

The following quotations are from:

Prejudices A Philosophical Dictionary
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(by R. St. Nisbet)

Chapter on Abortion

Page 4. "History disposes as well as proposes, and its capacity for making a burning issue simply irrelevant in due time should never be underestimated.

Page 10.mesmeric appeal.

Page 11. ... the number increases of people who believe themselves to be powerless or who are chronically and irremediably bored with, cynical about, or uninterested in anything beyond their immediate selves and the instant gratification of whatever narcissistic, hedonistic, and solipsistic needs arise in their selves.

Chapter on Atheism

Page 16. Atheism is commonly thought of as the very opposite of religion, ...not so. Chesterton,... remarked in praise of McCabe that it is not atheism which kills religion, but indifference. ...Chesterton concluded, much is owed to ...atheists for keeping people from being complacent and then indifferent about their religious beliefs.

Page 18. ...government in authoritarian as opposed to totalitarian societies is naturally checked in its powers by the continued existence of largely free institutions ... receiving corporate rights of autonomy. ... values of tradition tend to be very strong in authoritarian societies.

Page 19. ^{It is} possible for a society to be authoritarian and at the same time relatively free of speech and, more important, high in intellectual and cultural creativity.

Very different are the totalitarian states, peculiarly creations of the twentieth century. Here the state is all-in-all, by its very design a kind of permanent revolution against competing forms of association. Whereas in authoritarian society everything is permitted that is not explicitly forbidden, nothing is permitted in totalitarian society that is not explicitly authorized.

Page 21. This distinction between authoritarianism and totalitarianism throws light upon the degradation of liberalism in the West in the twentieth century, when liberalism began to change from an ideology based in the main ... upon freedom--to an ideology based more and more upon the goals of equality, redistribution, and social reconstruction. Rousseau and in some degree Marx are the patron saints of the new liberalism. ...from the Enlightenment on, European liberalism has had a vital strain of animosity towards the traditional, toward strong kinship systems, religion, social class, and the like. This explains the current distaste, even repugnance, among liberals for the distinction between authoritarian and totalitarian.

Page 22. ... authoritarian states are more stable than are totalitarian orders, for the latter are made inherently fragile by their design: the remaking of human personality.
Given the mission of obliterating human differentiation
and the instituting of a general will or some other form of collectivism, it cannot hope to survive very long in history.

Chapter on Boredom

Page 25. Quite possibly G-d expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden and into the perilous unknown as a way of warding off the boredom that might have come with marriage-in-utopia and perhaps fruitlessness.

Miltonians... the torment of tedium.

Chapter on Christianity

Page 40. ...what a Victorian wit said of Herbert Spencer: "His idea of a tragedy is a beautiful theory ravished by a gang of brutal facts."

Chapter on Community

Page 51. That is one current sense of the word community. Another is set forth presciently by Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor in The Brothers Karamazov, who explains to the returned Jesus the absolute necessity of abandoning the freedom Jesus had brought to his followers: "For these pitiful creatures are concerned not only to find what one or other can worship, but find something that all will believe and worship; what is essential is that all may be together in it. This craving for community of worship is the chief misery of man individually and of all humanity from the beginning of time."

In the formation of close to fifteen thousand communes, rural and urban, in the United States during the last three decades a considerable segment, mostly young, made clear what is thought of ordinary society. Much of the passion for encounter and related groups is at bottom a seizing upon community in whatever form it may appear.

Behind the contemporary crisis of community lies a long history of the slow but inexorable destruction of the traditional communities in the West. Much of social history for the past four centuries has consisted of the displacement of kinship, locality, and church as centers of community. Medieval society was rich in concrete communities, ...

Page 52. The process of destruction commenced with the rise of the centralized nation-state. ...the effect over the centuries was the dissolution of the communities which lay intermediate to individual and state. The government during the French Revolution was more relentless ... than any monarch had ever been.

Page 54. Because state power has enfeebled, even killed community in the historic sense of the word, ...The spread of movements like the Unification Church and the Hare Krishna may be expected to continue, and it is a delusion to think that many of the young people belonging to these required brainwashing. These groups demand complete surrender of individual freedom of thought, but after all, Rousseau declared the perfect community to be one in which the condition of membership is the total surrender of the individual of all his rights.

This is the terrible power of community in modern times and a full illustration of the fact that community is not a sufficient end itself. What it is a community of is what matters. The Manson family...

More and more people, especially the young and aged, are pulled inexorably towards such communities as they can find, irrespective of their functional or ideological base.

