirable—that “too much” of one thing is objectionable—is ludicrous. Does unimpaired health need to be “diversified” with bouts of illness? Or knowledge with ignorance? Or sanity with lunacy?

The value of a racially integrated student body or work force lies entirely in the individualism this implies. A racially integrated group implies that skin color is irrelevant in judging human beings. It implies

that those who chose the students or the workers based their evaluations only on that which reflects upon the individual: merit. But that is not what the advocates of “diversity” want. They sneer at the principle of “color-blindness.” Whether the issue is being admitted to college or getting a job at a corporation or being cast as an actor on TV shows, the “diversity” supporters want such decisions to be made exactly the way that the vilest of racists make them: by bloodline. They insist that whatever is a result of your own choices—your ideas, your character, your accomplishments—is to be dismissed, while that which is outside your control—the accident of skin color—is to define your life. Their fundamental goal is to “diversify”—and thus to undercut—the standard of individual achievement with the non-standard of race.

As a result of their efforts, the creed of “diversity” is metastasizing. There are now demands for “linguistic diversity,” under which English teachers grant equal validity to ungrammatical writing—for “diversity” in beauty pageants, under which the unattractive are not discriminated against—for “diversity” in oratory contests, under which mutes are not excluded. These egalitarian crusaders for “diversity” seek to wipe out a standard of value as such. They want to negate genuine, life-serving values by claiming that non-values must be given equal status.

Is this the philosophy that will “prepare students to live and work effectively”? Racial “diversity” is a doctrine that splits people into ethnic tribes, which then battle one another for special favors. If President Bush is

eager to demonstrate his disagreement with the racist views of a Strom Thurmond, let him stand up and denounce all forms of racism—particularly, the one that underlies “diversity.”

Mr. Schwartz, editor and contributing author of Return of the Primitive: The Anti-Industrial Revolution by Ayn Rand, is chairman of the board of directors of the Ayn Rand Institute in Irvine, Calif. The Institute promotes the philosophy of Ayn Rand, author of Atlas Shrugged and The Fountainhead. Used with permission.

Water in Your Mouth

By Jerry Vilhotti

“Little Monty, you lug Mr. S. up by the boat and we’ll walk the woods,” Mountain said to his eldest son. He nodded solemnly. He wanted so much to be like his dad that he even tried to chew as big a chunk of tobacco like the one Mountain was always choking on and then spitting into the incoming breeze, caressing all their faces.

While Little Monty dragged the boat upstream in shallow waters, Johnny drank from the Crown Royal his former student, Mountain, had bought him as a thank you gift for coming with them all the way from the Litchfield Hills – six hundred miles to the south. He tried to sing, very off-key, “I Saw the Light.”

Little Monty was having difficulty doing his rhythmical moments that he had done so well during the many hours trip up while joining his younger brother Roland and uncle Gavin on every song blaring loudly from country music stations in all the separate New England states.

After a half hour they all converged at the deepest part of Bitchy Vendervanter’s Water Hole where fish were waiting to be caught as Mountain’s eighty-two year old uncle Barnard was attempting to catch the fish waving at him with his fly casting – nearly piercing everyone around.

“Watch it, you old bastard!” Gavin shouted. The drunker Gavin became, the more his eyes became little beads.

“At least all our people – rich and poor – serve their country up in these parts while in your divided

states only the underprivileged get that opportunity!” Uncle Barnard yelled, angry that the fish were ducking his aim.

“At least we don’t pay six dollars a gallon for milk!” Gavin said, taking another long swig of beer.

“But we live in dignity and don’t die for lack of health care – you cheap bastard!”

“They’re only funning Mr. S.,” Roland said, trying to hide his embarrassment.

“No big deal,” Johnny said as he tried to talk all the guys staggering into the boat to be very, very careful as he recalled how his two older brothers – resenting his becoming the father’s favorite – had tried to teach him how to swim by keeping his head under water for very long times.

“No, Gavin! I wouldn’t do that!” Johnny said, but Gavin was all ready standing on the edge of the eight foot long boat attempting to pee, making the boat go into a vehement convulsive shuddering – and just before the boat capsized, Johnny fumbled his tape recorder out and was able to capture all the sounds of splashing water, loud curses encompassing half the world of sons from whoring mothers, deathly gurgling gasps for air...

