

August 27, 1970

Dr. John Hospers
8229 Lookout Mountain Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90046

Dear Dr. Hospers:

I've been informed that you have a copy of our book, THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY. And I've known for several months about your intended conference next month on the question, "Is government necessary?" I am reasonably sure that, at least until you received and read our book (if not very shortly before), you have held a variety of the "limited government" idea--that a coercive, or political, monopoly on the use of force is "a prerequisite for a civilized society" (to quote Leonard Peikoff's statement to us at a Detroit meeting about a year ago). And, since I'm extremely concerned for the cause of individualism, for which a knowledge of liberty is an absolute prerequisite, I am extremely interested in doing what I can to help those people in positions of influence to come into a better understanding of liberty so as to facilitate our progress toward a totally free-market environment.

Which is why I'm writing you. Assuming you to be the man I fervently hope you are and that you've read our book carefully, I have no doubt about what you now hold re government. I know that you understand that government is a coercive monopoly which has assumed power over and certain responsibilities for every human being within the geographical area over which it claims control. I know that you understand that government is not a market monopoly and that it must, therefore, use initiatory force to prevent competition in the area(s) of endeavor it has pre-empted. (As Roy Childs has pointed out, if it's moral for governments to protect individual rights and to see that justice prevails, it's moral for other institutions to do likewise. I suggest that this argument is rationally unassailable. How this might be done is a separate question entirely--one which we've answered in THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY.) I know you understand that the use of initiatory force is morally wrong and that government is, therefore, intrinsically evil. I know that you understand that there's no such thing as a necessary evil ("evil" being volitional human behavior which is anti-life). And I know that you understand that government is, therefore, unnecessary. I know this is true of you ... if you are the man I fervently hope you are and you've read our book, thoughtfully.

Knowing what is right is of supreme importance to me, Dr. Hospers, and I'm sure you feel the same. Since a near-fatal car accident five years ago, I have had plenty of time to do lots of thinking on my favorite subject--freedom. (So that you'll know what I mean, I define "freedom" as the condition of existence in which a man is not prevented by other men from behaving in any non-coercive manner possible to him. I should also explain that retaliatory force is not coercion since "coercion" has no good connotations and retaliatory force when feasible is a moral imperative--i.e., it is good when feasible.) I would like very much to hear from you, assuming that you've read TMFL. Has our book changed your ideas re government? Lou Rollins will keep me posted on how the conference goes next month. I sincerely wish you every success in behalf of the truth.

Cordially,

Morris G. Tannehill
Morris G. Tannehill

cc - Louis Rollins

Dear Mr. Tannehill,

8229 Lookout Mt. Ave., Los Angeles CA 90046, Aug. 31 1970

Thank you for your letter just received. Yes, I read your book about a month ago, though not yet with the care it deserves (I'll have another go at it soon), because of being unbelievably busy just planning the conference, writing my speech for it (not yet completed), proofreading my forthcoming book on artistic expression, and handling innumerable crises in the USC department during the summer. I am about to collapse from exhaustion just as the school year begins. Also, in those moments when I've had time for political talks and discussions, my energies have centered more on refuting the liberals (who believe in a NOT very limited government) than in probing the pros and cons of doing without government entirely. However, I have been quite impressed by what you and Rothbard say on this last subject. I do have some reservations though - or at least some unresolved questions - some of which you may deal with successfully in ~~an~~ your book in passages which I don't now remember, but if I went to look them up now I'd never get this letter written, so here goes.

We can be protected, you say, not by government but by private protection agencies. (Incidentally, I don't see that ~~tax~~ government HAS to be initiatory in force, though historically it has always been so. Ayn Rand's ideal government leaves everyone's lives undisturbed up to the point where they commit aggression against others. That is n't initiatory, is it?) I cannot help wondering what or who is to protect us against the agencies. What code of law would bind them? You might have the James Madison agency which would be quite circumspect, but you might also have the Gestapo agency, which would ~~use~~ rough up all suspects and even use torture on them, perhaps even if they weren't suspected of anything but the agency-men just had a sadistic yen. (These are the kind of men who are attracted to such jobs anyway.) I wouldn't feel very safe if I knew some members of the Gestapo agency were around, who might consider me a suspect for some real or imaginary crime. Would the agency to which I belonged have to watch their Gestapo methods in order to keep them off my back? And if they did use Gestapo methods, who would have the authority to stop them? Perhaps the subscribers to their agency would decline, but this would be a long-term effect, and it might not happen anyway - the Gestapo method might even be much more effective than the James Madison method of dealing with criminal suspects. So I am not sure what kind of protection I'd get. - Besides, Rand's limited govt. concept is not just dedicated to PROTECTION, it is also dedicated to a system of objective LAW. And where in the system of private competing protection-rackets would one find the latter? (What, indeed, would keep the competing protection-rackets from engaging in outright war with each other? They have the arms, don't they?)

I can see some point in having private protection agencies IF the whole world had them. But we must face the possibility, indeed the certainty, that even if the U.S. dissolved its formal government (most unlikely of course) the rest of the world won't. And then what would keep Russia from saying "There's no central government in America any more, so let's destroy the whole area with a few well-placed nuclear missiles"? Indeed I suspect that this is just what would happen. Centralized governments would clean up on the territories occupied by ex-governments. Unless everyone did it, those who did it would be at a severe disadvantage.

And if other governments did exist, would private dealers in ex-America be free to sell armaments to both sides and help foment wars among other nations? Is it a part of total freedom to be free to sell the wherewithal for mass murder?

This last point is quite bothersome and, I think, cannot be easily dismissed. One humble example of it: gun control. I tend to believe that everyone should be free to have whatever weapons he wants; criminals will always get hold of them in any case. BUT I feel far from certain about this: many a man after a quarrel with his wife has been mighty glad he didn't have a gun handy at the time, or he'd have used it. (According to you, should psychotics and people known to be trigger-happy be free to possess guns? If not, who would have the authority to stop them?)

A much more important example of the same principle is the traffic in drugs. It is easy to say, "Everyone who wants to ruin his life through drugs ~~ix~~ should be free to do so." But most of those who are now killing themselves gradually through drugs are teenagers and even younger, who don't fully see the consequences of their ~~aggressive~~ actions, for whom it is all a glorious game - thus far. I ~~am~~ not convinced that laws will put a stop to this, but then I am not sure either that it won't at least help. I blanch before the thought of the legalization of heroin. If twenty million people started ~~eax~~ using it regularly, wouldn't ~~o~~ this be quite horrible? and ~~la~~ danger to the rest of us? Many a former teenager who's been forcibly stopped from using the stuff, has later been grateful that the constraint was applied when it was - even though it did inhibit his "freedom to take drugs". Not all people are adults, not all weigh the consequences of their actions, and in some choices they'll never get a chance for a second ~~y~~try or to "learn by experience".~~x~~' In short, I am not so sure as I used to be that sometimes the law should not protect you from yourself. And of course, in a no-government scheme of things, there would be no agency empowered to do such things. (Question: IF an exhaustive empirical survey revealed conclusively that pornography was bad for children to see, would you still ~~l~~ say it should be legal because it would violate the adults' rights to ~~po~~hibit or limit it in any way?)

On economic matters of course I agree with you - I have been arguing for laissez faire for years. It is on these other matters - not all of which I have had time to mention in this letter - that I have my reservations. It seems to me that the private agencies, in their relations with one another, could well duplicate the tragedies of governments all over again. As long as human nature remains the same, as it undoubtedly will, men who enjoy toting guns will get into positions where they can wield them with impunity - whether those men belong to the army, the police force, or the private agency.

Well, I've no time for more just now, but I would enjoy corresponding with you some more if you are interested. If you care to reply to any of the above, or give me the benefit of ~~ex~~ your reflections on it, or/and refer me to specific pages which I can then reexamine, I'd b e very grateful and happy.

Sincerely,

John Hospers

*Overgrown
Eagles*

September 16, 1970

Dr. John Hospers

8229 Lookout Mountain Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Dear Dr. Hospers,

Thanks for your nice letter of August 31. I received it just after we had moved to a beautiful $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres out in the country, 15 miles south of Lansing (we have a large mobile home), then we had company for four days (two people at the same time, one from New Hampshire and Roy Childs from Silver Spring, Md.), then I had to make a business trip to New Hampshire ... and I've just returned to a number of important things to get accomplished. (You're third on my list of priorities; I know you must feel honored!)

By the way, the No. 1 priority was the writing of a review of Harry Browne's How you can Profit from the coming devaluation--a really great, new book, for a future issue of The Atlantis News (Werner Stiefel asked me for it when I called him on my way back from New Hampshire). Mr. Stiefel had just received the book the day before I talked with him and was very enthused about its contents. If you haven't read it, I recommend it highly.

Linda and I hope your conference comes off as well as expected, or better, and we're eager to find out the answer to the question, "Is Government Necessary?" Or, rather, to hear how many people discovered the correct answer, "No." And here's why. "Ayn Rand's ideal government" is a "government" only because she and those who agree with her choose to call it a government ... which doesn't make it a government, of course. Miss Rand has "defined" government from what she wishes it to be, not from what it is and always has been--a coercive monopoly which has assumed power over and certain responsibilities for every human being within the geographical area over which it claims control. If we accept as true what Miss Rand says re her "ideal government," we are driven to a rather ridiculous conclusion--that no governments have ever existed! What she has tried to describe seems to have the form of a government but it is completely different in kind from any government which ever existed, as one of the distinguishing characteristics of government, as we know it, is "coercive." As explained in my last letter, "coercion" is initiatary force. Every government which has ever existed ("government" as we know it, that is--not as some might wish it to be) has maintained its existence by the use of initiatory force, until such a policy ultimately brought about its inevitable end with social chaos. Miss Rand's "government," Dr. Hospers, is a floating abstraction--it never could exist as a government. If such a social institution did exist, as an institution which would not and did not use initiatory force, it would be a market phenomenon (which a government is not), maintaining its existence as any other market business. And it could not prevent competition without the use of initiatory force, for people would obviously want the best protection and defense available, and they would differ in their opinions as to which defense agency gave the best. (The function of a free-market defense agency would be to provide protection for and defense of person and property, not "the forcible restraint of men," as Rand says; "the forcible restraint of men" is what characterizes all governments!) As to "what or who is to protect us against the agencies," the broad answer is: the competitive mechanism of the free market. This is a point, however, on which we've dwelt specifically and extensively in THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY,

as we heard and answered it repeatedly, literally dozens of times. I refer you to Chapter 11, particularly pp. 109-111. I think our argument is conclusive. Also, Chapter 5 was written to enable the reader to make the transition in thought from what exists now to what differences would obtain in a free-market environment, which ~~some~~ understanding may enable the reader to view the future situation from the delightful perspective of human behavior as it will improve and become in a totally free-market society. Chapter 5 is very important. It emphasizes the wholesome effect of peace and freedom and shows the free-market persuasions against violence--powerful persuasions! No one could survive for long by the use of initiatory force in a free-market environment. Our book thoroughly illustrates this point.

Regarding your comment on "objective LAW," we've covered the error connoted by this distinctly Objectivist argument quite adequately in our Chapter 12, to which I refer you. We show why legislative law is not only unnecessary but undesirable.

Re your statement, "I can see some point in having private protection agencies IF the whole world had them," our Chapter 13 shows the result of the establishment of a free-market area in just one substantial area of the world, and Chapter 14 shows the ultimate result--"The Abolition of War"--and explains why this would be the inevitable result. I urge you to please take the time to read our book carefully; it's worth reading.

Re your fear that private dealers might sell arms to "help foment wars among other nations," see our comments on the function of insurance companies in a free market (pp. 85-87), then read two of the most refreshing chapters in our book, 13 and 14, and I think you'll see the great power for good the insurance companies will have and that such nefarious activities (as selling guns to warring nations) would be short-lived at best but would weaken the warring nations even while it lasted, thus paving the way for the achievement of peace and freedom in those nations. The free-market insurance companies, contrasted with today's insurance companies (in league with government), will have a vested interest in seeing that every non-coercive individual lives a long, happy, and very productive life ... and you can safely bet your life on it--they'll make widely known via the news media any activity of anyone or any group which is at odds with human well-being. The social ostracism such people would have to endure, not to mention the necessities of which they'd go in want as a result of the ostracism, would be literally devastating. Besides, it would be evident to all but the most self-deceived that some kind of value-production is the only satisfactory way to live (which it is, even today). Men are not going to remain mental infants forever, Dr. Hospers; and their maturation depends on the spread of the idea that liberty is good and that it is nothing to fear. That most people do fear liberty is the result of the 12-year imprisonment in government schools to which most of them are subjected (though we are now seeing the government-created chicken-monsters coming home to roost, and many of these "monsters" are ripe for libertarianism, of which we've seen much evidence).

Contrary to popular belief, Dr. Hospers, regimented collectivism--to whatever degree--makes a people weaker, not stronger. A free people will develop, via free-market means, the most effective defense against possible aggression--defense which is at present well nigh inconceivable (the market process impels toward excellence). And one should not overlook the certainty that other governments will steadily deteriorate with increasingly totalitarian degeneracy, making them increasingly weaker and vulnerable to overthrow by their own subjects. Besides, as we point out in TML, the primary purpose of government is to protect and perpetuate itself; it uses its subject-citizens for this purpose and attempts quite successfully (so far)

because it cannot be ignored

to propagandize them into believing that it protects them (whereas the exact reverse is true)! Freedom works, Dr. Hospers--the market for effective protection and defense certainly exists, as the burgeoning defense budget with popular approval testifies. And people in general will behave much less irrationally if free, when it is unequivocally clear that their very lives depend on such behavior, than they do under the coercive rule of politicians and bureaucrats, which gives most people a false sense of security. (Like, for example, your implied belief that "gun control" reduces the amount of violence stemming from the possession of guns; actually, the reverse is true--honest people are disarmed and self-made aggressors are delighted with the result.)

Re your fear of no gun control and your example of the man who was glad he didn't have a gun after a quarrel with his wife, I refer you to the first complete paragraph on page 13 of TMFL. I have no doubt that there is much more violence of the nature of your example today than there would be under a system of laissez faire, if for no other reason than that the people composing such a peace-oriented culture would be much more psychologically healthy. I think you must see the validity of and agree with this conclusion (?).

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The drug problem. Most of the problem today is the result of government misinformation and prevention of the dissemination of reliable information and the development of the drug industry (the FDA is the chief culprit). When a free-market environment is understood, instead of viewing things from today's distorted perspective, it becomes obvious that such a situation as that which exists today could not arise in a totally free-market context. Please see the first paragraph on page 51 (of TMFL). The "drug problem" is government-created, and there's a causal connection between more restrictive controls and the increased use of illegal drugs--the risk results in some men being drawn toward the greatly increased, illegal profits (Shades of Prohibition!). And the propaganda put out by government and government-sanctioned agencies about marijuana is so ridiculous (and most young people know it!) that few put much credence in what government says that is valid. Free, unfettered, market advertising and enforcement of justice is the answer to the government-caused drug problem (which would be no problem in a free-market society).

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Re your question about pornography at the end of your first paragraph on page 2, I'm surprised that you consider pornography as suspect (possibly harmful to children). Pornography could not harm any child who was reared rationally with respect to sex. The grossly irrational views re sex which prevail in the culture ^{are} the cause of virtually all deviant sexual behavior (Linda is writing a book on a rational theory of human sexual behavior; we've thought out and studied the subject quite well). An item in my current issue of BEHAVIOR TODAY newsletter states: "Institutionalized sex offenders and other sex deviates said they were rarely exposed to erotic materials during adolescence, Michael J. Goldstein of the Legal and Behavioral Institute at UCLA reported." Besides, it's apparent that in a more rational culture the market for most "hard-core" pornography would plummet; and what little there was would have little or no detrimental effect on anyone. Question: Do you mean to imply that some agency should initiate force to prevent what some segment of the culture believes to be wrong? No, Dr. Hospers, the answer to this problem is (again) freedom--the only satisfactory answer to all social problems. The social pressures on those who did cause social disruption would become so invincible that such peddlers would have to find other lines of work if they wanted to survive. The insurance industry wouldn't tolerate for a moment longer than absolutely necessary any public nuisance which cost them money. Something to do with the profit motive, you see.

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Re your comment on human nature and men "who enjoy toting guns," I refer you to our Chapter 8, which goes into detail, lucidly, about the difference between the nature of free-market protection and defense and today's police system of "defense" (who furnish no protection at all, except for aggressors--political and otherwise). I have noticed that it seems very difficult for advocates of limited government to see that we have more actual violence as the result of the existence of governmental police than would occur without them. This misunderstanding is caused by their failure to identify the nature of government, see it as intrinsically evil, and realize that nothing good is possible to it.

I appreciate your comment about our "looseness of expression" that pervades much of our writing, and I would especially appreciate your pointing out specific instances which might mislead anyone. Most of the "looseness" was intentional, as we spent much time on the manuscript tailoring the wording so that the least number of people would be "turned off" by the way we expressed our ideas (we knew we would displease some for lack of scholastic sophistication--and, sure enough, we did! and I'm not referring to you). We assiduously avoided anything which even approximated an academic style (my wife got her summa cum laude, partly, by writing in this highbrow style and, while I don't have a "union card," I can write so as to evoke from many readers, "He surely must be brilliant--I can't even understand him!"). I wrote of Harry Browne in my review of his book, "The style in which Mr. Browne writes is absolutely superb! Without exception, his is the best style I've seen. He is one of the tiny minority of those who write with the obvious purpose of being understood. Though one of the most knowledgeable in his field, Mr. Browne shares, I believe, my contempt for the currently popular writing which is the high-sounding result of academic ignorance. I know of nothing better I could say of Mr. Browne's style than, he makes his important subject easily understandable." Which is our fervently hoped-for objective, Dr. Hospers. We shall revise any confusion-causing, loose expressions out of future editions as we become aware of them, and we appreciate any suggestions that will improve our book.

I am not unaware of the philosophical gymnastics played with the "fighting phrase" (to a philosopher), "no such thing," but you might say that I overlooked this point and forgot to remember the field of work in which the man to whom I was writing (you) is engaged. Assuming you would agree that "God" is a pseudo-concept, since a concept refers to something which does exist in reality, I doubt that you would disagree with me that very, very few people would have trouble with the statement, "There's no such thing as a 'God'," understanding it to mean, "'God' does not exist." (Whether or not they agreed with the statement is, of course, another matter.) Likewise, when I said, "There's no such thing as an unnecessary evil," I meant that an unnecessary evil does not exist. Yes, I do "really mean that in all the world there is not one example to exemplify the phrase 'a necessary evil'," and here's why: "Evil" is any human (volitional) behavior which is contrary to the requirements of man's nature for his rational existence qua human being (or, as I said in my letter of August 27 to you, "'evil' being volitional human behavior which is anti-life."). Since evil behavior is volitional (I hope you don't give credence to any variant of the self-contradictory belief in psychological determinism), it's not necessary for any man to choose to do evil--he could have chosen otherwise. If a thing is necessary, however, it's not open to choice and, therefore, can be neither good nor evil. It may be disliked and even destructive, but it can be evil only if it's open to choice. My statement re evil was made with aplomb--justifiably, as I've shown. I'm sure you're quite capable of making the appropriate applications to the various examples you listed of "necessary" evils.

I can't tell you how much I appreciate the nature of your response to my letter,

Dr. Hospers. So many people of our age group (I'm 43) have a character, the description of which also describes dried cement--all mixed up and permanently set (which malady I swear, by my life and my love of it, I'll never permit to afflict me). It looks as though you might be another exception to this general rule. In any case, I do appreciate your letter, and I'd like to hear from you again. Maybe we can meet and get better acquainted with each other when I'm out that way; I'd like that.

Cordial regards to you and yours from Linda and me, for F.I.O.T.!


Morris G. Tannehill

Sept. 29, 1970

Dear Mr. Tannehill,

Thank you for your letter of September 16. Yes, the political philosophy conference went very well. So well, in fact, that there may be another one next year. In the event that there is, would you be interested in coming to address it, on a topic selected by you? (Fee this year was \$300 for an address, plus air transportation and hotel expenses while in Los Angeles. I cannot of course predict what it will be next year.) I for one would be very much interested in meeting you and hearing you speak - just as I wish you had heard my speech this year!

Now to your letter: What Miss Rand has defined is both (a) government and (b) her ideal government; she does not confuse the two. The conclusion you draw, that if one accepts her definition of government, no governments have ever existed, does not follow. No ideal governments as described by her have ever existed (though the USA in 1839-1860 came pretty close), but surely governments (however bad they may be) have existed and do exist.

There seems to be a bit of a confusion about concepts and pseudo-concepts. A concept is not a pseudo-concept just because no instances of it exist. There are no unicorns, but the concept of a unicorn is a genuine concept: if I came across a horse with a horn in the middle of its forehead I would say correctly that I had seen a unicorn. I know what the concept is: i.e. what it would be like to come across an instance of it. (See pp. 30-31 of my Introduction to Philosophical Analysis, 2nd ed. 1967, p. 30. The case of God is a bit more complex, because the word "God" means different things to different people, especially theologians, but on some conceptions at any rate the same applies as to unicorns: the concept is a genuine one, only there doesn't exist anything in the universe to instantiate it. (See pp. 486-490 of my Introduction.) What the theologians claim to exist doesn't exist. All one can conclude from this is that the term "God" lacks denotation, not that it lacks designation or meaning.

For the most part, in my thinking about political philosophy, I have been most concerned to advocate (with detailed reasons) the limitation of governments, particularly to the limited function advocated by Miss Rand. The no-government theory, whatever its merits, has not seemed a practical goal to ~~achieve~~ strive for because there is just no possibility of its happening, and I prefer to deal with viable alternatives. It seems to me possible (though unlikely) that there will be something of a limitation of government in the USA in our lifetime - though much more likely we shall become more and more of a fascist state; but that we shall close up shop and disband the entire government, that seems to me so unlikely that it is hardly worth considering as a possibility. ~~xxxxxx~~

However, it may be, and in my opinion is, worth considering as a goal, even though it will never be attained. Goodness knows, I have been writing and talking against government power for so long, and recognize the evils of government controls so acutely, that if the race could get along without government entirely, as the root of so much human evil, I couldn't be more pleased. That is, I have no objection in principle to your no-government ideal; I was simply raising, and will continue to raise in this letter, some objections to it as a practical measure. There are difficulties in it, I think, which you over-optimistically believe can be overcome, or which you slough off with insufficient evidence. Mill was wrestling very ~~xxx~~ profoundly with some of these same difficulties in Chapters 4 and 5 of his On Liberty.

we could expect a rain of Russian missiles tomorrow; and I still think this is true. It may be that in the long run our decentralization would tend to make them decentralize too; but in the meanwhile, the aims of the communists are what they always have been, world domination, and they would surely see this as a golden opportunity. It seems even doubtful to me whether their tendency would be toward a no-government society in the long run. As long as they have a centralized & totalitarian government, the leaders wouldn't even let their people know of what was going on in the outside world. - In the past, I have advocated a more limited goal: that the USA revert to laissez-faire capitalism (with limited government a la Rand, not interfering with any economic activity) and the business expansion and prosperity would be so great that it would put every other nation to shame by comparison. And while I still believe this is true, I am not so naive as to believe that while this was happening we could unilaterally disarm: for before we had fairly begun to transfer the funds from armaments to economic development, the Russians (or later, the Chinese) would see our military weakness and bomb the hell out of us. (You can see this even now: as the U.S. gradually withdraws from world involvement, the Russians, seeing this, are moving in to every vacuum we create; the next one will probably be Saudi Arabia and that whole peninsula, with Israel just happening to be on the way.)

(2) An example closer to home: you say, perhaps correctly, that the Gestapo Protective Agency would gradually lose business if it used torture and other such tactics. Perhaps; but in the meantime it would inflict a great deal of damage. Murderers and their ilk, in my opinion, must be quickly and severely punished by the courts - but, according to your system, there would be no courts at all! (Or more accurately, if I read you right, private court systems which would be voluntary; but the people who most need to be apprehended and tried in court would not, of course, belong to any such voluntary agencies.)

A problem in this connection occurs, which attends even Rand's limited government: how is a court system going to function without the power to subpoena witnesses and to get juries? Witnesses might not want to come forth, but I see no alternative but that they should be made to do so, in the interests of justice for the defendant. If the defendant is innocent of a crime, and his innocence can be proved by one crucial witness, would you make it optional whether that witness should come forward to testify? For my part, I would say that the clearing of the innocent victim is much more important than ~~whether~~ the witness' freedom to choose whether or not to spend a day testifying in court. If you say that the witness' freedom is so important that he should not be made to testify, then you are surely emphasizing the witness' freedom (from inconvenience) at the expense of the freedom of the innocent defendant! The defendant might get a life-sentence as the result of the witness' failure to appear! - I realize that, according to you, there should be no systems of criminal punishment at all, but I think the consequences of that would be monstrous. What murderer would be deterred from his next deed by the thought that a protective agency to which he didn't belong anyway might in the long run lose some business as a result?

There must be some system of deciding on the guilt or innocence of an accused person. This system may impose considerable inconvenience on some persons, e.g. witnesses, juries (though they are compensated), and so on; and most of all on suspects, who may be innocent, but who have to be "checked out" by the police to determine whether they are innocent or not - and this may require imprisonment for a limited period before trial. I can't see any real alternative to this. And it, unfortunately, requires a government to do it. A voluntary agency wouldn't do the trick - if there is a trial the guilty defendant wouldn't show up for it, and if there is no trial he is luckier still - he'll just continue to commit crimes. It seems to me that in this detail you are ~~really~~ really unbelievably over-optimistic - that the advance of liberty will cause crime to decrease. There will always be a certain percentage of psychotics of one kind or another, and people whose aim is to eliminate other people, and people who find it easier to rob others than to be productive themselves - and something must be done to deter them. I don't see that this happens in your system.

In so many cases, you defend the freedom of one individual to do what he wants, when the inevitable consequence of this is that another individual or individuals cannot do what they want because they are the victims of aggressive activity by the first individual! And thus it seems to me that you are protecting the freedom of some at the expense of the freedom of others - in order to protect the first party from a minor loss of freedom you would submit the second party to a major loss of freedom. To protect the freedom of the trigger-happy psychotic to own and use a gun, you would vastly increase the danger to everyone else who is a potential victim of that gun!

On the matter of drugs, I see no present alternative but to prohibit the use of the "hard" stuff (not marijuana - though even here the case is not clear; the effects of long-term use of this is loss of motivation do to anything whatever, and this is pretty serious). Would you really have every experimentally minded adolescent free to buy heroin in the local drug store? (That's the way the Japanese conquered much of China in the late '30's - they let them have all the opium they wanted, with the result that the victims didn't give a damn about anything any more, not even the preservation of their own family or property.) And here is another point: let us assume that anyone who wants to become a heroin addict is legally free to do so; ~~You misread my remark about pornography:-~~ but now we have in consequence a very large problem for the rest of us; because they are addicts they don't work, and to keep up their addiction they need money, and so the incidence of robbery and burglary goes up about 2,000%. In consequence, the insurance companies who insure us against vandalism will have to increase their rates by the same percentage. Would you find this tolerable?

You misread my remark about pornography: I said that if it would be empirically shown that it was bad for children to see or read, what would be your attitude toward it? This of course is a big "if"; and my own position is that there should be no limitations on pornography whatever, for the reasons that Bertrand Russell gave in his book "Human Society in Ethics and Politics". But I take this position because I believe that pornography really doesn't do any harm. If I thought it did, I would take a different position. What I wanted to elicit from you was what you would say if you found incontrovertible evidence, from long investigation, that pornography is harmful. Would you then ignore such facts in order to favor a theory? I'm enough of an empiricist not to do this, ever - and that is why I am skeptical of all neat systems, yours and all others. Though the pornography case seems to me clearer than most, it is still not entirely clear: the truth is usually messy rather than neat and tidy, and the truth in this case is probably that some children and/or adolescents are harmed by viewing the stuff, at least in that it tends to consume a disproportionately large fraction of their waking hours when they are at such an impressionable age and the stuff is so readily available to everyone. (I take it you wouldn't limit access to it to "people over 18".) There is some evidence, though not conclusive, that the reason why peoples in the tropics have not advanced in civilization has have those in the temperate zones, is their constant and unremitting preoccupation with sex. I am no Puritan, but I think that there is evidence on the other side too, and I don't want to ignore it just to ~~get~~ come out with a neat theory. That is the besetting vice of philosophers, and I don't want to fall victim to it.

■ ■

This topic leads me to inquire your opinion about a related one: overpopulation. I have pondered long over this one, and it is most intractable. It is easy to say that technology can solve all problems of food and shelter no matter how enormous the population of the earth becomes. And it is surely true that with free-enterprise economics, and the use of materials from the oceans etc., a larger population even than we have now on the earth could be sustained for some time - though even then, the raw materials would eventually give out, and our great-great-great grandchildren wouldn't thank us for using them all up so fast. But what I want to draw your

attention to now is another aspect of this situation: it seems to me that people are much more irritable, much more crime-bound, and ~~just~~ much unhappier when the world is so full of them that they can't live without being constantly on top of each other. In fact it seems to me that the optimum population of the United States is not more than a hundred million - a figure which has long since been passed. It seems to me that in the life of every child there should be a lot of exposure to the wide open spaces - and that city-bred children have a tremendous disadvantage, in happiness and in potential for the future. Now whether you agree with this or not, you must surely admit that even with the best technology it ~~would~~ be very long before the world, whose population is now doubling every thirty years, is just too full of people to be bearable. And I take it you wish to prevent this from happening. The question, then is how. A voluntary system of birth control? It just wouldn't work: a few of the most enlightened people would practice it (but even there, many might ask, What difference would MY additional child make? and meanwhile the impulse to procreate more children remains very, very strong, being among the ~~many~~ most powerful of all human impulses). But the vast remainder just wouldn't practice it - and the greatest procreation of children would be in the genetic lines that would provide the least desirable material for future population. So, the only alternative, when the time of population -crisis comes (and in my opinion that's now), is a forced (by government) control of the number of children. I come to this conclusion with very great hesitation, for it ~~means~~ is an interference with one of people's most valued liberties, the liberty of couples to have as many children as they wish. On the other hand, it would be more merciful for the children if they were fewer in number. (Even now, some couples couldn't even support one child, much less the fifteen that they have - and this is pretty awful for such ~~2~~ children, you must admit.) If the parents ~~would~~ abstain from exercising their ~~sex~~ impulse, the children would be happier - and don't we have to consider the children too? In any event, it will very soon come to the point (if it hasn't already) that if population is not limited, the whole kit and caboodle of them will be destroyed in a nuclear war. And if you ~~think~~ think that voluntary birth-control is going to work with the vast masses of the human population, I must say that I think you are only deluding yourself, or, once again, distorting the facts in order to fit a theory.

