

Six In Anger
Essays and Poems by
Jim Michie

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Published by
Door Into Summer Press
Waves, North Carolina, USA

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Door Into Summer Press

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Introduction

These essays have been written over the last five or six years and revised when necessary to suit the changing situations that they address. The essays are concerned with topics I think are critical to solving the current social problems facing this nation, should any of its citizens show enough interest to want to work on the problem.

All of these essays have been discussed at length with friends that I believe to be sufficiently open to logic and having the ability to divest themselves of the encumbrances of dogma when required.

Dogma

The blackest hole of rationality
That questions not the right of piety
Ignoring needs that call for human rights
Subsuming will it rends the heart it blights
While hobbling hope and throttling life's intent
It seeds and breeds a world of malcontent

Reason

That finds its path wound through reality
Portending social change technology
It works to solve the worst of human plights
Illuminates the darkest of our nights
Addressing plans that work without relent
To heal and sooth with how your life was spent

Truth

The dialogue on these essays with my friends has been essential in hauling me back from more than one over-emotional precipice and their intelligence has been a beacon warning me of the shallow waters of my own knowledge.

I hope I have used their efforts in my behalf effectively, because ultimately, essays of this nature have to be an expression of my own convictions, and I don't really believe in compromise. I prefer the application of logic and going with the best conclusion that the facts support.

Compromise is a
dirty word that needs to be
spoken quietly
It strips the soul of
Logic by riding in on
life's expedience
Surreptitiously
using what is acceptable
not what is needed
It is the tool of
colliding ideals touted
as a solution
An anathema
for those who lead a life of
Rationality
It comes stealthily
draped in the warm fuzzy skin
of the **Pragmatic**
Ignoring facts of
Reality's Existence
it constricts the mind
It is the dogma
of purchased virtue for those
who will not be **Free**
Through political
discourse it slithers into
the hearts of mankind

Finally, I feel it necessary to express why I have bothered to write essays like these when I am not very optimistic that it will be possible to pull this country up out of the accumulated muck of the last 250 years. It is because I am angry that such a noble endeavor as this country has been allowed to fail by the apathy of its citizens, who shuffle through the endless hype and pap of their media-filled lives in a fog of ennui.

It isn't much, but I hope it helps.

What Is American Freedom?

What is American freedom or American liberty, if you prefer that word? Everyone seems to have a different definition based on their own experiences and longings, but let's see if we can come up with a working definition that would fit 99% of American citizens. First off, freedom is normally thought of as being able to do what you want—at least until you think about it a little more incisively. The extra thought should bring you to the conclusion that for people who live in a society like ours, the exercise of your freedom shouldn't give you the right to infringe on another person's freedom. Certainly not if it's your freedom they're infringing upon.

Absolute Freedom

The unbridled exercise of personal freedom is antithetical to the concept of a societal grouping. Societal groupings came into existence because some level of subordinating personal freedom proved more efficient at ensuring survival for the individuals and families of the grouping. Once humans formed groupings, their improved safety from predation coupled with their cooperative success at gathering and hunting for food resulted in a general lowering of the fear instinct that had previously ensured their genetic survival.

Happiness began to replace anxiety and fear but only at the expense of freedom, which was abridged by social rules and close proximity to others. Of course, you can still choose to live your life in isolation (certainly still possible in this country,) having as little contact with society as possible. To do so would give you that extra measure of freedom, since you would not be likely to infringe on the freedom of others. And as long as you were living in an area where human society had already eliminated the most fearsome of likely predators, you might be able to be content with your existence—even moderately happy.

However, living in isolation you are probably giving up the benefits of living in a society, which can bump-up your levels of contentment and happiness even while infringing on your freedom. The increase in contentment might come from having a reliable surplus of the necessities of life (most pigs live a contented life, even though it is frequently short,) but true happiness requires intellectual appreciation, participation in human concourse, access to education, the acquisition of firsthand knowledge, appreciation of the arts, etc. While it is possible to be happy without society's advantages, probably less than one-percent of the people would find it so.

Make no mistake, absolute freedom is impossible within a framework of societal rules. Such absolute freedom requires anarchy, and a large, complex, technology-driven society like ours is impossible without government.

Slavery—The Antithesis of Freedom

So, here we are at the extreme statement of absolute freedom for the individual, and we got here by examining the antithetical juxtaposition of freedom and society. Let's now take a look at the very antithesis of absolute freedom: slavery.

This country was carved out of the pristine wilderness of the New World on the backs of slaves as methodically as a worm eats the heart out of an apple, and this cruel wantonness of our forefathers was surpassed only by the callous genocide of the countless millions of Native Americans from whom we stole the land.

In early America there were several types of slaves. There were the absolute slaves, which were considered sub-human by reason of race and that were bought and sold like cattle. There were penal slaves that were human, but had been imprisoned in their native countries (usually for economic reasons) and sent to America to get rid of them. There were indentured slaves that were socially less-fortunate humans that sold themselves (in some cases coerced to do so) into a limited form of slavery in order to survive.

We managed to get rid of these forms of slavery, but we combined some of their worst components to create another form of slavery that is with us even today. We created and then institutionalized racially and ethnically based socioeconomic slavery—institutionalized by virtue of our laws, tax structures, educational realities, social indifference, and the list goes on. These nouveau-slaves have little freedom beyond their existence, which is frequently precarious in the inner city ghettos and the isolated reservations. And in many cases it is just as precarious in the subsistence-living of those who know only agriculture, are poorly educated, and are virtually land-less in our rural areas. Can you be reading this essay and believe that these citizens of the U.S. have anything even resembling equal opportunity?

Irreverence for Our Forefathers

Freedom requires that the individual be free of arbitrary or despotic control, so our forefathers decided on a democratic form of government where every citizen capable of intelligent voting would have an equal opportunity to elect their own leaders. By the mandate of our rich and aristocratic forefathers, that meant the voting was restricted to the white male property owners that made up only fifteen percent or so of the new country's population. Almost all of the citizens engaged in trades and manual labor, all of the slaves, all of the rightful owners of the stolen land, and all of the women were not deemed worthy of this freedom.

Even the small minority of the population allowed to vote were not trusted to do so with informed intelligence when voting for the president and vice-president of the United States of America, so each state's legislature was allowed to devise its own method for appointing a group of representative citizens having a more refined intellect that could be relied upon to exercise proper judgment for such an exalted post. These electors were eventually labeled the Electoral College, which varies from state-to-state in how it is impaneled and is ultimately too complicated in its inner and actual workings to explore further in this essay. Suffice it to say that the system serves to potentially remove the voting citizen from having a direct say in his country's top leadership positions.

In addition to this indirect election of the top two offices of the land, there is the U.S. Senate, which is part of the original compromise designed to bring the smaller states into the union. The compromise succeeded by setting up a bicameral governmental structure requiring all laws to be passed by both chambers of the legislature, which meant effectively that the vote of each state in the Senate would exercise the same power to enact all of our laws. Consequently, our forefathers consciously abridged the basic freedoms of equality by guaranteeing that the citizens would not have an equal voice in their own governance. This compromise effectively removed the majority of U.S. citizens one more step from an equal opportunity to elect their own leaders—and this inequity still exists. In fact, the latest census data (2009 projections) shows that it is possible through the vote of their Senators for less than eighteen percent of U.S. citizens to deny the passage of any law the other eighty-two percent might desire. While it might be argued that our forefathers did not intend for this disparity to dominate the legislative process, it is clearly an indication that the political compromises required to forge a governmental structure capable of freeing the colonies from the tyranny of King George was a stronger incentive than any dedication they might have felt about equality for the citizenry.

The Reality of Governmental Equality

But let's not forget the disenfranchised. We started out with giving the freedom to equally elect the nation's leaders to only fifteen percent of the population. This was elitism at best, but was really closer to oligarchy than it was to representative democracy.

It took until 1850 for property ownership and tax requirements to be dropped as prerequisites for being able to vote, which extended the potential voting population to almost all white males. However, many states moved quickly to institute literacy requirements in order to racially and ethnically deny the vote to blacks and large immigrant populations—more oligarchy and more abridgement of freedom. Strangely, the northern states of Connecticut and Massachusetts were the first to do this.

It was not until 1870 that the 15th Amendment freed the former slaves and gave male citizens of all races and ethnicities the right to vote. However, most southern states hastily imposed a poll tax that effectively denied economically depressed citizens the freedom of the vote—essentially the same group of people that had been denied that freedom by previous means.

Women were never denied citizenship because of their sex, but they were citizens denied the freedom to equally elect their leaders until the 19th Amendment in 1920. This was followed in 1924 by the Indian Citizenship Act that finally (almost a hundred and fifty years) granted citizenship and the right to vote to all Native Americans—including the women. Most citizens could now vote fairly freely in federal elections and in most states, if they met the frequently arbitrary requirements of the states in which they lived.

It was not until 1964 that the 24th Amendment eliminated the requirement of a poll tax to vote in federal elections, and the 1965 Voting Rights Act eliminated the literacy requirements. It took a Supreme Court decision in 1966 to finally eliminate the poll tax requirements to vote in state elections.

By this point in our history, the freedom for all the legal population of our country to equally (at least as equal as it gets) elect our leaders had almost become a reality. It was certainly a far cry from the fifteen percent freedom that our forefathers had granted us when they framed the Constitution. But even today, citizens could be equally prevented from being able to select the highest executives of our country by the Electoral College system.

However, the idea of selecting a representative democracy as the basic governmental system for our new country was not just to allow the citizens to select their own leaders. It was to free them from the arbitrary and frequently despotic control exercised by the governments the original colonists had left behind when they came to America—primarily the European monarchies.