Chapter on Covetousness

Page 66. The rage to be honored has become boundless. It makes one think respectfully of the Englishman who was appointed by the Queen to some hoary order and who said, "The best thing about it is there is no damn nonsense about merit."

Chapter on Creationism

Pages 68-69. Evolution, as an idea or perspective, is implicit in one degree or other in the Greco-Roman and also in the Christian tradition, and it has been a staple of the modern mind since the eighteenth century, Darwin's alleged revelation of 1859 notwithstanding.

It is ... creationism in the looser sense, as opposed to literal creationism, must be assessed. ...overwhelming majority of self-styled creationists today are a different breed. They accept the reality of a long evolution of earth and life. But explicitly or implicitly they argue that, such reality accepted, current naturalist hypotheses and theories have proved inadequate and insufficient to explain the astonishing things disclosed in recent years by scientists themselves. These mainstream creationists accept without serious question the spectacle of an evolutionary differentiation of species going back great distances of time. What, however, is not acceptable is a theory that posits only the laws of chance, only an irrational, blind, mechanistic process of selection which is the sole and exclusive causal agent in this whole complex and intricate process of evolution. *And such creationists have no objection whatever to a*

planet of evolving life over four
and a half billion years. ...The origin of life is as much a mystery today as it was when Darwin carefully avoided the subject, referring merely, in the Origin, to the "Creator." of science" incessantly belabor the public with homiletics to the opposite effect.

Page 70. ...there is every likelihood of a sharp change in this dominance of pure secularism. The reason, quite apart from the religious efflorescence taking place, is the uncomfortable yield of the sciences concerned most closely with the nature of the universe and man. This yield--scarcely older than three decades--has thrown into question many of the premises and assumptions of the rigorously anticreationist mentality of modern times. It is now known that our own universe, far from being a timeless complex of planets and stars, is finite in age, in existence for only the last ten to twenty billion years, and is very probably the outcome of a primal event, the "big bang." This notion has every bit of the flavor of "creationism," for out of that single event emerged a universe so delicately articulated, so harmonious in the motions of its component bodies, and so marvelously suspended in space as to deserve in and for itself the label of divinity. As an astronomer recently observed: "With every fresh penetration of our universe through space craft tens of millions of miles away from the earth, the suspicion grows that the theologian got there first."

*And the question, then, is why the drum beater
for the "church"*

Page 71. As for the wonder that is man's mind and nervous system, the physiologist Eccles, noted for his discoveries in the transmission of electric impulses of the brain, remarked that only something that is supernatural to the same degree as creationism can even begin to explain man's unique mental faculties.

(*Note: The following portion has a notation on side:
"TUM or Torah only? Kook")

Creationists of the educated, common-sense, rational ... could complementarity. Bohr used this term to characterize situations in man's attempt to understand the universe where there are several mutually exclusive but legitimate approaches to reality. Such situations, as the physical scientist Weiskopf more recently noted, exist throughout science, including physics with its complementary aspects of the atom quantum state and location. Divergent though the two states of vision are, each is necessary to a full understanding of the atom.

Weiskopf emphasizes: Science has always had to work outside its own rational mode of thinking. He cites the mathematician Goedel's demonstration that a system of axioms can never be based on itself.

Page 72. "Science," noted Weiskopf, "must have a nonscientific base: it is the conviction of every scientist and of society as a whole, that scientific truth is relevant and essential." ...Planck: ... "Religion and natural science are fighting a joint battle in an incessant, never-relaxing crusade against skepticism and dogmatism, against disbelief and against superstition, and the rallying cry in this crusade has always been, and will always be, 'On to G-d.'"

Chapter on Crime and Punishment

Page 78. When it comes to muggings, rapes, burglaries, and murders, the liberal is characteristically so concerned by the injustices--as the liberal sees them--done by society to the wretches responsible that he finds himself poised between sympathy for the criminal and a certain animosity toward the criminal's victim, who the liberal sees as a personification of society-the-offender. It is hard for the liberal to see the mugger as guilty, as a violator of law and morality and therefore deserving of punishment, irrespective of the presumed state of his mental health. Thus the steady decline in the United States during the past half-century of the mentality of crime and punishment and the steady rise and spread of the mentality of sickness and therapy.

But it must not be overlooked that the same liberals who weep for the killer instead of the slain can scarcely control their fury at mention of the "authoritarian" nations and their leaders. In such leaders there is no illness, sickness, or maladjustment--only hard and vicious criminality. Death to all apartheidists, Ku Klux Klanners, Watergate conspirators, makers of nuclear reactors, and their like on the earth; but mercy and therapy for radical terrorists, murderers, rapists, and other takes of life and property.