Final question, on which I am not quite as certain as on some of the above: in some cases it seems to me important to have such a thing as the official stand or record on something. For example, the registry of births and marriages and deaths. Private agencies could do this, of course, but what if agency A gave a different birth-date for Smith than did agency B? There could be contexts in which ~~such~~ this matter could be very important. And then there would have to be ~~some~~ some agency with the authority to make the official and accepted pronouncement on the matter. You suggest in several places in your book that when there is a dispute between private agencies, there would be an arbitration agency (like a supreme court) whose verdict both parties have agreed in advance to accept. I wonder if this too isn't just unrealistic. (1) WOULD both parties agree to accept a verdict that differed from their own? And (2) even if they agreed to do so, why should they keep the agreement if the verdict of the board (or whatever) went against them? Wouldn't it be easier for the agency that was on the unfavorable side of the verdict, just to use force against the favorably treated one, in order to get its verdict accepted? Ah least I can't think of any reason why it wouldn't do this. In your belief that those who are defeated in something would just calmly and passively accept the verdict of some board or agency, particularly on a matter of great importance to them, I think you are just plain over-optimistic about human nature. There are lots of people who would just never do this! They would resort to force to win their case ~~and~~ and salve their injured egos. Now come on - you know they would!

I'll be much interested to hear, at your convenience, your response to these remarks.

All best wishes,

John Hospers P.S.. Yes, let's use first names from now on.

October 12, 1970

Dear John,

Re the P. S. (yours of Sept. 29), appreciatively agreed; my friends call me "Tanny."

Very happy to hear that your conference went so well! I would like to have been there, met and gotten better acquainted with you, and heard your speech; I'm looking forward to meeting you on my next trip out that way ... will try to let you know enough ahead of time so we can make mutually satisfactory plans for our get-together. And yes, I'd be delighted to address your next conference. Were it today, I'd probably speak on the vital necessity of epistemological precision in the individualistic cause of spreading the idea of liberty. We must understand clearly, precisely what we're talking about in our libertarian endeavors, and we need precise definitions of our key concepts before we can know clearly what we are talking about (and, as Mr. Branden has pointed out, that is the purpose of definitions--The Objectivist Newsletter, Jan., 1963). It's a sad thing that most self-professed libertarians can't even give an epistemologically sound definition of "liberty;" and, as we say in the first chapter of TMFL, (I'll revise it a bit for you) "If we don't know where we should be going, we're not likely to get there!" I have to admit that I just recently found a definition of "force" which is satisfactory to me (after wrestling with the concept for over a year!)--"Force" is any volitional behavior which intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of another person or other persons. Had I known this as clearly as I do now when TMFL was written, the references to the threat of force (specifically the underscored words) and the phrase "or any substitute for force" would have been omitted as unnecessary. I'm compiling a list of definitions which I may publish one of these days; there's such a need for a good dictionary!

Now to that part of your letter between the first and last paragraphs. Mao Tse Tung truly said, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Miss Rand wrote (in "America's Persecuted Minority: Big Business"), "Foggy metaphors, sloppy images, unfocused poetry, and equivocations--such as "A hungry man is not free"--do not alter the fact that only political power is the power of physical coercion and that freedom, in a political context, has only one meaning: the absence of physical coercion." I can't help but wonder--how can freedom exist if freedom means the absence of physical coercion, that is, exist in a political context if political power is the power of physical coercion? In the paragraph before the above quotation, Miss Rand said, "The nature of governmental action is: coercive action. The nature of political power is: the power to force obedience under threat of physical injury--the threat of property expropriation, imprisonment, or death." And in the next paragraph after the above quotation, Miss Rand says, "A proper government has the right to use physical force only in retaliation and only against those who initiate its use." I agree with Miss Rand that the nature of governmental action is coercive action, but I think she failed to identify the nature of coercion as initiated force. As I pointed out before, retaliatory force is good when used within reason, and since coercion has no good connotations it can only be initiatory force. In consideration of the primary meaning of "politics" ever since its Greek origin and in the hopes of identifying the nature of politics to an increasing number of people, I've been defining "politics" as the pseudo-science of slavery. And that's exactly what it is. I've heard from more than one source that Miss Rand was an anarchist at one time, but I find that hard to believe. I think she has made the same mistake re government that most people have and do when considering the subject--she started her deliberations by considering government a given and asking, "What kind of government should we have?" instead of asking the fundamental question, "Should we have a government?" If she had started with the fundamental question and then identified government for what it is and always has been--an intrinsically evil institution--she wouldn't have found it necessary to invent her "proper government" in her attempt to make government consonant with her correct view of an objective morality. But the truth is, Dr. Hospers, Miss Rand has only once come close to a good definition of government--in her opening sentence of her article, "The Nature of Government": "A government is an institution that holds the exclusive power to enforce certain rules of social conduct in a given geographical area." Add "coercive" before "institution" and it's very close to our definition in TMFL. (page 32)

first sentence, second paragraph). When I referred to Miss Rand's "definition" of government, I had in mind a collation of three statements of hers on government which I gave in an article I wrote about a year ago (in my more caustic days; I've learned a lot in the last year!)--the collation read, "A government is an institution which holds a monopoly on the retaliatory use of physical force in a given geographical area and whose purpose is to enforce certain rules of social conduct with this exclusive power of retaliatory force." This is her "proper government," of course, and no such institution has ever existed. Nor could it ever exist, as no ~~rational~~ person would ever give up his right to self-defense without being forced to do so. Besides, a (natural human) right cannot be delegated to anyone by the man who has it (though one can delegate the authority to exercise one's right). I'll enclose a copy of my article on "rights" which I intend to publish somewhere before long. Rothbard asked me for the article and then sent it back, saying that his audience wouldn't understand it! I'm reasonably sure that his unstated reason was that the article is out of keeping with the character of his periodical (Roy Childs, who knows Rothbard well, says this was his reason), as it is oriented toward concrete issues more than philosophic issues. (Which is not meant as criticism of The Libertarian Forum, I wish to add. I quite enjoy The LF.) I'll welcome your comments re my article.

Re your "but surely governments, (however bad they may be) have existed and do exist," of course governments exist, but ~~what point~~ I attempted to point out is that the governments which do exist have nothing--not anything at all!--in common with the Randian "proper government." For clarity's sake, therefore, (also for epistemological precision) we must not use the same concept for two institutions which are totally different in kind. One would be just as consistent were he to use the concept "thief" to refer to a robber and an honest man. It's true that a thief can become an honest man, but then he's no longer a thief. If it could ever happen (and I don't believe it can) that a government actually became a Randian "proper government," it would be a market phenomenon and would, therefore, no longer be a government. If it maintained itself as a monopoly, it would have to be by excellence in providing for the needs of men, as it could not use initiatory force (and remain a market phenomenon) to prevent market competition. (For explanation of the parenthesis in the foregoing sentence, see the second paragraph of Chapter 3, "The Self-Regulating Market," on page 16 of TMFL.) Every voluntary economic exchange is a market phenomenon. No one I know of has made the ridiculous claim that government is a market phenomenon. Since government is not a market phenomenon, it cannot reasonably be considered a voluntary economic exchange (the reverse of the above is also true: a market phenomenon always involves a voluntary economic exchange which does not make use of coercion). Since the existence of government does require exchanges of wealth (from subjects to rulers), and since these exchanges are not voluntary, they are of necessity contrary to the will of men who are concerned about maintaining moral integrity ... and we see (again) that government is intrinsically evil. (I'm referring to government as we know it and which does exist, not a "proper government" which could not exist, as I've shown.) When I said above that the governments which do exist have nothing in common with the Randian "proper government," I was not unaware that they are both "institutions" ... but the one exists, while the other is purely a pipedream (that is to say, it could never exist as a government without doing violence to language of the Humpty-Dumpty variety: "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less."). And another point, involving a contradiction inherent in Miss Rand's notion of "government"--the only moral way it could be a monopoly is as a market monopoly; since government is not a market monopoly, it's an immoral, and hence evil, institution! Q.E.D. Now, I've given, so far, philosophic, abstract principles--moral principles. "There can be no compromise on moral principles." "In any compromise between food and poison, it is only death that can win. In any compromise between good and evil, it is only evil that can profit." (Atlas Shrugged) The next time you are tempted to ask: "Doesn't life require compromise?" translate that question into its actual meaning: "Doesn't life require the surrender of that which is true and good to that which is false and evil?" The answer is that that precisely is what life forbids--if one wishes to achieve anything but a stretch of tortured years spent in progressive self-destruction." (From Ayn Rand's "Doesn't life require compromise?" The Objectivist Newsletter, July, 1962.) And now I come to the issues of your letter after the second paragraph.

I've tried like hell to get your INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS (2nd Ed. 1967) but it was either checked out or not where it was supposed to be. I'd appreciate your letting me know how to obtain a copy. Also, have your views changed much since you wrote HUMAN CONDUCT: an Introduction to the Problems of Ethics? If not, I'd like to get it, too. Is a subscription to The Personalist available to me, and, if so, how much is it and where do I send for it?

According to Miss Rand, "A concept is a mental integration of two or more units which are isolated according to a specific characteristic(s) and united by a specific definition." From her Chapter 2, "Concept-Formation," of INTRODUCTION TO OBJECTIVIST EPISTEMOLOGY, one must, I think, conclude that every concept has a referent(s) in reality. And, if a word is used as though it had a referent ~~in reality~~ in reality but in fact does not, the word would not be an auditory/visual symbol of a concept ... which is why I refer to "God" (and other words which have no referent in reality) as a pseudo-concept. (Mr. Branden has correctly pointed out that no one has ever given a rationally consistent, non-contradictory definition of "God," and such words have no conceptual meaning without a definition.) If a word is by definition symbolic of that which has no existence in reality, then it is a valid symbol of a concept. E. g., "unicorn" is defined as "a mythical/horselike animan having a single horn growing out of its forehead." The only actual existence unicorns have is as a mythical idea in men's minds, and the definition implies this truth. With "God," if the word were defined as "an irrational idea, existing in men's minds in as many forms as there are men holding it, generally thought to represent some sort of Supreme Ruler of the universe," I would have to agree with you that "God," by this definition, is a concept. It does have a referent in reality--it's an idea in ~~men's~~ men's minds. I think I'll have to disagree with your statement, "All one can conclude from this is that the term 'God' lacks denotation, not that it lacks designation or meaning."--Unless you understand something other than I do by "denotation," which I understand to necessitate a referent in reality in order to have meaning. In other words, a concept is not a genuine one if "there doesn't exist anything in the universe to instantiate it" (and I'm eager to read pp. 486-490 of your INTRODUCTION), since a concept, as Miss Rand correctly points out, exists only when there are two or more units (existents) which do have existence in reality. In deference to your seniority in this field of knowledge, however, I want to ask how my reasoning is in error.

When government is seen for what it is (and always has been)--that its distinguishing characteristic is "coercive" and that it is therefore intrinsically evil--it will be seen that to advocate the limitation of governments is to advocate limited evil. If, as you say, the goal of an entirely free-market society (with no government) is a worthy one (or is worth considering as a goal, to represent what you said exactly) but "has not seemed a practical goal to strive for because there is just no possibility of its happening" (and you "prefer to deal with viable alternatives"), then you are entertaining a contradiction which has been the source of incalculable human misery--if what is good (worthy) is impractical, then we are left with the horrible position that what's practical is wrong, a position which all the Attilas and witch doctors have always tried to convince men of, and with considerable success! Were such a position true, the good would be unachievable. But it's not true, and peace and freedom are practical, viable alternatives to the various kinds of political rule under which men have always suffered and died! I very much appreciate, Dr. Hospers, your comment, "I have no objection in principle to your no-government ideal," but that you are raising objections to it as a practical measure. I know that you are more than a little attracted to our position, which means to me that you will accept it if you can see your objections successfully (to you) dealt with. This takes time, of course, but I'm betting it'll be worth it.

John Stuart Mill wrestled "with some of these same difficulties in Chapters 4 and 5 of his On Liberty" because 1- he considered "society" as an entity having authority over the individual and 2- he was a wretched altruist (who died a socialist, according to Mr. Branden). He did not conceive of man as an end in himself--"It would be a great misunderstanding of this doctrine to suppose that it is one of selfish indifference, which pretends that human beings have no business with each other's conduct in life, and that they should not concern themselves about the well-doing or well-being of one another, unless their own interest is

need of a great increase of disinterested exertion to promote the good of others. . . . I am the last person to undervalue the self-regarding virtues; they are only second in importance, if even second, to the social." (!!)) This kind of "thinking," I submit, is the prevailing idea which has always twisted man against himself, leaving him (as long as he remained conscientious, or sensitive to what he thought was right) with a morbid sense of guilt because there's no objective criterion by which to draw the line between acting in his self-interest and fulfilling his duty to the public interest! Mill never did see that there's no actual difference between self-interest (which he viewed as "selfish"--that is, evil) and the interests of society (for which one must make sacrifices and which is, therefore, good). The underlying reason, I think, for these beliefs of Mill (and the vast majority of all mankind) is that he didn't understand the nature of man--he didn't understand that man isn't inherently evil but is "a being of self-made soul," which means: he is what he has chosen to become, which also means: he can choose to become good by an act of volition (he is not forced to choose the irrational and, thus, to become an evil person). Without understanding this explicitly and clearly, men have no incentive to be rational and choose the good consistently, and the more collectivistic their environment the greater the disincentive toward the rational and the good (which are penalized under collectivism). The reverse is true in a peaceful environment of freedom--the rational and the good are rewarded commensurate with their value, and the irrational and the evil are penalized. Which brings me to a subject of great importance and which, I think, needs emphasis.

I refer you to pp. 85-87 in TMFL. Please read it before continuing with this letter.

Now, the insurance companies of today bear no resemblance at all as far as their moral character is concerned with insurance companies which would exist in a totally free-market environment. And this isn't just speculation. The insurance companies today, in order to survive, have to play ball with government; and, in return, government plays ball with the insurance companies by acceding to the various insurance lobbies pressure (and, no doubt, in many cases, bribes) and passing legislation which militates against the consumer and allegedly favors the insurance industry. For example, one must have a certain minimum amount of public liability and personal property damage insurance on one's automobile here in Michigan (and in all other States, I believe) or he must pay an additional \$35 when he obtains his license plates for his car, for which he gets absolutely nothing in return. In addition, if one doesn't have PL&PD and has an accident, it's virtually unknown that he has successfully proved that it wasn't his fault ... no matter who was really to blame. All this was brought about by the insurance companies' influence on the various legislatures. But, you see, in a free-market environment, there wouldn't be an instrument of force (government) with popular sanction for them to work through and perpetrate such improprieties on their customers (and on everyone else, for that matter). They would go out of business in an environment of unrestricted competition (the only restrictions being those which reality imposed), and any deviation from integrity would be widely advertised (or publicized by others) and would hurt them substantially even though they quickly did what they could to rectify their bad behavior. John, I have to say that those who advocate "limited government" have not done enough thinking about the nature of a free-market environment. The insurance industry in particular has a vested interest which is obvious in rooting out ruthlessly any social behavior which harms the interests of any peaceful or non-coercive person. Their interest is in fact concern for the interest of individual persons, which is of course true public interest. While they wouldn't dare to do anything against anyone who behaved himself morally toward others (they would sign their death certificate if they did!), they would literally have the power of death over any individual or group of people whose behavior was the cause of social unrest--they could refuse to sell him (or them) insurance and, by mutual agreement between companies (this kind of cooperative competition exists today), they could refuse to sell insurance to anyone or any company which would not stop doing ~~business~~ business with such a person or group. No man or group of men could continue to exist in an aggressive manner in such an environment--they'd either "shape up or ship out." Optimism has nothing to do with it; it's a true, a priori ~~recognition~~ recognition of what must be, based on a rational extrapolation of truths which are known now. If you haven't read Murray Rothbard's new book, POWER AND MARKET, please put it on your "must list." His insight into the adverse effects of government intervention (which is what any action of any

that institutionalized aggression really isn't necessary (and our number, while increasing at a delightful rate, is not large yet), politicians and parasites will have no alternative but to see that their very lives depend on their getting honest jobs. Which brings me to another point.

Your belief that "if the USA disbanded as a government today, we could expect a rain of Russian missiles tomorrow" is easily disposed of. In the first place, the USA is not going to disband tomorrow (though I know this is not news to you) but will disband gradually only after pro-freedom ideas pervade the culture in sufficient measure to effect this end. The younger generation are quite disillusioned with the present culture, though few of them know explicitly why, and they are not going to patriotically uphold the present coercive institutions, even before and until they learn why. And, as the idea of freedom is grasped by an increasing number of them (and, Dr. Hospers, thanks to Ayn Rand, we have a consistent rational philosophy as an unshakeable foundation for our ideas; no one in history before us has had this advantage!), their opposition will spread and (I think within two decades) will become invincible. Now, what do you think will become of "big, terrible Russia," whose subjects passionately hate her, as alternative, market institutions arise to provide 1- the sound monetary system and 2- the real protection which the burgeoning, individualistic movement of freedom-lovers will provide the demand for? True, the idea of slavery--better known as the idea of government--will die hard ... but it will die! And long before the US government is brought to its knees (probably a number of years), the Russian government will exist only as a number of outlaw gangs, each trying to hold on to some rule, with the Russian people attempting to bring some order out of the rubble. And those of us who hold and understand the idea of freedom will achieve the abolition of slavery, and I think it will be for the rest of human history--we're achieving what no other generation has done: we're growing up (see the last paragraph of TMFL)!

According to Eugene Lyons in WORKER'S PARADISE LOST, the Russian rulers are constantly walking a tightrope, in fear of the Russian people--in fear of their miserable lives! It wouldn't surprise me at all to see peace and freedom established first in Russia. I don't know whether the idea of freedom is very well known in Russia, nor to what extent, and one can't know today, with the news media substantially under the control of various governments all over the world. But an oppressed people don't just sit on their hands, and they won't be oppressed forever--when one's life depends on thinking his way out of a bad situation, he thinks or dies. A lot of Russian people are not choosing death! Dana Rohrabacher, whatever you may think of him, can relate some very interesting things which are going on behind the Iron Curtain!

Regarding the "expediency" of forcing a witness to testify so that an innocent person won't suffer injustice, in reason, Dr. Hospers, there's no such thing as a right to violate a right. Open the door an inch and principle is down the drain. Besides, if one were a witness to an act of aggression, there'd be no need for him to waste his time in a long, drawnout trial (as is commonplace today). A short taperecording, taking only a few minutes and done at his convenience, would be all that was necessary (and I know they're not permissible as evidence today, and with good reason in this age of institutionalized deceit--according to Arthur Sylvester, "The government has an inherent right to lie."). Any arbitration agency which lent itself to skullduggery with taperecordings in a free-market society would be courting its ~~their~~ own demise (for reasons already made clear)! And this last sentence brings me to a misconception you have.

I can't help but wonder how anyone could read our book and conclude that (guilty) people "who most need to be apprehended and tried in court would not, of course, belong to any such voluntary agencies" and, by implication (if I understand you correctly), would get away with their aggressions. A reading of our Chapter 9 will quickly dispel this misconception. If a man is guilty and there's absolutely no doubt of it, there'd be no foolish waste of anyone's time with a useless trial ... but Ch. 9 goes into this point adequately. (We referred to courts as arbitration agencies, as we wanted to avoid forensic terms as much as feasible to avoid their bad connotations.)

witnesses, and your question about juries indicates that you either haven't read the part which begins at the bottom of pg. 68 and ends at the top of pg. 70 or you've forgotten it. We're getting so many reports of people who are becoming convinced after reading TMFL; I wish I could influence you to take the time to read our book through, thoughtfully.

Re your remark that, according to us, "there should be no systems of criminal punishment at all" (the consequences of which you think would be monstrous), I think you may change your mind after reading Ch. 9. Justice cannot exist where there is punishment, and justice is the only satisfactory deterrent to injustice; this point is adequately explained in Ch. 9.

Re your statement, "In so many cases, you defend the freedom of one individual to do what he wants, when the inevitable consequence of this is that another individual or individuals cannot do what they want because they are the victims of aggressive activity by the first individual!" please show me one such instance. Even in today's cultural condition of near psycho-epistemological chaos, there are very few "trigger-happy psychotics" in relation to the total population, and especially if you exclude the police and the military! In a free-market environment, people would not be prohibited from making necessary preparations for protection against any real danger, and any trigger-happy person would be an obituary statistic on his way to happen, soon! A free-market society, Dr. Hospers, is about as far away from a permissive society as it's possible to conceive of.

The long-term use of marijuana per se does not cause the "loss of motivation to do anything whatever," and I am quite certain of this. I have several friends (good, reliable friends) who have used marijuana for a number of years and still use it, and they are more intelligibly active than ever before ... and none of them advocate violence, nor would they participate in any violence unless it was absolutely necessary to defend themselves (i.e., unless there were no other way out). A person who uses pot may experience a loss of motivation, but I know from actual experience that the use of pot per se doesn't cause this result. As for any further word from me on this subject, I believe I'll take the 5th!

Re your remarks about the "hard" stuff (in your 2nd par., pg. 3), were I to view things from today's political jungle and not be aware of the differences between a governmental society and a free-market society, I'd have to agree with you. As I've shown above, however, such things could not continue to exist in a peaceful environment of freedom--that is, even if they "broke out" sporadically.

I apologize, I did misread your remark about pornography. But I think the truth is obvious to both of us on this score. If what you say could be and were proved, then it would be treated like any other menace to society--it wouldn't be tolerated! As I said in my last letter, though, "The grossly irrational views re sex which prevail in the culture are the cause of virtually all deviant sexual behavior" ... probably the cause of most pornography (though I'm not sure the word has intelligible meaning). I have no desires for any "neat theories" which are not well founded in fact.

Re the problem of over-population, Rothbard has given the answer on pages 40-41 in POWER AND MARKET. The problem will never be solved without disaster, however, until men are free. With freedom an experiential fact, the answer is so utterly simple. I refer you to the Rothbard comment, reference given above. Freedom is the necessary condition for the solution to all of men's social problems.

Why would two agencies give different birth-dates for anyone? This would be a relatively unimportant matter in a free-market environment, though it does have more importance today in our artificial environment. And if you really think I believe "that those who are defeated in something would just calmly and passively accept the verdict of some board or agency," you've really misread me; if they were found guilty, they'd have no choice and it wouldn't matter whether they accepted the verdict or not. Retaliatory force when used within reason is right and necessary to protect rights, rectify aggressive injustice insofar as humanly possible, and maintain peace. Insurance companies would never permit any arbitration to act as you suggest, and our Ch. 11 shows why such agencies couldn't possibly get by with such behavior. As I think I have shown above, the only way to prevent such behavior is to have a free-market society.

THE HAIRY QUESTION OF "RIGHTS"

by Morris G. Tannehill (9-18-70)

"A right is a moral sanction to an action in a social context."

"A *right* is a moral principle defining and sanctioning a man's freedom of action in a social context."

"A right is a claim," etc.

"Rights are governmental permissions." (A fairly well-known "objectivist" stated in a recent article that parents get the right to discipline their children from government!)

Only one of the above statements has anything correct about it which is useful in defining the concept "rights." The subject of "rights" has caused so much confusion that it's high time for libertarians to clearly understand it; it's really not a difficult subject after the fog has been cleared away.

Assuming that the concept "rights" is a valid one and that it has nothing to do with politics (the pseudo-science of slavery) except to indict any political action as a violation of men's rights, we may also assume that there can be no instance of a human right which violates another human right and that, therefore, human interaction is harmonious within a social context of mutual respect for human rights. Most libertarians, I think, will agree with the preceding sentence, but few men have been able to give a definition of human right which contained no flaws and was universally applicable to every possible instance of human interaction. I propose to give such a definition in this article (given in THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY, by Morris and Linda Tannehill).

Some invalid uses of "rights" are as follows: "Every man has a right to a decent job."

"Good health is necessary and, therefore, adequate medical care is the right of everyone."

"Human rights are more important than property rights." The first two statements are invalid because if enforced they necessarily involve the violation of some men's rights. The last is invalid because property rights are human rights--a property right is the right of the (human) owner of the property to determine its disposition in a non-coercive manner.

Some valid uses of "rights" are as follows: "I have the right to type ~~my~~ this article on my typewriter in my home." "I have the right to own this typewriter and my home." ~~My~~

"You are within your rights when your behavior is non-coercive." "He was not within his rights when his volitional actions placed the lives of others in jeopardy." ~~My~~ "Mr. Roark had the right to destroy his own property." A careful analysis of the above statements will lead to the conclusion that

A RIGHT IS A PRINCIPLE WHICH MORALLY PROHIBITS MEN FROM USING FORCE AGAINST ANYONE WHOSE BEHAVIOR IS NON-COERCIVE.

Now, this definition will be clarified as we define the concepts used to express it (misunderstanding them causes much confusion).

PRINCIPLE. Since we intend a social principle, a principle which applies only when there is human interaction, a "principle" is a social rule of human behavior which is derived from the nature of man qua volitional animal--especially, from the requirements of man's nature for his rational existence. A principle is the verbal codification of one or more natural laws. A principle is derived from observed natural laws which inhere in the entity to which the principle relates. *A natural law is a causal attribute which inheres in all entities. By identifying the natural laws which inhere in any entity, we can learn what that entity is capable of doing or becoming--what a thing is determines what it can do or become. **Natural laws are causal attributes which inhere in all entities.*

MORAL. By this term, the misunderstanding of which has caused so much human misery, we simply mean right--i.e., correct--as judged from the unique mental frame-of-reference of one who has a healthy regard for the facts relating to that which is judged. A moral prohibition is a universal principle of human behavior; it doesn't physically prohibit anyone from any social behavior, but one who does what is morally prohibited is wrong--i.e., his behavior is objectively at odds with the requirements of man's nature for his rational existence. In other, fewer words, his behavior is anti-life. Moral principles, therefore, are necessary as criteria for judging human behavior as pro- or anti-life. (Before those of a certain school get beside themselves, I don't mean to imply that anyone has the right to

enforce moral principles on anyone but himself. The enforcement of justice is another matter. For example, when one man, with malice aforethought, destroys the property of another man who has done nothing to provoke the destructive act, the aggressor owes his victim a debt—the market value of the property at the time it was destroyed, plus any other loss directly occasioned by his destructive act. "Justice" involves the payment of debts and receipt of that which is objectively deserved. ~~See~~ A more complete explanation of the concept "justice" is given in THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY.)

FORCE. Libertarians especially should know precisely what this word means. Assuming it's understood we're not talking about Physics, "force" is any volitional behavior which intentionally requires the unwilling ~~involvement~~ involvement of another person or other persons. The use of force is the attempt to compel another to act against his will. If a victim of an aggression insisted that he did not act against his will, that he wanted to comply with the aggressor's demands, one would have to conclude that there had been no aggression and, therefore, no victim and no aggressor. There are two uses of force (by man against man)—initiatory and retaliatory, the former wrong and the latter right when feasible and used with reason. (Retaliatory force is moral only when feasible—when one judges its use worth the risk—and when used within reason /see next paragraph/ for the purpose of attempting to keep what one rightfully has, 2- to regain stolen property, or 3- to otherwise rectify the injustice resulting from an act of aggression insofar as is humanly possible under the given circumstances. See especially Chapters 2, 9 & 10, THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY.) The quibble that some have made, that retaliatory force has to be initiated (thus attempting to obliterate the distinction between invasive and ~~defensive~~ defensive force and, hence, ignoring the difference between murder and self-defense), is to puerile to ~~even~~ ^{even} time consider.

Another point which should be understood is that "coercion" has no good connotations and therefore, either initiatory force or an "overkill" use of retaliatory force (as, for example, when the store owner takes a shotgun and blows the bubblegum thief's head off). A non-coercive person is one whose behavior doesn't intentionally require the unwilling involvement of any other person.

Now, we may rightly inquire, "What is the function of rights?" In a totally free-market society—a society devoid of institutionalized coercion (i.e., devoid of any form of government), rights would be the criteria for determining the requirements of justice when the use of initiatory force by man against man resulted in any loss or damage to the person and/or property of the victim(s). The question, "Were Jones' rights violated by Smith?" means: Did Smith's behavior intend and require the unwilling involvement of Jones and was Jones' behavior non-coercive and, therefore, not such that would provoke Smith to act as he did? A violation of rights always involves the use of initiatory force—to determine whether there's been a violation of anyone's rights and, if so, whose rights were violated and who violated them, one has merely to ask the question, "Who started the fight?" and then find the answer. Rights are moral prohibitions. Because of Smith's rights, all others are morally prohibited from using force against Smith so long as his behavior remains non-coercive. But if Smith's behavior becomes coercive, thereby causing others to suffer a possible or actual ~~diminution~~ diminution of their non-coercive lives (including their property), the others are not morally prohibited from using force against Smith and may morally do so should it become feasible in their judgment. There's no mystical, moral rule which says they have to retaliate against an aggressor (morality is always contextually applicable), but they may within their rights when they reasonably use retaliatory force to protect themselves or to rectify an injustice by compelling the aggressor to make reparations to his victim(s) (to the extent they can be reasonably required from him). The aggressor is not within his rights—i.e., he is outside their moral protection—when he uses force against another man, and rights are, ~~therefore~~ therefore, not violated when his intended victim uses retaliatory force within reason.

The concept "inalienable" is often applied to rights; this is an ancient, traditional error. Rights are neither alienable nor inalienable—they are either fully applicable to a man or they are not, and his behavior determines which. When Smith aggresses against Jones and the principle of justice requires that Smith pay Jones \$100 in reparations to rectify the aggressive injustice against Jones, Smith no longer has the right to that part of his life (his labor) and/or his possessions which is required to make just reparations to Jones, and Jones is justified in using retaliatory force (within reason), if necessary, to collect the debt.

that's owed him by Smith. (In a free-market society, there would of course be agencies which would specialize in seeing that justice prevailed. Such agencies are carefully examined in THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY. Also, see Chapter 1 of Murray Rothbard's new book, POWER AND MARKET.)

Now, what's wrong with the statements at the beginning? Well, if a right is a moral sanction to an action (in a social context), then it follows that one has only the right to moral actions, since such actions are the only actions which are morally sanctioned. But, clearly, anyone has the right to behave himself in an immoral (i.e., anti-life) manner so long as his behavior doesn't require the unwilling involvement of any other person. (Refuting the notion, held by some libertarians, that a man cannot be immoral—that is, wrong—in an isolated context is outside the scope of this article.) One certainly has the right to destroy his own property, though normally such a person would be acting in an anti-life manner if he did. One does have a right to behave in an anti-life manner, but a moral (pro life) sanction to anti-life behavior is a contradiction in terms. A right is not, therefore, a moral sanction to an action in a social context. Every person has the right to be wrong so long as his bad behavior is non-coercive. The same objection applies to the second sentence quoted at the beginning; it is correct, however, in calling a right a principle.

As for the third statement, a claim may be based on one's right to person, property, or freedom of action, but a right is not a claim. A claim must be asserted to be a claim. And, while a new-born baby certainly has the right to life (~~which~~ which means that everyone else is morally prohibited from behaving coercively toward the baby), it is hardly capable of asserting its claim to the right to life. Most, if not all, just claims are based on rights, and "claim" is similar in meaning to the concept "right" (a natural right, not "right" as opposed to "wrong"). A human right is a principle, regardless of whether a claim is made or not. And besides, since "claim" is a synonym of (a natural) "right," it's epistemologically impermissible to use "claim" as the genus of "right," as those who know the valid epistemological rules of definition realize. (When synonyms are used to "define" a concept, one must then define two concepts before he can know what he's talking about; synonyms, therefore, may not validly be used for the purpose of definition. Definitions are for the purpose of enabling us to know what we are talking about; synonyms may be helpful, but they define nothing.)