The myriad compromises made by the Constitutional Convention to form our federation of states and those made by our fledgling government that followed did a reasonable job in eliminating arbitrary and despotic leadership, but many of those same compromises set up the conditions which have bled away the effectiveness of our government. While we have gained greater universality in who selects our leaders and have gone a long way towards eliminating despotic leadership, the system by which we have accomplished this has failed to free us from *arbitrary* leadership. In fact, it has assured our government will act in an arbitrary, capricious, self-serving, self-perpetuating, and elitist manner. We have eliminated the despotic monarch but have substituted an organizational oligarchy.

It is not clear why the Continental Convention overlooked the need for congressional term limits, except that they just never thought about it. Jefferson's writings seem to indicate that he would have found it highly improbable that anyone would want to spend more time in government than patriotic duty demanded. In those times without trains and planes, to serve in government meant leaving families, estates, and businesses while serving the country, which few could contemplate doing for very long. But whatever the reason, the failure to place term limits on members of congress might have been the single most important governmental structure failure of our constitutional framers. Allowing these starting patriots to stay in positions of power and influence long enough to become addicted politicians leads most commonly to self-aggrandizement, greed, and corruption. It was the failure to place term limits on

congress that provided the opening needed by the wealthy and later by corporate interest to take control of the country by suborning congress.

The U.S. Version of Oligarchy

As usual for oligarchies, it is powered by greed and corruption, but our current oligarchy has been morphed by modern society and empowered by modern technology. Ours is a government run not directly by the real oligarchs but by the puppets seated in our congress that are mere marionettes of the very rich, who control the very large corporations, who control the media, who control the minds of the citizens. Through this control, the very rich decide who will lead and make the laws of this country—not unlike the way it was in the beginning.

When I look back at the previous paragraph I am struck that it reads like an indictment of conspiracy, which it is not. It is an indictment of the reality of human evolution. An evolution that equipped mankind with powerful genetic tools for personal survival that started with instincts, went on to emotions, and then graduated to intellect. Instincts provided our initial means of survival. Emotions and intellect fostered social structures as a means for improving survival, and intellect alone went on to court technology as a means to assure survival, if we could keep it directed. What didn't keep up with the growing and accelerating evolutionary train were the human instincts and emotions, which were only capable of changing over millions of years.

The technological explosion during and after World War II pushed intellect into a position of total dominance in human efforts at survival, so far into dominance that the only hope for human survival now lies in the ability of human intellect to grow strong enough to dominate the irrationality of its stunted genetic heritage.

The Genetic/Intellect Disconnect

Human history has recorded the rapacious nature of human survival instincts that over millions of years have grown into more complex emotions that generate our desires and fears and govern our moral sense in an effort to balance them. This history is fairly universal in showing that little has changed with these inner-directors of human individuals. We are not only still victims of the seven deadly sins, we can now parse those out further to a list virtually without end. This is what humans are. To expect humans to act outside of these controlling inner-directives is an act of idealistic faith that denies the clear record of history.

After bashing them a bit, I must now give our forefathers their due, they did their best to set up a governmental structure that had as many checks and balances as they thought they could jam in without destroying its effectiveness—and they did it well within the framework of knowledge and assumptions that they applied. They knew that the governmental form they were setting up was vastly more complicated than a monarchy, and consequently they believed that the general population, being highly practical but basically uneducated, would be unable to select the best people to serve as their leaders. Their uninformed observations of races and ethnic groups not their own led them to categorize this portion of the population as not fully human, which required protection by, not participation in, the government.

But despite the vagaries of our original governmental structure's efforts at providing freedom and equality, we chipped away at the inequities for the next two hundred years and didn't do a bad job at it so far as the basic format of our government and the constitution would allow. But the American oligarchy didn't much care for what was happening so they turned their energy to a new method for assuring their dominance by suppressing the free will of the people.

Growing almost directly out of the observed success of the German Reich's ability to control the thoughts of its citizenry (may you live in infamy Mr. Goebbels,) the Industrialists, bankers, and other manipulators of wealth in America realized the efficacy of controlling the media beginning to dominate the everyday life of the citizens.

What they found was an unevenly educated population, many of whom were economically depressed and socially deprived that could be manipulated in almost any fashion desired if enough propaganda flooded their minds. The barrage got going in the 40's, hit its stride in the 50's, and currently has no end in sight to its growth. First the printed media, then radio, and then television has allowed the oligarchy to convince the American public who should govern them and how they should spend their money, which is the backbone of societal control.

As a probably unexpected bonus for their efforts at mind control and dominance, the oligarchy has benefited from a key side effect of media advertising. To reach the greatest number of citizens with its propaganda, the programming used to attract the audience has to be reduced to the lowest common denominator of intellect (let's give it the acronym of LCDI for later brevity.) In the sixty years of advertising's full use of media for its message (thank you Mr. McLuhan,) the citizenry has been de-coupled from the learning process that used to occupy a significant amount of an individual's time, creating a feedback loop that has further lowered the LCDI to where the media provides only spin and pap. It has also produced a national average education base lower than most other industrialized nations. Oh, you thought we were at the top? Ha!

And while the oligarchy was busy reducing the education level of the populace, the nation has been on the up-side of one of it's frequent religiosity cycles, which is encouraged by the political marionettes (for their own advantage) and abetted by the oligarchy (with a quiet chuckle of false piety into their sleeves.) This has produced yet another feedback loop that is lowering the education level by replacing science (mostly among the under-educated) with the pseudo-science of creationism and replacing logic with dogma.

Denial of Conspiracy

Once again, it might sound like I am ranting about a national conspiracy, but I am not for two basic reasons. Number one, there is no need for a conspiracy when human nature is the enabler, the structure of our government is a similar enabler, and the cumulative laws of the land permit everything that's going on. And if things are getting a little tight, you can always have the Supreme Court grossly miss-interpret the intent of the Constitution pertinent to corporations so that the political process can be even more skewed by those with the largest pocketbooks.

Second, most of the people composing the oligarchy (and certainly not those composing the puppet oligarchy) aren't clever enough to even conceive of a conspiracy as good as this reality. The fact is that for all their talk and even shouts about freedom to do what they want, the great majority of the American people want to be told what to think and told what to do because it's a lot easier. They deserve what they've got, and it's not a bad life until the day the trough is empty, which is not far off.

A Glimmer of Hope

The only check and balance mechanism for humanness is the collective intellect, because only as a social collective are humans strong enough to override their individual survival instincts. But this strength is frittered away when it spends all its time tilting with the windmills of idealism instead of addressing the realities of the country in which we live.

Unlike when it was founded, this is a country where it is possible to travel from any one place to another in a single day. This is a country where communications are instantaneous. This is a country where the digital reality of a global connection among all people that, while not free from spin, prejudice, and ignorance, is at least still free to also provide logical, factual, and enlightened information without control by the existing world's power structure, even though some are trying mightily.

This global connectivity and openness must be the highest priority for all true pursuers of freedom, equality, and knowledge. We must not allow digital freedom to be

abridged in any way. If society will just hold together long enough for most of us dinosaurs to die off, there is a slim chance that the digitally enmeshed youth can pull off the required miracle of salvaging this country and maybe even the world.

So, as usual, the answers we can work with are not found by pursuing the absolute or idealistic. We must start with the reality of freedom in this country and not as our current society thinks it used to be or even that it should be. Note, however that the effort of recalling and examining the full scope of its ideal intent is not wasted time, because it refreshes our memory of the limits for which our society should still be striving while working within the structure of societal reality. The ideal, if we can determine it and if it is logically derived, should still be our goal.

What Is Freedom?

American freedom is the ability of each individual to live free of any form of tyranny and direct his or her own life without physical restraint or psychological coercion toward the goal of providing the maximum happiness over his or her life-span without infringement on the rights of others or abridgement of our laws. It must also include the freedom inherent in an equal voice for each citizen in making our laws, while receiving equal protection of all such freedoms under those laws.

Did We Ever Have it?

No! Our forefathers didn't even want it. Even the well intentioned that thought they were enlightened and acting in the best interest of all the citizens failed to provide us with a starting point that assured freedom or a structure that had a hope of allowing us to eventually engender freedom. It was their best shot with their knowledge base that they could manage under the exigencies of the times, but it was not anywhere near the target.

Do We Really Want It?

Only if the educational system is completely re-framed to provide an informed populace that is capable of governing itself (sounds like the same fear that the founding fathers had, doesn't it?) Only if the information flow to the population in general (primarily through mass-media which didn't exist in the times of our forefathers) is freed of control by either the government, religion, or big business. Only if governmental structure and operational profile and laws are modified to reflect the realities of living in today's technological society.

Do We Have It Now?

Absolutely not! Some elements of freedom have improved but most have not, and what freedom we do have is likely to get thinner if it doesn't disappear altogether. But the one thing that no system, no group, or no individual can take from an American is hope. We have somehow bypassed the required millions of years of evolution. Something in the air, or the soil, or the water seems to mutate everyone that accepts America as its own—the thirst for freedom and the belief that we can attain it is in our genes.

American Freedom

Goal

To live not tyranny in any form
Without restraint to body or mind perform
A person's search for happiness in life
With no impact on other's rights through strife
An equal voice for each in making law
On which a citizen in need could draw

Failure

Our forefathers did all they could but failed
To meet the tests that freedom's needs entailed
Though lofty words they gave us rule by few
A structure that prevents our freedom's due
Prolonging social inequality
Denying government's ability

Change

If education's light for all will shine
Through media's mask that shrouds and clouds the mind
To feed on truth in networked info flows
Transparency in instant bit/bytes goes
For all the people equally to see
There is a chance that we'll be free

Hope

Outsourcing American Jobs

In the last two decades the global economy has grown from a suckling calf to a raging bull. It is an economic reality for every nation of the world from the poorest to the richest. This growth is fueled by the twin jinns of communications and transportation technology, and they aren't going to go back into the bottle just because they present problems to a few of the world's established economies. For the established economy of the United States, the outsourcing of our industrial jobs is a sign that we are still at the top of the technological food chain. On the other hand, the outsourcing of our technological jobs is a warning that our position at the top is eroding.