Chapter on Dogma

Page 91. As Chesterton remarked, the merely rational man will not marry, and the rational soldier will not fight.

Pages 92-93. The word dogma comes from the Greek root meaning "seems good," and men will give far more of themselves for ideas or values which have become parts of their very souls, their intellectual tissues, than for ones that have been reached merely through calculated application of reason or through majority will in discussion. Religion and politics are necessarily the realms of life most fertile in dogmas, for only dogmas can ensure that degree of cohesion, of felt community, which is the sine qua non of church and state alike.

...Tocqueville, early in life, wrote, "If I were asked to class human miseries, I would do so in this order: Disease, Death, and Doubt." But according to Morley, "at a later date Tocqueville altered the order, and deliberately declared doubt to be the most insupportable of all evils, worse than death itself." Balzac wrote, "Men have a horror of a spiritual vacuum."

Chapter on Effrontery

Pages 93-94. Latin Root of this word tells something of its current meaning: shameless. ...it can be prodigious in adding to the store of ethical illth in Western society. ...It is chutzpah, but generally without the ingenuity and wit associated with chutzpah. Effrontery is the exhibiting for gain of the unbuttoned ego; it is the hypertrophy of brashness, ... It is invariably associated with an individual's sense of effortless superiority; arrogance at its zenith.

Anthropologists tell of "shame cultures," in which a high degree of conformity is induced by fear of shame before one's fellows, If there are shame cultures, then there may also be "shameless cultures," ones so lacking in capacity for shame that effrontery not only ceases to be offensive to a people but becomes actually welcome.

The United States is without doubt in one of its periods of rampant effrontery in government and society, ... It becomes steadily more difficult to think of any act or statement from anyone of whatever sphere or status in American society that is sufficiently offensive to taste and morals as to lead to that person's self-removal in shame from the public forum. Even the most egregious acts of license are greeted with bored indifference...

(~~*Note: The word "grief" appears on side of sentence below~~)

Page 96. "Light ^{GRIEF (cub 6, 12)} griefs can speak," wrote Seneca, "great ones are dumb."

Chapter on Environmentalism

Page 102. In the Jewish and Greek respect for the individual human being and for his unique powers of mind lies the beginning of Western civilization and its distinctive contributions to the world. Pagan philosophers and then Christian theologians might glorify the scala naturae, the great chain of being, but man was regarded as sovereign; none of that man-abasing, nature-worshiping, pantheistic monism of the East was allowed to creep into Christianity any more than it had into the Jewish religion. The anthropocentrism in the Christian envisagement of the cosmos is receiving more and more confirmation in the twentieth century from discoveries in astronomy. The earth was created, whether by G-d or the big bang, and it is unique in its occupancy by man.

This anthropocentric and dualistic view of man and nature lies behind the great practical achievements of western civilization on the one hand, as in the economic and technological conquest of nature, and its great theoretical achievements on the other hand, as in the triumph of science. There were occasional dissenting voices prior to the twentieth century. That of Saint Francis is the most memorable. But his ideas concerning the true relationship of man to earth and its organic mantle--so very different from the Jewish insistence upon subduing the earth and having dominion over all that exists on it, as also from the humanistic, man-ascendant natural philosophy of the Greeks--were regarded by the church in Francis' time as heretical, which indeed they were, and although the founder escaped the heretic's pyre, some of his followers were not so lucky. The saint declared a monistic philosophy of man and nature--and lived exactly as he preached. But from the early Jews and Greeks on, the true, the main, the overriding philosophy of the West has been dualism with respect to man and nature.

Page 103-105. That dualistic, efficiency-driven view of man's true relation to environment survived in America until about the beginning of the 1960s.

A number of things happened to conservation during the period. In the first place its numbers began to assume mass proportions; the spirit of proselytization and of conversion was almost religious in quality. Thousands of new environmentalist groups, clubs, and associations, many local but an impressive number national in scope, came into being. From the beginning there was a militancy in these groups that had been lacking in the older conservation and preservation societies. But even the older organizations were infused by the new spirit. There was, as is always the case when cult-like groups are beginning to become mass movements, an enlargement and diversification of stated aims. Conservation of resources remained perhaps the sovereign goal, or stated goal at any rate. But the theme of preservation took on an intensity and scope going far beyond anything earlier existent in, say, the national park movement. Now preservation referred to creation and protection not simply of parks and wildernesses, but of what became known as ecosystems, however small or large, however necessary their space might be to the development of industry or the building of homes for the many rising to middle class status.