Regarding the fourth statement at the beginning, since "government" is the coercive rule of some men over other men (who live non-coercive lives), and since the coercive rule of man over man is slavery, a government is a form of slavery and is, therefore, intrinsically evil. It follows, therefore, that any permission which is granted by an intrinsically evil institution inherently involves the violation of men's rights. The claim that a right is a governmental permission is, therefore, patently absurd.

Some have criticized our definition of a right because they say the statement, "I have a right," must be translated into, "I have a principle," which, they say, sounds silly. What they have overlooked is the function of idiom in our language. When I say, "I have a right to type this article," this statement is an idiomatic way of saying that there is a principle which morally prohibits others from forcibly preventing me from typing this article. "Having rights" is the idiomatic way which has developed to convey the thought of being morally protected on principle. However, when one says, "I have a right," he does, as a matter of fact, have a principle which morally prohibits others from using force against him so long as his behavior is non-coercive. The quibble of this criticism is obvious now, I think.

A RIGHT IS A PRINCIPLE WHICH MORALLY PROHIBITS MEN FROM USING FORCE AGAINST ANYONE WHOSE BEHAVIOR IS NON-COERCIVE.

8229 Lookout Mt. Ave., Los Angeles CA 90046
Dec. 10, 1970

Dear Tanny,

My long delay in answering is not the result of lack of interest; it is the result of misplacing your letter. I have hunted everywhere that I can think of not once but many times - and still haven't succeeded in finding it; so I shall have to answer from memory (and my memory of the details of your letter is now rather imprecise). But rather than let the correspondence lapse entirely, I thought I had better answer anyway, even though what I ~~may~~ say cannot be based on your last letter. I was especially regretful at misplacing, along with your letter, the little paper on force, for I had wanted to say something about your definition of force, though I can't remember now what it is; you don't by chance have another copy of it, do you?

Though I don't remember your definition of force, I am sure that "force" cannot be defined entirely ~~may~~ in terms of physical push-pulls: if I see someone beating up someone else, and then discover that the first person is a sadist and the second one a masochist who loves it and asked for it, one can hardly say that the second man was the victim of force, since the element of unwillingness is absent. On the other hand, one cannot define "force" in terms of unwillingness alone, for there are many things that other people do which I dislike and disapprove and which I would not willingly countenance, but I would not say they are using force against me because of it. - Incidentally, if a man trespasses on your property, would you say that he is using force against you? I assume so, for you do hold that you are entitled to use force to eject him, and you believe (as I do) that force should be used only in retaliation.

When I read Rand's "Objectivist Ethics" I found, among the ~~xxx~~ lacunae in her argument, one that seemed to me particularly outstanding: after she has defended life as the standard of value (something about which I have many questions, which no one has yet answered to my satisfaction), she ~~h~~ then says that the objectivist ethics proudly proclaims each man's own life as his aim or goal. Now, it seems to me that your account shares the same gaps (p. 8-9 in your book). You say, "For each man, ~~xxx~~ his own life is his moral standard; death, the negation of values, is the only alternative standard". Now, first, that is surely NOT the only alternative; it may not be life per se, but something in or about life, that is the standard of value: traditionally, it has been held (since Aristotle) to be happiness: the happy life is worth-while and valuable, but a life marked by constant unhappiness is not. It's not life itself, but certain features of life, that are valuable. Moreover, second (and the point I most want to raise now), from the fact that life is the standard (whatever that means), it does not follow that one's own life is the standard (your term) or purpose (Rand's term). Suppose that useless pain, for example, is bad; one might argue, as Blanshard does, that it is bad regardless of who it is that has it - and that if the bad is what one should try to avoid, then one should try to avoid the suffering of that pain whether it's you yourself or another person; who is the sufferer. In short, how does one get from "Happiness is the only good" (or similar statements) to "MY happiness is the only good"? (See the first section of Chapter 4 of my book, Human Conduct, for a more extended discussion of this point.)

Once more on government: the other day I read that a man and his wife were about to fry their own 18-month-old baby on the stove (apparently for their own sadistic satisfaction), and were only stopped at the last minute by the entry of the police. I wondered, what if there had been no police but a laissez-faire society a la Tannehill? The man and his wife would have told the intruders to get out: "You have no jurisdiction in my house! and since the parents are the guardians of children's rights, you have no right to enter!" In fact they might sue anyone for interfering - why not?

2
There are many other examples I could adduce here, but I think the point is clear. How in countless cases is an innocent victim to be saved if there is no group of men, the police, who ~~can~~ have the authority to do so?

One might reply that anyone could come in and stop the parents from doing their foul deed if ~~xxx~~ they happened along at just the right time, provided they had superior force. And so they could - I mean ~~it~~, they could beat the parents into submission, kidnap the baby, or do whatever they fancied - including fry him themselves if they took a fancy to it. Why could stop them, other than a force superior to them? And this leads to a further question: if group A, who desired peace, can hire an agency to protect them, why cannot group B, who desire protection for themselves less than they desire aggression against others, hire an agency of hired killers to do their dirty work? The Agency of group B would go marauding about with guns, killing and torturing ~~however~~ they wished. Why not? they have the power, and all it would take would be a fairly considerable group of sadists or otherwise malevolently motivated people. Who would defend the innocent against the agents of Group B? No one, unless perchance the agents of Group A had superior fire-power.

I am also enclosing a term-paper suggestion recently given to one of my classes; I would be interested, in case you have the time and inclination, in hearing your response to any and all of these. Again, I am sorry to have lost your last and very interesting letter, but I did want to get the correspondence moving again!

All best wishes,

John

December 17, 1970

Dear John,

Delighted to hear from you again. I like your desire for precision of thought, and I didn't want to "lose" you; at least, yet--while the tone of our letters evidences a mutual cordiality (and there's no good reason I know of for our attitudes to change). I do regret, though, that you misplaced my letter of October 12, as it contained a few words on drugs which conceivably could be used against me were it to fall into the wrong hands. That possibility, however, is remote, I think, and the detriment it could do, if any, slight. So, we won't spend any time worrying about it.

I really don't know what "little paper on force" I sent to you. Was it a copy of my paper on (entitled) "THE HAIRY QUESTION OF 'RIGHTS'"? I didn't note on my copy of my letter to you that I'd sent you a copy, but it does define FORCE, though my ideas have matured somewhat and I'd refine the wording a little if I were to re-write it now; and I shall do so when I get around to re-writing it. If another plan I have for the article goes awry, what's the chances of getting the article published in The Personalist? As it was originally written for another audience (and rejected because its character is too sophisticated for the periodical to which I sent it!), and since it needs a bit of refining for the audience of The Personalist, I'll perform that simple task if you say the word and my other plans for the article don't materialize (I want to get paid for it if I can find a publication to print it and pay me for it ... and I note in the WRITER'S MARKET '71 that "No honorarium" is granted for articles which appear in The Personalist). Well, I just read over my letter of Oct. 12 to you and see that I did send you a copy of my article on RIGHTS. I'll send with this letter my file copy of my letter to you of Oct. 12 and my one copy of the article on RIGHTS, with the request that you return them in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope (I have another copy of the article on RIGHTS which is to be returned by a friend, to whom I sent it, soon, so it's not likely I'll have to write the article from scratch again (though that might not be a bad idea - hah). I hope the following few words on FORCE will suffice for the time being.

First, my definition (with which I think I'm entirely satisfied, the "I think" signifying a slight reservation). FORCE is any volitional behavior which ~~intentionally~~ intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of another person or other persons. As you can see, this definition is applicable to either initiatory (invasive) force or retaliatory (defensive) force. I should note that retaliatory force is both defensive and invasive when used beyond the bounds of reason--an "overkill" ~~use~~ use of retaliatory force, such as (to use my favorite example) the store owner blowing the ~~bubblem~~ bubblegum thief's head off with a shotgun. My conclusions are: 1- COERCION is either initiatory force or an "overkill" use of retaliatory force; 2- retaliatory force (used) within reason (being good = objectively right = moral) is not coercion (which has no good connotations). -- A friend of mine in England (with whom I've corresponded for about 2 years and whom I met in Los Angeles this past summer) has just written (in part): "Your definition of force solves something that has been worrying me for sometime. The case of a person who continually, verbally 'picks' at someone until that victim eventually is provoked into taking physical action against that party. I now see that in fact that action by the second party (depending on his degree of response) may be justified since the first party was in fact using force against him." INVOLVEMENT is a state of being included as a part of some human action in a way which impinges on one's volition. In a peaceful discussion between Roy Childs and me about Dr. John Hospers, our discussion involves some aspect of your existence but you are not personally involved unless our discussion actively relates, favorably or otherwise, to your volition --a state in which your will plays an active part. A ~~person's~~ person's will is what he wants to do that's possible to him. A violation of a non-coercive person's will is a violation of that person's rights. UNWILLING involvement, then, would be any volitional behavior of one (AB) which ~~intentionally~~ intentionally required something of another ~~person~~ (LS) which he did not want (rationally or otherwise); this is applicable to an aggressor and his intended victim alike--LS, the intended victim, when he uses retaliatory force against AB's aggressive behavior, is intentionally requiring a change in AB's behavior which AB doesn't want to make, and the obverse (AB against LS) is obvious. (I did not

survivor's note

I'm quite pleased to have your assertion that you believe "that force should be used only in retaliation"! Assuming that you mean (as I do) what Miss Rand says--that force should be used only in retaliation and only against the person or persons who initiate the use of force--and make no exception to this rule (and I don't, under any circumstances), this understanding resolves your question as to whether a person (who has knowledge about an aggression) should be forced to testify if he refuses to do so. Force of this kind is initiatory, pure and simple. However, I'll hasten to say that such a person (who refuses to give information which will help resolve a dispute) would (especially in a free-market environment) suffer social ostracism, and conceivably to an extent which would make life very tedious for him. (Such behavior in today's environment is quite another matter.) I look forward to discussing with you the subject of freedom, social and psychological, and related concepts in the not-too-far-distant future. -- By the way, Roy Childs called me yesterday and said he has a string of engagements at the U. of Hawaii, beginning (I believe) on Jan. 7 and that he will be in LA for three days and hopes to be able to see you, at least briefly. I surely hope you two will have the privilege of meeting each other. My respect for Roy is great! (In case you're interested, his address is 400 Bonifant Rd., Silver Spring, MD 20904 and his private phone number is Area Code 301, 384-6058.)

Re your sentence (in part), "one cannot define 'force' in terms of unwillingness alone, for there are many things that other people do which I dislike and disapprove and which I would not willingly countenance, but I would not say they are using force against me because of it," if their behavior does not intentionally require your involvement in some way which is at odds with what you want, they are not guilty of using force against you ... though they would owe reparations for the result(s) of their behavior if it inadvertently and directly occasioned the loss of and/or damage to your person and/or property. Re your question, "if a man trespasses on your property, would you say that he is using force against you?" yes, he is, assuming that he has reason to know that I do not want him on my property (for reasons which I think are clear in view of what I've said about force). Definitions are vital and absolutely required before we can know precisely and exactly what we are talking about! (That wasn't meant presumptuously, as informing you of something which you didn't know.)

If by HAPPINESS is meant an emotional, psychosomatic state of well-being in which one justifiably feels that his existence is good (in which case, HAPPINESS would be the product of rational behavior), then happiness is a by-product--a result of one's consistent regard for and adherence to the objective standard of value (assuming, as I do, there is one), which I now believe to be human (each man's) well-being. The first task, of course, is to identify the principles which explain what a man's well-being comprises, and I am convinced that the well-being of one man can never be counted, rationally, as being inimical to another man's well-being (any one person's well-being can include only that which is possible to him; AB's getting the job doesn't adversely affect LS's (who wanted but didn't get the job) well-being, since it is not possible for two men to occupy the same position (place) at the same time and in the same respect). One's well-being is not guaranteed--he must pursue a course which secures it, and failure to do so is the primary cause of not securing it (which is broader than and ~~subsumes~~ LS's failure to get the job). Hence, Happiness is not a standard of value but the result of adherence to the standard of value. A critical operation would probably occasion much unhappiness (see def. of HAPPINESS above) but it might very definitely be conducive to one's well-being (indeed, one's well-being might depend on the operation) to undergo the operation. I agree with Miss Rand when she says that each man's happiness (the achievement of) is his highest moral purpose. How to achieve one's happiness vitally depends on the knowledge of what one's well-being is (though, sadly enough, it certainly isn't guaranteed even when one has this knowledge). -- We did accept Miss Rand's postulate that life is the human standard of value, but your letter has caused us to look with critical judgment. And I see that some (perhaps a lot of) thinking must be done on this subject. You've jogged my mind; much obliged! I can see that purifying THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY philosophically for the 2nd Edition is not going to be a mere, simple evening's work!! Gad! When'll I find the time?

Upon further reflection, could it be that reason is the distinctively human standard of

By Jove! could it be? I'll try to hang on to my enthusiasm while my thoughts are maturing. I certainly do appreciate your bringing this subject to my attention! The exploration of virgin areas of thought is not the easiest task, but it can be the most rewarding! And I positively intend to come in for my share of these rewards.

A further thought: Reason as each man's standard of value would call explicit attention to what every physically normal person possesses, and that's what's been lacking in most institutions of education, and this lack is without doubt the cause of incalculable human misery. Were this to become wider known, any teacher who would take an opposite position would have to openly oppose reason (and what would he oppose it with?--his reason?). Reason is an axiomatic aspect of human existence and, therefore, must be assumed but cannot be proved or disproved. It's the mental faculty by which a man is able to judge what is good for him or bad. A man whose reason was impaired could not be held reasonably responsible for his behavior--he would not possess that faculty in workable condition and would, therefore, not have a standard by which to judge what is good and what is bad. -- In view of your desire for clarity of thought, am I correct in assuming that putting my thoughts on paper (above) as I think them has your sanction? Were the situation reversed (as it is in the area of human value-standard), my sanction of your thinking (on paper) would contain a substantial amount of gratitude (as it does re "standard of value"). Such considerations make me wonder how many more lacunae we need to discover in the hierarchy of our knowledge. I don't know whether you appreciate it or not but, be that as it may, you have my gratitude!

Also, the exercise of reason is man's fundamental virtue, from which all other virtues derive, and being guided by reason is the same as being guided by man's objective standard of value, because (simply) reason is man's standard of value. To say that life is man's standard of value is obscure, vague--certainly not crystal clear, as there is no definition I know of which squares with the statement that life is man's standard of value. Self-generated and self-sustaining action is hardly a standard of value! The volitional part of a man's existence, however, which is the self-generated and self-sustaining action (which sustains his existence) is and can only be the result of his following reason (or someone else following reason on his behalf, in the case of children). I don't want to go off half-cocked, but I think you've put me on the track leading to a discovery of crucial importance. WOW! Please excuse my exuberance.

Re your "Once more on government: the other day I read that a man and his wife were about to fry their own 18-month-old baby on the stove (apparently for their own sadistic satisfaction), and were only stopped at the last minute by the entry of the police. I wondered, what if there had been no police but a laissez-faire society a la Tamehill?" Etc. John, you keep showing that you haven't read our book, and this is a classic example. Though we avoided the use of "police" in our book (because of the bad connotations of that and other forensic terms--such as "courts"), their rational counterpart in a free-market society are called defense agents in our book. There's no reason to assume that defense agents, given the same situation, wouldn't have prevented this disaster (and probably much more satisfactorily), and the diabolic intentions of the parents would have been the justification for the agents' action (upon what grounds did the police act?). But it's a mistake to assume that the police (in the case you related, were acting for the primary purpose of protecting the would-be victim, as our Chapter 9 goes into quite adequately. The primary function of police is to protect and act to perpetuate the government, though government must keep this from becoming common knowledge if they can. Please read our book. I think I really could come to think very highly of you; both of us, however, are caused to waste unnecessary time as the result of your not reading our book carefully. Really, John, it's good reading. Dr. Armentano, Prof. of Economics at the Univ. of Hartford (Conn.), wrote that TMFL is "a masterpiece of libertarian thought" and is requiring his graduate students to read portions of it (and there are a number of others). Our book was instrumental in bringing Dr. Armentano from a devoutly Randian position re ~~the~~ government to a total and explicitly clear belief in freedom (as it has many, many others). In a totally free-market environment, there would develop a cultural ethos which would make such an atrocity (as the 18-month-old baby incident) extremely rare; with the government setting such a horribly degenerate example, it's a wonder there aren't many more instances of such atrocities! It could always occur--Utopias don't exist. And anyway, there are other ways to prevent such a

other ways we're too psycho-epistemologically immature to conceive of at our present stage of mental development.

In a totally free-market society, however, all anyone would have to do is to let the parents know that their foul deed would become common knowledge. To do a thing like that (to anyone, let alone their own baby) would be virtual suicide in a free-market society, in which a person's reputation for reliability would be his meal-ticket (and I'd be inclined to believe that most people would consider as at least slightly suspect anyone who'd do such a thing). If you can succeed in making the transition in thought from what now exists to what would develop in a free-market environment, ~~then~~ you can see that it is quite conceivable that a person could behave himself so badly that he'd have the choice between 1- dying and 2- reporting himself to a rectification company (see Ch. 10 of TMFL) in order to gain social acceptance by demonstrating his ~~own~~ good intentions, making reparations for his aggressions, or otherwise rectifying his aggressive injustices and thereby re-establishing his reliability. No "superior force" would be necessary, John. It's quite understandable today, though, that force is the first thing most people think of when considering how to put a stop to aggression. In a free-market society, however, force would be used only as a last resort, as men would learn that the best which can be expected when force is used (in this case, in retaliation against initiatory force) is to maintain the status quo--that is, to keep what one has, intact--and that even the moral use of retaliatory force is a non-productive expenditure of energy (and in most cases is counter-productive), though it may of course become necessary on occasion to use force in self-defense. A point I'd like to make with you, John, is that the methods of self-defense would flourish in a competitive society in which men were ~~neither~~ neither ideologically nor legally disarmed, and this would cause to evolve an environment in which men would come to know that honesty is their only safe policy (to borrow and ~~refine~~ refine Ben Franklin's statement). Reading our book with the thoughtful attention it deserves (!) would, I think, make clear to you what I've said about the effect of freedom on the moral tone of the culture which is fortunate enough to bask in it. (No offense intended by the exclamation point.)

The question of "hired killers" is fully answered in our Chapter 11, "Warring Defense Agencies and Organized Crime." Please read it. Your argument (in your next to last paragraph) is, however, an excellent argument against a single, monopolistic government "The Agency of group B (government) would (indeed, does) go marauding about with guns, killing and torturing whoever they wished. Why not? they have the power, and all it would take (rather, takes) would be (is) a fairly considerable group of sadists or (and) otherwise malevolently motivated people (the latter being today's majority who think they need to be ruled). Who would defend the innocent against the agents of Group B (government)?" I disagree with the ~~own~~ thought which is implied in your answer--"No one, unless perchance the agents of Group A had superior fire-power."--as our defense (defense which is completely satisfactory) is in the development and use of rational ideas to "kill" the bad ideas which prevail and make our culture what it is; and the impact of our ideas is beginning to take effect, though barely perceptible (but the individualistic movement for freedom, as possessing a rationally consistent foundation, has only just been born!). I'm reasonably convinced that we'll win freedom easily if we have five more years before our deteriorating economy collapses, plunging most of the population into oblivion. But, John, trying to make "our" government become what it "should" be, while it may not help the forces of collectivism, certainly won't help the individualistic cause of freedom, either. Won't you, for your own sake, come all the way over to the individualistic cause of freedom. It really is good and, therefore, the only societal condition which is practical. Methinks thou art but a step away from the (figurative) Kingdom of Heaven. Come on in. We don't have streets paved with gold, but we have much better--intellectual pleasures which make life an exciting adventure.

I have acquired both your books since I last wrote. I've read portions with much interest; wish I had time to devour them. -- I believe my definition of FORCE and comments on it make clear what my answers would be to your term paper suggestion. Sorry I don't have time to elaborate more fully. -- Looking forward to hearing from you again. Best regards from Linda and me, for reason, peace, and liberty,

Janney
Morris G. Tannehill

Encl. - My ltr. to JH, 10-12-70, "RIGHTS" article, and S.A.S.E.

OVER

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of force and comment
sorry I don't
Best you again.

Very interesting what's transpired between Messrs
Branden and Nash recently. It surely looks as
though Mr. Nash is doing some independent
thinking re government, since a recent dis-
agreement w/ Branden. But you proba-
bly know the whole story.

December 20, 1970

Dear John,

You might call this a Sunday Supplement. I woke up early this morning, thinking about the question of human value-standard, and I think I've come to a conclusion. Which is: The standard of value for the species, Homo sapiens, is human well-being. And, I think, this is what Miss Rand means when she says, in substance (I won't take time to look it up), that whatever is conducive to man's life is the good, the moral, and that whatever is inimical to man's life is the evil, the immoral. This would be true in most cases ... but not all--suicide could never be conducive to a man's life, but it might be conducive to a man's well-being, as, e.g., many of the "witches" during the Inquisition who were tortured to force a confession and then burned to purify their souls. It's certainly conceivable that there are many such situations in which a man would be better off dead, in which situations his well-being would be his criterion for making such a judgment. In fact, a man's well-being is his standard of value for everything he does! Everything anyone does is ^{done} because he thinks it will serve his well-being. The task of a rational person, of course, is to correctly assess what his well-being consists of, and there are no situations in which the objective well-being of one man can be inimical to the objective well-being of anyone else. This last statement is not just something I want to believe--Roy Childs and I have discussed the lifeboat situation in which a man would have to kill another man (who'd done nothing to provoke the taking of his life) ... and if life is man's standard of value, one could very easily conclude that "kill him, I must" (as Roy did), as not killing him would be the result of the choice to die, and life as the standard of value can hardly lead a person to choose to die (death is not conducive to life). But I maintain that the choice to behave rationally and not to kill the other person, which would in some instances mean my death, would be conducive to my well-being, since my well-being requires a healthy self-esteem, which I could not have were I to kill an innocent, peaceful man (and I'm convinced that killing a man who has done nothing to provoke it is too high a price to pay for a rational man's existence, and I know I would not do it under any circumstances). The same is true, of course, even if one considers life to be man's standard of value, as the "life" which is considered man's standard of value is certainly not just the animality which enables a man to move around but life as "self-generated and self-sustaining action" (a process of, that is), which is usually understood in a rather hazy way as life as a consistently rational-acting being. Exactly what life is, I think, is the fly in the ointment--it's too indefinite, vague, because ill-defined; as I said in my letter of the 17th, in substance, it's more than a little suspect, the idea that a process of action is or could be a standard of value! For the time being, at least, I am heavily inclining toward the idea that human well-being is man's (every man's, since the well-being of one can never conflict with the well-being of another) objective standard of value.

Reason is that ~~process~~ by which men determine what their well-being is. When I suggested that reason might be man's standard of value I wasn't too clear about the distinctions in the various ways "reason" is used. Before I came back to well-being as the standard of value, it had occurred to me that "reason" is used as an abstract concept which subsumes under it every valid reason for any question anyone could ever ask--as an Objectivist might say, "Our appeal is to reason (with regard to any issue)." But, reason is man's means for determining what his well-being is; it's based on the facts of reality within one's cognitive purview, but it isn't a standard of value.

Well, that's all for now. For reason, peace, and liberty,

Lanny
Morris G. Tannehill

not man's faculty of reason

Dec. 22, 1970

Dear Tanny,

Thanks so much for your letter just received a few moments ago. This is not a reply to it: I shall reply in the next couple of weeks when I have digested the contents of yours. But I do want to say a couple of things that you should perhaps know about immediately:

Yes, DO send something to The Personalist. I know it doesn't give honoraria (it has a hard enough time surviving on University handouts, and many thankless hours are spent with the burden annually just to keep it going at all), but if it should happen that the other periodical does not wish to publish it in the form you want, I'd be delighted to take it on here, and give it first priority.

I shall return your two papers (letter and article on rights, which IS the one you sent) as soon as I have read them with some care.

Do not worry about the fate of your previous letter. It never left my house. If it doesn't turn up here (as I doubt that it will after all this time), I can only conclude that the maid threw it in the wastebasket along with certain other things on my desk that she thought were not to be kept. But it didn't fall into anyone else's hands, of that I am sure.

I know nothing of a Branden-Nash split, except over the matter of delayed royalties. I haven't seen Branden for ages, but when Nash was at my house two weeks ago he still professed belief in a limited-government view, as does Branden.

It is true that I haven't yet re-read ~~all~~ of your book - I shall have re-read it all before I answer your current letter; I know it is maddening to have objections made which are already covered in one's previous publications. (I have read again the first five chapters, and it was because of this fact that I sent you my latest comments about life and the standard of value - I'm glad now that I did, seeing that it sparked such a reaction in you!). But in all fairness let me point out that you have not - or had not - read my works either, and often I would either have to presuppose a point which I had treated at length in one or another of my books and articles, or explain it in a not-too-complete a way for lack of time. Not that I expect you to read my entire corpus of six books and dozens of articles, but it does help to be acquainted with the context of another person's thought.

Please DO think out ~~as~~ loud ~~a~~ in your letters - this last one of yours was very exciting just because you did. I always do the same myself, and would find it difficult to write letters in any other way.

Note on force: why do you limit force to the intentional? If I bumped against you accidentally or carelessly, and caused you injury, shouldn't I be liable? If a boy carelessly leaves his bicycle on the sidewalk and a blind man stumbles over it and injures himself, shouldn't he be able to collect damages? There is a whole fascinating area of law called "negligence law", negligence being the inadvertent infliction of injury or damage. Surely you wouldn't wish to throw this out entirely?

Note on using force only against those specific people who have used it against you: do you mean that if our country was invaded by a foreign power, you wouldn't retaliate unless YOU had been injured? (You couldn't retaliate after you were killed!) Not even if members of your family had been killed? or fellow townspeople? friends? Does the threat have to be that immediate before you are justified in wreaking injury on the invaders? What if they come with nuclear bombs, and unless you intercept the bomb FIRST there will be total devastation of the 100 miles in which you live? Surely waiting till YOU are injured is a perfect formula for getting yourself killed!)

More later,

Dear Tanny,

Just a bit more of a reply now than my note of yesterday. You are quite right, that all the central concepts - such as life, value, force, coercion, liberty, rights - need more careful thinking from the Randians than they have thus far received. I have read "The Objectivist Ethics" and other works till I am blue in the face, but I cannot make any more sense of some of the assertions than before, and many of the arguments seem to me clearly non sequiturs. The whole meta-ethics is bristling with difficulties which no one seems able to dispel; they just go on repeating the same stock formulae. ~~x~~ It would take a volume to spell it all out! Bob Nozick of the Harvard philosophy dept. has spelled out some of it but far from all in his forthcoming article "On the Randian Argument" in the Spring 1971 issue of The Personalist.

I do not define "coercion" as you do. It has seemed to me that if I hit someone over the head I am not coercing him, i.e. I am not coercing him into doing anything; I am just hitting him over the head, period (using brute force against him). But coercion comes in when I use a threat of some kind to exact some kind of behavior from him. For example: "If you don't let me have your daughter in bed tonight, I'll fire you from your job and I'll see to it that you won't get any other job in the city." That would be a prime case of coercion (assuming that the man was in a position to make good his threat). The degree of coercion would decline as the threat became less threatening: "If you don't do as I ask, I'll slap your face" wouldn't be much of a threat. But "If you don't give me fifty thousand dollars by next week, I'll blackmail you" is a genuine threat, and may be even more dreaded by the person than the loss of his life. No overt use of force is involved, not even a threat of force, just a threat of something else, just as dreaded or even more dreaded by the potential victim. I wonder what you would say about ~~in~~ such cases. They don't fall under your definition of "force", and yet I daresay you would agree with me that such situations are as undesirable as overt use of force or threat of force against someone.

The stock example used by liberals goes something like this: "Here is a starving man in South Carolina. There is a rich capitalist who can give away plenty and never miss it. The backwoodsman asks the capitalist for a crust of bread and the capitalist replies, 'Not until you pay me!'" This is supposed to prove that the capitalist ought to be forced to keep the man from starving. If we say "The man has no right to the unearned" the reply will be "What if he never had a chance to earn it?" ~~x~~ followed by "It's better than a tiny bit of the capitalist's freedom to choose be infringed upon, than that the other man be permitted to starve." Freedom is valuable but not THAT valuable!" I don't know what line you would take to answer such objections as these - the first ones to come out of the mouths of the liberals - or ~~any~~ other ones such as ~~x~~ "The physician found a cure for cancer, but he didn't care about humanity, ~~only~~ only for his wife; he used it to save his wife's life. Now before he destroys the formula, shouldn't he be forced to reveal the formula so that other lives can be saved? yours, for instance? What is so important about liberty that a single bit of it in ten minutes of one human life cannot be infringed, when as a result of this one case of infringing it, thousands of human lives can be saved and spared months of physical agony?" - The point of this is that our liberal "friends" would say that the capitalist was coercing the starving man. I would not say so, because as yet there is no threat; but suppose the capitalist said, "If you don't agree to work for me for nothing for the rest of your life, I won't save your life now," then that ~~an~~ would be coercion in my sense of a threat of a serious loss. However, there is still no use of force, or threat of force, in your sense!

~~xxxx~~

Hayek, in an otherwise ~~an~~ excellent opening chapter on liberty in "The Constitution of Liberty", cites the case of two men living some miles apart on an otherwise

empty desert. Mr. A's wells all run dry, and without water he cannot exist. Mr. B's wells are still all right. Mr. A goes to B's house and begs for some water. Mr. B refuses. Mr. A offers to buy it. Mr. B still refuses - under any conditions. Now Hayek says that Mr. B has exerted coercion on Mr. A. I say simply that "the desert has eaten him" - but Mr. B never coerced him. Hayek apparently confuses coercion with loss of a vital necessity of life. But I would say that if Mr. B said, "If you don't give me all your savings, and your daughter in marriage, I won't give you the water needed to save your life," that would be coercion: threat of loss of something important to the man's existence.

~~xxxxxxx~~

But note how easily a threat becomes an inducement. The master says to the slave, "If you don't work 16 hours for me today, I'll give you 50 lashes tonight"; this is coercion (threat). But now suppose the master has given the 50 lashes every day for a week, and the 8th day he says to the slave, "If you do as I ask today - 16 hours of work - I'll refrain from giving you a beating tonight." And now this is an inducement! And the mother-in-law saying "If you don't do what I want, I'll move out of your house" could be construed as either a threat or an inducement, depending on the man's attitude towards his mother-in-law. (Here is a very interesting case: the mother-in-law says, "If you don't do what I want, I'll have a heart attack!" assuming that she can't just will to have the attack and that the attack will come quite involuntarily, but that in the past she has always had a heart attack from frustration when she's been crossed (that she can't avoid this consequence even if she wants to). Is she coercing her son-in-law?)

The general theme of these remarks is that if force is the only thing that should be prohibited in your political philosophy, and if force is defined as narrowly as you do, then it excludes a host of things that (in the opinion of most people at least) ought to be prohibited as well, such as threat of exposure, threat of loss of job, the doctor's refusal to use his cancer-cure, etc. I wonder what you would say about these things.