So far, our government has taken its usual polarized positions on a solution to the problem of outsourcing. One extreme wants to pass laws forbidding the outsourcing of American jobs and the other wants to allow whatever outsourcing is needed to maximize profits to American business. Neither solution will work, and a workable solution cannot be a simple compromise of these two extremes.

Defining the Problem

To find a solution to our nation's outsourcing problem requires that the true nature of the problem be understood. First, it is necessary to come to grips with the reality that the global economy now has the inertia of a freight train moving at full speed. To think that we can somehow stand in the middle of the track and slow it down is ludicrous. It likewise does little good to stand on the side of the grade waving as the train goes barreling through. We must not only climb aboard but make sure we are the engineer that controls the speed and decides which stations need to be visited along the way.

Enough metaphor, let's talk about the details. The global economy was born when communications technology (primarily satellite relays, the Web, and cell phones) created a world market for products and services by displaying their existence and providing a means to purchase them. The kindled desire was served by the growing efficiency of global transportation systems that (mostly through economies of scale) were able to provide unit transportation costs that were a small fraction of total product cost. With these two elements in play, it became apparent to even the dull-witted that raw resources would come from countries that had a plentiful supply and could provide those resources to the buyer at the lowest delivered price; manufactured goods would come from those countries with the necessary infrastructure to produce them but with labor costs still low enough to make them cheaper at the point of delivery; and services that were either physical or communications-based could and would be delivered by whatever countries had the skills and infrastructure to provide them to the user at the cheapest price. Participation in the world economy was being driven solely by contribution to the bottom line—supposedly, the American Dream.

Adding fuel to the fire of the global economy is the changing nature of consumer goods. Every year seems to bring a higher percentage of electronics to the total products available in the world marketplace. These products are compact and light by nature, making them easy and inexpensive to transport in large quantities. The American computer industry is a perfect example of how all this works. The high-technology world of micro-processors was once the exclusive domain of the United States due to the research fostered by our military build-up against the Soviet threat and by the space program. However, when less developed countries acquired the skills to provide cheaper labor than could be found in the U.S., companies took their electronic manufacturing off-shore (the U.S. TV manufacturer is an oxymoron) where the combined cost of labor and transportation provided a lower total cost than that provided by U.S. workers and transportation. Even today, some U.S. computer makers are doing final assembly of primarily foreign-built components in U.S. factories because there is still a large market for customized capabilities computers, which cannot be

served directly from foreign plants because of long delivery times. However, if a transportation solution is found to meet the necessary delivery time requirements without exceeding the costs of custom assembly in the U.S., there will be no computers built in our country. Simple business economics.

On the manufacturing side, the Japanese provided the model years ago when they built assembly plants for their cars in the U.S. The rising cost of labor in Japan was eroding profits. Automation had stemmed the tide for a while, but there were really only two basic options: to move the assembly operations to a country that had lower labor costs or to move the operations to the market, where the very large costs for transportation of the bulky end-product were minimal. Analysis showed that total costs would be reduced by moving the assembly plants to the U.S. market, thereby creating the greatest profits. Again, simple business economics.

Is the global economy a short-lived phenomenon that we can afford to ignore until it fades away? No! It is here to stay, though its exact form will no doubt change as it grows and new technologies enter the equation. With this reality, it is clear that passing laws forbidding outsourcing will only make American businesses less competitive in the world market by forcing them to utilize higher cost labor and components in their products. The long-term result of this policy would be the immediate slide of the United States into a secondary status in the world's economies, and a long-term guarantee of staying there with the loss of technology preeminence.

Fixing the Problem

How can the U.S. stay at the top of the economic food chain in the era of the global economy?—through more emphasis on education and retraining and with a focused approach to funding and conducting the effort. Education and retraining is already available to the unemployed, but it is different in every state and amorphous in nature, since it must meet the requirements of the full spectrum of skilled and unskilled unemployed persons. What is needed is a federal program that is focused on the specific group of outsource replaced persons—their location, their general education level, their old skill sets, their economic bracket. And that program needs to be able to deliver all this when it is needed.

But how would you do that and, most importantly, how would you pay for it? You would do it by passing a law that required a U.S. company to declare its intentions for a major outsourcing of its work from six-months to one year before being allowed to proceed. This would provide the government agency tasked with education and retraining the time to plan its curriculum and bring together the resources it would require. At the time of declaration of intention to outsource, the company would begin to make payments toward education and retraining based on a percentage of displaced personnel salaries. These payments would be made until the education and retraining is complete.

Benefits and Implementation

This simple plan has multi-leveled benefits. First, it puts the responsibility for the welfare of employees where it belongs, on the company. Second, it provides a warning for the employees to look for another job or to consider retraining rather than finding themselves suffering from pink-slip shock. Third, it adds a new factor for the equation of outsourcing benefits to the company by modestly raising the cost of outsourcing and hopefully encouraging that outsourcing plans be well reasoned and long-term rather than knee-jerk reactions to immediate balance sheet worries. Fourth, it provides time and money for a focused approach to educating and retraining the displaced workers.

These are the benefits of the plan at the surface. The next level of benefits might be even better. By slightly changing the bottom line benefit for companies considering outsourcing to bring down costs, there would be fewer decisions to outsource or the

pace of outsourcing would slow. This would please the proponents for stopping outsourcing.

By making the declaration of intent to outsource and the outsourcing fee apply to all companies, the competitive playing field would be maintained at least in the U.S. market. This would please the more responsible companies by relieving the pressure for them to join the outsourcing stampede.

The plan would encourage companies to work harder at finding new jobs within the company for those that are being displaced, even if some education and training were necessary. This would bring the obvious benefits of cross-training and help the companies build employee loyalty, a concept that many companies have succeeded in killing with the mass pink-slip mentality.

The implementation of this plan, while delaying outsourcing through its one-time shift of bottom-line dynamics, would not be the draconian measure of restricting or eliminating outsourcing. This plan would keep U.S. companies in the game for global markets, which they must be able to pursue.

Both sides of the debate would get some but not all of the things they want. American business would remain in the hunt for global market share, and the U.S. labor force would be adding a commensurate level of education and new skills to ensure its place at the top of the economic food chain. But this plan alone will not stop the developing countries from improving the education of their citizenry, nor the skill levels of their labor force, nor the infrastructure of their industrial base, and ultimately displacing American workers in the global workforce.

The Real-world View

Of course, this plan is only a stopgap measure. Re-educated and retrained workers are, by definition, older employees with higher salary and benefit expectations that are not as desirable to potential employers as young workers with the same skills. The only thing that will keep America at the top is to make fundamental changes to our educational system that encourage science, technology, and rational thought—and to make this education available to everyone, not just a privileged few in the upper economic brackets. These are the skills that will keep us out of competition with the world's rising economies and ensure our economic position through the next millennium.

The reality is that the current generation of American workers, while not a lost cause yet, are severely disabled by the degradation of the educational system in this country since the 60's. Our schools need to be removed from their status as an extension of "Social Services" and rededicated to teaching us how to think. On the other hand, new fiscal policies of our government, which mutated during this same period, should remove the focus on immediate bottom-line results and substitute research and development incentives that promote long-term growth and stability.

No simple solution will save us in the future global market.

Outsourcing

Global

Desire springs forth when need is sown
By friends and apps upon your phone
Enforced by links on Web and screen
The market spreads and moguls preen
As ships make haste, containers full
From cheapest source to feed the bull

Developing

By using new machines that build
With unskilled labor needs are filled
In education lies their hope
To bring success within their scope
Enhancing skills to increase share
Lets happiness replace despair

Developed

Without a job their futures see
A life that's grey in bland ennui
With funding cut to educate
They shuffle home not relocate
In anger not incentive caught
And with the dole their soul is bought

Home

Prejudice in America

The Origins of Prejudice

When we talk about prejudice in America are we talking about racism or are we talking more about subculture and social prejudice? Or if not more about subculture and social prejudice, what part do they play? To answer this requires that we understand the roots of prejudice. They are deep.

Evolution requires free-moving organisms of the animal kingdom to be able to recognize their own species to ensure reproduction. In the simpler life forms this is mostly chemical recognition, but as life evolved other senses (particularly vision) they too became genetically wired into the species recognition imperative that ensured survival. While it is possible for some closely related species to successfully crossbreed, this can be at a lower chance of successful fertilization or it can produce sterile offspring. Both of these possibilities produce a lower chance of species survival so evolution has reinforced our abilities to recognize our own types.

Growing along with our ability to recognize our own was an ability to recognize other species that either preyed on us or were likely to harm us in stopping territory infringement. Territory was important since it defined the area in which we could forage or hunt for food in relative safety. If we shared this territory with other species that hunted and foraged for the same food, we reduced our own chance of survival. This genetically hard-wired evolutionary instinct to declare and protect territory as our own domain is usually referred to as the Territorial Imperative (forgive me Mr. Audrey for the simplicity).

Consequently, humans carry a cluster of hard-wired instincts, taking millions of years of evolution to produce, that are now totally out of whack with the world in which we live. We now have no need to kill or harm other species entering our immediate territory as assurance we will have food to eat thanks to science and technology. We now have brains that employ rational thought (at least, some of us) to decide if another creature is a threat to our person or our procreation rather than just relying on our senses. We now know that the addition of the female intellect to all phases of life is a huge social benefit. But we still have those genetically hard-wired circuits that evolution gave us for survival.