Later they would all do a bragging banter when most of the people of the New Brunswick settlement came by to hear of the near drowning on Johnny’s tape recorder. They had left death behind. They had left death behind.

Objectivism and Libertarianism: A Short Essay

by matthew denker

The best way to start this essay would be with a quick dictionary definition of the two enormous terms in the title. Objectivism, according to Webster’s, is, “One of several doctrines holding that all reality is objective and external to the mind and that knowledge is reliably based on observed objects and events. An emphasis on objects rather than feelings or thoughts in literature or art.” A Libertarian, on the other hand, is, “One who advocates maximizing individual rights and minimizing the role of the state or one who believes in free

will.” While those two definitions do not directly relate to one another, another idea of Objectivism, as per their website, suggests “man is an end in himself¹.”

This sounds as though these two ideas would go hand in hand: individuality and standing as your own person. Both groups are generally against collectivism. The similarity of the two makes the truth of the matter all that much more ridiculous. Objectivists actually consider Libertarianism an “evil doctrine.” And while

1. <http://www.aynrand.org/objectivism/essentials.html>

they feel that they are the prime supporters of reason in the universe, the very fact they find a group so similar to them to be so different is the exact reason they are a farce.

That's right, Objectivism is a farce, but you would have to actually use reason to see it, not what they pass off as reason. As a philosophy, Objectivism is more suited to a robot than any humane person alive. Considering that Michael S. Berliner has to say this about environmentalists: "They inhibit or prohibit the development of Alaskan oil, offshore drilling, nuclear power – and every *other* practical form of energy. In the name of 'preserving nature,' they undermine our quality of life and make us dependent on madmen like Saddam Hussein. Housing, commerce, and jobs are sacrificed to spotted owls and snail darters. Medical research is sacrificed to the 'rights' of mice. Logging is sacrificed to the 'rights' of trees. No instance of the progress which brought man out of the cave is safe from the onslaught of those 'protecting' the environment from man, whom they consider a rapist and despoiler by his very essence." Maybe Republicans would be best suited for Objectivism.

Despite a jab at Republicans, Berliner's quote could bear a little scrutiny. He starts out by blaming environmentalists for impeding progress as if everyone but them wanted to drill there and they have laid down in Alaska to prevent it. He then goes on to push

that logging over protecting endangered species is important. This alone would not raise an eyebrow, but then to suggest moments later in his quote that man is not a "rapist and despoiler" makes his argument truly preposterous. One final issue about his quote: while he suggests we are rampantly dependent on Saddam Hussein over drilling our own wilderness for oil, we get very little oil from him to begin with, and is it not nicer for the pollution to be on Saddam's land rather than ours?

Objectivists are actually against a large number of modern day advances in thought. They are firmly against environmentalism, as all ready stated, as well as affirmative action, buying American, and rent rights and other government price controls. They would sooner have capitalism drive anyone who does not consolidate or tighten to the point of bursting. This is not terribly unlike Libertarians who are also all for a radical laissez-faire economy. Both these philosophies are fatally flawed in their basic trust of humans. They are a modern and sheik form of communism, a fact all too telling by their own hate for one another. So if you think it is cool to live solely for yourself and that you are an end and nobody's mean then fine, go start drilling for oil in Alaska with your foreign drilling equipment and your spotted owl hat yourself, because your rent is worthless here, no matter how much you would pay.

**Objectivist haiku
by matthew denker**

#1

An Objectivist:
A trader among these men,
Standing for himself.

#2

I, Objectivist;
No one as special as I;
No means, but an end.

#3

Do not toy with me.
Your petty ghosts are not real.
Supernatural.

To Our Readers

As some of you may have noticed, last week's issue (volume 24, issue 4) suffered from a minor technical error which caused it to suck. This was due largely to a misunderstanding of some policies that have existed since GDT's inception, but were recently revised after a report we received that indicated we should worry more about our image than actual content. It was decided that only 15 percent of our articles should be considered "good," and instead of raising the standards implied by the definition of "good" to ensure that our articles were well written, we began printing more crappy articles. As we review this policy, we will carefully take into consideration all the comments we have received, some of which I would like to address now so that you feel we actually care about your concerns and you won't notice when we promptly ignore them.

One response we received was, "This new policy makes GDT suck worse than Reporter." We definitely do not want this to occur. Not sucking as much as Reporter is one of our greatest strengths. This point will be carefully considered before we disregard it entirely.