I don't want to go far into your other comments until I've finished the remaining chapters of your book as promised. But allow me to mention - since I'm remarking in this letter only on things in the early chapters which I have re-read - that the word "reason" is one of the biggest weasel-words in the language and that I don't think the Objectivists have been clear enough about it, especially since it is such an important weapon in their arsenal. Prof. Donald Emmons has talked about this in the spring 1970 and winter 1971 issues of The Personalist; Richard Robinson has talked about the definition of "reason" in his fine book, "An ~~At~~ Atheist's Values"; and others have done so also, such as Brand Blanshard in "Reason and Goodness" - would that Rand's works were as lucid as Blanshard's!

It also seems to me that you do injustice to Mill. I have never found that he ended up a socialist (though it may possibly be true), and his "Principles of Political Economy" is an excellent piece of free-enterprise literature. He was not an altruist (at least not as Rand defines altruist, a person who considers only the interests of others and never his own), but a universalist (one who considers the interests of everyone involved, including his own). I can't discuss this in relation to egoism here, but will mention just one point that Blanshard makes: if the having of a painful toothache is a bad thing, why is it less bad when someone else has it then when you have it? The egoist apparently says it's bad only when you have it and couldn't care less if someone else has one. But why should the matter of who it belongs to make all this difference? Why are you so important as over against him, that your having it is bad and his having it is of no consequence?

Back to the force-coercion business, a remark occurs to me: much as I respect Rothbard's "Power and Market" (which I've read thoroughly - I met him here in L.A. several weeks ago when he spoke), I think that he makes a mistake at the beginning when he says that an agreement (or contract) must be to the interest of both parties, else they would not have entered into the contract in the first place. The starving man does not want to enter into the contract to work for free for 20 years, but he has to in order to have his life saved. When one man is at a great disadvantage, he is not in a position to dictate the terms of a contract or agreement, and yet it may happen that his life depends on making such an agreement. True, he gets something out of it - 20 years of servitude may not be as bad as losing his life right now - but it can hardly be said that "both parties benefit, else they would not have made the agreement." This has some bearing on the starving-man example, I think. "If I use no force against you, no threat of force; it's just that unless you sign over your entire bank account I won't extend this rope to you, and I'll leave you to sink in the quicksand."

A word here on your "meaningless concepts": as you see from Chapter 1 of my "Intro. to Phil. Analysis", the denotation of a term is its actual instances (instantiations) in the world; and, to have meaning, a term need not have denotation. "Unicorn" has no denotation, yet it has meaning. It has meaning because there is a rule for the use of this expression: we may never have seen a unicorn but we know what the term means if we have a criterion for its use, i.e. if we'd be able to recognize something as a unicorn if we came across it. It's not necessary that we actually come across it. Designation, i.e. having a rule that determines the use of a term, IS necessary for meaning; denotation is not. This seems to ultra-clear that I don't see how anyone could doubt it! (Your remark about the term "unicorn" denoting an idea in men's minds, is a mistake. When Thurber said he saw a unicorn in the garden, he didn't mean that he saw an idea-in-men's-minds in the garden! The term "unicorn-image" has denotation, for I now have a unicorn-image in my mind; but the term "unicorn", meaning the animal and not the image, has no denotation at all.

fbg

I am not comment on political philosophy in this letter because I shall read your remaining chapters first. But permit me a concluding cavil which does not take me into those chapters: you say that "there is no actual difference between self-interest and the interests of society". If you mean, ~~that~~ not that they are the same, but that they are co-incident or co-extensive (i.e. have the same denotation), then I say that this is true in some areas. It tends, as Adam Smith correctly thought, to be true in economic matters: the producer produces for his personal gain, but he cannot have that personal gain without fulfilling the needs of others. We are both equally familiar with examples from laissez faire economics. But as a general principle applying to all actions it seems to me untrue, i.e. it has thousands of exceptions. A man ~~steals~~ embezzles money from a bank, and if he gets by with it (conditions may indeed be such that he's pretty sure to) he is the gainer but surely society is not. If I get the job, then you don't get it. (And it doesn't help to say that we're both gainers from the general practice of voluntary hiring and voluntary application for jobs; this last is true, but I'd still be better off having the job than not having it.) (Rand was mistaken about this in her essay "The 'Conflict' of Men's Interests.") Some people do things harmful to society and are happy; others do not, and are unhappy. (See my section "Why Be Moral" in "Human Conduct".) As Plato said, the just man may be thought unjust and ~~benefit from society~~ be scorned and condemned by his fellows, and the unjust man may not be known for what he is and live a long happy life. It would be nice to say that "the virtuous are always rewarded and the vicious punished in this world" - but (to continue to quote Fielding's "Tom Jones") "there is only one thing the matter with this doctrine, namely that it is not true."

There now, I have replied in a manner of speaking after all. If the spirit should move you, I would appreciate any comments you have on the above, even before I comment on the parts of your letter which presuppose a closer acquaintance with your remaining chapters. Which will

Dear Tanny,

This is my Sunday Supplement in response to yours just received - or, one might say, Part Three of one longer letter.

In my Introd. to Phil. Analysis, I distinguish reasoning (pp. 128-33) from reason (pp. 133-34). This of course does not begin to unscramble the ambiguities attached to this vexed term. Richard Robinson has a lot more to say about it in the book I mentioned in yesterday's letter. And Donald Emmons, replying to Branden, says in part on p. 96 of the Jan. 171 issue of The Personalist: "As I use them, expressions like 'rational' and 'pure reason' have no normative ethical content or connotations whatsoever. To be more specific, the rational man (the man of pure reason) is one who has a clear view of what is (was, will be) the case, and neither contradicts himself nor commits obvious category-mistakes. But Mr. Branden's usage is normative. He would define the 'rational man' as one who has in addition a firm grasp of what ought to be chosen or done by the moral agent. Hence for him it is analytically true that the 'reasonable' man behaves morally; while for me this is by no means guaranteed." It seems to me that Emmons' sense of the term is clear, albeit too narrow to fit ordinary usage of it. We do speak of this or that as the "rational" thing to do, though such usage is usually extremely vague and ambiguous. A person can be rational in the sense of avoiding self-contradictions and category-mistakes and still be an absolute bastard in his behavior - and quite consistently with his premises too, if he pumps the wrong premises into his ethical reasoning. It's how one establishes and defends these ethical premises (from which conclusions about what-behavior-he-ought-to-engage-in follow) that's crucial: on this the whole thing turns. And this brings us to the huge issue of ethical naturalism vs. ethical non-naturalism (see Chapter 11 of Human Conduct and the entire first half of the anthology Readings in Ethical Theory, ed. W. Sellars and J. Hospers, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 2nd ed. 1970). I cannot even begin to embark on that vast subject here!

As to the standard of value, I suggest that you read Chapter 3 of my Human Conduct, the first half defending ~~egoistic~~ ^{hedonistic} theories and the second half anti-hedonistic theories ~~of~~ about the standard of value. The book was written in 1961, before Rand's "Objectivist Ethics" appeared, but I cannot say that I would do it all that differently today, because try as I will I cannot see a clear and unambiguous line of reasoning in that essay. (All various versions of happiness-theory are included under "hedonistic theories".)

The egoism vs. anti-egoism distinction cuts right across the very different egoism vs. altruism vs. universalism distinction: e.g. one can be a hedonist and be an egoist or an altruist, etc. (Chapters 4-7 of Human Conduct.) When you suggest that "human well-being" is the standard (it was Aristotle's also, and explained in detail in Chapter 1 of his Nicomachean Ethics), it is very important to keep one thing clear: are you suggesting that a given individual, say you or I, should use "human well-being" as his standard for determining what he should do, or should he use his own well-being as his standard? As I indicated in my letter of yesterday, the two do sometimes conflict. E.g. if you were in the French Underground during World War 2, and were about to be tortured and killed if you didn't reveal the names of your confederates, it might well be to your interest to tell, but not to theirs! (And if you decided not to tell out of "concern for their lives", how could you be an egoist, since you'd be placing their lives above yours?) (I have many fascinating variations on the lifeboat situation in that book.) I think the Objectivists are ambiguous on this point: sometimes they opt for outright self-interest, but sometimes they don't if they say that this or that is bad because it is "anti-life" (not anti YOUR life, but just anti-life); and when they talk about human rights they seem to say that you should not violate other people's rights, ever, even in situations where it would be to your interest to do so, e.g. where you could rob someone and never be found out. I don't think the Objectivists are very clear on these points, and I with your statement that "thanks to Ayn Rand we have a consistently rational

December 31, 1970

Dear John,

Just a short one while waiting for Linda to get ready to go into Lansing and start what I think will be a very active 3-day period. A couple of our friends are coming from Wisconsin this evening, and both of them have psychological problems which we'll tangle with. One of them came here for a visit on Thanksgiving, 1969, and we had quite a session of counseling him at that time; he's made some progress, but I'm reasonably sure that he's not the kind of person who has enough self-discipline or psychological knowledge to make continuous progress (I know, it should have been continual) without outside help. He will soon be in charge of a weekly newspaper with over 6,000 circulation, and his weekly editorials are already very good; he always brings the issue of freedom into his editorials. And he has done a fairly good job of illuminating certain aspects of freedom.

Well, just wanted to thank you for the three good letters and to say that I'll send you my response sometime next week, probably the latter part. I'm writing an article ("Man's Standard of Value") and am getting very enthused about it (I've thoroughly shown the error of holding that "life" is man's standard, and I'm eager to have your comments on it), but I have to do much more thinking on what human well-being is and how to explain it. It seems such a simple concept ... until one begins to explore it! However, I'm making progress in understanding it, and whatever I write on the subject will not be over-complexified (to use a term my wife coined, to counter the accusation of "oversimplification"). By the way, I thought Aristotle's professed standard was happiness, not well-being (which is inclusive of much more than a person's happiness). What a man's well-being consists of is objective--that is, it's not determined by whim but must be identified continually, at whatever time and in whatever context one finds himself. The faculty by which a man identifies what his well-being requires is, of course, reason. What human well-being is, has to be learned, as any other knowledge has to be learned. A doctor learns what the proper function of the heart is, and he discovers that it is objectively the operations which serve a man's well-being. ... Well, I can see some problems, and I don't want to get too involved at this time, so I'll call a halt. More later.

Best regards from Linda and me,
For reason, peace, and liberty,



Morris G. Fannehill

Dear Tanny,

Your note just came today; thanks - I look forward to your letter. Meanwhile, I have finished reading your book (carefully, I hope), and instead of waiting for your letter I'll forge ahead with a few comments. They will not be in any particular order, just as I happen to think of them.

1. Economists are constantly saying, "Yes, we can get rid of inflation IF you don't mind having increased unemployment. The more we put the brakes on inflation, the more unemployment there will be. Now, are you willing to have 12 million people in the United States unemployed as the result of your anti-inflation policies? Do you want to have that on your head?" And so on. Now, when I say that but for government interference there would be very little unemployment, they claim that this statement of mine is entirely lacking in evidence. They say that a purely capitalistic society would be rife with unemployment. And I must say I have never seen any concrete evidence on this matter - just speculation about what would probably happen if.... You say some things about this on page 25, but I know of no really systematic and empirically grounded defense of pure-capitalism-as-compatible-with-full-employment. Do you? and have you any thoughts on this matter?

2. Nowhere in your book do you mention ecological matters. True, this has become the rage since your book appeared; but I am sure you must have some thoughts on the subject. There are surely problems; and those who know the most about the matter, such as the biologists, are the people who are the most worried of all. Not only are our lakes and rivers turning into sewers not fit for life, but the same thing is happening to our oceans, much more rapidly than we had thought. The question is, what should be done about this? It's no good for just this isolated individual or that one to take some measures - that would be a drop in the bucket. Everyone must do so, to save the environment. And how can everybody be got to do so? Here the obvious move is: pass a law, making the penalties for violation very stiff. But of course a no-government libertarian such as yourself does not wish to make any such move: there must be no government, consequently no laws. Now, then, would you, in a completely voluntaristic society such as you recommend, make sure that masses of people don't contribute to the destruction of the environment?

The question here is a general one, not limited to ecology. Abe Lincoln said, "The government should do only what the people can't do for themselves." Now this statement is vague, for it doesn't specify WHAT things in his opinion they can't do for themselves. But the statement would be better if it read, "The government should do only what individuals can't do ALONE." The environment would seem to be an example of this. Many people ~~xxxxx~~ will voluntarily cooperate in an enterprise they deem worth-while IF they know that everyone else is doing it to - but how ensure that everyone else will do it too unless certain penalties are attached to the failure to do it?

3. You repeatedly state, as on page 56, that private defense agencies would find it to their interest to make a fair decision. I tend to doubt this. The private defense agencies that would make the most money would be those that made the most popular decisions. Of course there is a difference! For example, in disputes involving management vs. labor, there are more people in labor than in management, so an arbitration agency that was known to be pro-labor would get more members than one that was pro-management. It would be to the interest of the agency to be pro-labor. Wouldn't it? What would keep the agency fair as opposed to just popular, i.e. pandering to the most numerous group?

4. You say that a private defense agency would be more efficient than a police force in ~~preventing crime~~ reducing the incidence of crime because it would help to prevent crime, ~~xxx~~ whereas the police only try to apprehend the criminal after a crime has been committed. How far can one do this, however, without violating the rights

of individuals? There are some psychologists who now say, that on the basis of carefully prepared psychological tests they can spot by the ages of 8 or 9 those boys who are going to be juvenile delinquents later (by their mid-teens) - so, they reason, why not take those boys from their homes and put them in a "decent" environment with good psychological therapy, thus preventing the crimes that they would have committed if they'd stayed home? Note that this would presumably involve taking them away from their homes even without their or their parents' consent. Let's assume that the psychologists are correct in saying that they can make such excellent predictions; would you be in favor of empowering them to do this? I am sure you wouldn't; but it would be a good example of crime-prevention. I could cite many others.

Even in the most ordinary situation of one person assaulting another, there is a certain amount of "jumping the gun on the aggressor" which I am sure you would take to be justified. If you see the stranger reaching for his gun-holster, I am sure you would say you have a right to shoot him before he has a chance to shoot you. (Or would you say you should wait until you are absolutely sure? and you can't be absolutely sure until he's done it, viz. shot you!) And surely you are entitled to apprehend the man as he enters the factory gates with a switchblade, or perhaps some explosives (to destroy the factory); or must you be sure of his evil intentions first? I am still not clear how far you would be prepared to go in preventing the crimes of others, especially how nearly sure you would want to be that he is going to commit one before you undertake measures yourself.

5. But the feature of your thesis that disturbs me most, I think, is your treatment of punishment. In prehistoric days, people took their own vengeance against aggressors, either alone or in packs. Now it has long been contended, with good justification, that a person is not a very impartial judge of aggression against himself: he will over-value the severity of the offense, and he might consider ~~it~~ retaliatory murder the best penalty of someone looking at him the wrong way. It is for such reasons as this that we have a system of law, which standardizes (somewhat) the punishment, and does not leave it entirely to the whims of the aggrieved party.

Now, you would leave punishment to the defense agency. But surely the individual retains the right not to leave it to an agency, and take care of the punishment himself if he chooses, doesn't he? So he could track down the aggressor himself and mete out whatever punishment he chose to, and not belong to any defense agency at all! Surely he has this right, and then just as surely he ~~ex~~ could exercise it? And this would have all the difficulties hinted at in the preceding paragraph.

This bothers me a good deal, but not even as much as the following: suppose the man does leave it to a defense agency. Now, from your description, it would appear that the defense agency's interest (as the representative of the aggrieved party) is to keep its good name by having as little crime as possible. It seems to me from your accounts that its concept of crime and punishment is entirely utilitarian: the agency "arrests" the aggressor in order to deter him, deter future criminals, and protect others; I see nothing in your acct. of desert, of giving the man what he deserves. (See Ch. 10 of Human Conduct, last section.) Acc. to desert, he is punished because he committed a crime and not in order to prevent future crimes. Your defense agency seems to have the latter function only, leaving the former one unmentioned and ignored. Do you really want it that way? (To say that if the aggressor is uncaught, the defense agency gets a bad name, may be true, but isn't it trivial compared with the far more important fact that the man goes free?) Consider one insignificant little man, with no influence, just a "public nuisance" who however is innocent of THIS crime of which he's accused; I want a system of justice which will consider this case on its merits, regardless of the fact that he's a nobody. A defense agency surely would do what it wanted with him and no one would ever know the difference! Why should any of its patrons care what happened to the nobody?

In short, what kind of penal justice would there be, to mete out punishment in accordance with desert - rather than of simple utility? (Utility might well consist of railroading an innocent nobody and covering up the evidence. Utility might consist of letting off an influential sonofabitch if he paid the defense agency enough money for letting him go. Utility would run constantly afoul of human rights - that's the main traditional objection to utilitarianism in matters of justice. And I don't know how you would get around it.)

True, we don't need long jury trials as now, but your mention that we might not need a trial at all scares me somewhat. If "it's perfectly clear" who did what, just go ahead and kill him (or whatever punishment), you say. But perfectly clear to whom? How can one know, if there's no trial? The only murder in history in which it's perfectly clear is the murder of Ruby by Oswald, which was seen by millions on television. For virtually every other, it's a matter of circumstantial evidence, gathering evidence pro and con, presenting it in a court of law by prescribed rules of evidence and going by a law that was on the books before the trial began. ~~Whyxxxxxxx~~ Would you NOT have it done this way? How would a defense agency do it? Would cost-cutting methods result in ~~inadequate~~ punishments based on inadequate evidence of guilt or innocence? If you don't have a system of law, binding upon the judge, I don't see how you could avoid countless cases of railroading-of-the-insignificant-innocent whom nobody cares about, and of letting-the-rich-guilty go through bribery, and so on. A defense agency after all is out to make money; why should they care about such niceties?

Well, I have lots more comments, but I have papers to correct before tomorrow, and a department meeting to conduct, so I'll wait with further comments until a more convenient time. Hopging to hear from you at your earliest convenience, and with all best wishes to you both,

January 13, 1971 (thru 1-21)

Dear John,

Don't know how soon I can finish this letter, but I'll at least start. A young lady is coming from New Hampshire for a week or two for some help with her mental problems, and she will be taking up time which will substantially reduce my "spare" time (I think she means business about solving her problems, so I'm somewhat hopeful--expectantly so). As you know, I have eight full pages to answer (your four letters, of Dec. 22, 23, 24, and Jan. 5), and I want my answers to be as clear and convincing as possible (of course). By the way, did you read the article on libertarianism, with front page feature in color! in last Sunday's New York Times Magazine (Section 6)? Very good article! I have an advertisement on your new book, LIBERTARIANISM--THE COMING POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY, and am ordering two copies (one for a friend); look forward to reading it. I don't like your use of "political" as having a good connotation, as I'm convinced there's nothing good that's political and that a part of our progress toward peace and liberty will be the dawning realization within the culture that politics is an unnecessary evil. There is, in reason, no place for any political philosophy ... except maybe for the purpose of studying the various systems of slavery which have always prevented men from being free. But I'm reasonably sure you mean the word to convey the meaning of social relationships, so I'll understand it that way until you correct or further enlighten my understanding. I certainly agree with the last line in the brief review the adv. contains, that "Libertarianism is 'an idea whose time has come.'" Right on! ... to the victory of reason. I say again--we're going to win!

I'm working on my article, "Man's Standard of Value," and I've just about done the thinking and discovering (for myself) what I want to go into the article, as well as having it about 2/3 completed. I've thoroughly demolished the notion that "life" (using Miss Rand's definition) is a standard of value for man, showing that the life of a mystic or a successful thief (one who eludes capture) is "self-generated and self-sustaining action" every bit as much as is the man's whose behavior is consistently based in reason, and I've shown that the jargon about "man's survival qua man" is meaningless (since it's not possible for a man to survive as a non-man), and that a "rational ~~man~~ being"--a man--is still a rational being even when much of his life is expended irrationally. (That is, he is in the Aristotelian sense.) Will send it to you within two weeks (probably). When does the next issue of The Personalist come out, or do you already have enough to fill that issue?

"Note on force: why do you limit force to the intentional?" Because, if it's not intentional, it's an accident. And, though a man may be responsible for repairing the damage resulting from his accident (that is, insofar as is humanly possible) if both or all parties aren't equally at fault, the accusation ~~is~~ that one has used initiatory force (in a free-market society) will be a very serious charge and will blemish a man's character, making it more difficult for him to survive; therefore, unless his action was intentional, he should not be held morally responsible, since accidents are certainly not intentional. The only fundamental law, stated as a principle, in a totally free-market society will be, NO MAN OR GROUP OF MEN MAY MORALLY INITIATE THE USE OF FORCE AGAINST ANY OTHER MAN OR GROUP OF MEN. All that men must learn for peace to become experiential reality is that it's wrong to initiate violence, and they will, eventually. Almost everyone today has permitted into his consciousness the idea that it's permissible (at least under certain circumstances) to use initiatory force (they see it all around, and the existence of government with popular sanction is a very great influence to permit this principle into one's consciousness, though this influence is subliminal with respect to its effect on most people). One who has this principle uncritically and unwittingly established in his mental structure places himself, psychologically, in a hostile world (to the extent of the intensity of the effect of the principle), and he is suspicious, to some extent, of everyone (this is, as I'm sure you know, a destructive psychologically practice--projection). After all, if initiatory force is permissible, no one can be trusted ~~anymore~~, they think. And, John, isn't this the attitude of most people?! It's the presence of that principle in most people's minds (that initiatory force is permissible) which accounts for this attitude. One of the greatest ^{reasons} ~~of~~ the moral tone of the culture in a free-market environment spiraling (up) is that the premise, in most people's minds, that initiatory force is permissible would be virtually irradiated very shortly ... as soon as men discovered that it really is possible, practical, and inevitable that men, as a general rule, live together in peace (as soon as coercive in-

As you can see, two days have elapsed. The girl arrived and her father, who brought her, just left this morning. We have a 50/50 partnership with him in the establishment of a libertarian community ~~XXXX~~ retreat, which is for the purpose of survival after the coming financial crash. We know what we want but are hindered from going ahead with the project right now--he has been trying to sell his land and buildings for several months, but the property has been tied up by some legal action which one of his renters has initiated against him and keeps stringing along (for free rent). We think we'll be able to get going with FIOT (that's what we plan to call it) by late Spring at the latest. Well.....

"Do you mean that if our country was invaded by a foreign power, you wouldn't retaliate ~~if~~ unless you had been injured?" John, I don't have a country, and I'm not sure I know what you mean by "country." I doubt that I'd join, willingly, with the armed forces of the USA to repel the attack by the foreign power--the fight between two intrinsically evil institutions would be nothing but a nuisance to me, and I'd try to steer as ~~clear~~ clear of the fighting as I could ... and I'd use retaliatory force when feasible against either side! I'm not going to be in a position to intercept any bombs, so I doubt that I'll have to make any decision as to what I'd do. But, and what's more important, you're looking at things from today's regimented, collectivistic environment and making the same mistake, I think, that Galbraith makes in THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY--namely, assuming that things are going to stay just about as they are. They aren't! I don't know whether you ~~saw~~ saw the long and very good article on libertarianism in last Sunday's New York Times Magazine ~~(mentioned on page 1)~~ (mentioned on page 1), but remember that I said it's just the beginning ~~show~~ shadows which coming events cast before them. Now, I firmly believe we'll begin to make more than just a small impact on the culture. I'm very encouraged. And, if I'm right and the real peace movement (libertarianism) grows here in the USA, the result will be crumbling regimes all over the world, in which case there won't be any danger from foreign aggression. I'm convinced this is what will happen, though I can't prove it; but I will ~~fore~~ forecast that you will be able to see much evidence of crumbling statism within the next year or two. Hold me to it! Much, however, will depend on what the U. S. Government does with regard to the shaky monetary situation. Frankly, I can't see how the U. S. Government will be able to preserve even the semblance of sanity much longer; and, when the "blind" begin to see, the sanction of the victim will no longer exist (and this is one reason why I'm hoping that a completely voluntary military isn't developed--they're much more powerful than conscripted men--and I think this might be one reason why Nixon is moving toward a voluntary military, withdrawing troops from Vietnam, and making government "better looking" in as many ways as he is able to do). When enough victims' sanction is withdrawn, as it will be as the idea that freedom really is good spreads, those evil men who want to rule others will, lacking support, decide to become honest for a change (at least, most of them will, being the social metaphysicians all of them are). And, after all, this method of changing the ideas in the culture is the only completely satisfactory way to change the culture for the better. I've been saying two decades for the past year and a half; it's possible, depending on the monetary situation, that we might even beat that! The idea of freedom is a powerful one!

Speaking of meta-ethics, please note that none of the ~~XXXXXX~~ definitions of related concepts in my article on rights is circular (the work done on these concepts took me well over a year--part time, of course, but continually), and they are concepts which are vitally important and which must be understood clearly before one can understand the subject of freedom. It's little wonder that the prevailing idea in our culture is a fervent, patriotic belief in slavery--that "we" must have rulers to "run the country"!! A top government official said recently that the trouble on campuses is because the young ~~people~~ people have too much freedom! Not understanding that freedom is not license but a condition of existence in which a non-coercive person lives uncoerced (which is the result of believing that one must rule or be ruled--sacrifice to others or sacrifice others) is directly the result of the failure of the cultural opinion moulders to define their terms (the requirement to do so would put most social workers out of business).

Speaking of definitions, you say, "I do not define 'coercion' as you do," but you never get around to saying how you define it. You give some imagined situations, and you use the word in your descriptions of them, but the most one can get from your use of the word is a sort of a feeling or a mental image of what coercion means, nothing very precise. "Coerce" means force (at least, of a certain kind, assuming there is a distinction between the two words),

and hitting someone over the head is coercing him, and you can't say that you're not coercing him into doing anything--obviously, you don't want him to remain conscious and do what he'd probably do without the hit on the head. And this ~~xxx~~ brings up an interesting point re the difference between coercion and retaliatory force--an act of coercion is for the purpose of getting a person to do what he's unwilling to do, whereas the act of retaliatory force (when used within reason) is for the purpose of getting a person not to do what he wants to do, or to undo the damage he's already done. Now, because an act of coercion is for the purpose of getting a person to do what he's unwilling to do, doesn't mean that an act which is for the purpose of getting a person to do what he's unwilling to do is ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ necessarily an act of coercion; it does mean that an act of coercion is always an act ~~which~~ which intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of another person or other persons. FORCE is always a volitional act which intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of another person or other persons, even retaliatory force (since it intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of the aggressor--it requires behavior which the aggressor doesn't want to do), but retaliatory force is used to repel coercion (or to effect justice after an act of coercion has been perpetrated) and is ~~xxxxxxxx~~ not itself coercive in nature (that is, retaliatory force is not coercion), since coercion is wrong and retaliatory force (used within reason) is good. "Coercion" has only bad connotations, and I have concluded, therefore, that COERCION is either initiatory force or an excessive use of retaliatory force (how it would be determined what was an excessive use of retaliatory force is another subject, one which is not ~~xxx~~ relevant to the present discussion).

As Linda has just pointed out to me, the idea of doing or not doing is irrelevant. I got into it from your statement, "I am not coercing him into doing anything," and this derailed me for a while. The government doesn't care what I do, so long as I pay my taxes and obey its laws, but obeying its laws involves not doing some things I would otherwise do--that is, the state coerces me/~~into not doing~~ those things it legally prohibits (it doesn't coerce me into ~~doing~~ anything with respect to those things which are legally prohibited, it coerces me into not doing them). Coercion or force can be used for purposes of restraint, which is not for the ~~xxx~~ purpose of getting anyone to do anything.

In today's environment, many people do get away with such irrational behavior as saying to an employee, "If you don't let me have your daughter in bed tonight, I'll fire you from your job and I'll see to it that you won't get any other job in the city," though I'm sure such behavior is rare even today. In a free-market environment, however, such a person would either shape up or ship out because there'd be no instrument of initiatory force which makes justice impossible to come by. And, further, there'd be no threat at all with regard to his finding another job in a totally free-market environment (it'd probably be a better one, in view of how irrational his boss is), though such a threat would be a serious matter for most people today (with jobs getting scarcer).

When you say, "No overt use of force is involved" (2nd par., page 1 of your letter of Dec. 23), I think it is because of your idea (unwitting or otherwise) that all force is of the "physical force" kind. You ~~xxxx~~ made this statement in connection with your blackmail situation, and there's so many questions re blackmail to which I don't have the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ answers that I'm reluctant to getting into any discussion re blackmail. However, I'll venture to say that all blackmail wouldn't necessarily be bad--for example, suppose you knew some things about me and knew that I didn't want them known, and you threaten me with exposure unless I pay my bills to you and others; in this instance, I'd say that blackmail would be a good method of retaliatory force. Before going any further with this line, however, it's a straw man which can and does actually exist in a regimented society (which is the result of irrational ideas about right and wrong) but which would be virtually non-existent in a free-market society (people, generally speaking, wouldn't need scapegoats against whom to direct their hostility, which they have toward themselves; they do "need" such scapegoats today, as Thomas Szasz eloquently points out in THE MANUFACTURE OF MADNESS). While the "I want your daughter or you're fired" situation is not an overt use of force (if by "overt" you mean physical violence), it is the use of force, as it does intentionally require the unwilling involvement of others, and it is initiatory force since the intended victim(s) did nothing to provoke it. I'm sticking to my definition of FORCE since I see nothing wrong with it and you haven't shown me anything wrong with it or a better definition. The other instances (in the 2nd par., page 1, yours of Dec. 23) do fall under my definition of "force," and yes I do agree that such situations are undesirable (as is any other situa-

Re the "rich capitalist" and the poor, starving backwoodsman (last full par., page 1, yours of Dec. 23), ~~neither~~ neither instance you posed is an instance of the use of force, nor is the latter instance the use of coercion, even with your idea of coercion--the serious loss the backwoodsman will experience (if he doesn't get food) is not the result of the capitalist taking anything away ~~from~~ from him that was rightfully his. But it is a case of extreme irrationality (assuming that the backwoodsman isn't known to be a ne'er-do-well), and the backwoodsman would, were he to behave rationally in this instance, agree to anything, knowing that the contract would and could never be enforced. The only moral obligation ~~the~~ the backwoodsman would have to the capitalist is to behave himself in a non-coercive manner toward him and, possibly (depending on the capitalist's behavior), to pay him a reasonable price for the help when he got able to do so. This capitalist/backwoodsman example is a situation which has been created by the same liberals who spout it in their attempts to extend their rule (with ~~the~~ resources stolen from others!) and, thereby, increase slavery (which I prefer to "restrict freedom further," since freedom is an absolute and is not divisible). -- Your example of the physician who destroyed his cancer cure is virtually inconceivable, but YES! he is taking nothing away from others which is rightfully theirs, and anyone who would force him to reveal the formula would be acting in a reprehensible manner. Why the initiation for force is always wrong is a crucial part of my article on man's standard of value. ~~What is so important about liberty that a single bit of it in ten minutes of one human life cannot be infringed, when as a result of this one case of infringing it, thousands of human lives can be saved and spared months of physical agony?~~ Your last sentence (same par.) is correct--"there is . . . no use of force." Your argument, "What is so important about ~~liberty~~ liberty that a single bit of it in ten minutes of one human life cannot be infringed, when as a result of this one case of infringing it, thousands of human lives can be saved and spared months of physical agony?" is a variant of ~~utilitarianism~~ utilitarianism which is an inextricable part of all the share-the-poverty schemes. One thing I've noticed about your books is that you seldom venture to advance your own conclusions, and I've wondered why. Of course, when a person does declare himself about something, there's the chance that he will have to point out his error to others later (when he discovers it), but I don't count this as reason enough for refusing to publish one's conclusions. Not having many firm conclusions would be a good reason, and I can certainly understand how one could get confused by reading all the krapp that's been written (especially on philosophy), but I think the reason in your case is your failure to develop precise definitions of certain key concepts. At least, it seems obvious to me that you use the words "coercion" and ~~the~~ "force" without knowing precisely what they mean (for which, an epistemologically correct definition is required), and perceptual images are not sufficient to convey precise knowledge (one's understanding must be conceptual before he can convey knowledge clearly and with exactitude). An example of holding a concept in a perceptual way is our use of force in THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY (which I've alluded to before), which was before we had a satisfactory definition of force. Since it is the ~~moral~~ moral responsibility of everyone (to himself) to be clear in what he understands (everyone, not ~~just~~ just philosophers), I'll never be satisfied with my understanding of any concept until I arrive at a valid definition of the concept; then one can know what he is talking about!