The Rising Imperative of Happiness

As the social construct has provided a much improved probability of survival for the human species, the genetic, survival wiring provided by evolution now seems to have rational, thought-applied filtering to its input in our lives. Our rational brains allow us to add resistors, as it were, into these circuits that reduce the current flowing through them and into the conduct of our daily lives, but this takes a lot of conscious effort. Maybe you've noticed that most people don't make a conscious effort to do much of anything, much less thinking about the complex issues of prejudice.

One of the primary reasons it is hard to intellectually overcome genetic prejudice is that the very way our brains organize and retrieve data is by the use of metaphors and paradigms, which are collectivizations of characteristics that are typical of type. This is also a good definition of the more modern word: stereotype. Of course, if your stereotype of a socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, religious, or similar classification of humans is made up primarily of social indoctrination dogma rather than scientific facts or personal experience, it is extremely difficult not to make snap judgments of a person fitting one of these identifiable groups based on your brain-stored characteristics for those groups. Consequently, if your metaphors, paradigms, and stereotypes are made up of misinformation, you are likely to make an incorrect snap judgment (better known as: garbage in, garbage out.)

Now that we have rational minds and have formed social constructs, we have added new dimensions to our predilection for prejudice. We now have cultural and social

stratification differences to go along with our racial ones, and as a further complication, we have gone well beyond the driving need for survival to where we now seem more focused on “the pursuit of happiness.”

Let’s step back a little and take a look at where we’ve come. We evolved along with other animals on the planet to have a strong attraction for those that our senses tell us are like ourselves, since this attraction enhanced our survival. Along with that we evolved a dislike of those that our senses told us were not like ourselves and had the greatest probability of challenging our territorial dominance. As the human species’ chemical senses seem to have faded during evolutionary development, this identification of those we like and those we dislike became primarily a visual input of appearance.

Near the end of the process, we evolved rational thought that let us make decisions based on much more than sensory data, which allowed us to somewhat temper our bias against animals that were different from us. At the same time or following closely, we invented the social construct to enhance our probability of survival and then added science and technology to take us to the point where survivability is reasonably assured. But as the social construct became large and complex, it allowed unabsorbed subcultures to flourish, strict social stratification to develop based on minor differences, a dampening of the survival imperative to weaken personal resolve, and a growing drive (almost to the point of displacing survival) for the pursuit of happiness to dominate our lives.

The Complications of Indoctrination

Even as cynical as I am, I must admit that most people living in America have had some rational thoughts about racism and other forms of prejudice. After all, the topic is inescapable in a multiracial, multiethnic, socially stratified country like ours. But it’s the quality of the thought that counts. When rational thought is employed, it utilizes the information available to the thinker. And it is unfortunately true that most people have little knowledge of the facts of prejudice, while simultaneously carrying a huge burden of misinformation from childhood indoctrination on the subject.

In the early years of mankind this indoctrination of children with regard to prejudicial discrimination was a mere extension and strengthening of the evolutionary prejudice already wired into our brains. Early man stayed close to home and was unlikely to have frequent contact with other humans that had a different skin color, consistently different physical features, or a radically different way of life. There was, however, frequent contact and conflict with other social groups of humans whose territory was close or contiguous. In this setting, varying directions of language development also grew to be a primary indicator of difference.

As human numbers grew and the social construct grew in complexity and pervasiveness, social indoctrination added culture and religion as keys for spotting difference. However, none of our senses are as strong and as pervasive in our lives as vision, and as modern mankind began to add long distance travel to its regular activities, the difference of appearance reasserted itself as the dominant form of discrimination. The importance of these elements of prejudicial discrimination fit easily into a ladder that reflects the relative ease with which they can be employed:

race

language

culture

religion

Socioeconomic and Subculture Discrimination

When the pursuit of happiness began to vie with or displace survival for top honors as the driving force in daily life, ethnicity and sub-cultural isolation began to attract as

much prejudicial discrimination as did race. The old bastions of discrimination, not looking or acting like us, became layers and highlights on the more visible social stratification of our society. Even more importantly, those bastions' predominate role in focusing prejudice was being suborned by the more pervasive and rapidly growing economic stratification that was tightly linked to the social stratification and spoke directly to the pursuit of happiness. In a technologically driven culture that is experiencing a degradation of intellectual values, such as ours, wealth has become the dominant factor in realizing happiness for most people.

Today's prejudicial discrimination still carries race as part of its makeup, and it is frequently the trump card used in conscious and unconscious decisions when all other factors are equal. However, it appears that the part of prejudice made up of purely racial bias has actually declined in the last fifty years, while the prejudice against many ethnically and religiously defined subcultures and any group or subculture confined to the lower socioeconomic stratifications of society has grown.

Since many minority racial and ethnic groups are primarily confined to the lower socioeconomic stratifications by their low average income, Americans appear to be more racially and ethnically biased than ever, but they are actually just as discriminating against the economically poor and the poorly educated, which are concentrated among the racial and ethnic minority population. Of course, if you belong to a racial minority, are part of an entrenched subculture, are firmly in the grips of poverty, and have had an inadequate education, you get a quadruple dose of prejudicial discrimination. If you add in being female and homosexual, you could experience a sextuple (no pun intended) dose of prejudicial discrimination.

Unfortunately, this newly increased prejudice against American subcultures has been enhanced by their increasing rates of growth and because the majority of people feel threatened by them. The increasing use of multi-lingual labeling and phone messaging, the increasing national observance of ethnic and non-Christian holidays, the growing incidence of culturally traditional clothing, and the sheer numbers of voting citizens contained in these subcultures make many Americans fear that control of their country is slipping away from them.

All of this fear is feeding the frenzy of political groups that are shouting we should “. . . take back America!” Take it back from whom? If they mean take it back from those who currently control it and substantially own it, then they mean the wealthy.

When in the next breath those same political groups are shouting that we should reinstate the freedoms guaranteed by the constitution of our forefathers, is that the same constitution that would have denied most of the shouters a vote in their government? These groups are a big part of the problem; they are certainly not the answer.

Religious Prejudice

While this essay addresses religious prejudice in the broader context of subcultures and both social and economic class structures, the topic requires a few words of its own without turning into a sermon or anti-sermon. For the first time in a very long while, the president of the United States of America acknowledged that there are a great variety of religious beliefs held by our citizens and also that there are citizens who are “non-believers” as well. His message was that our country was big enough and strong enough to encompass them all in the spirit of our forefathers. I would add that those forefathers we most remember, like Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, and Madison were non-Christians—a fact frequently overlooked by many citizens. They were Deists who restricted their religious belief to a God that must have created and set the universe into motion—but that's it—period.

The nation is currently experiencing a surge in fundamentalist Christian activism, not unlike those that have occurred in the past. There is nothing inherently wrong with an increase in religious faith, since religion is primarily a matter of personal choice. It is the

activism that is counterproductive, because these religious activists seek to impose the social values associated with their religious beliefs on those citizens having a different set of social values. Of course, each group of believers and non-believers thinks that their set of values is the only valid one (or the only rational set, or the only set mandated by God, or the only set mandated by Allah, or whatever.)

This is not a matter of who's right, it's a matter of preserving the freedom to worship (or not) as you choose and to conduct your life in any way you choose as long as it does not infringe on the rights of others. In the complex societal structure of our country, this is a difficult path to follow, and some compromises between personal freedom and maintaining a civil society are inevitable, but it is doable. The only line that cannot be crossed is the legal codification of myth instead of science.

Have I strayed too far from prejudice? Not really, because it is intellectual prejudice that is the fuel for this insanity. They might look like me, but they don't think like me, they don't believe like me, they don't act like me; consequently, they are not as good as me. As many as twenty million Native Americans were killed to grab this land, primarily with the excuse that they refused to accept our God and had no technology, which made them heathen savages. If we cannot move beyond the unenlightened reality of our past and restrain our religious prejudice to a level commensurate with social civility, we will severely damage or lose freedom in America.

Gender Prejudice

Sexual prejudice became possible early in the evolutionary process after bisexuality won out over asexuality because it assured more genetic diversity. It became a reality with the development of life forms that were complicated enough to require nurture of the young before they were able to make it on their own in the environment. This required the female to develop genetic instincts and physiology different from those of the males in the species.

By the time hominids came along, males were larger and more aggressive while females were smaller and less excitable to aggression, saving their ferociousness for defense of their young. Because they were smaller, the females were physically dominated by the males, and early social groupings tended to be patriarchal. As intellect became a major factor in social groupings and the learned trait skills of males and females became more polarized, most societies continued with the appearance of being patriarchal, but in hindsight, it is frequently difficult to tell just who pulled the strings, as history, until recently, was always written by men.

So Homo sapiens arrived on the planet with the usual load of genetic baggage that the intellect is now required to control if societies are to be efficient and productive in providing a foundation that fosters the pursuit of happiness. While most modern males might have to intellectually restrain themselves from being brutish and most modern women might have to intellectually assert themselves to avoid being demure, I believe that the industrialized cultures of the world have finally crossed the threshold where most of their citizens are aware of the intellectual parity of the sexes even if not all of their actions show it.

With this recognition of parity, it is now time for both women and men to rationally rework the social rules of sexual propriety that have lingered on for millennia past their usefulness as religious and cultural dogma. The U.S. finally made a start at recognizing the intellectual parity of women by allowing them to vote with the 19th Amendment in 1920; I repeat, 1920! Since then there have been a few notable cases of women CEOs for major corporations, but it is still too much of a rarity to be strictly representative of women's capabilities. With women already holding major political offices and having made runs on the number one and two government positions, things obviously need to speed up.