Another respondent indicated, "Articles should be judged based on how good they are, not by how they compare to other articles in the same issue." This comment indicates your complete lack of understanding of the policy, you stupid git. Assuming a characteristic of a good article policy is that people can comprehend it, there's only so much we can do to improve this area. However, there is no evidence that this assumption is true.

We would like to reiterate that the policy was revised in order to improve GDT's image in the eyes of the rich parents of incompetent children who provide us with funding to teach them how to bullshit their way through life the same way we do. It had nothing to do with the actual quality of our publication. In keeping with this goal, however, we'd like to offer our reassurances that are obviously designed to make you quit whining: Those responsible for making last week's issue suck have been severely tortured, even going so far as forcing them to read Atlas Shrugged.

We hope this clears up any misconceptions, and we apologize for any inconvenience.

Thank you again for your comments. One of the great things about GDT is that we all have opportunities to offer our opinions on topics of interest for everyone to read with apathetic lackluster. Another great thing is that we are concerned enough about making ourselves look good to actually give those comments the appearance of serious consideration. Our web site is not just for public relations. It's also a good distraction for when we take your money.

-Ed.

December 26, 1999

By Melissa Hutson

I had waited and thought about this moment for two years and now that it's happening, I'm surprised you can't hear my heart running away in my chest. I'm nervous, I don't know how to act, I don't know how you will react to seeing me after all this time. Happy? Indifferent? Surprised? Since I don't know what to expect, your hug throws me off, but it also feels just right. There is a lot of talking going on, mostly between you and Andy, but if it weren't for him I wouldn't be here. I see you looking at me out of the corner of my eye; I think you are happy I'm here.

Eventually we get to talk; you ask if I want to get together. This is better than I hoped! We plan for the 26th, the day after Christmas. It's the last day I have before I have to go back to school, our last chance to catch up. I give you my new number (I have moved in the two years it's been since I've seen you), you say you will call.

Finally the 26th is here; you call and say that you will pick me up at 9:00pm. I'm excited, nervous. 9:00 seems so far away! What will happen? You come to pick me up; it's weird, you haven't seen my parents in two years either, and they aren't quite sure why I'm seeing you tonight after all that happened between us. For a while we just drive...and talk. We talk about what's new, school, and eventually we get to what happened to us two years ago. It's a little uncomfortable. We both know you left me for Candace...and lied about it. And we both know the reason, although I can tell you don't want to admit it. But hey, that's the past and I have forgiven even if I haven't forgotten. We were so close, but at 16 I don't think we could handle it, all those feelings. Love like that shouldn't have been given to people our age; we didn't know how to treat it. But I've still kept some of mine and I've thought about you.

Later on you end up kissing me; after all, haven't we both wondered what it would be like to kiss again? I cry after; that kiss has brought back so many memories! Good times as well as tears, and most of all it reminds me of feelings I've tried to hide, but that I think were there all along. And you comfort me. That's the best part, being in your arms again, I've needed and wanted that for so long.

It's now 3:30am, and we are laying in each other's arms. I look at you. Another kiss, and then things heat up; it's like we've never been apart. Your body is still familiar, even with the new tattoos. I remember touching every part of it, drinking you in whenever we got the chance to be alone. I still feel so comfortable around you, and my body hasn't changed much in the two years since you've seen it. I can tell you still enjoy the way it looks and feels, and you still know where to touch me and get a reaction.

At 4:30am we leave to bring me home. The night has gone so fast and has ended in a way I didn't expect, but kind of did. Because it was bound to happen, even if it has been two years since I've seen you, and now things finally feel right between us.

It's 4:45am and I kiss you goodnight for the last time, knowing I might never see you again, but you gave me your email, so who knows? I go inside to go to bed; my parents must be worried about where I've been. I try to go to sleep; I actually have to get up at 7:00am to drive the four hours to school, but tonight keeps replaying itself in my mind, and it brings with it memories from our relationship before. Eventually I sleep.

* * * * *

The morning starts with a fight with my parents. Am I okay? Why didn't I call? Am I really considering driving to Rochester on less than two hours of sleep? Yes, I am. Well, then, do I want some coffee? No, I don't. The drive is exhausting, but I make it. My thoughts keep me awake. When I get back, I email you, even though I'm not expecting a response. I don't get one. But strangely enough, I'm satisfied with our parting this time. It's time to move on.

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Howard Roark leading a Communist rally

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