Re Hayek's two-men-on-a-desert ~~situation~~ situation, I agree with you--"Mr. B never coerced him." As to the latter situation, Mr. A would be warranted in agreeing to anything in the face of Mr. B's blatant irrationality and collecting back what was rightfully his when he was able to do so, as well as what interest Mr. B would owe him on his savings (the daughter ~~he~~ brings in some complications, though ~~the~~ the problem would be minor if the daughter were, or had been, reared rationally--she'd know how to take care of herself until he could get some help or she were able to escape). In the first instance, where B refuses to give water to A under any conditions, I agree with you--"the desert has beaten him." But no one forced A into the desert; he took his chances and lost. However, the chances of such a thing happening are extremely remote; and, further, anyone who would do such a thing in a free-market environment would cut his own throat if it were ever found out, unless he were self-sufficient, as no one would give him the time of day, nor would they permit him on their property. I just received a letter from a friend who does some placer mining north of San Francisco. He (Dave) knows the history of mining in Calif., and he says that the first miners in the gold rush days were men with no scruples, men who would rather be rich than honest, and the government had very little to do with what transpired among the settlers; but they became very trustworthy men in the anarchy which existed, as a dishonest person

had his possessions (or a substantial part of them) taken away and he was banished--literally banished--from the area! Furthermore, one was highly incensed when another asked too many questions to establish his honesty, and one could get himself in trouble by asking too many questions (if he didn't know the sacred code of honesty which was rigidly ~~xxx~~ enforced and religiously adhered to, the questioner's honesty was in doubt!). The psychology of such happenings is very clear; it can't be any other way when men are truly free! Why people don't see it is a sad commentary on their sense of life and understanding of human nature (they're too busy looking at the results of altruism to notice that man can, if he knows he can and chooses to do so, behave himself reasonably).

Re your 1st full par. on page 2, yours of Dec. 23, the master/slave situation is ~~xxxxx~~ a coercive one, and the inducement (work 16 hours and I'll not beat you) is a coercive inducement--the other side is, "If you don't work 16 hours, I'll beat you again." I don't have enough facts about the mother-in-law threatening to move (does she own all the furniture and will be taking it with her? etc.). The mother-in-law who threatened to have a heart attack would probably do everyone a favor if she did, and the sooner the better; and anyone who would concede to her whims deserves her! If she doesn't take anything away from the son-in-law that is rightfully his, no, she's not coercing him, even if she takes everything in the house (assuming it is hers) away with her.

You see, I have defined 'force' very broadly, not narrowly as you state--any volitional behavior which intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of another person or others is force and is wrong. The rule of social freedom is, "If it isn't force, no one may rightfully prevent you from doing it by the use of ~~xxxxxx~~ force; and if they do, it's their ass!" -- Why should threat of exposure be prohibited? The employer who frequently threatened his employees with the loss of their jobs couldn't last very long in a free-market environment--the employees he would keep would never produce the quality that the employees of a more rational employer would produce. You see, sales today are based on many other things than price, and the price of labor (wages) is artificial and based on many other things than ability and merit. The situation you posed ("do this or you're fired"), though it surely might occur in a free-market society (and no one could rightfully prevent it by the use of force), would be virtually non-existent. The insurance companies would make it very rough on anyone who behaved so irrationally, and they could do so easily without having to resort to the use of force; you see, they ~~xxx~~ want a peaceful environment, as they have a vested interest in seeing that everyone behaves himself in a non-coercive manner. At any hint of violence, or even any non-violent irrationality which would result in the unnecessary ~~xxxx~~ diminution of people's lives (such as the boss who made irrational demands under the threat of loss of job), they'd go into action in several non-coercive ways (the news media, telling what the man had done, is one way to ruin anyone like that). You pick all of your examples (most of them, I should say) from the degenerate culture in which we live, move, and ~~xx~~ have our being (to quote a part of Acts 17!), and such examples are not too hard to find; in fact, I don't understand why there aren't more, today (except for the fact that in any semi-civilized society the number of "criminals" (aggressors) is relatively small, especially if you exclude all politicians and bureaucrats! (Get rid of them and aggression would virtually come to a halt.) My definition of 'force' excludes nothing which can rightfully be prohibited by force, and it spells out clearly how men may behave themselves--do anything you want, so long as it is non-coercive--i.e., so long as it doesn't require the unwilling involvement of another or others. It's so simple that any 6th grader couldn't fail to understand it, but grown people, who've lived with initiatory ~~xxx~~ violence all their lives, know better--life isn't like that, and you'll learn better someday (they say, "knowing" that life is a sewer!) And many people know that what I've said is true but find it very difficult to consider it seriously, 'since hardly anyone believes like that!' These people are sad cases of social metaphysicians who desperately need to learn to do their ~~xxx~~ own thinking. 50,000,000 Frenchmen can be wrong!

1-21 I had an extremely interesting experience last evening. I went to Detroit to meet with some men who are with a new company (3 years old); they contacted me, wanting me to come down to a meeting they were having to see whether I'd like to become affiliated with them. ~~xxx~~ They had sent me some of their literature on three previous occasions, and I was a little intrigued in spite of the fact that the literature was couched in somewhat mystical, unclear wording, and what the company did was not understood at all from reading their literature. But, from what I could gather, I was curious to learn more and find out

whether their operation was something similar to what I've done a bit of thinking on--and, by George, it was! They sell programs, much more sophisticated than the NBI lectures, with tape recorders and the whole works (a written manuscript to enable one to learn via two of his senses, ~~and~~ reading as he listens, with plenty of space to make notes, etc.), which are alleged to motivate a person to learn what it means to live/~~for~~^{for} his own self interest! The taped lectures, as I told them (after hearing one), are so horribly foggy and in some cases very much in error that I wouldn't sell one to an (non-violent) enemy of mine. But I spent a few hours with the Vice President (the No. 2 man)--Dave--and made him a proposition which he decided to pursue. He is going to send me a chapter from one of their programs and let Linda and me re-write it! Then, if he likes it, we will have the job of re-writing the whole series--around 8 or more complete programs--and making them as consistently objective as we can. Then, after that is completed, I can sell their programs ... can I ever! ... with a passion!!!! We'll also be able to incorporate the philosophy of freedom, subtly, ~~into the programs~~ ~~into the programs~~ into the programs (Dave said we could!). Dave was literally fascinated with what he heard from me about freedom and my explanation about the nature of man and the psychology of human motivation, and he was in disagreement very little (he even agrees now that governments are unnecessary evils, though I cautioned him not to say too much about the subject until he learned more about it; he bought a copy of TMFL). The last thing he did after ~~me~~ I began to leave was to call me back and ask me to write Branden's definition of an emotion on the back of his plane reservation envelope! (I had pointed out to him that whoever had made the tape I ~~listened~~ listened to, which was about emotions, didn't even know what an emotion was, and I quoted NB's definition, which I like--an emotion is the psychosomatic form in which a man experiences his estimate of the harmful or beneficial relationship of some aspect of reality to himself, and I noted, at his request, (on the envelope) that an emotion ~~was~~ was an automatic value response; he was really interested, and I haven't seen such interest in quite some time! I was in my element last night!!!) I don't know whether Linda and I will be able to make anything out of the particular chapter he sends to us, but we'll try if we think we can after receiving it. It's quite an opportunity, I think, and may be what I've been looking ~~and~~ and preparing myself for (Linda, too, wants to get into something else than teaching). I'm hoping, but not too expectantly. They're selling their programs, krappy wording and all, almost like hotcakes, and they cost \$595 each! There may be as many as 10 or 12 programs, and they're planning on making as many other programs as they can find applications for; and they revise and update them every six months, even if it takes throwing the old one away and making a completely new one! I surely hope we can get the gist of what they're trying to convey in the chapter he sends to us and do a bangup job which will be perceived as such.

It's true that "reason" can be used in a number of ways, but I can't see the difficulties that your descriptive "one of the biggest weasel-words" implies. I've read what Richard Robinson says, pp. 72-105, and, while some of it is informative, some of it is certainly krappy ("Any virtue may become an occasion of pride, for the peculiarity of the vice of pride is that it finds its opportunity precisely in the presence of a virtue." Horror of horrors, a man might find pride in his consistent use of his reason!). I haven't read Blanshard's REASON AND GOODNESS, and don't know when I'll have the time to do so. I do want to get the back issues of The Personalist and read the articles I find interesting, and I'm sure I'll find Emmons' articles interesting. Please inform me how much the back issues are --- and I'll send you a check to cover as many back issues as I want and a year's subscription. I will endeavor, however, to be more precise in how I use "reason" and make sure my meaning is not unclear.

As Rand defines altruism, it is all or nothing, and no one can live a 100% life of altruism, of course. I understand altruism to be any human behavior which is motivated by any primary interest(s) which is not one's own (I can recall, during my religious days, giving much more than I ~~knew~~ knew I could afford to some "cause of God" or other, having faith that God wouldn't let me go without what I needed--which didn't always work out, hah). I quoted a passage from Mill which illustrated his altruistic bent (which most men have had, of course) ... in which he distinguished between the public good and one's private good, a distinction without a difference, except that it's not clear what's meant by the public good. A universalist ("one who considers the interests of everyone involved, including his own") is a variety of altruist as I understand the term. I guess I'm partial to my favorite economist --Murray Rothbard, of course; beside him, Mill and all others pale. After studying MAN, ECONOMY, AND STATE, one will find even the good things Mill says quite commonplace. On

painful toothaches, a painful toothache is a painful toothache, no matter who has it; but, of course, it hurts me if I have it more than it hurts me if you have it. Anything that's ~~bad~~ bad is either objectively bad, subjectively estimated to be bad, or both. Re painful toothaches, a very painful one is worse than a ~~slightly~~ slightly painful one, so I guess you might conclude that there are degrees of badness. However, if a thief, who had just stolen my car, were overcome with pain because of a very bad toothache, while he would consider the toothache bad (and it per se would be a bad toothache), I would consider it good if it caused him to stop the car at a dentist's office a half block away from where he drove it away. So, if we're talking about bad toothaches per se, yes, it's bad no matter who has it. Your "egoist/?" (do you mean as opposed to altruist?) example may stem from the idea that a man's alternatives are: sacrifice oneself to others, or sacrifice others to oneself--altruism, or egoism--and I can't see much to be gained from considering what either irrational position holds (except to have a ~~response~~ ready argument when confronted with one of these two irrational positions). A man can be rational in his behavior if he chooses to be (as you know).

Rothbard, alas, is somewhat sloppy in how he states his meaning sometimes. What I'm sure he meant is that both (or all) parties to any transaction (or contract) believe it to be to their interest or they wouldn't have entered ^{into} the agreement, and he is also assuming that the agreement is not of the nature of a lifeboat situation. (I don't recall, however, the passage in POWER AND MARKET to which you refer.) I've already stated my views on what "the starving man" should do in such a situation as you pose. John! re your last sentence, first par., pg. 3, yours of Dec. 23, such examples as this, a number of which you've given, indicate either 1- gross malevolence or 2- a streak of sadism. Which is it, John? (Hah!) Which is it?

"Unicorn" does have denotation--it denotes a mythical, horselike animal with a horn growing out of the center of its forehead ... and this denotation is very explicit and permits of no connotations. The denotation of a term is its actual instances in the world only if it has an actual ~~instance~~ instance or actual instances in the world (and I'm sure you meant "universe" instead of "world"). At the moment, it seems to me that your differentiation between designation and denotation is spurious and drawn on for expediency's sake (though I can't see the expediency). "God" has no denotation (as used by most Christians) and is, therefore, what I call a pseudo-concept since it is meaningless. You're right, of course, ~~my~~ ^{at} my remark about the term "unicorn" denoting an idea in men's minds, is a mistake. However, "When Thurber said he saw a unicorn in the garden," just what was he up to?

John, you're not serious, are you (?), when you imply (explicitly) that an embezzler acts in his self-interest? Your example, "If I get the job, then you don't get it," is not ~~valid~~ valid to show that the self-interest of one man sometimes conflicts with the s-i of another --since s-i, to be meaningful, can only include what's possible to ~~do~~ a man, and it isn't possible for two men to occupy the same position at the same time and in the same respect. I thought I had covered this aspect of self-interest in a letter before (?). When we say, "there is no actual difference between self-interest and the interests of society," that's what we mean--what is actually in the interest of one man does ~~diffuse~~ diffuse throughout society to the ~~benefit~~ benefit of society, self-interest being the root of both ~~the individual's and society's interest~~ the individual's and society's interest. Here again is an example of saying something which would never (or scarcely ever) cause difficulty for the man of average intelligence--and this is why we said it as we did--but which sets the philosopher to picking his nits (Hah). All said in good humor, of course; but, seriously, your readiness to conceive of such hellacious instances would make you an interesting (to me) subject to observe, to see if I could relate it to your behavior, and how. I'm looking forward to meeting you!

Wow! and holy Galt!! Listen to a part of a letter I just received today from a geology professor (and he ordered 30 copies of TMFL): "Thank you very much for your letter of Jan. 9, 1971. I have been floating two feet off the floor ever since -- something akin to receiving a letter inviting me to move to Galt's Gulch and signed by Galt himself!! Reading your book was exciting enough; but then to get a 5-page letter . . . jammed full of additional magnificent ideas... Wow! Even though I have not met you in person (but be assured that I intend to), I place you among my most valued friends. This experience is a real first-class super-thrill for me!!" He says further, ". . . your book was my first introduction (on Dec. 26-28) to the idea that government is an unnecessary evil and I wrote

my letter (to which I responded with my 5-page letter--MT) a few days later. Prior to that, I had uncritically accepted Ayn Rand's ideas of government limited to the protection of rights -- an arrangement far superior to what we have now!" And further, "I am impressed with your definition of FORCE (it does as you say -- integrates several clumsy phrases). This sort of epistemological precision and the integration of ideas is the central business of teaching and research and the aspect of my job that I like best." Haven't had a shot in the arm like that in weeks!

Just read your section, "Why Be Moral," in HUMAN CONDUCT. You didn't answer the question! Why? And, since you still think embezzlement could be in one's self-interest, I suggest ~~that~~ that your observation about the psychology of one who so acts is entirely faulty and overlooks the devastating effects of permitting any principle/^{into one's consciousness}that (some) evil is permissible, if not necessary, and, therefore, consonant with self-interest. John, I think you'd be a very interesting study. And I think we could have some very stimulating discussions, to which I look forward one of these days.

I disagree that an ~~evil~~ evil man is happy (because of his evil), as I understand happiness invariably to be conducive to human well-being ... always. Pleasure is what the heroin addict experiences, not happiness, and that only temporarily. Pleasure can be either pro-man or anti-man, but happiness is always good, objectively so. It is a psychosomatic state of being in which one justifiably feels that his existence is good. Rational pleasure is an increment of happiness. If one is to have any happiness, it can only spring from rational behavior (though rational behavior, of course, doesn't automatically produce happiness). I haven't done all the thinking which would really satisfy me about my present ideas on pleasure and happiness, so the above is with some reservation--I may conclude differently in some respects later. There's a hell of a lot ~~to~~ to learn, isn't there!

Well, I come to your letter of Dec. 24, which will have to await another day ... as my beloved wife is clamouring for my attention (and I hate to admit it, but she takes precedence over you, John). (Just read this last par. to Linda and a friend who's visiting us, and we all had a laugh, and I was taken to task for talking to you this way by our visitor; I told her you'd understand.) -- So, I'll get back to you in the next few days, maybe over the weekend.

Best regards,


Morris G. Lannehill

Dear Tanny,

Just a note on your piece on rights before I return it to you, together with your letter of the same date.

I agree with your examples of rights, valid and invalid, though these aren't "uses of" the term, they are instances (demonstrations) of the use of the term. But I object most of all to your definition of rights, not because I disagree that one has the right specified (to do anything that isn't coercive), but because you build your theory of rights right into the definition of "rights". These two activities should be carefully distinguished. A consequence of your definition would be that someone else with a different theory of rights would not (according to your definition) believe in rights at all! And he, of course would then give a different definition of "rights" acc. to which you have no belief in rights at all. One should surely distinguish (1) what it is for someone to have a right, from (2) what particular things one has a right to.

I don't know why you reject in your third paragraph the view that a right is a moral claim; for this it surely is. Since the concept of rights doesn't arise if one is Robinson Crusoe alone on an island, and arises only in the context of other men, (or possibly animals - a fascinating and puzzling topic), a right is surely a moral claim on other people. And the other side of the coin, a duty, is what other people have toward you when you have a right. A right of A implies a duty of B, C, D, etc. and a right of B implies a duty of A, C, D, etc. All this is definitional, without yet stating what anyone has a right to or a duty to do.

Now the next step is to show specifically what rights and duties people have. Rand claims to have done this, but I don't think it has been done with deductive rigor. I for one surely wouldn't be able to carry out any such deduction. But nevertheless I do agree in general with her view. The only duties of B, C, D etc. that result from A's right is the duty of forbearance - i.e. not the duty to do anything to help A, but simply to forbear from forcibly interfering with A, i.e. the duty not to violate A's right. Correspondingly, A's right does not include anything of B's life or work - B has no title (right) to these things, but has only the right to work non-coercively to for whatever goals he seeks in life.

I would hope that all parties could agree on the definition of "right"; but not all will agree on what things specifically one has a right to. Liberals, for example, would probably say that a starving man ~~a~~ has a right to some (not all) of the fruits of the labor of other men, as long as they have a lot more than he has. I on the contrary would say that he cannot claim the fruits of any other man's labor as a right; if given, it is a privilege and that's all.

There is, again, trouble about "coercive" - cf. my last letter to you. Is the man who says "If you don't work for me as my slave forever, I won't get you out of the quicksand" coercing him? Is the man who fires an employee in a fit of pique, knowing that the man can't get a job anywhere else in the county, coercing him if he says "I'll only keep you own if your daughter marries me"? etc. Coercion has to do with the threatened loss of a value - but how important the value must be, and how large the threat, is a matter of "the slippery slope" all the way from threat of loss of life to no threat whatever.

I find your and most other people's treatments of "natural law" unclear. Cf. on this H.L.A. Hart, The Concept of Law, the chapter on natural law.

I think you misinterpret Rand on p. 3. A right is a moral sanction to an action, she says; and you infer that one has then a right only to moral actions. Not so. The word "moral" is ambiguous: in one sense it is the opposite of non-moral ("Is this a moral rule or a rule of etiquette?") and in another sense it is the opposite of immoral ("Is this the moral thing to do?"). I think Rand is using the word here in the first sense, so your objection does not apply. One has the right to any non-coercive actions, though many non-coercive actions would be immoral if performed.

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Dear Tanny,

Thank you for your welcome long letter just received. I'll not try to answer all of it now - you have some things of mine still to answer also, as you indicate; just a few comments on things here and there which I cannot refrain from making at once. (I ~~am~~ am always most highly motivated as soon as the letter has been received.) Incidentally, did you receive my 1-page note to you of January 14? You did not mention it in the list of my missives which you had yet to answer.

In line with my remarks in that last m issive, I would emphasize that I think it preferable to define a term "value-neutrally" when possible, and then indicate later whether what the term denotes should have a + or a - label attached to it. For example, I would define "steel" in terms of being a malleable alloy of iron, this being what the term means; but although it is also true that steel is used for purposes of construction I would not use this fact as a part of the definition of the term. (It always comes back to definition! The long section "Definition" in Chapter 1 of my Introd. ~~to~~ to Phil. Analysis is the most important section in it, and more fallacies ~~are~~ creep up thru neglect of it than anywhere else.) Similarly, I would define "coercion" as "threat of loss of a value" (a bit more would be added, but the part just given would be basic) without any implication one way or ~~another~~ the other about whether coercion is always a bad thing. Some people do hold that there are instances of coercion that are good, (such as forcing the doctor to give up the secret of his cancer-cure), and the effect of your definition would be to rule them out definitionally. As a result, of course, they wouldn't accept your definition, and would give one of their own instead. And still similarly, I would ~~define~~ not include the term "justifiably" in the definition of ~~the~~ "happiness" which you give, since it begs one of the most important questions at issue, whether in fact happiness IS always good. And still similarly, I would not define "force" in such a way as to settle by definitional fiat the question of whether the use of force is always wrong. You define "force" in such a way as to settle by definition the question whether the use of force is ever justified. Whereas I would like to leave that an open question. I prefer when possible to use the words in an ordinary sense such as will be understood by an intelligent layman who already uses the term. This may not always be possible, because his usage may contain confusions and ambiguities, but at any rate if we begin by using the term in an ordinary everyday sense we don't constantly run into the difficulty (which your definitions do) that people who sincerely WANT to discuss with you serious questions e.g. about whether the use of force is always wrong, cannot do so because you have already legislated by your definitions that the use of force IS always wrong; i.e. you have so used the word "force" so that ~~the~~ the wrongness of it is already contained in the definition. Example: suppose the doctor nextdoor ~~had~~ had the cure for a disease from which your wife was suffering, and he was the only one who had it, and he refused to give it to you; are you quite sure that you would not use force against him to make him give you the formula? Or what I should ask is not whether you WOULD, but whether you are sure that you SHOULD NOT initiate force against him to make him give you the formula which he has. Surely that is an open and discussable question; but your definition forecloses it, for your definition implies that if it's the initiation of force then it's wrong, period.

The consequences of the above are far-reaching indeed, and if we cannot break this impasse on the matter of definition of terms, much of our ~~the~~ ensuing discussions will be less than fruitful, I fear. I think you pump too much into your definitions of terms and then, in consequence, foreclose the possibility of discussion, since you define the terms in question in a certain way, which would be vigorously opposed by your discussants.

Now, re the trend of your remarks concerning my being an interesting "psychological subject". Perhaps; so would anyone else be, and I'm not more interesting than most, I think. I do take my examples from today's culture; why not? But I don't see why you take me to task for this. & I've encountered most of these examples in my personal experience, and though I don't like them, they do exist. I consider myself neither
nd

pessimistic nor optimistic about human nature and the world, but just a "tough realist". I cannot share your optimism about some things, such ~~as that~~ as that men would become much more rational in a laissez faire society. You say in your today's letter that if we got rid of the politicians, human aggression would practically cease to exist. I don't see the slightest evidence for this, and I don't think it's true. People are made nasty and aggressive, as a rule, because of having horrible childhoods and horrible parents; and these, I fear, will continue always. People are aggressive against other because they feel they've gotten a dirty deal in life, that life has dealt them a bad hand, and they're out to get even with the world that "did them dirt". Political institutions haven't very much to do with this (though living under a dictatorship can surely make it worse); what we need to help cure the situation is decent parents, plus programs ~~of~~ "how to raise children". Raising children well is a specialized job, just as specialized as being a doctor or a lawyer, but most parents just aren't up to it - and then they wonder why their children turn out so. There, I think, lies the main source(not the only source) of human aggressiveness - and it would certainly not wither into nothing in a laissez faire society.

Yes, I am absolutely serious when I say that a person could embezzle out of self-interest. Surely this is just what embezzlers do - they want some personal gain. To rob is easier than to work, and when one ~~can~~ can get by with robbing, one often does it in preference to work. I don't see why that should be so surprising! One might make the point that the embezzler may THINK it's to his self-interest to do it, but that it really ISN'T to his self-interest. That he thinks it's to his self-interest seems obvious; that it really is, ~~is~~ may be true or false depending on the situation: if the police are swift and efficient, it won't be to his self-interest; if he is given to having guilt-feelings, then it won't be to his interest even if he isn't caught by the police. But if law-enforcement is sloppy, or if he doesn't worry about his past ~~deeds~~ deeds, then it may well pay off for him - it may not make him unhappy at all! I know of plenty of cases of this - don't you? (I don't mean embezzling in particular, but aggressive acts of one kind or another.) This seems to me so clear that (just like my principles of definition, above and in my book) - to paraphrase you - any person with a sixth-grade education and normal intelligence can easily understand it. What's the hangup? That it SHOULDN'T be that way, I would grant; but ~~that~~ that it IS that way, seems perfectly obvious. (Selling heroin to minors would seem to me just as bad as embezzlement, although it involves no use of initiatory force; and once again, there are plenty of people who do it and it doesn't bother them at all. But I doubt if this last is a good example to use against you, because as far as I ~~can~~ can tell, there would be nothing wrong according to you with selling heroin to minors.) I would really like to have your opinion on this heroin example. It's one of those cases where our liberal friends say that we run one principle - don't initiate force - into the ground at the expense of all other principles. They would say that selling heroin to kids who just want kicks and haven't thought about the consequences is about as bad as one can get, and that you are only kept from admitting this by your strange insistence that everything is O.K. as long as it doesn't involve the initiatory use of force!)

Again we seem to be at an impasse about my "Why be moral?" in Human Conduct. The only way in which I've "not answered the question" (your charge) that I can see was raised by Prof. Kai Nielsen in an article in Methodos (included in Sellars & Hospers, Readings in Ethical Theory, 2nd ed. 1970, Appleton-Century-Crofts), is that to answer "I should do it because it's right - this answer is quite sufficient" is O.K. only if one is ALREADY committed to "the moral point of view"; but that it is not a sufficient answer if the person is still debating with himself whether he should adopt the moral point of view in the first place. Here, Nielsen has a point, which I confess I hadn't thought of when I wrote the section. But I don't see your treatment on p.8 of your letter as an objection at all. (It concludes with your interesting observation, "You'd be a very interesting study. I have studied psychology extensively, including psychiatry and psychoanalysis, and I have yet to see how my attribution of motives etc. in the examples I use is faulty. I think you only see it that way because it conflicts with an ethical principle to which you are already committed.

Now to a related subject: about what to do if the U.S. were invaded by a foreign power. You state that you have no country. This, perhaps, is the most profound of the differences between us. I do. I am most profoundly grateful for the opportunities I have had in the United States, its freedom, its chance for making oneself affluent if one works toward it, and so on. Granted it isn't perfect, it isn't nearly as good as it was 100 years ago, but it's still the best there is, and I would rather work to correct its errors from the inside, to work for a limitation of government as I have for the last decade, rather than try and throw the whole thing over. I think you tend to "throw the baby out with the bath-water". Because the United States is bad in many ways, you tend to think of the Soviet Union as no worse, or at least to think that since all governments are bad, one is as bad as another. You would really not willingly join in defense if the U.S. were invaded by Russia??? Then you know what would happen if Russia won: you would no longer be free to write, to share your opinions with others, you would be taken to a slave labor camp as soon as your opinions were discovered, and that would be the last anyone would hear from you. And I would almost say, that if you didn't see the difference between the U.S. with its freedom of speech (and some other freedoms that still exist) and the totalitarian Soviet Union, you'd deserve that fate! I don't quite mean this last, but I do think that by throwing out the only really "limited government" founded by the Founding Fathers, a great concept, just because it wasn't perfect, you'd only be inviting something far, far, worse. In life we seldom can choose between something bad and something perfectly good; we often have to choose between better and worse, or even between the lesser of two evils. Bad as it is, I would rather live in the U.S. than in most other countries - and people still come here to get more freedom than they can get behind the Iron Curtain and elsewhere. Would you really be willing to see freedom of speech and our other liberties go down the drain, and a Soviet-style collectivism forced on the United States (including the nationalization of your own property and everyone else's), without lifting a finger to prevent it? When you say, "I'd use retaliatory force when feasible against either side", I am really shocked - including the armed forces of the country that was trying to defend your rights??? That would be buck-passing with a vengeance!

No, things won't remain as they are now. I'm not in the prediction business, but I daresay that there will be a severe monetary crisis and depression, though doubtless not as bad as you envision, since you seem to think it will unseat the whole country. What I do anticipate, perhaps in the 1980's, is an armed Soviet attack upon this country, now that the Soviets already have nuclear parity and we don't seem to be doing anything to counter it. They will surely attack and destroy us as soon as they think they are able. Perhaps sooner than 1980, I don't know. Whatever survives in this country will then become a strong central government with total control over the individual. With or without war, I suspect that the centralization will continue (historically it always has), and that more and more freedom will be lost, and that we shall end up before the end of the century with a totalitarian fascist state. That is my realistic appraisal of the matter. Have you read any of the writings of Albert Jay Nock, an anarchist of the 1920's? He had many of the same ideas, and some devastating arguments against government, but then as now, libertarians were a drop in the bucket, and were scarcely even heard in the prevailing clamor. So it will be again.

In Spain in the 1936 civil war, the anarchists were so opposed to Franch's fascists that they joined in with the communists, who were numerically superior; the communists then assigned them to the dangerous missions, and they were killed to a man. The libertarians are doing the same thing by aligning themselves with the New Left; just because the N.L. has some bad things to say about government, they think they're allies - and the New Left, greatly superior in numbers, will simply absorb them if given a chance. The New Left has only contempt for the libertarians, and will use them for their own power-purposes. Also, both are for peace, both are anti-war, and again there is the illusion of an alliance - and of course the Soviet Union just loves any peace-movements in the U.S. because the more of them there are, the quicker she can fulfill her plans of conquest. I am afraid that when the peaceniks think themselves most successful, a missile from a Russian sub will put an end to them all - but alas, it will put an end to the rest of us too, who cried out against their folly but were not heard. So much for now,

January 28, 1971

Dear John,

Just received yours of the 25th. I, too, am highly motivated after reading an interesting letter, and right now is no exception!!

I have yours of Dec. 24, Jan. 5, and Jan. 14 yet to answer, and I'll probably spend much of this coming weekend doing just that. But I want to clear up some things which yours of the 25th, just received, brings up. Then, I'll probably answer it more in detail later.