Homosexual Prejudice

For a very long time, homosexuality was considered aberrant behavior stemming from psychological disorder. Science has proved this assumption to be incorrect, and has determined that homosexuality has a genetic component producing at least a predisposition, with a high probability of influence during the uterine period from hormones, antibodies, and perhaps other agents. However, the “why” of homosexuality seems little more to me than a smokescreen to the real issue of personal choice. Homosexuals are a significant portion of the U.S. citizenry, and they are under a continuing bombardment of social prejudice that seeks to deny their freedom of choice.

The excuses offered for this display of prejudice has no rational validity, and is generally antithetical to the full body of today’s science. The actual reason for this display of prejudice can be found primarily (and once again) in the religious and social dogma of most western religions.

While homosexuals have finally been accepted into the mainstream of American culture, many states have failed to purge their legal systems of laws making homosexual behavior illegal, which leaves our gay citizens open to legal attack by extremist groups and still denies them the full acceptance they deserve and desire.

For those that lead a rational life, it is apparent that sexual prejudice in all its forms is still wielded with malice and ignorance by very vocal minorities. As usual in this country, these minorities are entitled to their own opinions and the right to voice them; however, they are not entitled to make laws or take any other actions that abridge the rights and freedoms of other citizens.

We Try Periodically But We Fail

The bold and partially successful push in the mid-twentieth century to integrate the nation’s racial minorities either failed to understand the importance of racial discrimination’s link to economic strata or was prevented by politics from properly addressing it. Because the primarily African American minority was mostly poor, we kept it confined to the lowest strata of society—because it represented the lowest strata of society, we trivialized its poverty and either actively sought to keep them where they were or successfully ignored them.

We stifled the African American’s ability to achieve upward mobility through hard work and self-reliance by allowing the entry-level jobs they needed to start their climb to go to the Caucasian race immigrants. We then compounded this slap in the face by turning our backs on the problem of illegal immigration. We very effectively denied them the American dream of becoming a fully realized American citizen, and they responded by creating a subculture that has its own values, rather than keep getting beat-up every time they tried to become a part of the greater American culture. We might not have *created* the subcultures of poverty, but we expanded and codified them.

Establishing a minimum wage and raising our levels and types of monetary welfare did nothing to break the cycle of poverty, it just redefined its characteristics and provided another object of prey that the wealthy could exploit by redirecting basically middle class taxes to a segment of the population more susceptible to media exploitation, and ultimately put those tax dollars in their own pockets. In fact, our redirection of tax dollars to economic assistance for the poor did nothing to change social values in general and, in particular, failed to build self-reliance and self-esteem, especially in the young. What it did was to accelerate the black minority’s descent into a sub-cultural slavery not unlike the slavery that brought them to this country, while it helped the rich get richer.

By not rationally solving the problem of pervasive poverty in this country at the same time we took bold steps to enforce integration, we failed to solve the problem of social prejudice even though we did create a greater awareness of racial equality.

Cultural Absorption

When the mostly European people first came to this country and started the three hundred year process of stealing the land for themselves primarily by overt (massacre) or covert (disease) genocide of most Native Americans (usually estimated at about 20 million in North America,) they were disparate and frequently desirous of isolating and preserving their own specific cultures in the new land. For the first hundred years or so of expansion, social, political, and religious unrest in Europe produced more immigration to the new world and the population grew accordingly.

This first hundred years also saw the introduction of African slaves into the working economy of America, but there was no attempt to integrate them into the culture because they were considered subhuman, capable at most of simple tasks and in need of both spiritual and intellectual guidance from their European masters.

As the reality of America's bountiful resources were recognized and a bit of greed set in, it became apparent that working together (with a good bit of that work being done by slaves) offered the best chance for the continued prosperity of all. Working together for the common good began to build a more homogeneous culture that eventually spawned the United States of America, which came into being with two subcultures already established—the savage natives (an early conclusion drawn from their lack of technology and resistance to Christianity) and the blacks (already catalogued as subhuman.)

During this period and all the way to the Civil War, new immigrants were absorbed into the American culture as quickly as possible because it was the best way for them to gain the fruits of their adopted country and because it helped build the wealth of the growing number of American entrepreneurs to do so. However, the newly emancipated African Americans found little changed in the subsistence living standard of their daily life, and the absorption of new immigrants was not without the strife of prejudice in all its various forms.

The main waves of immigration during this period of rising entrepreneurship that triggered discrimination based on ethnicity and national origin were Chinese, Jewish, Italian, Irish, and Puerto Rican, (but we should remember that the Japanese internment camps during WW II weren't just security motivated.) Oddly, the most bitter prejudice during this period was for the Irish who were white and predominantly Christian, which one would expect to have smoothed their integration, but in this case, we saw the first glimmerings of prejudice based on purely socioeconomic bias, as the Irish tended to be extremely poor and poorly educated, making most of them suitable only for the heaviest and most onerous of manual labor when they arrived in America.

Despite the heavy prejudice against them, the Irish succeeded astoundingly in integrating themselves into the American culture by hard work and pragmatically taking advantage of the opportunities that came their way. In fact, more than half of U.S. citizens now identify their heritage to contain some measure of Irish blood.

All of this successful absorption was available to everyone except the subjugated American Indians and the African Negroes that came first as slaves and then became citizens. Even those nationalities that were encouraged to immigrate just for the unskilled labor they could provide were successfully integrated.

After WW II, Puerto Rican immigrants were still incurring the largest focus of prejudice, but they were finally displaced by the Cubans, and they were replaced by the Vietnamese, and now we have switched our prejudicial wrath back to Hispanics but are focussed primarily on the Mexicans. This focus is mostly due to the fear that the legal and illegal immigrant volume is taking American jobs, taxpayer's dollars, and is large enough to have an undesirable impact on American culture. But it is my contention that we would be successful in absorbing the Mexican and Central American Hispanics, if we adopted a rational immigration and illegal alien policy, which is prevented from happening by the political arm-twisting of the wealthy who make a healthy profit from employing illegal aliens.

Who Do We Blame for This Mess?

From the time the first European settlers set foot on the continent, the vast majority of new Americans gave little or no thought to the plight of the rightful owners of American soil they were killing and subjugating. And well before the first English colonists arrived, the Spanish colonies brought over the first African slaves that were deemed biologically sub-human and therefore intellectually inferior to the Caucasians of Europe and the Orientals of Asia.

If you think the previous paragraph presents a totally self-serving set of illogical conclusions by our ancestors, you are correct, and science and experience has shown us that it was all pure rubbish. However, that attitude, a holdover from our evolution developed biases, prevented any organized political effort at the cultural absorption of blacks until the Emancipation Proclamation, and has subverted, diverted, and discouraged it since then.

President Johnson's effort to integrate the public schools, as radical as it was, proved unable to create the needed absorption, though it did serve to moderate attitudes on race for the children that experienced it. Even though the American black subculture does not have the language barrier of many other subcultures in our country, cultural absorption will require us to break the cycle of poverty being sustained by irrational welfare policies and ensure a higher level of education for their children.

During the next hundred-and-fifty years we successfully absorbed an astounding array of new immigration races, ethnicities, and nationalities, but the last fifties years or more have seen us fail miserably at social integration, with many of these new social groupings falling into the same subculture trap as the African Americans.

Of course, we continue to do our very best to completely ignore the Native Americans, which has been our greatest prejudicial disgrace, but they have recently found that they can use the law and the treaties that were made with them to improve their economic status. If they can successfully rekindle their ethnic pride and character, they might be able to parlay this new-found economic success into a real cultural revival that would allow them to participate more broadly in current American society—if they should choose to do so.

So here we sit having been a nation for more than two hundred years and we have saddled ourselves with a societal structure containing a variety of subcultures that make up a significant portion of the population at the bottom of the socioeconomic spectrum. The classes immediately above this poverty and subsistence-level class of citizens are providing the welfare support for these people through the nature of our tax structure and they resent it mightily.

As if that weren't enough, our predisposition to prejudice has led the unthinking members of this middle class (probably a majority of them) to the incorrect conclusion that the undereducated socioeconomic classes are somehow genetically incapable of intellectual levels achieved by the socioeconomic levels above them, thus feeding an education-level prejudice which we are doing nothing effective to change.

If this all sounds like we are spiraling downward towards and in many places have broken through to new depths of social animosity rather than the harmony we need to be an effective society, then you have understood what I am saying. This country became strong because it was a melting pot for racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. It could still be our strength if we remember our past, quit pointing the finger at someone else, and do what it takes to melt better and faster.

Which Way Do We Go Now?

So what is the answer to prejudice in America? First, we must fully understand that there is no complete answer to prejudice. It is genetic in origin and reflexive in occurrence; consequently, we can only temper its dominance of our responses by the use of intellectual rationality. To do this requires that people act rationally in

accordance with our knowledge of scientific fact, and this requires that people be as free as possible from the social dogma typically absorbed during childhood, and this requires that all people be educated with an understanding of real science (not religion-based pseudo-science,) logic, and social history.

Second, we must achieve cultural absorption because that minimizes the cultural differences that cause much of today's prejudices. We can do this by curbing the large volume of illegal immigration and developing a more rational plan for legal immigration, but in doing so, we must not allow the rise of bilingualism as an established government policy, because a common language is essential to the cultural absorption process.

Third, we must stop the economic predation by unregulated business that is exploiting the undereducated American subcultures and extending the economic distance between the poor and the rich, which breeds economic prejudice. The primary venue for this exploitation is through media control that is eroding cultural values and replacing them with the concept that happiness comes only through consumerism—and have we got a deal for you!

Fourth, we have to shut down the welfare system that only perpetuates poverty and all the negative psychological effects that come with it. The government should do this by always providing adequate food and shelter but little else to those who are not willing to work. Of course, we must provide work for them to do, but we have done that before and we know it can work. And if we can't motivate those currently entrapped by our previous callousness, we should focus our attention on the children with a plan that will allow them to rise out of the depths of poverty and ignorance.

If we accomplish these difficult goals, we can re-establish a civil society where courtesy is more than a word that is seldom used, where your actions are determined not just by your own wishes but by their potential impact on others, where aggressive business practices stop short of exploitation, where people can be proud of their cultural heritage and still feel a vital part of the society in which they live, and where people can feel like Americans in the spirit of 1776.

Prejudice in America

We see ourselves as rational of mind
Who want to be in race and color blind
Ethnicity and faith though we condone
With values not like ours they stay unknown
To give respect and act in ways refined
A life not leaving empathy behind

In fact all humans are genetic grown
To fear and hate who differ from their own
In shape or size or color-wise to sight
Instills in us a need for fight or flight
Though intellect be freedom's genes not sown
If education fails we can but drone

To judge not each but in totality
In dogma not in rationality

A Rational U.S. Immigration Policy

The question: “what are we going to do about illegal immigration in this country?” contains its own answer. It is illegal. Consequently, it should not be allowed. In fact, there should be a zero tolerance for illegal immigration.

The Physical Facts

That said, however, such zero tolerance does not require any measure as stupid as building and patrolling a fence along the 1,952 miles of U.S./Mexico border. Besides, building the fence would not stop persons determine to use it as a point of entry. The fence could be breached in remote areas by various means, not to mention tunneling under it and flying over it. Then again, determined, would-be emigrants could bribe a couple of border guards and use ladders to go over it, get on a boat in the Gulf or Pacific and go around it, or simply go to Canada and walk in across a much longer, unfenced border.

The Political Wrangle

Actions needed to stop illegal immigration are really rather simple. The only thing stopping their implementation is politics. In this case, the Republicans have decided that they could energize their voting base by taking a strident stand against illegal workers taking American jobs and diverting tax dollars for education, health care, and other social support while Americans already don't have enough themselves. All of which is true but not germane to solving the problem. The Great Wall of America is little more than PR fluff.

On the other hand, the Democrats have a much larger following in the Hispanic voting community and are paralyzed by the fear of making immigration policy changes that would cut into their Hispanic majority. They seem to have forgotten that the *voting* Hispanics are Americans and are being damaged by illegal immigration as much as any other voting group of U.S. citizens.

Amidst all the chicanery on this topic, nobody seems to be questioning our legal immigration policy. Should the U.S. allow any immigration? If so, what restrictions should apply?

Learning from History

One of the primary components of American economic success was its willingness to accept immigrants of all flavors that were willing to work hard, and who wanted to become a vital and permanent part of this great nation. We had some of the most accessible land area and resources in the world and we needed workers to take advantage of that fact. Nothing's really changed. While the population virtually exploded during the 20th century, much of it preferred a handout rather than taking on the jobs requiring real hard work. The immigrants to this country have continued to fill those hard-working jobs, and if we fail to salvage our educational system fairly quickly, immigrants will be needed to fill the high-tech jobs as well.

The Cause of the Problem

When *illegal* immigrants started being a significant percentage of the total immigrants entering the country, business was delighted. Those that require unskilled or easily learned repetitive work now had a source of workers that would work hard for a very low hourly wage, did not require the payment of unemployment taxes, did not require an employer contribution to social security, and did not require benefits of any type. The contribution to the bottom line was little short of amazing. Of course, hiring these illegal aliens was against the law, but if one were careful, made the right political contributions, and took care of people willing to look the other way, one was rarely caught. And even if they were caught, the fine was rarely more than the tiniest fraction

of the contribution being made to their bottom lines and the perfunctory slap-on-the-wrist was hardly noticeable.

So the U.S. continues to allow immigration and allows or even encourages under-the-table illegal immigration because we need them to perform jobs that too many Americans are not willing to accept for multiple reasons, but why do the citizens of other nations want to come to the U.S.? Some come for seasonal work to augment their regular income from other sources, and some come because they are forced by economic downturn in their own countries, but the majority still come because they want to become Americans and enjoy the freedom and upward mobility still possible (but getting harder) in this country while providing much greater opportunities for their family's future. All of which sounds a lot like what most Americans want out of life.

A Long-range Generalization

One further point needs to be made. Only immigrants coming to this country in a hope for future citizenship should be accepted. Those coming for temporary work should only be considered as temporary workers and their numbers minimized. Both the immigrants coming to this country and the country accepting them should have the clear goal of their eventual integration into the culture and economy of the U.S. That does not mean that their cultural background should be in any way denied to them, but it does mean that they agree to conform to, while contributing to the diversity of the cultural norm in the U.S. The most vital enabler for cultural absorption is language and the official language of the United States of America is English. Consequently, regulations should be made governing the extent to which any other language will be employed in the U.S.

Short-range Specifics

We need them; they want us. Sounds like the perfect deal, and it is. We just need to be a lot smarter about making it work, which primarily means removing the political component of our current problems. Here is what we should do:

A national registry of all aliens legally allowed into the U.S. should be established and made accessible by computer to individuals and businesses. The registry should include fingerprints and current photographs. State employment agencies should be equipped with electronic fingerprinting equipment and made responsible for applicant matching to the national database. Anyone caught using fake identification should be immediately deported and denied all future entry to the U.S. for any reason.

Individuals hiring aliens without validation by the national registry should be fined heavily on the first offense, severely on the second offense, and with mandatory jail time on the third offense, which would be classified as a felony.

On a first offense, all businesses hiring aliens without validation by the national registry should be fined for each illegal alien hired, an amount equal to the full compensation received by the chief executive officer of that business for the previous year. The second offense would be classified as a felony and would require mandatory jail time for the CEO of the company along with a fine ten times that of the first offense for the company. Any further offenses would result in the same penalty as the second offense with the jail time and fine rising by a factor of ten on each future occurrence.

Legal immigration quotas should be raised to roughly the level now being experienced for both legal and illegal immigration together or to lower levels if the effective exclusion of illegal immigrants (and concomitant raising of immigrant labor costs) lowers the demand for their services. All immigrants or their employers as

appropriate, whether seasonal, temporary, or seeking permanent status would pay all taxes assessed against citizens, with the exception of unemployment and social security taxes. Mandatory withholding for all income taxes shall be at a level sufficient to cover the tax required for no exemptions, and responsibility for this withholding should fall on the individual or business employing them.

It should be illegal to have any legal document, public signage, public announcement, public query, or similar offering, explanation, or delineation in any language other than English.

Immigration quotas should be adjusted to provide as great a cultural mix as possible and a skill mix that meets the continuing demand for unskilled labor while also filling the skills gaps left by the declining U.S. education system.

The English language should be taught in schools to immigrant children of school age not having the proficiency required to learn subjects being taught in English, but in no circumstances would normal academics be taught in a foreign language except for the teaching of such foreign languages.

Visas would be issued for only five years to immigrants, including their spouses and dependent children, seeking U.S. citizenship. Visas would be renewed only for those having proven skills in demand within the U.S. Aliens would not be allowed to earn U.S. citizenship without a minimum proficiency in English.

Temporary or seasonal workers would be granted visas having durations concomitant with the specific jobs they would work and would be provisional on the continuation of that work. Spouses and dependent children would be covered under these same visas and would have access to the same schools and healthcare afforded citizens. Children born in the U.S. to parents that are in the country on a visa would not automatically be granted citizenship. However, they would be able to remain in the U.S. with their parents as long as at least one parent held a valid visa, and they would be allowed to apply for citizenship under the same rules and conditions as their parent(s).

To effect a transition from the existing state of massive illegal immigration now in effect in the U.S., illegal immigrants currently in the U.S. without a job or not being legally claimed as dependents of aliens or citizens would have two years to change their status by securing the required visa or be deported to their nation of origin. All aliens being claimed as dependents under this transition provision (children, parents, disabled, etc.) would not be allowed to work unless they applied for and received their own visas but would be allowed to remain in the U.S. as long as at least one of their parents or a guardian retained a valid work visa or had been granted U.S. citizenship. Alien children included in this transition provision would have to meet the requirements for and be granted a valid work visa or U.S. citizenship by age 18 or be deported to their country of origin. Those children born in the U.S. under current law as citizens would not be allowed to remain in this country without at least one parent or a court approved guardian until reaching the age of 18.

Immigration

America

A country great in souls diverse
That alloy all in need
So those who work and heart immerse
Can plant their freedom seed

Immigrants

Embracing growth their minds entwined
And fertilize our soil
Perspectives new in grand design
They till with hope and toil

Melting

They learn our speech, are glad to give
To social need and see
Their children go to war to live
And grow in liberty

Citizens

Socially Defined Unions and Commitments

Mankind has seen an unending change in societal rules throughout all of history. There have been matriarchal societies as well as patriarchal societies. There have been societies where the roles of males and females were roughly equivalent in authority and those where women were little more than slaves. There have been societies where open displays of sexual activity were encouraged and those where sexual activity was reserved strictly for the purpose of procreation. There have been societies where the bodily mutilation of children was a ritualized mode of social acceptance and those that found any physical alteration of the body abhorrent. In short, acceptable social behavior and rules are as mutable as the imaginations that led to their adoption.

The Early American Experience

The American colonies were assembled with a large influx of fundamental Christian groups that were as ideal for the rugged life of the frontier as they were a thorn in the side of European society. These societal groups were really tightly controlled mini-theocracies that were very communistic in their early agrarian forms. While their sense of community and the sharing of both work and the fruits of that work were essential for survival in the New World, they also brought a boatload of societal rules that plagues us even today. These religious groups were strong patriarchies and these rules evolved primarily to subjugate the female to a role of child bearing and drudgery bordering on slavery. The authority for the imposition of these rules was found in the Word of God.