The most important thing I want to point out is that my definition of FORCE is "value-neutral"--FORCE is any volitional behavior which intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of another person or other persons. Let me bring in the concept of human rights in my explanation of the value-neutrality of this definition. Using our (it's Linda's and mine) definition of a natural human right--A right is a principle which morally prohibits ~~men~~ from using force against anyone whose behavior is non-coercive--you have the right to freedom, which is the right to an uncoerced, non-coercive existence. A holdup man (hum) violates your right to freedom--he points his pistol at you and says, "Your money or your life." By our definition of a natural human right, you are not morally prohibited from using force against the hum--his behavior is coercive and he is no longer within his rights (he is no longer ^{morally} protected by the principle of non-aggression against a non-aggressor)--and you catch him with his head turned and clout him over the head with the poker you grab from the fireplace, subdue him, and call your defense agent (today, of course, you'd have to be very careful not to hurt the hum or you'd be in trouble!). -- Now, you have used force against the hum, and it was not wrong to do it since you were defending what was rightly yours but which was placed in jeopardy by the hum. Hitting the hum over the head, subduing him, and turning him over to your defense agent is volitional behavior on your part, and it intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of the hum. We wouldn't have been satisfied with the definition had it not been value-neutral. To use your words, "I would not define 'force' in such a way as to settle by definitional fiat the question of whether the use of force is ~~always~~ always wrong" ... because the use of force is not always wrong (retaliatory force used within the boundaries of reason is right--morally right, that is). The use of initiatory force is always wrong, without exception, and I've shown why in my article, "Man's Standard of Value," which I'll have ready to send to you within the next two weeks. Furthermore, I intend to make the moral principle--that it's always wrong to initiate the use of force--so much a part of the fabric of Tammy's life that I'll develop mental policies consonant with that principle so that I wouldn't think twice about what to do should the doctor next door not give up, at any price, his cure for my wife's illness. I wouldn't use force against him now, were I in such a situation (assuming that he'd done nothing to violate my rights) ... though I can hardly conceive of such a situation (I daresay this situation isn't one which you've observed--an actual occurrence--in any culture in your whole lifetime); have you ever heard of such a thing occurring in the whole of man's history? It's faintly conceivable, but if such a thing took place, the chances are great that the sick woman and her husband deserve the doctor's snub ... in which case, the doctor just might be completely justified.

Aha, I see where I goofed--in my letter of Jan. 13-21, page 5, I did say, "... any volitional behavior which intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of another person or others is force and is wrong." I should have added (after "and is wrong") "when the other person's (or persons') behavior is non-coercive," or I should have omitted "and is wrong." I was thinking of initiatory force against a non-coercive person when I added "and is wrong." However, I have pointed out the moral neutrality of my definition of force more than once before--that the definition was applicable to either initiatory or retaliatory force. Retaliatory force used within reason is right, even tho the crook is unwilling to be thwarted in sustaining himself by "crookery." Our definition does cover both the good and the bad uses of force. Sorry 'bout my goof, tho.

Re "selling heroin to minors." If you mean "minor" in a forensic sense, I don't consider the concept to have any validity. If you mean a young person who is still in the charge of an older person, the young person not having yet assumed full responsibility for his own existence, then selling heroin to the minor would be ~~an~~ a violation of rights if the guardian were opposed to the sale and was not consulted. However, I'm attacking the problem from the wrong end. Heroin is physically harmful and addictive, and there's plenty of proof that it

is. (We had a beautiful girl, 27 years old, visit us over the New Year's holiday. She has just spent 2 years in prison for a number of things, one being: she was a heroin pusher. And she was hooked as much as a person can be hooked on the stuff. She became acquainted with Rand while in prison and is doing a great job of getting herself straightened out. I've never used heroin, and never will! but I know what it does to a person. It's terrible!) In a free market environment, no one could be ignorant of the truth about heroin. Anyone who would use heroin would be jeopardizing his social standing--a serious thing in a free-market society. Which is why the moral tone of the culture must rise as the culture advances toward peace and freedom. Can you really doubt this? When the cost of aggressive immorality becomes prohibitive, as it would in a free-market environment, the incidence of coercive activities will inevitably decrease. How can this be doubted? Competition in the defense insurance industry can only impel toward excellence (in the service of protection and defense of person and property), and, as I have pointed out before, the insurance companies wouldn't tolerate for very long any deviation from rectitude on the part of any defense agency. This is so clear to me that I don't see how it can be doubted ... but, of course, what I can't see is no argument.

Besides, the sale of heroin could be virtually prevented quite easily, and without the use of force ... by a policy of the insurance companies not to sell insurance to anyone who had anything to do with the use of heroin, offering (as an example) a year's free insurance (or a certain amount of money) to anyone who provided evidence of anyone using heroin. John, as I have said before, the insurance companies have a vested interest in prohibiting anything which objectively harms man, and they could do it ... and don't think they couldn't or wouldn't.

I apologize for the remark about your being an interesting person to study psychologically. I shouldn't have said anything like that until you get to know me better, and perhaps until I know you better. I meant it as a humorous but serious gouge, as a friend would do to urge his friend to "check his premises." I certainly didn't mean to cause offense; I regret it if my remarks did offend you.

John, I have no illusions about the fact that the Soviet Union is much, much worse than the USA. But the fact that the USA is less bad doesn't incline me at all toward sanctioning the evil thing! And the idea that the USA might be "trying to defend your rights" is puerile nonsense. Besides, you've fallen victim to the government propaganda (this point is made clearly in our book in Ch. 8, and Rothbard does, too, in his "A Libertarian Analysis - War, Peace and the State," which I'm enclosing) that it's the government (the country, the nation, or however government is referred to) which protects its "citizens," whereas the exact reverse is the case. But worse, it's the government which causes the wars in the first place!!!! You say you do have a country and that you're profoundly grateful for the opportunities you have had in the US, its freedom, its chance for making oneself affluent if one works toward it, and so on. John, you're giving credit where none is due--what you've achieved for yourself is to your credit and yours alone; it's no credit to your "country" that it permitted you to be able to realize some of your potentialities (think of the vast amount of wealth which never did come into existence because of the existence of "your country!"). True, we can all appreciate our good fortune to have been born in the USA, where there is less slavery than in other parts of the world; I certainly do. But, by your 'reasoning,' you would be grateful to a holdup man who only stole half of your money and left you the other half! This kind of "thinking," John, is "the sanction of the victim" which is the greatest obstacle in the way of establishing peace and freedom and justice. Patriotism is experiencing a comeback in our time, and it's becoming unpopular not to be patriotic, but, John, patriotism is the sanction of the victim--and it is extremely irrational! In your assertion that you do have a country, what do you mean by "country"? It, too, is an extremely irrational concept which makes "the sanction of the victim" possible. Bill Buckley would have been cheering you on. It's true, as the ad for your new book states, that libertarianism challenges both liberalism and conservatism; but re-read your first par. on page 3 (yours of Jan. 25) and see if you can distinguish its content from patriotic conservatism (I can't). John, this is a serious matter, and I urge you to consider it seriously; because of this very issue, our very lives are at stake--without absolute freedom (the ^{unhindered} right to an uncoerced, non-coercive existence) no man can realize his full potential. I'm not satisfied with what's better than others have, I want what it's possible to have, what the nature of man's existence makes possible for him to have--freedom, peace, love, plenty! We can't have it so long as the number of sanctioning

why people are patriotic

The popularity of patriotism (loyalty to one's "country") and the unpopularity of anarchy is not a good reason (it is one reason) to be patriotic, but it is the reason many people are patriotic. I've got much more confidence in you, John, than to think that you've given this issue much (if any) serious thought. The position of anarchy (though I usually refer to it as "libertarianism") is the only rational and peaceful position (LeFevre's pacifist position is neither rational nor peaceful; it's not peaceful because it encourages the self-made aggressor to more and worse aggressions, as we point out in Ch. 2 of TMFL, and man is "a being of self-made soul"). Anarchy = no ruler(s) = no slavery = freedom, which inevitably results in peace, happiness, and prosperity. I repeat, that article in the New York Times Magazine (Section 6), Jan. 10, is just one of the shadows which coming events cast before them. Mark my word and hold me to it, if there is such a thing as a "wave of the future," libertarianism is it! John, is there a chance for you to change the title of your book to LIBERTARIANISM: The Coming Social Philosophy? Libertarianism is apolitical. I quote a short article (paraphrased in some instances) by a friend of mine; it is called "The Death of 'Politics'."

Man confronts one fundamental alternative--existence or non-existence, life or death. The realization of man's ~~potential~~ potential--the potential of his life--is possible ~~only~~ only to the extent that he is not prevented by other men from fulfilling ~~that~~ that potential. The fulfillment of that potential, therefore, is a man's highest purpose, and to realize this purpose, his well-being--that which objectively serves his self-interest--must be his standard of value; and man should judge all ~~values~~ values in terms of this standard--as for him or against him, as good for him or evil, as moral or immoral.

Society is not alive; only individual men are alive. Society cannot be rational; only individual men can be rational. Hence, the rational standard of value, and thus all rational values, pertain only to individual men. Society has no existence, no standard of value, and thus no values in the absence of, in contradistinction to, or in conflict with the lives and values of the individual men of which it is comprised.

Traditional philosophy includes a subdivision known as "Politics," which is concerned with the question, "How should society be organized?" But this question presupposes an affirmative answer to the logically antecedent question, ~~"Should society be organized?"~~ "Should society be organized?" And this affirmative answer presupposes the existence of "societal values" which are to be achieved by means of "societal organization." Since, therefore, the notion of "societal values" is a fiction, the question, "Should society be organized?" must be answered in the negative; and thus the question, "How should society be organized?" is absurd.

Hence, 1- there is, in reason, no such subdivision of philosophy as "Politics," 2- a rational Ethics fully answers the question of how men should act in a social context, and 3- man's failure to formulate a rational Ethics and to repudiate the conceptual corruptions of "Politics" is largely responsible for the present state of the world.

by Anthony I.S. Alexander (1968)

Men's failure to identify and to repudiate the conceptual corruptions of politics is largely responsible for the present state of the world. That's the point I'd like to make with you. Please change the name of your book if it's not too late!

Re your "buckpassing with a vengeance!" remark (middle of pg. 3, yours of Jan. 25), I'm sure you can understand that no man or group of men is morally entitled to defend my rights against my will. But this idea--that government defends anyone's rights--is ridiculous, since govt violates rights just by existing, and govt can't defend rights by violating them in the first place. Q.E.D. (with a passion)!!!! (The govt I'm referring to does actually exist--it does exist solely by violating men's rights ... though a sufficient number of us men haven't discovered this truth yet, alas!)


When I said I was ordering your book (in my last letter), what I intended was that I was going to order it right after finishing my letter to you ... but I didn't get around to doing it until yesterday afternoon. And I had the order for two copies in the outgoing mail, when my wife brought your letter home with her. In view of your kind offer, I immediately yanked my order out of the outgoing mail, and I'll accept your offer of one copy and will pay for the other (which I want for Anthony I. S. Alexander)--enclosing check for \$5.40, payee left blank. I'm also ordering a two-year subscription to The Personalist. Thanks for the info

on it (~~from~~ to whom to send my subscription). We were delighted to hear that your students are reading our book, and I, too, surely wish I could have been there for the discussions! We really appreciate it! You may, of course, quote passages from THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY! If at least some of your quotations are for the purpose of refutational criticism, please allow me to comment first, as there could be a misunderstanding (e.g., of a purely semantic nature). If you want, tell your students that, as I have time, I'll try to answer any serious question they have re TMFL.

I want to request your help re the enclosed REPORT ON APPLICANT FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. Mark Pearson is a philosophy student and wants to attend your philosophy classes. He's industrious and making rapid progress in his own self-improvement. He has been coming to us for counseling for a few months, and we've found him to be exceptionally honest with himself. You'll enjoy having him in your classes.

Will write more in a few days. I do appreciate you, John!

For reason, peace, and liberty,


Morris S. Tannehill

Encls. - Check for \$5.40
REPORT (on Mark Pearson)
Rothbard's "War, Peace and the State"

February 16, 1971

Dear John,

I want to do a bit of reading in your HUMAN CONDUCT, especially Chapter 3, and the other references you've listed before I get into a reply to your letters of Dec. 24, 1970, Jan. 5, Jan. 14, and Jan. 25, 1971. I'll try to explain why one man's well-being can never conflict with another man's well-being, contrary to your belief as stated in your letter of Dec. 23 and in your last par. of your letter of Dec. 24 (though the reason can be deduced from a part of my article, "Man's Standard of Value," which I'm enclosing).

I think I've been over (and over, and over) the enclosed article enough times, though I'll probably discover some changes I will want to make or should have made (depending on when the discovery is made). I have just concluded that it's as I want it (i.e., after a couple of weeks sitting on it, discussing it with Linda and Anthony I.S. Alexander and a few others, I am fairly well satisfied with it ... though it could be much longer--e.g., to distinguish between standard and purpose) and, pursuant to your 2nd par. of yours of Dec. 22, 1970, I'm submitting it for inclusion in a subsequent issue of The Personalist. I'm really looking forward to receiving the back issues of The Personalist (I spent some time at the MSU library recently, reading a few articles in last year's issues).

I have just received a letter from Roy Childs in which he makes the following comments:

Morris, you should not expect to be an invited speaker to the Second Annual Conference in Political Philosophy. It will not be run by John Hospers, but predominately by Tibor Machan. John may be a participant, but I think that is the only role he will play.

Since it was you who asked me whether I'd be willing to speak, and since I am concerned to know as much as is reasonably possible what's ahead for me, I think I'd better ask you, "Did Roy correctly inform me, or is this just another case of one man attempting to impress another, not having learned that the ethical way up is not to push others down?" By the way, Tibor did mightily impress Roy! Roy says that "He is one of the most important people in the libertarian and Objectivist movements." Having read a few things from the pen of Tibor, I'm not exactly in agreement with Roy. Lou Rollins has an interesting piece in his latest INVICTUS (Some Brief Comments and Questions About Machan's Governmentalism, pg. 20). I'm sure you will understand my concern about Roy's comments.

I think Linda and I will be in LA the latter part of next July. If you've not been swallowed by an earthquake by that time, we look forward to meeting you personally.

A Mr. Morey M. Gibbs (one of the department heads at the Aerospace Corporation there) has just sent a review of TMFL to Barbara Branden, in care of AA Book News. His review ends with, "It is the opinion of this reviewer that this is definitely the best book published to date on this important subject." I'd surely like to see it in AA Book News, but I'm certainly not expecting it.

Will write again in a week or two, after I've had a chance to do some reading. I am leaving on a 2,200-mile drive this evening and won't be back until Saturday. "See you" later.

Best regards,

Morris G. Fannehill
Morris G. Fannehill

Encl. - Article, "Man's Standard of Value"

Dear Morris,

Thanks for your letter of last week. I shall await your promised further letter before embarking on many substantive issues.

You are right about Tibor Machan. He is in many ways a nice guy, and bright, but he has an all-consuming ambition which alienates people from him. I guess it was a blow to his ego that I was in charge of the program last fall. He also made many unreasonable demands: e.g. the budget of the political philosophy conference was handled through USC, via me, and USC demanded an exact accounting of expenditures. When Tibor would send in bills for so many trips to San Francisco and New York, without any ticket stubs or hotel receipts to support it, USC raised a fuss, and Tibor blamed me. I spent most of the summer planning the conference, but Tibor took the credit. I didn't make an issue of this, but apparently he told the sponsors that I did nothing but complain, and he had the conference for 1971 transferred from USC to the University of San Francisco, with himself in charge. So I am now out of it. I am just as glad to be, seeing what a pest he was last fall, but I don't think the conference will now be as well attended as last year's was. And I am sorry that some of the people, such as yourself, whom I had tentatively invited will not now be asked.

I am delighted that you and Linda will be in L A in late July. I look forward to seeing you then.

Your piece on man's standard of value is clear and interesting. It raises one tactical problem. I need permission from Rand to quote her in my forthcoming book, since I have numerous quotes from her, but she will never give it if I write put anything critical of her in The Personalist. I really don't know how to get around that situation! But aside from that I have a few questions and/or comments:/'

- (1) I really think that you should read some value-theory, which has been very thoroughly gone into by philosophers, since they go into many important details and distinctions from which you could profit. I suggest reading at least the selections by Perry and Campbell in the Sellars and Hospers READINGS IN ETHICAL THEORY, or if you don't have that book, read at least my account of Perry's theory on pp. 551-6 of HUMAN CONDUCT. The distinction between two senses of "value" has often been made: value as that which IS objectively for the well-being of man, e.g. clean air, and value as that which one acts to gain and/or keep, i.e. that which one values. One colleague of mine came out with a minimum of eight "basic senses of value". Your discussion would be more finely honed if you relied more on this rich literature.
- (2) When Rand talks about life as the standard of value, she doesn't mean just life: she goes on to explain what she does mean - it's the survival of man qua man that she is referring to, and this means, in her words, "the terms, methods, conditions, and goals required for the survival of a rational being through the whole of his lifespan, in all those aspects of existence which are open to his choice" (p. 24 in THE VIRTUE OF SELFISHNESS). It is not just life, but the life of a rational being, ~~xxx~~ as just explicated by her. The bank robber is not living the life of a rational being, a life "proper to man".
- (3) Now, human well-being has long been set forth as the standard, from Aristotle on. The word often translated "happiness" is the Greek eudaimonia, which is much closer to "well-being". But then Aristotle goes on for many pages to consider in what that well-being consists. Some reference to this important historical background would be desirable, to show that the idea of well-being as the human ideal didn't just spring from a human brain for the first time.
- (4) And then you get problems of "WHOSE well-being". Egoism says: for each individual, his own; other ethical theories oppose this. Rand is officially an egoist but actually she ~~xxx~~ talks often (e.g. in discussing war) of human well-being in general. And any ethics/V such as hers which places such emphasis on rights, must grant that one should always respect the rights of others, even when it's not to one's ~~xxxxx~~ self-interest to do so. It is not to the interest of the starving beggar to grant the right of property of a rich man from whose crumbs he could receive sustenance.
- (5) Then there are probl

3-22-71

Dear John -

Here's an extra copy of a letter I think may interest you. I'll write in a day or so, but I want to send the enclosed copy of my letter to two friends instead of sending it with a long letter and thus taking more time at one sitting.

More, soon.

Regards,

Tanny

Dear Fran and Bill,

What an experience I've been having lately! Linda and I are going to write a book on what we're learning. The idea--HOW TO BE YOURSELF (or HOW TO BECOME YOURSELF; haven't decided on which title to use yet)--is so novel (to us, at least) that it'll be a while before we will understand it well enough to have the confidence necessary to write a book on it. I have already found that bringing the subject up usually brings people's defense mechanisms into operation, and fast! This is because (as I told Ralph in the enclosed copy of my letter to him) most people do put on a front (or several fronts) when interacting with others and most of them don't realize it, and they don't ever allow themselves to think about this possibility. The sad fact is that most people are not honest with themselves. To the extent they are not honest with themselves, they find rationalization quite easy. To the extent they put on a front in their dealings with others, they are convincing themselves that their real selves--what they are without the facade--is not good enough for public scrutiny, and most of them become convinced that their real selves (what they would be without the fake front) are bad (or, to put it in the singular, the faker becomes convinced that he is bad, as he soon becomes unable to see himself apart from his front). One who fakes it with others will usually be always finding fault with others, and he will find it extremely difficult to come to grips with his own epistemological problems. This psychological defection is social metaphysics, but to understand it clearly requires that one take a good, hard look at oneself until he becomes aware of who and what he is--the "who" to identify how far from pure individuality he is, the "what" to identify his bad mental policies which explain his pseudo-individuality. As I remarked to Linda a day or two ago, Shakespeare was way ahead of his time (if he understood it) when he said, "This above all--Be true to thine own self, and it must follow as the day the night, thou canst not then be false to any other man." (This quote may not be verbatim.) I now see that a person is at his very best when he becomes fervently concerned with his own development and discovers that he is not minding his own, morally proper business when he tries to impress others. Any attempt to impress others favorably, other than just being oneself (that is, other than just being the pure person one has become at any given time), is dishonest. Putting on a front may or may not accomplish its purpose--to fool others--but such behavior persisted in will have very bad results for the person who so behaves himself. Such a person (and virtually everyone is in this category to some extent) has "learned" from the culture that one must make a good impression on others in order to succeed in our status-oriented society, and ~~he has never learned~~ he has never learned that the matter of primary importance is to develop himself (his own potentialities) according to the dictates of his own reason (not according to what he believes other people to think or wants them to think). The energy one spends on trying to be what he believes will bring about the response he wants in others, is energy not spent in developing his moral character (which is the source of anything good anyone does or can do). Many people frequently make moral condemnation of others (see "The Psychology of 'Psychologising'" in the March 1971 issue of THE OBJECTIVIST) to prevent others from seeing their own moral defects; it's somewhat like the preacher who preached against sin with a white-hot fervency to show others how much he was opposed to all evil. Such a person is concerned with the symptoms of faking it when he criticizes others; hardly ever does he go to the cause of people's pathological behavior--the desire to be what one wants others to think of them. The one thing which must above all else characterize libertarians who wish to be happy and to be the greatest friends of liberty is the determination to know and to behave according to the truth ... with no embellishments! When one discovers a bad idea he's been holding or a bad mental policy he's been following, he must (if he is really concerned for his well-being) acknowledge it and get rid of it as quickly as possible; and this task is something anyone can choose to do if he hasn't sabotaged his consciousness so much that he has himself "locked in" to his pseudo-self. Which most people haven't--they just hate to take a look at how horribly ugly they've made themselves. Well, except for the morally perfect, self-improvement does involve the discovery of psycho-epistemological evil in oneself and the conscious, deliberate choice which results in the evil behavior being discontinued. And self-improvement requires that one place his own development as a primary on his scale of values, so that he compares himself with what he can become, not with others--he is primary, others are totally insignificant. One who so learns how to behave himself will be as attractive as he can be to those who are worth attracting.

I made the first page devoid of such personal reference, since I am going to have copies made (Xeroxed) and send to some of my correspondents for their comments. I'd like to have any comments either of you would care to make.

The greatest thing ~~which~~ which happened to me during my recent trip away from home is the increasing realization of the importance of being concerned with setting oneself straight (instead of setting others straight) and of this concern being one's supreme concern. I think it probable that most people have just never thought seriously about what kind of person they'd be if they developed the mental policy of just being themselves, minding their own primary business. They haven't discovered that this mental policy inexorably results in their being the most beautiful person it's possible for them to be. I've just begun to learn it, and what you've been attracted to in me is the result of the measure of understanding I have of this truth. I'm happy, of course, when I do impress others favorably, but I've found that the more I'm unconcerned with ~~whether~~ how others view me, the more I impress others favorably. And I'm really beginning to understand that it doesn't matter what others think. One whose life (behavior) is pure--concerned with his own primary business--has discovered the key to any happiness he can have--his happiness doesn't depend on his knowing what others think of him, as ~~he knows~~ that he is good. Further, he has no lack of friends, as such a person will always attract those he evaluates as worthy of being his friends (his behavior will also repel those with whom he ~~and~~ wants nothing to do; these are the ones we must be careful not to become vulnerable to!). I believe I've really found the key to happiness! And I have many things to do, so I'll close with much thanks to you two for your efforts and hospitality of last week. I appreciate you both; now, get to work, each of you, individually, and resolve your problems. You can if you choose to do so, and you're potentially very beautiful people.

Love,

Tanny
Morris G. Parrish III

Encl. - Ltr. to Gear, 3-22-71

Dear John,

My apologies for the long delay. I've been beset by a number of things which have left me with very little time and inclination for correspondence beyond that which satisfied my mercenary interests (responding to letters requesting info re our book, responding to orders for our book, etc.). I shall in this letter skip through your past letters and comment on certain points, possibly ask some questions, and then mention some of the things which have occupied my intellectual attention lately. I have been interested in psychology for a number of years, but I think Linda and I have made some substantial progress in understanding the mental behavior of the human animal. More, possibly, on this later.

Re my article, "Man's Standard of Value," I had decided, shortly after receiving your letter of March 1st, that I wouldn't want it published in The Personalist (or anywhere else, for that matter) until I had revised and refined it considerably. Your suggestion that I indicate "that the idea of well-being as the human ideal didn't just spring from a human brain for the first time" is certainly one of the refinements I shall make. I find it very difficult to spend my time studying what other people have said on the "whys and wherefors" of human behavior, either from the broad and general philosophical perspective or from the narrower and particular psychological perspective; one has to wade through so much krapp to find something worthwhile, if he does even then. And besides, since discovering that I could do my own thinking and that my conclusions in the area of social philosophy and psychology are so much clearer (clearly related to what actually exists) than anything I've read and ²⁷²actually superior, in that they are an advanced development of the very latest discoveries or are the latest discoveries themselves. What Linda and I are learning re human psychology has raised some questions to which we don't have the answers as clearly as we want to understand them before writing our (or my) new book, HOW TO BECOME YOURSELF, which I at least am about ready to begin writing (Linda is working again on her book on sex in what spare time she has, which may leave the writing of HOW TO BECOME YOURSELF to me) ... if I can find the time. So, I said the foregoing to point out that I am primarily interested in writing what is the truth on whatever subject I'm dealing with, and I'm not interested in presenting what others have said which I consider to be error and then showing what's wrong (although this is necessary at times). (By the way, Tibor Machan's review of THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY was so bad that I could actually feel sorry for him if I didn't understand his motivation. Several people have written, saying they couldn't understand what he was trying to say. I have no doubt about it--neither does Tibor re much that he says.) I followed your suggestion that I read some value-theory--I read your account of Perry's theory on pp. 551-6 of HUMAN CONDUCT. I fail to see what that passage adds to my understanding of value-theory; in fact, what I wrote in "Man's Standard of Value" and the implications of what I wrote clarify the subject more than anything I've read, and I suspect that most of the "eight 'basic senses of value'" by one of your colleagues actually adds little which can be called knowledge to the subject. I don't doubt that he put his words together in such a way as to sound learned (I detest that kind of pedagogic scourge), after the manner of the type of professor who writes so as to elicit such comments from other professors as, "That man is brilliant--I can't even understand what he's saying!" (There's no oblique implication that that's the way you write; you don't, or I couldn't bear to have anything to do with you.) -- If one ~~xxx~~ answers the question, "Why does man need values?" with the answer, "To live," it then should become clear (though it didn't to Perry!) that a value is something which is actually beneficial to a man--conducive to his well-being, and the man's ~~xxxx~~ evaluation of what is conducive to his well-being has absolutely nothing to do with its being conducive to ~~xxxx~~ his well-being (he only identifies what is). I don't understand why you call Perry's theory of normative ethics "a fascinating and exciting one. His subjectivist ethics--whatever one wants is good--is the purest kind of krapp, though his attempt to dazzle the reader by the strange meanings of the words he uses ("interest," for example, as in "total interest pattern" ... I am not impressed by his use of foggy word combinations!) and the way he puts his words together has not been altogether unsuccessful. But the truth is, re the concept value, that there's a deficiency in the English language--the word is used to denote an objective benefit and that which is thought to be beneficial (whether actually beneficial or not). I noticed the other day that I was using "value" in

the latter sense (I knew that others did, but I was unaware that I did, ~~inadvertently~~ inadvertently)--I spoke of the order of some people's values when their value-hierarchy was distorted because of false ideas which they hold. As Linda has been insisting all along, the problem stems from the deficiency of the English language, and we need another word (such as "evalue," which we are using to denote what one believes, rightly or wrongly, to be beneficial to him--a favorable subjective evaluation of something with regard to its relationship to his well-being). -- I am supremely interested in reaching conclusions which are objectively, clearly related to human existence, and I have very little time to spend with the writings of those who are afflicted with the intellectual disorder which I call academania. There are an unlimited ~~number~~ number of ways to be wrong on any subject, but the truth is one (with many ~~many~~ facets). If one understands the truth clearly (on whatever subject), he will have little trouble spotting the inconsistency of any error he hears, whether he has studied the particular school of "thought" from which the error comes or not. And I have concluded that one will have to do his own thinking re many social problems today and discover the answers for himself, since the answers have never been found by anyone on record in prior history ... and this is what we did in THE MARKET FOR LIBERTY (though we succeeded in putting our ideas in such easy-to-understand wording that a few, of whom Machan is a classical example, are not able to see the profundity of the creative ideas which delineate the voluntary nature of the organization of a free-market society). -- Your point 2, your letter of Mar. 1, is exactly what I intended to point out in my article, "Man's Standard of Value"--namely, that "When Rand talks about life as the ~~standard~~ standard of value, she doesn't mean just life" If one doesn't mean what ~~she~~ ~~she~~ says, ~~they~~ ~~they~~ should find words which express what ~~she~~ ~~she~~ do ~~mean~~ mean. And what is this nonsense, "the survival of man qua man"? What in hell could a man do short of dying to stop being a man? "Man qua thinking being" has meaning, but "man qua man" is no ~~more~~ more meaningful than "a rose ~~is~~ is a rose is a rose." That's not even a good attempt to sound learned! And contrary to your statement, isn't it true that the bank robber is living the life of a rational being in the Aristotelian sense of "rational being"--~~the capacity~~ one with the capacity for making moral choices ("moral" in the sense of right or wrong)? "A life proper to man" is begging the question, as this is what man's standard of value is to enable a man to discover. My point is that such a manner of expressing oneself, while dazzling to many (look at the Rand's following!), does not convey knowledge! Rather, it compounds the already existing confusion ... or would, except for the truth which is conveyed in spite of such "learned" expressions. The establishment of peace will be hastened in proportion to the clarity with which our ideas are promulgated. I do realize, however, that the art of expressing profound ideas clearly is just now beginning to come into its own (as for example Harry Browne's HOW YOU CAN PROFIT FROM THE COMING DEVALUATION /Harry has referred his agent to us, and vice versa, and we're exploring the possibility of working out an arrangement with him/), and that very few people have learned it ... which is chiefly because few people understand their ideas clearly enough so that they understand them clearly themselves! Well enough on this theme.

The question of whether one's well-being can ever conflict with the well-being of another is one to which I don't have a clear answer. I'm convinced that one man's well-being (that which his self-interest requires--and I don't mean merely that which he may be interested in) can never conflict with another's, but the basis for this truth (and I'm holding it as truth since any alternate idea allows for the permissibility of ~~invasive~~ invasive force in certain conceivable circumstances, which I'm convinced is psychologically detrimental to a human being) will be found in a clearer understanding of mental behavior of the human animal. Almost without exception, everyone is ~~reared~~ reared in ~~an~~ an environment which inculcates ~~into~~ into him the notion that invasive violence is permissible, and I think this notion has caused a blind spot which, so far, has prevented us from discovering a universally consistent philosophy of human behavior with clear explanations for every question. For the time being, I'm going to let the question ("Is it ever permissible to initiate the use of force?" rest. When I discover the objective reason for my position, that it's never permissible, under any circumstances, I'll take the subject up again (and I have no doubt that I'll discover the answer eventually). I'll only say now that killing an innocent person is too high a price for me to pay to go on living, and I won't even entertain the idea of such an atrocious action.