If one disregards the individual members of these groups, it can be said that they did well in the New World, that is they prospered as groups, particularly when the economy stayed closely tuned to agronomy and when they comprised the entire societal body. As larger communities formed and industry and commerce began, they had difficulty fitting their rules into the demands of this new and more robust society. Nevertheless, their influence on societal rules was large, from the wording of the Constitution to the incorporation into common law of many of their religious interpretations for moral behavior.

All of the early religious groups of significance in America were patriarchal and monogamous, unlike many of the societies of the Bible on which they supposedly relied for their guidance. Of course, the natives of America were a curious mix of monogamy and polygamy (another reason to consider them expendable savages), and we solved that problem by one of the worst genocides in the history of mankind. Then the Mormon Church came along wanting to include the polygamy of the Old Testament as part of their societal rules, and we drove them into the wilderness of Utah.

So while the Constitution was framed based on the concepts of human rights adopted from the European enlightenment (although frequently worded in Christian phraseology), the people weren't all that tolerant. If you were both white and Christian, you were accepted. If you were black, brown, yellow, or red, or if you had non-Christian or no religious beliefs, you were a heathen—deserving of no respect and few human rights.

The Legacy That Survived

From all of this early and now ingrained moral piety we have inherited both moral strictures and common law which still asserts that the primary function of sexuality is procreation, that the rightful place of women is subservience to men, that marriage is a bonding by God of a man and a woman for the purpose of procreation and subsequent nurture of the family (primarily by the woman), and so on. But as usual, society marches on, and the demands of newly morphed societies are rarely identical to those of the past.

We now have a society where some recognition of the reality of, and even tolerance for, homosexuality is beginning to take root. Paradoxically, we have even legislated

some of this tolerance at the national level, while many states are still enforcing laws put in place in our Puritan past. We are still prosecuting polygamists in Utah (or killing them in shoot-outs with the law). We are still withholding the legal and social rights of those in social unions that do not meet the criteria of our Puritan Christian origins. Societal change is relentless and as inevitable as taxes, but it is never easy.

Definitions

So let's examine the concept of unions and life commitments. First of all let me say that what we need in this country, and indeed in the whole world, is a more realistic approach to socially necessary relationships—no matter what you call them. And what we call them should be as neutral a phrase as possible, because what we don't need is the historical, social, and religious baggage that goes along with most of the current descriptors. That baggage is so out of touch with social reality as to be meaningless if viewed with logic and not dogma.

Second, I would like to make it clear that I have no interest in religiously defined relationships as they should not be allowed as legally binding in this country, which is dedicated to the separation of church and state. Religion and religious relationships are a matter of personal choice, and all citizens should be allowed to engage in such choices as they see fit. I am interested in defining social relationships that are essential to the ordered conduct of our society and the continuing social evolution of our specie.

Third, I would like to make it clear that I will not make any effort at euphemisms and politically correct phrases, as it is a monumental waste of time and a linguistic trap for essayists who fall into it. Instead, I will employ phrases that are as accurate and neutral as possible. Consequently, I have chosen to use the phrase "social union" when talking about formalized personal, social, and familial commitments that may be made by adult citizens.

Defining the social union is probably easier if we first define what it is not. It is not a union granted by God, that's a different issue altogether, even though it is an issue at the root of the problem plaguing us today in America. At its minimum, a social union today is any domestic partnership of two consenting adults of any sex that provides a legally contractual basis for the sharing of common property. At its maximum, it is a union that, beyond the personal reasons of convenience and expression of care and mutual responsibility, provides a legally contractual basis for the sharing of common property among any consenting adults (the essay will eventually get to this) and a guarantee of additional rights and benefits our society provides to encourage the formation of such a domestic, group entity.

A minimum social union is available in only a few states at the moment, but it is inescapable in many states where common law provides precedence for dealing with common property that has been shared in a domestic relationship by any parties, regardless of sex or even number. Such is the beauty of common law where societal practicality demands solutions of real problems and thereby sets the stage for change of the more idealistic rules of society, bringing them ultimately more in line with reality.

Only a few states have managed to pass homosexual marriage legislation, and that legislation has frequently been struck-down by the courts or rescinded or might soon become struck-down or rescinded. Federal mandates bringing any type of social unions other than those with the legal name of "marriage" to the level of rights and benefits traditionally bestowed upon such a legal marriage have not yet been enacted, but should be as transitions to the more rational proposals for social unions in this essay.

Consequently, the only consistently available maximum social union in America today is called marriage, and this is defined (with few exceptions) as the union of one male and one female consenting adult in a domestic relationship. This union provides for the legal disposition of common property, the legal assumption of responsibility by one party in matters of physical emergency to the other party, and legal entitlement to financial and other benefits legislated (local, state, and federal) for those in the social

union of marriage (no religious ceremony is required.)

Of course, many of these marriages include unacknowledged or unrecognized bisexual or even homosexual members, but the law seems to ignore this fact even when it becomes known. That is, the actual sexuality of the participants is disregarded as long as the union is between a male and a female. Does this defy all logic? Yes!

Cachet and Shortfall

So it could be said that the law of the land guarantees civil rights to all citizens but allows this guarantee to be eroded by arcane laws lingering from our Puritan past. It allows one kind of social union but essentially denies all others. It accepts the reality of homosexuality when it is convenient but denies it when it conflicts with our Puritan sense of societal rules. Then again, this is quite consistent with a society that is comfortable, even intimate, with hypocrisy.

It is obvious that the word “marriage” has the cachet of social acceptability for consenting adults in a domestic, sexual, and familial relationship. It gained this social acceptability because it served the survival of early patriarchal and sexist societies by ensuring that one of the parties (mostly the man) would not shirk his nurturing responsibilities and thereby add to the general burden of the society at large. To make this contract even stronger, we added the sanctity of God (or the Gods, in some societies,) and no matter how hard we godless try, the married in the eyes of God tradition will not just roll over—not as long as the truly religious and the hypocritically religious retain a majority in the electorate. Consequently, the term “marriage” carries the baggage of sexual and religious prejudice and social injustice of those early societies that makes its continued use more than it is worth to those citizens previously and currently being denied their equal rights in today’s society.

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet” (thank you, Will). So why bother with trying to call all forms of social union marriage? To do so is to uselessly burden the new forms of social union with the social and religious baggage of the past. What we need are new forms of social union that will transcend the antiquated concepts inherent in the traditional social union of marriage, forms that will serve the original purposes but do it in the very different society of today.

Necessity for Change

Death of the old definition of the family unit was preordained with the emancipation of the woman in Western society. A key to which was the science of practical birth control, which succeeded in freeing many women from the tyranny of childbirth demanded by the then accepted rules of society. For all of the hoopla created on the patriarchal side of society (like wars) the family has always been matriarchal at its core. The physical and the psychological care of the family’s children have been overwhelmingly left to the women. The teaching of societal rules and the transfer of values to the children has been predominantly accomplished by the women.

Social freedom for women simultaneously started us down the road to the current economic reality of the two income household and the restructuring of sexual morays. Since this has consequently doomed the old concept of family, did we do the wrong thing by giving women their freedom? Absolutely not. To think so is the same as believing that doing away with slavery in this country was wrong because it caused an upheaval in the economic structure of the South. We did both because it was the right thing to do—because it fit the basic precepts of our society to provide equality and opportunity for all, not just some.

The simple fact is that the functioning of the family unit in our society is failing to provide the benefits it was designed to produce. The nurturing of the children has too frequently been given over to caretakers of either choice (one or more of the parents pays for it) or necessity (the state pays for it). The passing on of values (if the parents

have any) has been given over to the media. Knowledge of and adherence to the rules of acceptable social behavior are no longer passed on by the nurturing family, causing a breakdown in civil society and the virtual destruction of the national education system as we dilute the ability of our nations schools to teach by forcing them to spend most of their efforts on social services.

Today's Realities

Except for adoption, the only way of securing progeny was, until modern times, strictly a matter of male and female copulation to produce offspring. This is no longer true. Artificial insemination negates the need for a male's presence in fertilizing the egg of the female. In vitro fertilization negates the need for either sex to be present at the time of fertilization. In the future, cloning (yes, the Puritanistic restrictions will eventually fade on this issue as well) will make it possible for either sex to procreate without any participation from the other. In the farther future, we can expect artificial wombs that would put even the women out of the equation.

Add to this scientific reality the social reality that Western cultures are well down the road in providing equal economic opportunity to women, and even providing special benefits to them in regard to familial responsibilities, regardless of marital status. This fact alone allows society's need for familial nurturing to be fulfilled by sources other than the traditional male-female social union. When coupled with the varied ways in which a family group can now be created, it makes socially practical sense to move on with formulating new modes of social union that will more completely fill our needs.

Beyond Equality

It's time for us to consider new forms of social union, not just to provide equality and an opportunity to pursue happiness that is now being denied to a significant number of the electorate, but also because we need a solid answer to the disintegration of the family unit. We need a practical way to provide food, shelter, protection, guidance, and compassion for children that still works in the new realities of our society.

We need a nationally recognized, non-religious, social union that allows the domestic partnership of both heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals, and that is flexible enough to allow domestic partnerships of any type and size of mixed group that is capable of providing a stable and nurturing environment for children (thank you Mr. Heinlein).

To sum it up, social unions of all types should only be matters of convenience, expressions of caring and mutual responsibility, and environments for the nurturing of children. The first two items are personal matters of individual freedom. Only the last item is of any concern to the state and only then when it fails to function properly and increases the burden of the state.