Before I forget, I want to tell you that I appreciate your style of writing; it's lucidity is, from my point of view, extremely satisfying. Given an understanding of certain philosophical terms (such as "positivism," "naturalistic," etc.), only a dunce would fail to grasp what you say. When I said in a previous letter that you had failed to define your terms, I didn't mean that you had failed to give the ideas which certain men have written on whatever subject you were considering; but I don't consider what others have said to be a definition unless it is truly definitional ~~XXXX~~ in character. By "definition," I meant a statement which explains the nature--explicitly, the essential characteristics of the ~~nature~~ nature--of what is being considered. I think your books are probably the best there are for provoking thought in the classroom, and I guess I can't fault them for failing to give the answers to certain questions which I, admittedly, don't have the answers, either. I've quite enjoyed what I've read in HUMAN CONDUCT and An Introduction to PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS.

Re the enclosed sheet with your letter of Mar. 1, these comments-- 1. If, to keep from being killed, you had to shoot the armed gunmen, risking the killing of innocent bystanders, one would shoot the armed gunmen, taking that risk. If innocent persons were killed, the person who killed them accidentally while defending himself would not be guilty of using force against the innocent bystanders, let alone initiatory force. And here is where a precise, epistemologically correct definition of force clears the air. Force is any volitional behavior which intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of one or more persons. The one who defends himself and kills an innocent bystander certainly does not intentionally require the unwilling involvement of the innocent party, and he is, therefore, not guilty of using force against the innocent bystander. The gunmen who brought about the situation by their use of invasive force would be guilty of the innocent bystander's death (assuming that the one who ~~defended himself~~ defended himself exercised a sufficient amount of precaution appropriate to the situation and that the innocent bystander's death was truly accidental). 2. If running the child down could not be prevented without the pursuing gunmen killing you (assuming this to be a given), the child's death would be the fault of the gunmen. However, I believe this to be an example of an invalid consideration, as it asks that one make assumptions and consider them as certain ("in order to make your fast getaway you have to run down a child crossing the road"). Your statement, "As far as that child is concerned, you would be the initiatory of aggression," is totally irrelevant to what the facts are. The ~~gunmen~~ gunmen in your illustration are like government in the sense that both (gunmen and government) make it virtually impossible for anyone to live so as to never be the cause of some harm to others! I am, of course, referring to the only kind of governments that ever existed or could ever exist in reality (a "Randian government" is different in kind from actual governments, which fact makes it epistemologically impermissible to use the word "government" to denote actual governments and the floating abstraction which a "Randian government" is--one is intrinsically evil, whereas the other, conceding for the moment that it could exist, is good in that it does not initiate the use of force and that it does protect men's rights). 3. This situation is the result of the prevailing idea of government (in general) and the existence of government (in particular), and there are no right answers which do not involve the abolition of government (which is the cause of the trouble in the first place). Government is institutionalized, initiatory, invasive force which could not exist as a government (as it would be a market phenomenon) apart from the theft of taxation. Such is the nature of politics. (By the way, are you still going to call your new book, LIBERTARIANISM: The Coming Political Philosophy? As I suggested before, is it still possible to change it to ...: The Coming Social Philosophy?) 4. Governments and only governments cause wars. Here again, there are no correct answers which do not involve the abolition of governments. A person, acting in consonance with what his well-being requires, could very well have to kill others, his rulers preventing him from having a free choice. 5. I don't think so, but I can't tell you why (and I'm assuming that the person who has a cure for the form of cancer your ~~h~~ wife has is in possession of a sound mind). 6. This situation is so inconceivable to me that I can't comment on it intelligently. Commenting on your P. S. at the bottom of the enclosed sheet, it isn't possible that a person can escape the detrimental psychological effects of permitting into his consciousness the idea that it is permissible to initiate violence, and your belief that you wouldn't have any such fears (that I listed on pp. 7 & 8 of "Man's Standard of Value") doesn't alter the truth. But I'm not satisfied with my understanding on this subject, so I'll wait until I am to say more.

Re yours of April 26, with which you returned my article, "Man's Standard of Value," I'm afraid I agree with most of what your reviewer said, and I had, as stated earlier, already decided that I didn't want the article published in any periodical in its present form. The reason ~~young~~ you gave in your letter of Mar. 1--the probability that Miss Rand would not permit you to quote her in your new book if you printed something against her in The Personalist--is sufficient reason for not printing it in The Personalist (though I think it's a hell of a note, assuming that she really is that way!). Even if there was only a remote possibility that she wouldn't permit you to quote from her works, that would be enough reason for you to refuse to print anything against her (and you know her better than I). I think I'll do some work on the article and enter it in the SOL III contest, taking into consideration the many helpful bits of advice I've received from many who have read it. I'm grateful to you for pointing out that Aristotle's "eudaimonia" is better rendered "well-being" than "happiness." (Don't you think it was Aristotle's failure to see through certain mystical beliefs--such as the notion of god, the idea that men must be ruled /that men need rulers/--that caused him to be inconsistent when it came to applying in practice /in his writings re human, social behavior/ what a man's well-being required?)

Incidentally, I have yet to receive any issues of The Personalist. Surely the machinery of The Personalist's publication is not as complicated and slow as that of government (?). If I don't hear anything for another month, I'll write to Mrs. Garey again.

Re your letter of ~~1~~ Jan. 5, 1971, I'll comment on your comments as you numbered them. 1. Re "pure-capitalism-as-compatible-with-full-employment," Rothbard has covered this subject very thoroughly in MAN, ECONOMY, AND STATE, and I refer you to the 2nd volume, starting on page 522. 2. You're wrong--see the passage beginning at the top of page 62 in TMFL. Once again, there are no correct answers to the ecological questions short of going to the cause of such problems--which is government (prevention of property ownership). In a completely voluntaristic society such as I advocate, one of the subsidiary functions of the insurance fraternity would be to determine what the objective rules are which govern human behavior with respect to pollution; these rules have never been the object of creative investigation since government control of human action has made such investigation quite irrelevant to legal existence in a political context (legal is what's permitted or required). Re your statement, "The government should do only what individuals can't do ALONE," if you mean singly by "ALONE," government would be in charge of many, many things. Leonard Read has shown how that one man, with no help from anyone else, couldn't even make a pencil (his recording, "I, Pencil."). Shall we put government in charge of pencil-making? As we point out in TMFL, page 62, "If I own the air space around my home, you obviously don't have the right to pour pollutants into that air space any more than you have a right to throw garbage onto ~~my~~ my lawn." Governments have pre-empted the area of rule-making, and they just haven't gotten around to figuring out the rules with regard to pollution (and they won't!). When objective rules have been discovered, as they will be once men are free, anyone who violates them to the detriment of others will be called to account just as any other kind of invasive violence will be. Short of this--freedom, that is, there are no satisfactory answers. That is why I insist that anything less than coming to grips with the cause of social problems--namely, the prevailing idea of slavery called government--and making the idea of freedom known so that its practicality is understood is largely a waste of time. Any social problem has a government or governments at its roots! The idea of government is the root of all social problems. 3. Government has caused the "management vs. labor" conflict (as well as all other social conflicts), and such a situation could not exist in a free-market society. There'd be no reason for it to exist, as the insurance companies would expunge from active operation in society anything which caused men to fight. Try to get your mind out of the prison of what has been coercively imposed upon us and let yourself see the moral implications of freedom; they're utterly fantastic! 4. We give examples of how "crime" would be prevented in TMFL--such as the installation of certain protective devices, resulting in lower insurance premiums. We certainly don't advocate "crime-prevention" by violating people's rights--that is, by committing "crime." How sure a person should be that another is going to commit an aggression might pose a problem for philosophers, but it isn't ~~much~~ much of a practical problem even today in our highly regimented society. 5. I'll refer you to our Chapter 9, "Dealing With Coercion," as you seem to have entirely overlooked what we

by free-market forces which are relentless in their jealousy for justice (in the absence of what is made possible by institutionalized violence--that is, governments). The jealousy for justice would stem from an understandable desire to stay in business (in a free-market context). This desire is ~~inherent~~ one of the more obvious moral results of freedom.

The rules for developing guilt or innocence ~~are~~ are so complicated and non-objective today that it's difficult to get one's thinking outside of today's regimented irrationality and ~~to~~ be able to see that most of our problems, when viewed in a context of freedom, have extremely simple solutions. Take, for example, your statement, "If you don't have a system of law, binding upon the judge, I don't see how you could avoid countless cases of railroading-of-the-insignificant-innocent whom nobody cares about, and of letting-the-rich-guilty go through bribery, and so on." A grasp of our Chapter 5 would easily clear up this seeming problem. Because of the news media ~~alone~~ alone, an arbitrator ~~of~~ wouldn't dare to pull such skullduggery--at the very least, people in business want to stay in business, and honesty would be a pre-requisite for staying in business (in an environment of peace and freedom). "Why should they care about such niceties?" Because they'd want to go on living free. On the other hand, there is plenty of railroading-of-the-insignificant-innocent and letting-the-rich-guilty go in all governmental systems (it's the nature of the beast). Also, our Chapter 12 shows why a system of statutory law cannot be objective.

Now, your letter of Jan. 14, 1971, on rights. When I said "uses of 'rights,'" I meant uses of the word "rights," not "instances (denotations) of the use of the term, which is why I put "rights" in quotes. But anyhow, I don't think I understand your distinction. Yes, I suppose you could say that I build my theory of rights right into the definition of rights, or rather, and more correctly, my theory of rights can be seen in my definition of rights. But my definition of rights developed from my theory of rights as derived from observing how the concept is used, the valid uses serving as the basis for my definition. It's not necessarily true that "A consequence of your definition would be that someone else with a different theory of rights would not (according to your definition) believe in rights at all!" and this can be seen in the way the concept is used by various writers. I didn't make a list, but I did notice sometime ago that many writers use the concept, rights, in precisely the sense of our definition (it was developed by both Linda and me), even though they sometimes ignore their own "definitions" of the concept. This can be seen in Rand's article on rights--she "defines" a right as a moral sanction to an action in a social context, evidently not realizing that this would restrict a person's rights to moral actions alone, but then she uses the word to denote the concept which we define as a right--in other words, she uses the word as we define the concept of which it is ^{the word} the symbol. It's true that one who believed a right to be a legal permission or requirement might claim that I don't believe in rights at all, but I'm not primarily concerned with anything other than what is the truth re the subject, and the truth is objectively observable. Human volition is the epistemological root of the concept, right, as it is volition which makes human aggression possible and the concept of rights necessary for moral protection and as a criterion of judgment. The obligation which others have to respect my right to life (not their duty to me, as duty speaks of service without pay and has its roots in altruism, as Miss Rand recently pointed out) is their obligation to themselves--their obligation to see that their behavior maintains their rights as fully applicable to them, as they are not within their rights (that is, they do not stand in the same relationship to their rights) when they violate my rights. We explained why in TMFL. -- In a descriptive sense, a right can be correctly said to be a moral claim, but a right is not a claim in a definitive sense; a claim is a by-product of a right but not the same thing as a right ... which is what I meant in saying that a right is not a claim. I'll make this point clearer when I revise the article again. I think our ~~understanding~~ ideas of what a definition is are not identical.

To "show specifically what rights and duties people have" is not easy, since a person has the right to anything which does not involve coercion (that is, which does not involve invasive force--which is any volitional behavior which intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of one or more persons who've done nothing to provoke such behavior). (I struck out "and duties" above as I think the concept, duty, is inappropriate to the consideration of our subject.) -- In your 5th par., you are granting equal validity to conflicting

opinions about what a right is, whereas it doesn't make a damn bit of difference what anyone thinks a right is--what is the truth is all that really matters, and the truth is not the product of someone's ~~subjective opinion~~ subjective opinion. Coercion in the broad sense is force; it might have "to do with the threatened loss of a value," but I don't see why you are apparently making this an essential characteristic, a defining characteristic ... but I'd have to know what you meant by 'value' before I could know how to proceed intelligently.

H. L. A. Hart's chapter on natural law was ~~found to be worth reading~~ found to be worth reading, but I certainly don't agree that all men have the equal right to be free--an aggressor doesn't stop being a man when he murders his victim, and he certainly does not have the right, equal to that of other men who are not aggressors, to be free, as he is not entitled to that part of his life (his labor if he is destitute) and/or possessions which are required by the principle of justice (the moral principle which requires the payment of debts) to make reparations for the coercive injustice insofar as is humanly possible. Most people who have studied and written on the subject of rights have never discovered that the notion of the inalienability of rights has only the foundation of "sacred" tradition. Unless one holds that men have rights simply by virtue of their being human (in which case, LeFevre is right --any self-defense violates the aggressor's inalienable rights!), he may be able to see how nearly every advocate of freedom uses the concept. Jarret Wollstein, with whom I've discussed this subject many times and who still holds that rights are inalienable, said in a letter, a copy of which its receiver sent to me, that a man had the right to live however he pleased so long as he did not initiate the use of force against anyone else; I quoted this part of his letter in a short debate we had before the first East Coast "Think"-In audience, and he said, "If I said that, I was mistaken" (!). Jarret is very slow to learn new ideas, but I think Roy Childs is fairly clear on the subject of rights, which means ~~gr~~ that Jarret will see the truth one of these days (Jarret is making progress in improving his personality so that people can stand him, and he's to be commended for sticking to his guns and building SIL, with much help from others, to the place where it shows some promise of becoming a success). The confusion regarding the subject of rights is because of the lack of a definition which states clearly what rights are, or what a right is--if a man can't define his terms, he doesn't clearly understand what he's talking about. And I think you're mistaken in saying that Rand used "moral" as the opposite of non-moral, and I think you'd be hard-pressed to show any place where she has used the word "moral" in any other sense than the opposite of immoral; if she does use "moral" in this equivocal way, she nowhere explains the ambiguity of "moral," which you suggest exists. Did she ever tell you that she meant the opposite of non-moral in her sentence, "A right is a moral sanction to an action," etc.? I think she's a stranger to that meaning you give to "moral." Her whole moral philosophy is foreign to that connotation. That "One has the right to any non-coercive actions, though many non-coercive actions would be immoral if performed," is exactly my point. I appreciate your suggesting the meaning she may have intended, but I'm sure you're wrong. Rand, I've studied, very thoroughly, repeatedly, as she is one of very few who is really worth studying. A right is a moral sanction to an uncoerced, non-coercive existence (this is not a definition), but the moral sanction is not upon what ~~was~~ an uncoerced person does non-coercively--it's on the coercion-free aspect of a human life. One may live a very profligate life, and such behavior certainly has no moral sanction, but the non-coercive character of his behavior is morally sanctioned (and I'm speaking only of morality which is naturally appropriate to human nature). -- In Hart's chapter on natural law, he shows that he is confused as to what freedom is--he speaks of one man's freedom limiting another's freedom, whereas if one understands that freedom (social freedom, that is) is the condition of existence in which a human being is not prevented by another person or other persons from behaving in any non-coercive manner desired by and possible to him, he will not talk so foolishly. Well, I have to get busy on the writing of HOW TO BECOME YOURSELF so these ideas can become known and the day of peace and freedom hastened. So long as those who set the intellectual tone of our culture remain in ignorance, one cannot rationally expect much of the culture.

Reference yours of Jan. 25. I want to point out again that my definition of force is value-neutral. I do not "define 'force' in such a way as to settle by definition the question whether the use of force is ever justified." My definition does not imply "that it

it's the initiation of force then it's wrong, period." My definition of force, "Force is any volitional behavior which intentionally requires the unwilling involvement of one or more persons," is equally applicable to either invasive or defensive force. When X defends himself against an aggressor's attack, he is certainly intentionally requiring behavior of the aggressor which the aggressor is not willing to ~~xxx~~ perform; but X's defense of his person and/or property by force can be seen to be a moral action only if one looks elsewhere, away from the definition of force (which says nothing about the moral character of the use of force). I do want this point cleared up. Many people have written me, after learning my definition of force, saying that it has brought the concept into clear focus and that they understand many questions they didn't before receiving my definition. I have just looked over your chapter on definition and I see much explanation and descriptive material which deal with the subject, definition, but I don't see where you have given your definition of the concept. I don't agree with anyone who would try to maintain that a long chapter on a subject is a definition. A definition is a statement which gives the meaning of a concept, listing the concept's fundamental characteristics. I am not advancing this as a definition, but it's close to a definition if it isn't exactly, epistemologically correct. (The next section in your book, on Vagueness, reminds me of a remark I overheard at a libertarian meeting some time ago. Responding to a "dirty" story, one of the listeners declared in tones of great indignation, "That sounds vaguely obscene; and if there's anything I can't stand it's vagueness!") I hope this will help to break our "impasse on ~~the~~ the matter of definition of terms." I don't consciously "define the terms in question in a certain way, which would be vigorously opposed by your discussants"--that is, for the purpose of provoking vigorous opposition; I am sincerely, fervently desirous of defining terms in accordance with their most common usage so that a precise understanding of what the term symbolizes in reality can be arrived at. I'm not the least interested in outwitting anyone or closing the door to discussion. Honestly! However, I confess to being more concerned with what is the truth than with what my discussants will think of me or of what I say. Knowing and discovering what is right takes precedence over any other consideration in my world. (And I'm referring only to myself--no implications are intended.)

Re your last par. (yours of 1-25), I see an increasing number of libertarians who are coming to realize that we have no rational business allying ourselves with anyone who doesn't show that he really understands the fundamental principles of liberty, and I don't think, anyhow, that the libertarians of today can be compared with any so-called libertarians of the past. The various philosophies that they held contained so much error, and the best of their philosophies (whichever it was--Spooner's, Tucker's?) contained enough error that the anarchists'/defeat ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ was virtually inevitable--we have to be consistently right if we're to successfully gain general support! All this in-group fighting is defeating our purpose, and I'll ~~xxx~~ have no part of it (except in the rare situations when I deem it in my self-interest to take part). I've come to hate--literally hate!--fighting, anyway. Sensible people can learn to behave themselves better than that. And anyone can choose to be sensible if he hasn't chosen otherwise so long that he has himself "locked into" his irrational manner of living. And few have reached this miserable end.

This has gotten quite long, and I think I'll save other comments until later.

Best regards, for reason, peace, and liberty,


Morris G. Tannehill

August 7, 1970

Dear Tanny,

It seems impossible that so long a time has elapsed since I last wrote you. It must surely seem to you as if I've deliberately cut off our correspondence. That was not done at all, but I am sure negligent: when your letter came I was preparing final exams and a series of dept meetings on critical matters of dept wellbeing, and then my novel came out and this week my libertarianism book came out, and tomorrow I am leaving for San Francisco for the 2nd political philos. conference which I had hoped to get you into here in L.A. but it was taken out of my hands and is now at the Univ. of San Francisco (I am talking about the concept of private property, answering Prof. Mavrodes of the U of Michigan). And then in two weeks I shall be on my way to the Soviet Union, spending 3 weeks in Siberia - Irkutsk, Tashkent, Samarkand, Khabarovsk- and also Moscow and Leningrad etc. I ~~have~~ look forward to it and hope to stay out of prison while there, but felt I had to make the trip to get some insight into the mood of the country ~~and~~ and its people. - Well anyway, so much for the summer, and this still provides no good reason for not having written you ~~sooner~~, and I really still don't know what happened - this summer was the first chance I've had to relax at all in years, ~~and-it-se-~~ the first time I was not overdue on some project of importance to me, and it seems as if an enormous lassitude settled over me and made me postpone everything, including those things I wanted to do.

I shall have (even now) to save my major letter for the time when I return from San Francisco in a few days, when there will be much more to report about the contents of the conference. (The proceedings will again appear in the Personalist.) I hope that you have had a good summer and I await the success of your new projects on psychology. This leads me back to your remarks on Perry: I don't see how you can say that he was superficial (etc.) - and he certainly did not say that "whatever I want is good" (only, with Wm. James, if I want something, that is prima facie evidence of its value, and a good reason should be presented to me why I should not gratify the want). His is the theory of value of which Rand's is a special case. Value is relative to ~~human~~ interests, and without interested beings there would be no values to attain - in this Rand agrees with him 100%. To the cat, the cream has value, and anything in which a person displays a pro-interest is a value to him, even though ~~it may~~ it may (by interfering with other things he also values) be deleterious to his values when considered in the long run. (He may want alcohol but find that it interferes with other things he also values, so gives it up or returns to moderation.) A person may not know all these causal concomitants, and so opt for the thing he is drawn to without realizing that it knocks out other items in his system of values; if he but knew this, he would give it up. All this seems to me both true and important. Rand's peculiar twist is about man's rational faculty and its importance in discovering those items worth valuing; and it's true that Perry doesn't say much about this, but if the empirical facts which Rand adduces are true, there is no reason why Perry would have to deny them - they would fit into his ~~own~~ system beautifully. But Perry, not Rand, was the pioneer in this area. I don't see how you can have such a low opinion of him, except via a tremendous amount of misinterpretation of his views!

I am tempted to adduce many arguments about government, which I've thought of since I last wrote you, and to see what you would say about them. But since my book is out now, you might read what I say about government in the last chapter - I try to be fair to both the pro-govt (limited govt) and no-government libertarians, but in the end give reasons for casting my lot with the advocates of limited govt, for the reasons given. I am surely open to reason on this, and hope you give me some good arguments to change my mind, but meanwhile I must stand pro-limited-govt: not because of being against a private police force etc. (I'm not), but because I believe there must be a rule of law, which would be impossible with various arbitration agencies each with competing laws and often coming to no agreement. What (for example) makes you sure that the agencies would deal only with aggression and not ~~with~~ meddle in e.g. pornography? If there are enough anti-pornographers they will be glad to hire people to beat up those who sell such books. And on some matters a single decision is important: e.g. whether certain animals can be hunted, whether a certain food is a health-hazard, the pollution of the atmosphere and other matters of ecology, where the boundaries of my property are. I don't see how any other agency can what government does in these cases.

August 25, 1971

Dear John,

I was happy to hear from you again (yours of Aug. 7). I hope the 2nd Conference on Political Philosophy was worthwhile. You should be somewhere in the Soviet Union by this time or very soon and won't get around to reading this letter for 3 or 4 more weeks, but I have the time and feel inspired and I want to bring you up to date on the latest at the Tannehills.

But first, a comment or two in response to your letter. The concept value is used in two different senses (in the nominative case)—as the product of an evaluative process (which is the way Perry uses it) and as a term to designate that which is actually beneficial (e.g., air is a value to a living human ... *whether he knows it or not*). I realize that 'value' is used both ways, but I also realize that the use of 'value' in both ways causes much confusion. Which is why I suggest to my regular correspondents that we use 'value' for that which is actually beneficial ("Why does man need values?" The correct answer is, "To live," and for this he needs that which is actually beneficial.) and 'evalue' for that which is the product of an evaluative process ("Why, my cigarettes and liquor are values to me," says the man, two years before his lungs and liver stop functioning properly and he dies.). If we don't make the distinction, nothing but confusion will result except when we say or it is clear in which sense we're using the word. I don't like to use 'value' as *the object of someone's subjective whim* (which it could be if used in Perry's sense ... or rather, which it very often is), though I know I do use it this way many times without thinking—as when I speak of someone's value hierarchy being distorted. What Perry said, in substance, is, "If I value it ('value' is a verb here ... MT), it's a value." It's a fact that men value many things which are inimical to their life and well-being, and these are not the values they need to *live*! I think the value/evalue distinction is much needed for clarity's sake. *I want what I say to be understood!*

I'll try a larger type, as I have learned a lot since I last wrote you and want it to be easily read. On second thought I'll use a larger type. This beautiful machine — on which I'm typing this letter — costs \$4,400. I'm leasing it and starting a new business as a compositor, typesetting (for offset printing). As you can see by re-reading this paragraph as typed below, I can justify the lines with this machine.

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I'll leave comment on your last paragraph (about government) until I have read the last ^{chapter} paragraph of your new book, which I haven't received yet (probably will before you read this, though).

I have solved the 'lifeboat' problem (for myself), but I hardly know where to begin to explain it. I suppose the logical place to start is with volition, which I now know to be error, or an erroneous belief. Now, don't get shook—I don't believe in psychological determinism, either. Volition and psychological determinism (at least, as Branden represents the belief) do not exhaust the explanations of human behavior. There is a third—the truth.

I'll use the narrowest teaching re volition—Objectivist doctrine as I understand it. Our hero, Human (H), must make the choice to think or not to think. According to Objectivist teaching, when H chooses to think, he *could have chosen not to think*; and, conversely, when H either chooses not to think or doesn't choose to think, he *could have chosen to think*. I submit that this is pure hogwash and that some variant of volition has been the root cause of most of 'man's inhumanity to man'! The reason (for my making the foregoing statement) is not hard to grasp.

In the following, I'll use 'thing' as inclusive of all entities—all the different kinds of entities—as considered individually; used thus, a human is a thing.

A thing is what it is and cannot be what it is and what it is not at the same time and in the same respect. This statement is axiomatic, and I am assuming that you agree that it is (if you didn't, all discussion would be at an end as far as I am concerned). The laws of identity and excluded middle are just as applicable to humans as they are to other entities. But, in the first place, because of the nature of human consciousness, I disagree with the Objectivist position that it is possible for a person to choose not to think ... but let me define thinking as *any mental activity which results in the expansion of awareness*. I realize that this implies that animals other than human can and do think, and I suggest that this is a fact (animals are smart—they can and do perceive their human companion's attitude toward them and respond accordingly). A human, because of the nature of human consciousness, cannot choose not to think while he is conscious (though the expansion of his awareness need not be anything more than the hazy notion that he and his environment exists, and it need not be important enough to be held in his memory ... but his awareness is expanded at the time [because, if for no other reason, his environment is constantly changing]). It seems obvious to me that any other meaning of thinking leaves large gaps in one's understanding (though I can understand why a believer in volition would want to define thinking as Branden does [or did]—it is necessary for his belief in volition). — I'll quote from a paper I'm writing, as much as I have finished, and then continue my subject (VOLITION, MORALITY, AND THE STANDARD OF HUMAN JUDGMENT) in first-draft form.

The purpose of this paper is to show that the idea of volition—that human consciousness is volitional—has no basis in fact and that this idea is actually the cause of much human misery. We shall then consider some of the implications regarding the erroneous doctrine of volition.

Volition, or free will (as it has been commonly called), is the notion that human beings possess a so-called power of

choice. This power of choice allegedly enables a human to freely decide between two or more alternatives and to select that alternative which he believes will be better for him, but that *he could have chosen any of the other alternatives*, volition being the 'first cause' of his choice. One philosophic school holds that the fundamental choice volition imposes upon humans is the choice to think or not to think, that this choice is the basis for any other choice any human might make. This same philosophic school, in attempting to establish their particular doctrine of volition, demonstrates the fallacy of psychological determinism. They point out that psychological determinism is the belief that a human's behavior is the result of forces which impinge on him, forces over which the human has absolutely no control (his posture before these exterior forces being one of passivity). This belief fails to take into account the distinctive nature of the human animal and reduces him to a mechanistic automaton which reacts to the exterior forces that act upon him. As I shall show, both volition and psychological determinism are false beliefs and, therefore, do not explain human behavior. And I shall briefly point out what the truth is.

In the first place, nothing that occurs just 'happens.' There is a natural explanation for everything which occurs. We may not understand what it is, but the law of identity is irrevocable—a thing is what it is and not something else. Stated another way (as the law of excluded middle), a thing cannot be both what it is and what it is not at the same time and in the same respect. And what a thing is, is the result of specific causes, which were the result of specific causes, etc., etc. Not any thing that exists came into existence out of nothing, since nothing doesn't exist (everything that does exist is *some* thing, not nothing). The point is, there's no such thing as a cause without a cause—uncaused causes don't exist. (The universe is everything which exists; it has always existed in the sense that it has no beginning nor ending; it needs no cause, since there is nothing exterior to it.) A first cause is an impossibility, as every cause has one or more prior causes. So much for volition as a first cause.

A further point which follows from the above paragraph is that what a thing is determines what it can do. Given an environmental context, what a thing will do is determined by what it is. To be specific, a person's behavior is what it is because of the kind of person he is at the time, and this particular behavior of his is the only way he could have behaved, given the kind of person he was at the time he acted. Had his behavior been different in any way, he would not be the same kind of person—he would have had to be a different kind of person for his behavior to be different from what it was. But a thing is what it is at any given time—it is *not* something else. So, when a human chooses a certain course of behavior, he chooses it because he is a specific kind of person at the time the choice is made; and, since he is what he is, he can make no other choice. The axiomatic law of identity applies to all things (entities), and humans are no exception. What a thing is, given its environment, determines what it will do. What a human is, given his environmental context, determines what his behavior will be. Aristotle really was correct when he pointed out that a thing is what it is and not something else at any given time and in any given respect. (But, of course, no one could know anything were this fact not an invariable axiom.)

"But," as some have argued, "if only one course is open to a person at any given time and he cannot choose any other, then he doesn't really make a choice at all. A particular choice presupposes the ability to choose differently or it is obvious that no choice has been made." The argument is specious and its solution simple. The concept choice is necessary simply because humans are not omniscient. Reality poses many problems, and humans must solve these problems for their well-being. Since a person has to figure out for himself what is the best way of solving his own problems, and since he doesn't know everything, he is confronted with what seems to him to be many alternatives. Given his environmental circumstances, he will make the choice of one of the alternatives whether or not he understands clearly why that choice is conducive to his well-being. And when he makes the choice, he is conscious of having made it and of having rejected the other alternatives. As far as he knows, he has made the best choice, or at least he believes that he is making the only choice possible to him in certain circumstances (as, for example, when he has to act but is not sure what other alternatives are open to him). Were he omniscient, no choice would be possible—as he would know everything, he could have no problems nor alternatives nor uncertainty and, therefore, no choice to make. The concepts alternative and choice are meaningful precisely because humans, not being omniscient, have to decide what their future behavior will be. Both choice and alternative can only have meaning in the absence of omniscience. All of which brings me to my next point, about human nature.

Aristotle defined man as a rational animal. If animal is understood to mean a living being with the ability of self-locomotion and rational is understood to mean the ability to think conceptually (I understand think to mean any conscious mental activity which results in an expanded awareness; with this meaning, humans aren't the only animal that thinks ... but he is the only animal that thinks *conceptually*), Aristotle's definition is correct and complete (since all the other human characteristics are subsumed under [being made possible and explained by] the two fundamental human characteristics, animality and rationality). Because the distinctly human mode of mental operation is conceptual, a human is not restricted in his thinking by the perceptual concretes with which he is faced in his immediate environment. Because of the conceptual nature of human consciousness, a human has the inherent faculty of reason. By learning how to use this faculty, a human can develop the ability to integrate the facts relevant to him, make correct inferences, reach accurate conclusions, and to direct his behavior purposefully toward the achievement of the best life possible to him within the limits of his environmental context. The point of emphasis is that a human, by virtue of his distinctive form of consciousness, has the potential for learning how to behave himself in harmony with the requirements of his own well-being (to the extent made possible by his knowledge and his environment).

With the above definition of think in mind, please note that babies think, even before they are born. That the development of their mental structure is to some extent caused by their pre-natal experiences is fairly common knowledge. The question arises, "What makes a person what he/she is at any given point in time?" To answer, "A person is what he is because of the choices he has made, or the thinking he has done or failed to do," is to beg the question and to

if you
doesn't
answer
just

leave one with the absurd conclusion that a human is nothing until he thinks and makes choices! Even if we use the formula of the above mentioned philosophic school—that volition is the choice to think or not to think—there is obviously a first time when one makes the choice to think or not to think. In actual fact, though, his initial choice is either on what he will think about or the intensity with which he will think about it, or both ... not *whether* he will think or not! The simple truth is that everyone makes the particular choices he makes *because of what he is*—because of the kind of person he is when he makes each choice. And what a person is, is ultimately reducible to the causal factors of his heredity and his environment. It should be needless to point out that what a person is, as determined by heredity and environment, is not the product of his own choice to think or not to think—that is, of his own volition. Also, it would be foolish to point out that what a person is *always* precedes any choice he makes ... that is, *it would be* foolish were it not for the popular belief in volition (which belief negates the law of identity as applicable to human behavior).

I'll leave the rest 'til later, John, as I have some other things which need attention. Just as a quick summary, though, reflect for a moment—if morality is based on volition, as most people hold implicitly and as Objectivists hold explicitly, and if volition has no basis in fact, whence cometh morality? In the final analysis, I'm convinced it's 'necessary' because most people have not yet learned to be fact-centered and 'need' such crutches for their flagging self-esteem. The following may make the foregoing in this paragraph clearer.

A standard is determined by the purpose for which it is required. To discover what the standard of human judgment is, one must discover what is the purpose of human judgment. The purpose of human judgment is *the maximization of human well-being*. Now, what standard must one use if he is to successfully maximize his well-being? The answer is, one must use *HIS OWN SELF-INTEREST* as the standard of his judgments in order to successfully maximize his well-being. And it becomes obvious at once that Rand is wrong when she says that there are no conflicts of interest between or among rational men ... though they are few and far between and most of them can be resolved without resort to violence. I was wrong when I held that the self-interest of one man could not conflict with the self-interest of another man, and my error was in holding to a moral absolute—the error of the frozen absolute. The rule of self-interest is absolute and universally applicable to each individual as individuals, but a frozen moral absolute is collectivistic in nature and, if believed, will cause the true believer to act contrary to his self-interest at times when he really needs to know that his own self-interest is supreme where his own behavior is concerned.....

Maybe I'll have my article finished when I hear from you after your trip to Russia. I'm *not* going to make personal references, nor will I refer to 'the Authorities,' in my article. I don't wish to put anyone down, and I think that what is held by any particular person or school is relevant only insofar as it is necessary to refer to it to counter prevailing error. I *don't* believe it necessary to name them; I do believe it best not to name them. My article will be a good one, and I have said all this to inquire of you as to whether you think it can be published in The Personalist. I'm reasonably sure that I can get it published in three parts in The Individualist (and get paid for it), but I would prefer The Personalist to The Individualist. I'm very busy (our psychological counseling service has picked up and my new business takes quite a lot of time), so I really can't say when I'll have this article finished. If those on The Personalist's Staff who decide on what is acceptable for publication in The Personalist always insist on references at the end of the articles, please so inform me, as my article will have no such references. I think this requirement is an academic one and probably exists because there are so few people who do their own thinking.

As for our psychological counseling service, we have had some tremendous successes and are really looking forward to the development of our black-market service. I'm telling you this in confidence, of course, as we certainly don't want any trouble from the modern, dark-age, psycho-practitioners who are backed by the government gun. Our latest success was with a professor of geology who had intended to avail himself of Branden's services until he found that he couldn't spare the time. We have learned how to help our clients to de-repress and bring into awareness that which is the source of their psychological problems so that they can understand them and do something about them. They go away from here different persons, literally! And we're going to keep on learning (assuming that Big Brother leaves us alone)!

Best regards,

Lanny
Morris G. Annehill

Made a Xerox copy for my file copy and have lost pages 2 + 3 of the original (they'll probably show up somewhere). I have another copy of page 3, and I have the copy of my article, some of which is page 2. OVER

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I know that not all determinists hold that a person's consciousness has nothing to do with his behavior and that Branden presents a one-sided view of determinism, and I plan to revise the 2nd par. of my article so as to reflect this.

By the way, I'm fast coming to the conclusion that it isn't an intellectual revolution we need *but a psychological revolution*. All the talk about 'libertarian strategy for the cause' is so much horseshit (though horseshit can be put to a good use) **except for its minimal, 'spin-off' result in causing more people to think more clearly**. It'll take mentally healthy people to bring about peace and freedom! Sad to say, few libertarians are very mentally healthy (though they *are*, generally, more psychologically free than most people). I should have seen this much sooner—psychological freedom is the firm foundation of social freedom (in fact, social freedom doesn't have any other foundation!).

Dear Tanny,

Thanks for your letter just received on my return from Russia. I could write volumes on the observations gleaned on my trip, but I shall refrain here - I also have hundreds of fascinating pictures of the land and the people in Siberia and European Russia. We traveled over seven thousand miles within Russia (always on Aeroflot, which compares favorably to American airlines in safety though not in luxury). And now school is about to begin, and I scarcely have time to breathe.

Though I would like to see your proposed article in The Personalist, I would tend for your sake to suggest that you send it first to The Individualist; first, The Individualist pays; second, it commands a much wider audience, one much more sympathetic to its ideas; third, it is not as strictly philosophical a journal, with the result that every line would not be subjected to the detailed philosophic scrutiny ~~that~~ and criticism that it would if it were carried by The Personalist. - The matter of footnotes has nothing whatever to do with it (many articles and discussions in The Personalist contain none, and the presence of footnotes is no criterion at all for accepting articles). The heart of the matter is that there is no substitute for detailed training in philosophy in graduate school, with a succession of teachers going over everything one wishes to say and subjecting it to the most detailed scrutiny and criticism. You are doing very well in philosophy considering that you were not trained in it; but in ever so many places this lack of training shows, and would be spotted at once by readers of the kind The Personalist has. Examples are so numerous that it is hard to bring specific ones to mind; the line that sticks in my mind is from your previous paper, "If we are to have values [or something] like that, let's make freedom it!" - which would immediately be lit on by philosophers, first as polemic entering a scholarly journal, second as ~~disproven~~ unproved (why not "Let's make pleasure it" or even "Let's make the anthill ideal of society it"?). Whether one's statements are true or false, the writing must be finely honed; ~~th~~ and the excerpts from ~~a~~ your latest one are much better in that respect than the earlier one you submitted and then withdrew from The Personalist. But the writing is not free of these things yet: for example, on the bottom of p. 1 of your letter of Aug. 25, you say "Volition, or free will..." Now these are just not the same, and every philosophy major knows it. Volition has to do with will; whether the will is free is another matter. The first question belongs to the enormous current literature on the concept of volition; the second belongs to the even more enormous literature on the free-will vs. determinism problem.

I am no specialist in the literature on the concept of volition; but I think A. I. Melden's book Free Action summarizes the problems and alternatives well, and T. Annese's article on volition in the 1969 Personalist is very sensible. It all depends of course, on what "volition" means. Aquinas divided mental activities into cognitive, emotional, and volitional, and in a rough way this is correct - what you know, what you do, ~~x~~ how you feel. And certainly there are experiences that can be called volitional, e.g. of wanting one thing and nevertheless deciding to do another, experiences of deliberation and calculation and striving and then deciding. But I do believe that "volitions" as a kind of mental act or process apart from all these things is a fiction, and in this latter sense there's no such thing as volitions. (And I certainly agree with you on the further point, not really connected with it, that the Objectivists are wrong in saying that there was once an alternative "to think or not to think" which we confronted at some moment in time.)

But I do think you are mistaken on p. 2 (first complete paragraph) in identifying the Causal Principle with the Laws of Identity and Non-contradiction. These are clearly distinct; whether everything is what it is, is a different issue from whether everything that happens has a cause. The first of these is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of my Introduction to Philosophical Analysis, and the other is discussed in detail in Chapter 5. As to first cause and uncaused causes, see the same book, pp. 429-434, 436. I discuss the issue there as well as I can, and can't really repeat the points in a letter.

Another place where I think you confuse two things is in the middle of p. 2, "if only one course is open to a person at any given time...then he doesn't really make a choice at all." That people do choose is an indubitable fact of experience; for example, I chose a few moments ago to start a letter to you. Whether that choice is free (in one or another of the many confusing and interconnected meanings of the term "free") is another and very different question - if every choice is 100% caused by preexisting factors, then he still chooses but his choice isn't free (in one sense of "free", the sense in which freedom excludes determinism). Again a confusion of choice with indeterministic freedom. - And then you go on to compound the error: you state that the solution is simple, that the concepts of choice and alternative are meaningful because people aren't omniscient, etc. This of course is true - if we were omniscient we would have no need for choices - but it doesn't answer the question posed, namely, whether if only one course is really open the person can be said to make a choice. People do have to choose because they're not omniscient, etc., but that in no way decides the question as to whether their choice is free in some indeterministic sense. That again is a different question, not to be confused with the other one. One must at least keep his questions clear and distinct!

And again (skipping a page for lack of time) I must object to your quick inference from well-being to one's own well-being (p. 3). You say "The purpose of human judgment is the maximization of human well-being" (though I would be interested in learning how you know this - you have to be very careful about the use of the word "purpose" in a context other than that of human artifices - see p. 245 of Introduction to Philosophical Analysis). I don't think there is any one thing that you can call the purpose of human judgment (who purposed it that way? God?). But waiving this point, you fly right in the next sentence to the assertion of one's own self-interest as the standard of judgment. And it is not at all clear to me how you get from the first to the second. I might say that if ~~max~~ the maximization of human well-being is what I ought to aim at, then I ought to aim at it regardless of how it affects me; that if I lay down my life in order to protect someone against aggression or injustice, or pay dearly to protect or defend someone else's rights, I am achieving maximization of human well-being in these circumstances but not necessarily the maximization of self-interest. The two often, but not always, go together, and I have long contended something that you now apparently agree with, that Rand's claim that the selfish interest of rational men never clashes, is just not true. It isn't true; but whether, in that event, it is the maximization of human well-being that one should opt to follow, or the maximization of self-interest, still remains an open, and often very acute, question.

Well, I'd like to keep on - but time forbids. Classes begin tomorrow, and I am still quite exhausted from the trip. I hope you have received your copy of my book by this time. I have some "doubts about certain details of libertarianism" to convey to you if you wish them, but that must wait for another time. Thanks again for writing, and good luck with your beautiful new machine.

All best wishes,

2953 S. Aurelius Rd.  
Onondaga, MI 49264  
September 26, 1971

Dear John,

Thanks for yours of the 19th. I'd surely like to visit with you and hear about your trip to Russia. Maybe one of these days . . . . .

Every person who learns and continues to learn what the achievement of his well-being requires will develop an attitude toward himself with which he is extremely pleased ... even when he receives a letter from, say, a well known doctor of philosophy which informs him of certain things about which he had been ignorant. Formerly, I would have felt hurt if someone had pointed out certain defects (from a modern philosopher's standpoint) in my writing, but I am actually grateful to you for pointing them out (in your very diplomatic way). (As I remember, I said, "If there is to be a 'wave of the future,' let's make freedom it!" but I must agree that this kind of talk is inappropriate for publication in *The Personalist* [though I *had* given reasons why 'the wave of the future' should be freedom and not something else which is inimical to human well-being].) I do understand now that I don't know how to talk the language of modern philosophers. And, while I could criticize some aspects of this truth, I also recognize that one must, if he really wants to be understood, learn how to be precise in what he says (as well as how to keep relatively simple in what he says). I shall accomplish this laudable goal—that is, I shall continue to learn how better to express my ideas. And I shall never stop learning as long as I live and am able to do so, my major subject being myself (or my self). My life has become such that I think it probable that I won't find the time or the inclination to finish my article (Volition, etc.); I have several other things which are of greater importance to me and which will get my bills paid and result in my well-being (much moreso than the publication of that article!). Eventually, someone will grasp what the truth is re volition and subject themselves to the hassle which will ensue when they attempt to get the truth known by publishing their ideas. In fact, a few have already tumbled to the truth, at least vaguely, and are grasping their way out and into print on aspects of free will vs. determinism (I mean within the ranks of libertarianism), and I'm going to be very interested to see how the garbled philosophy of libertarianism progresses (or regresses, which I consider at least a possibility). From your last letter I have learned, also, that volition has other meanings than the meaning I learned it had from my study of Objectivism, and I am made to wonder why, if *they* knew it, did Objectivists not at least indicate that volition had other meanings than the one meaning they intended to convey to their audience. I am becoming more and more unenamoured of Objectivism. It was instrumental in getting me pointed in the right direction, or (maybe it would be better to say) turning me from my slow journey toward more misery and ultimate disaster, but that's the extent of what I can say about it favorably. I've found many devotees of Objectivism to be very obnoxious, and certain views they got, or derived, from Objectivism is (with little doubt in my mind) causally responsible for the psychological wrecks they've become. (Which no doubt increases Branden's [and our] market!) When it is virtually certain that most people's psychological problems can be traced back to the first three years of their lives (and most of these within the first two years), it's so absurd for the devout Randoid to hold that most people behave irrationally "because they have chosen not to think"! How utterly absurd. How a lack of understanding is destroying our world, and so many Objectivists contributing to this lack ... mostly for the purpose of supporting their flagging egos! Well, I'm not sad to observe what's happening to Objectivism, especially when I see the number of people who are rising above its errors. I'm very gratified, as a matter of happy fact!

My only interest in the subject of volition (the Objectivist variety), aside from my desire to be philosophically correct (especially with regard to my beliefs about human behavior), is because of the psychological effect the belief in volition has on some (very likely, all) people. As long as a person believes the Objectivist doctrine re volition, he can never understand why a person behaves as he does and he is very apt to behave himself in response to some irrational behavior of another person in such a manner so as to make the other person's irrationality worse instead of in a manner which would provide the irrational one with knowledge which could or would bring him out of his irrational state (as might be the case were he to understand). No person ever acts consciously in a manner which is less than the best or least bad way he knows. If that way is harmful to himself and/or ~~the~~ others, it is because he didn't possess the knowledge of how to do things better—that is, he did the best he could have done (or the least bad) given the state of his knowledge at the time and in those circumstances. When a person does something wrong because he doesn't know any better (meaning, he actually didn't have the knowledge which is necessary for him to know better), he can certainly be held accountable for his behavior and made to repair his damage insofar as it's humanly possible to him, but the cause of his behavior ~~was~~ is that he didn't know any better. Helping the erring one to understand this by giving him the knowledge that he formerly didn't possess is the only completely satisfactory way to rectify the damage he did insofar as humanly possible.



How time passes! And I just moved my IBM Composer into my new, Lansing office today, so I'll have to finish with this SCM Electra 220 of my wife's. Its type really looks sick!

If I understand you correctly at top of Page 2, yours of Sept. 19, you misunderstood me --I was not dealing there, in the par. to which you referred (middle of p. 2, mine of 8-25), with whether a choice is free or not. As I'm sure you realize (from reading my letter of 8-25), I believe that every choice is determined. It's certainly not "free" in the sense of having no cause, or antecedent factors which gave rise to it. It is determined by 1- what the chooser is at the time the choice is made and 2- the environmental context. What the choosing one is (at any given time) includes what his psychological makeup is. If it were possible to know precisely and completely what a person's environmental context and psycho-biologic makeup were, it would also be possible to predict exactly what ~~his~~ his behavior would be. Of course, this isn't possible (to know another person's psycho-biologic makeup), but the point is that what a person is, given his particular environment, determines what his behavior (including his mental activity) will be. I don't see anything so difficult with this subject. I think philosophers are guilty of overcomplexification!

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Where I spoke of the purpose of human judgment being the maximization of human well-being, I think the context makes it clear that it is individual well-being intended. Purpose, involving conscious intention (yes, I did read your references), is always individualistic. "What is the purpose of that machine?" really means "What is the purpose of the owner of that machine with respect to it?" If one wanted to know what the machine did, he would desire to know its function (I know--you do make this distinction). -- How do I know that the purpose of human judgment, in the case of each individual human, is the maximization of his well-being? Because human judgment is the chief function of the human brain, and it is arrived at purposefully (or at least some attempt is made to arrive at one's judgments purposefully). ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ The brain must function according to natural laws, and one of the natural laws enables us to know that the brain will malfunction without knowledge. With the appropriate knowledge, however, purposeful judgments do result in one's well-being being maximized. The intended purpose of every human judgment is the maximization of the well-being of the one making the judgment. The reasonable purpose of one's judgments is the maximization of his own well-being. How do I know this? It squares with man's need to survive, and it makes sense (I don't have any divine illumination). Do you have doubts about the purpose of (individual) human judgment? -- And the point I made is that self-interest is each man's standard of judgment because well-being is his purpose. Please read that par. again. It's true, of course, that what constitutes one's self-interest is a subject about which not many people know very much. What I intend by 'self-interest' are those things which are in the genuine interest of one's self, and demonstrably so, or conducive to one's actual well-being as verified by the relevant facts. -- I see that this subject might become an endless one/ so, since I have some other work needing me, I'll get to it and come back to this letter later.

(10-30-71) Moving into an office in Lansing was really a great move, but I've been working almost around the clock! I've raised my price from \$8 to \$10 an hour to discourage some of the business, hoping to ~~decrease~~ decrease the demand (my 'supply' is just so much!), and I think I'll have to go to \$15 an hour before supply and demand is brought into equilibrium. I moved in with an artist (graphic arts) who is right next door to a rapid printing shop (Copy Quick ... does offset printing 'while you wait'), and the artist and the printing shop have been very good advertisers for me. I do exceptionally good work, and it is quite an advantage to both of them to be able to get their composing needs met on the spot (in most cases), instead of having to wait a day or two. My minimum charge is \$2.50, and some of them <sup>take</sup> less than 5 minutes. The ~~prospect~~ prospects of \$100+ work days are becoming more and more fascinating!

Before I forget it, a reminder. In your PS to your letter of 1-25-71, you ~~said~~ said: "I'm sorry you sent for my book on libertarianism - I would have sent you a copy of two

for them if they are at all numerous.)" I have received the book I paid for and which I ordered for Anthony I.S. Alexander (see bottom of page 3 of mine of 1-28 in which I accepted your kind offer), but I haven't received my copy ~~faxingraph~~ (autographed, please) from you. Secondly, before I received the copy for A IS A, I received a letter from Roy Childs in which he mentioned that you had quoted extensively from TMFL, so I think it correct to consider the quotes from TMFL (in LIBERTARIANISM) to come within your specifications of "at all numerous." What would you say ~~and~~ a fair price would be?

By the way, I have received one inquiry re our book (and a subsequent order) from a reader of LIBERTARIANISM and will no doubt receive several ~~more~~ more. We ~~think~~ your selection of ~~what~~ what to quote from TMFL is excellent. I regret to say that both of us (you and I) have missed the fundamental points re whether a government is or is not needed. ~~the~~ (The following was pointed out to me by a person from whom you'll be hearing shortly but who asked that I not mention him to you by name.) Limited government advocates (lga) seem to think that their limited, constitutional government would bring society as close to utopia as it's possible to be, and they just can't see how certain (presumably necessary) things would be done without a government. And most lga's hold that "objective law" is an absolute requirement so that people can know the bounds of their behavior and know what they are prohibited from doing. Well, for one thing, this view ignores the existence of natural law or at least doesn't consider its existence to be of much importance (I assume because most people don't know it exists). Secondly, it must hold that, even though there is such a thing as ~~natural~~ natural law, few will recognize and be bound by it. Well, as long as ~~man-made~~ man-made laws are in vogue, it is doubtful that most people will know but very little about ~~natural~~ natural law, and it is equally doubtful that they'll learn how to behave themselves according to natural law and, thus, how to behave peacefully until the idea of government (i.e., that humans require rulers and "objective," man-made law) is seen for what it is--an idea involving slavery (again, I'm talking about real governments, not the floating abstraction of a Randian government nor the "limited" government of Leonard ~~Read~~ Read which, though it taxes its citizens, doesn't violate their rights (!/)). Of course, what the lga's mean by "objective laws" is, no doubt, codified natural laws with penalties attached for violations, but we've shown why such laws cannot be objective in Chapter 12 of TMFL. The manner of handling aggression would shortly become standardized ~~in~~ in a free-market environment ... facts are facts, and the insurance industry of a free-market society would have a vested interest in discovering and implementing the very best ways of maintaining peace and justice. So would virtually everyone else! Though hoping for utopia is foolish, it is demonstrable that the free market, operating solely within the context of natural law, is the best instrument for achieving and maintaining peace and justice. Once, men wanted to ~~be~~ be told how to live by a God or Gods. Then, men decided that they needed a societal instrument to tell ~~them~~ them how they should live (or else!), which idea has resulted in so much human misery! And which idea still lingers. Eh?

On Page 345, last par., in An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis, you speak of a view seeming to be "palatable but unintelligible" and other views being "intelligible but unpalatable." You've probably had this pointed out to you before. I can understand that an intelligible view ~~might~~ might be unpalatable (though I'm not so sure if the view is with regard to the truth of some aspect of human nature ... and I don't consider death to be an unpalatable subject) but how can an ~~unintelligible~~ unintelligible view be palatable to an intelligent, reasonable person, John? Such a view would be palatable only to those who preferred faith to reason, as an unintelligible view would have to be (could only be) accepted on faith. Since you know of no view on the operation of human consciousness which is both palatable and intelligible (or didn't when you wrote Phil. Anal.), I'd like to know what questions you have on the view I've presented which is based on the law of identity. (I don't think I'm too dense to understand them.)

Re psychology, if you haven't read Janov's THE PRIMAL SCREAM, please put it ~~on~~ on your reading agenda. Janov has some views which can cause much mental anguish and even some harm if the reader is very sensitive and not very perceptive (in the sense of being a genuine, 100% independent thinker) ... like his requirement that a person writhe and

"total" ... Janov really likes that word). I've known two people already who have been through much mental anguish because of this Janovian requirement. One, almost ~~in~~ to the point of suicide, and the other had decided to give up trying to make psychological progress as his situation (for two reasons) made it impossible for him to writhe and scream! The first has made considerable progress since understanding this Janovian error, and the second seemed gratified to learn of the error (and I haven't heard from him since last weekend when he was here and went back home, 400 miles away). Well, I have learned much more about the nature of repression since reading THE PRIMAL SCREAM, and this is the value of Janov's book. Most people's neurotic behavior began very early in their life, the vast majority of them within the first three years. Every child has certain needs. If these needs are not met properly and the unfulfilled need implies certain facts (or a fact) which the child finds unbearable, he will attempt to deny that need (in most cases, to be loved, held, coddled-to be cared for with love) by repressing the knowledge of the implications of his parents' failure to love and care for him as they should and by becoming unreal in his attempt to get their love and the care he needs. And he continues being unreal, motivated by the blocked feelings (~~XXXXXX~~ blocked memories, too, which were a part of his repression), in his adult behavior until he remembers and relives the experience which was unbearable to him as ~~xx~~ a child and feels what he refused to feel back then. When one does remember and derepresses, though, he makes many connections and can then understand his compulsive behavior (e.g., to make people like him, still attempting to get his parent's love), and he sees that he had to become neurotic in order to preserve his sanity, that he had no other choice at the time (he was 2 years old! ... and the obnoxious Randroid looks down and says, "He didn't choose to think!"!!!), that the realization as the young child that his parents didn't love him would have been too much for him to recognize (he couldn't have stood it, and no child can ... see why there is so much neurosis?), and that his need as a child is no longer his need as an adult. But, further, this area of his life which has been blocked, causing him to be unfeeling (a numb greyness in many cases), can now be used for him instead of having to use so much mental energy maintaining the repression and being at war with himself. Linda and I have been spending most of our time, when possible, remembering our childhood, discovering the blocked feelings as we remember the instances in our childhood when we came to the realization, "They won't like me as I am," and became unreal, as we thought would get us the attention we were being deprived of (which never works, of course), until our feelings (emotional feelings) and our reason are ~~hardly~~ hardly ever in conflict anymore ... and we're really learning what it is to be happy! I don't find myself worrying anymore about whether this person or that will like me, as my neurotic, compulsive need for my mother's love (she tried to kill me when I was 3 years old) is no longer my motivation when interacting with others. Both Linda and I come from extremely miserable childhood experiences, and ~~now~~ we've both succeeded in escaping from our mothers' influence. We're really fortunate ~~in~~ in having each other (both of us are very interested in psychology).

All for now. Hope you're back in the swing of things (since the start of another school year) and things are going well with you and yours.

Best regards,

*Janney*  
Morris G. Tannehill

P. S. For what it's worth, Linda says tell you that, since noting the style of your writing (in LIBERTARIANISM), she's much more impressed with you. I surely hope we'll be able to get personally acquainted some day.

Dear Tanny,

Thanks for your letter of Sept. 26 which must actually have been Oct. 26 since I received it Oct. 29. Your new type looks very good indeed. Good luck with the new chosen profession.

First on the matter of the quotations from you in Libertarianism. After you wrote me that I could use them, ad lib, as I wished, I ended up using quite a few - more than I had originally intended. I did try to take the very best ones, the ones that had impressed me the most. I ~~do~~ could have done without some of them (while still having a complete thought) but I thought that the inclusion of some further ones would enhance both my book and your reputation. Now you would like some money for the quotations. Well, I guess I could oblige, but I would prefer to wait and see whether my own book will turn out to be anything but a total loss: and at the moment that is what it looks like. Nash is doing nothing whatever to publicize it. Even the most obvious and least expensive places that I suggest to him for publicizing the book, or at least letting people know of its existence, or sending review copies, he doesn't do it. The company is going through bad times, but I am most unhappy with their bad handling of the book. I wish now that I had taken an offer from a better known Eastern publisher. I was indeed promised (in the contract) \$1000 on publication of the book regardless of its sales, but I haven't even received that. Apparently the company is in such bad financial straits that they can't afford even that small outlay. A few months ago they were about to close up shop entirely & but were bailed out at the last minute. So let me see - the pictures should be clearer in a few months, but it looks now as if the mountains of work I went through in writing that book ~~will~~ may add to my reputation but will end up netting me less than ten cents an hour for my work.

When you say that both of us missed the fundamental points re whether a government is or is not needed, I don't know quite what points you mean. Many critics, e.g. the Reviewer of Ramparts, castigates me for believing in government, but they do not answer my arguments. I have no objection to private police forces replacing government ones, as I indicated, but that still doesn't eliminate government; the private police forces should still not "take the law into their own hands" - they must be responsive to, and act in obedience to, the law of the land (pp. ~~419-20~~ 419-20). "Force is too dangerous a thing, even in its retaliatory use, to be left to the whims of individuals. A system of laws, published in advance and knowable to all, is required to regulate the use of force, if men are to enjoy any sort of security in their social existence." (p. 419) The only alternative I see is for defense and arbitration agencies a la your book; and surely each person will run to the agency he likes most, which will then use whatever methods it finds most effective (or feels like using) on members of other agencies, and chaos would result (a Hobbesian "state of nature"). On matters in which feelings run strong (the very matters that make wars), people will just not accept the verdict of an arbitration agency, esp. as long as there are others who will decide something different. - You refer to "natural law". I consider this no solution at all. The content of "natural law" is too shaky a thing to rest anything on. And as long as there is one person who would violate it, one has to have an impartial machinery for taking care of that one person, seeing to it that he has a trial by jury and is otherwise fairly treated while still being incarcerated if he is found guilty, etc. It may not be to the financial interest of anyone (such as a jail) to do this - or, it would be only if they could be worked at very low wages and near-starvation rations - and in the case of the criminally insane, and other psychotics, ~~that~~ no one could make a profit out of their labors at all (they are unemployable) and still there would have to be some machinery to deal with them, unless ~~one~~ one wants them simply to starve, or to walk the streets assaulting people. Right now the state does this, and inefficient as it is, I can't think of any better alternative. What is required in such cases (dealing with suspects, apprehending them and arresting them, care of the sick and the insane) is JUSTICE; and justice in dealings with others is not always ECONOMICALLY profit-making.

I have other arguments, but most of them are in the book (439-454); I'd be glad to discuss any one of them, and I'm sure my discussion of them is inadequate, but I'm not sure which ones you ~~wish~~ wish to pursue; so I'll wait for your expression of preference on this.

As to send you a copy, I can, but you won't get it at once. I have exactly one copy to my name. Nash stocks no copies - all must be sent from the warehouse in Miami, which takes about a month. I have ordered numerous copies for people, and paid for them in advance, and about half of them have never arrived at their intended destinations. Nash blames the postoffice and there it stands: I've paid for the copies and they haven't arrived. Whether the same will occur in your case, I cannot tell - time will tell. In any case, I can't send an autographed copy, since the copy will come directly from the Miami warehouse.

Yes, I have read "The Primal Scream" - as much of it as I could take without emitting a primal scream myself! There is really nothing very new in the book; some therapists tell me that they use some of his techniques among many others, but that he is inclined to greatly overvalue his own (as most therapists are). So many books come up every year in psychotherapy, each claiming a breakthrough, and none of which have much originality as one realizes if he has read a modicum of Freud, Jung, and others.

We seem at an impasse regarding ethical egoism. I have mentioned what seems to me an ambiguity in Rand's discussion of it: sometimes she praises something as pro-life or pro-human-life, and sometimes only as a pro-this-man's-life. And there's a difference. If an egoist is defined as someone who always acts to achieve the fulfillment of his own interests (at least he tries to - he doesn't always succeed), and that this is his ONLY goal, then this view seems to me incompatible with a lot of other things that Rand and other objectivists also say, e.g. about human rights. It is surely not ALWAYS in a person's interest to respect the rights of another; if I am hungry and I steal something from you, in order to keep the wolf from the door, I am not respecting your rights, but I am certainly prolonging my own existence and acting for my own self-interest. Even if I embezzle funds from the bank in such a way that I am pretty certain I won't get caught, I am taking money from the depositors (or from the bank's insurance company) but it is surely to my interest to do so - I may never have any financial worries again, nor any inner worries either. This might not happen with you or with me, but there are many people with whom it happens: one can't surely say that the thief ALWAYS is caught or is ALWAYS nagged by his conscience etc. This would be just oversimplistic. In short, there are a thousand incidents in everyday life in which the practice of egoism would be incompatible with the upholding of the rights of man. And then what has to give, the egoism or the rights? I have never seen in objectivist writing any answer to this; doubtless they believe that no incompatibility would arise, but there seems to me no doubt that it would - perhaps not as often as some people think, but still, often enough.

I think there is a very real dilemma on the determinism issue, which ~~no~~ philosopher has really been able to resolve satisfactorily. On the one hand, it seems clear and obvious that everything that happens (including human action) is caused, totally and completely, by antecedent events and conditions; i.e. that determinism is true. In that case, it is also true that one could not have done differently from what one did, given all the causal factors. Then what happens to freedom? On the other hand, we are as strongly convinced (in practical life) of freedom to do differently as we are (in our scientific moments) of the truth of determinism. We feel that we originated our acts and that we could have done other than we did; i.e. we feel that what Taylor calls the "theory of agency" is true - it is our common-sense belief about freedom. But this belief, attractive as it is, is in the end unintelligible (How can one be a "first cause" of one's acts?); and the deterministic view, though it seems true, is repugnant and unpalatable to us. I think that Richard Taylor in his little book Metaphysics (esp. the chapter reprinted in my paperback, Readings in Introductory Philosophy) gives an excellent feel for the real difficulty of the issue, to which the authors of simplistic solutions haven't done justice.