Out of the belief that a state of marriage would offer adequate nurturing for children (which it did for a long time but not so much today,) the state has granted certain economic and social concessions to such a social union in order to reduce the risk to the state of having to assume these duties. Clearly, these concessions should be equally available to all social unions creating such risk lowering environments or the state should rescind these concessions. In either case, the state should utilize science (currently DNA matching) to assure that ALL parents bear as much of the financial responsibility (since there is no practical way to enforce social responsibility) for their progeny as possible and use other scientific advances to lower the reality of the millions of children being born each year into environments without adequate nurture—but that's another, and even more controversial essay.

Finally

For those citizens that desire a domestic, sexual, and familial union sanctioned by the government for whatever benefits that might provide, there should be a nationally

recognized social union. For those citizens that desire a domestic, sexual, and familial union sanctioned by their chosen religious faith for whatever benefits that might provide and have been denied it, that is a tragedy of religious hypocrisy for which they must seek resolution within their faith. As for the term "marriage," who needs its sexist connotations in a society finally freeing itself of such stupidities? Let the religious extremists have it along with all of its baggage and their other hypocrisies.

Social Unions

We brought our religious strictures
We carried the prejudice of culture
With a minimal value on women
To procreate and nurture

We forged a nation of liberty
We pledged a life of equality
With changing times we chose
To live in irrationality

We prospered but dogma prevailed
We gave our women some freedom
With social results that needed
To change our nurturing wisdom

We are close to social collapse
We desperately need a solution
With no sexual orientation
To bring us restitution

We must force social change
We need it to survive
With all of us being equal
To ensure our children thrive

The Fading Legacy of 1776

The intellectual growth of the individual in any society is controlled by his or her access to knowledge. Mankind has generally had ever increasing access to knowledge through the growth of science, but this flow of information from science to the individual is always filtered through the various lenses of society. Sometimes in our history the filters have been so light as to be virtually unnoticeable, and at other times this filtering has been so dark they have practically shut society off from scientific knowledge. To put it succinctly, our knowledge is limited by what science makes available for you to know and by what society allows you to know.

Our Religious Legacy

The most famous historical example of this is probably the conflict over whether the earth revolves around the sun or the sun revolves around the earth. Science clearly argued for the earth revolving around the sun, but the religious values in sway when Western culture was moving successfully out of the Dark Ages saw this bit of science as weakening the absoluteness of God and the general teachings of the Christian church about the God-man relationship. Religion ultimately lost this battle (thank you Copernicus and Galileo for standing tall), and as usual, the perceived conflict turned out to be more emotional than factual.

A similar religion versus science issue of today is probably embryonic stem-cell research. Like everything else today, this problem is more complex than the one facing Copernicus. The issue follows a chain of rationalization from the creation of man by God in his image, to the sanctity of human life, to the defining instant when ordinary life becomes human life, to recognition of life elements having the potential to become human life, to any actions that might thwart potential human life elements from becoming such, etc. depending on which religious precept you wish to trace.

Regardless of a society's structure, the values of those in control of that society are adjunctive rules for living in that society. In a democracy this means that the largest subculture has the potential to impose its values on the rest of the subcultures making up the country. In the multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-religious society of the United States, this is a potential problem of enormous societal implication.

Our Non-religious Legacy

The United States of America was founded primarily on the principles of the 17th and 18th century European Enlightenment. While the majority of the framers of our constitution were, if not deeply religious, personalities formed by Christian religious beliefs, the workers and movers were not Christians and not very religious at all (thank you Messrs. Jefferson, Madison, Adams, Washington, and Franklin). Consequently, while the basic documents of our country are framed with religious rhetoric, they are founded on the principles of natural rights. While this concept carries its own metaphysical sense, it is not burdened with the dogma of organized religion. That is to say, our country is founded on principles of rationality and reason (thank you Messrs. Descartes, Leibniz, Hume, Rousseau, Smith, etc.) rather than specific sets of faith and dogma. For this rationality and reason to be self-perpetuating in our society, the framers also included a strong mandate for public education. The Enlightenment, of which they were disciples, firmly believed that an educated electorate was paramount to establishing and maintaining an equitable society.

Our Cornerstones of Equitability

Since 1776 it has become increasingly clear (to at least some) that two cornerstones of equitability define the essence of our society, an essence that transcends the mere fact that our government is elected by a democratic method. The first (listed first only because it is a precondition for the second) is the fact that almost everyone has had

access to a free public education. For most of U.S. history the basis for this education has been the same that grounded our Constitution—the body of scientific knowledge and the power of rational thought. This universally available public education provided a means for upward mobility particularly important in our capitalistic society and a means of minimizing the inevitable inequities of social stratification. But as this cornerstone has eroded over the last fifty years, so too has the equitability of our increasingly stratified society.

The second cornerstone is the fact that our government has not functioned solely to the benefit of the majority that elected it, but that it has consistently governed in a manner that protected the rights of the minority that failed to elect the government. The United States has survived and prospered because it would not tolerate the imposition of the values of some on the lives of those that did not hold similar values, unless those values were specifically set forth in the founding documents.

The Slippery Slope

History has lots of failed democratic experiments. These failures were usually because the group that came to power proceeded to exercise that power without regard for all the other people they were representing. Consequently, there is a brutal legacy in Western culture of popularly elected governments metamorphosing to authoritarian governments with the goals of increasing power and self-perpetuation for the ruling few.

This few thought they had the right to impose their values on everyone under their governmental control. In fact, they usually felt they had a moral or religious imperative to impose their values—to do so was to follow the will of the people, the will of nature, the will of God, or some other “will” rather than to act with rational thought. Thus civilization suffered the callous slavery of the Semitic tribes by Egypt, the “civilizing” of the barbarians by Alexander, the butchery of the crusades and inquisition by the early Catholic Church, and the insanity of World War Two inflicted by the Nazis.

Mankind has a lousy record, and we seem doomed to keep adding to it by repeating old mistakes. Today we might be talking about the morality of stem cell research, the loss of individual freedoms to protect us against terrorism, the advisability of the government subsidizing religious education, or the fairness of teaching our children both creationism and science. Tomorrow, we could be talking about no right-of-choice to abortion for any reason, no tolerance for homosexuality, no rights to privacy if the government feels it needs to know, educational opportunity tailored to social and financial status, and the pursuit and dissemination of scientific knowledge only when it agrees with the majority held religious belief.

Alarmist rhetoric? Maybe, but all too frighteningly possible if we continue on our current course of increasing political polarization, erosion of individual liberties, and imposition of the religious values of a few on everyone. And the most frightening thing of all is that we are moving in this direction because it is the will of God (in this country) or the will of Allah (in the Islamic countries). We’ve been here before. Whether you couch your position as wanting to bring the benefits of democracy to the oppressed or wanting to bring the word of the True God to the infidels, it is simply the imposition of the values of one group on another group.

Values are personal and may be totally divorced from governments, societies, and religions, but few bother to do so because it requires a great deal of intellectual energy. Most of us are content to stay in the ruts of indoctrination we received in early childhood rather than face the difficult transitions that maturity finally offers us. We arrive at these potential transitions when we have expanded our knowledge of the universe to a point of criticality, a point where the accumulation of knowledge is such that we can start a chain reaction that will free ourselves from the tyranny of adolescent conditioning and provide a means whereby we may define ourselves through the application of reason.

We cannot begin this journey without knowledge, and we cannot gain knowledge in a society that denies science. While we haven't denied science in America—yet, we have taken the first step in doing so by substituting non-rational thought for the rational thought of our forefathers, by substituting the pseudo-science of creationism for the science of evolution. Who could ever have believed that a single social group, whether minority or majority, no matter how organized, determined, or vocal could so severely erode the basic principles of this country that we are faced once again with the Scopes' trial more than forty years after putting a man on the moon.

Staying Free

Democracy in one form or another seems to provide a reasonable governmental structure in which freedom can flourish. However, it is really just the icing on the cake, since freedom can exist under other governmental forms as well. It is freedom that is the cake itself—both physical and intellectual freedom.

For a government to provide freedom it must provide a society without tyranny. Such tyranny is easy to spot when it takes overt and physical forms like search and seizure of personal property, suspension of the rule of law, or the restriction of public information. It is less visible when it takes the forms of social injustice like racial, ethnic, and gender bias, or when it passes laws that perpetuate economic and social inequality. It is almost invisible when it takes the form of misapplying the governmental principal of “the greater good” to moral and ethical values.

Nevertheless, it is tyranny. When the power of government is wielded by ethnic, religious, or social groups in such a manner as to deny personal liberty, choice of values, and the pursuit of their definition of happiness to other groups under the aegis of that government, it is tyranny. When one government seeks to impose its values on a group or government not under its voluntary aegis, it is tyranny. No matter what ethical or moral high-ground the imposing group might feel it possesses, it is tyranny.

It is a terrorism of values.

I Watch In Anger

I have watched my country as it loses its soul
To social prejudice without control
That ignores the reality of cultural slavery
And the struggling few that escape with bravery

I have watched my country as it loses its soul
By placing our children in dogma's control
To hide the freedom of logic and science
Restricting their thoughts to ensure their compliance

I have watched my country as it loses its soul
To charlatans of faith who condemn and cajole
To line their pockets and abridge free will
Urging hate and intolerance and even to kill

I have watched my country as it loses its soul
To leaders who follow – their virtue a role
Who strut in impotence ignoring our need
Parsing our Forefathers to justify greed

I have watched my country as it loses its soul
To the power of wealth putting more in its bowl
Suppressing the weak by doling out care
Change our land of hope to a land of despair

I have watched my country as it loses its soul
Trading the grit of can-do for the pabulum of dole
Trading risky adventure for the safe pap of fun
From taking a stand to choosing to run

I have watched my country as it loses its soul
Not doing what's right no matter the toll
We were born for the High Road and not for the Low
And with each angry step that's the way that I'll go