The new preservationism led inexorably to still another theme in the environmentalist cause, namely the proper use and control of energy, so vital to all economic progress. ...It is the nuclear issue that did the most to transform the old conservationism into the new.

This led to still another, increasingly mesmeric theme of the new environmentalism; the development of new sources of energy guaranteed to be inexhaustible, utterly harmless to earth and life, and ineradicably clean. Almost overnight such anticipated or proposed new sources were focused in one: solar energy. One of the most ancient of human religions, sun worship, was of a sudden restored; to glory and power. What a wealthy person might be able to effect in a small house--nearly exclusive dependence upon solar heating--was immediately declared possible for factories and cities, and possible in a relatively short time provided the federal government gave it highest priority in research and development. The combination of nihilistic assault on nuclear energy and of evangelistic fervor in behalf of solar power was all that was necessary to put the new preservationism in the garb and light of an army of righteousness, one dedicated to extermination of everything in any way contaminant of nature and to achievement of a pure natural environment.

All mass movements must have their sacred texts. ...would appear to be Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, published in 1962. ...It was a short step from Carson's dithyramb of desolation to the position that what is really corrupting of man and earth is technology itself, and nowhere more odiously than within the capitalist industrial system.

The second major source of contemporary environmentalist revolutionary militance was the very substantial number of radicals who were in dire need of a new faith and ideology. The old socialism had increasingly come to seem obsolete, even obnoxious,...

Page 106. One of the most easily validated generalizations about human history is that successful single-interest movements are inevitably joined in due time by members of or refugees from other single-interest followings. Thus, as Engels himself noted, the socialist, working class movement in his day was already being joined or put in alliance with such motley followings as vegetarians, anti-inoculationists, and nature healers. As Engels further observed, precisely the same had been true of primitive Christianity: ...Any given Earth Day's mob is bound to have all these present for worship of the sun, earth, and ecosystem.

Page 107. Taken over the long run, the sin of environmentalism as we know it so stridently today lies in the created myth that nature has become. We are lulled into the belief that nature is benign, above all innocent. The ridiculous conception of human nature that Rousseau and his descendants advanced is matched by the conception of nature as mild in stream and forest. But one would do better to think of nature as Mount Saint Helens, a raging tornado, an unending drought, an earthquake, incessant visits of locusts, ants, and lice, and regular attacks of everything from famine to smallpox. That is how our forefathers saw nature. Only in an age of high and ubiquitous technology is it possible to think differently.

Chapter on Envy

Page 108. Emerson wrote that envy "is the tax which all distinction must pay."

Page 109. ...Tocqueville's law: "When inequality is the general rule in society, the greatest inequalities attract no attention. When everything is more or less level, the slightest variation is noticed. Hence the more equal men are, the more insatiable will be their longing for equality." And, of course, their envy.

Chapter on Epitaphs

Page 110. ... "A sham giant surrounded by real pygmies." ... "Hell is truth seen too late." Hobbes.

Chapter on Family

Page 116. The bloom of the shrub is never so brilliant as when its roots have just been cut.

Chapter on Fanaticism

Page 117. Typical of the fanatic is the boundless certainly of being right, sometimes uniquely right.

Page 188-119. ...Where others see mere problems, the fanatic sees crises, often of cosmic significance, ... Such crises, the fanatic knows, can only be resolved by constant vigilance, the aim being the destruction of all opposition. Fanatics can sometimes love individuals, provided those individuals are true believers, but their greater love goes to principle. Perish even friends rather than compromise on principle.

...friendship is possible but only on the basis of total loyalty. Disloyalty, however picayune, is unforgivable to the fanatic.

...the fanatic has the gift of hate in superlative intensity. the hate as time passes. The fanatic forgets nothing; no detail is too small not to remember for decades and to nourish constantly by the acids of hate.

The two great settings of fanaticism are religion and politics. have, strong elements of fanaticism in their beings. How else could they have appeared as authentic to their followers? The prophet must be of unshakable resolve, must have seen the truth and recognized it, ...One can be as gentle as Buddha or as fierce as Mohammed and still have the common quality of zeal carried to the nth degree. It is customary to think of the religious fanatic in the image of a Saint Simeon Stylites, but religious fanaticism has been far more often that of a Jesus.

The French Revolution gave the modern world political fanaticism. In this respect it differed immensely from the American Revolution a decade earlier. ...There was nothing, at least among the leaders, of the spirit of fanatical faith, of desire to continue the revolution until all conventions and habits had been changed, until human nature had been transformed, until perfection had been reached at last in the world.

...all of this is seen from 1790 on in France after the revolution had commenced. Robespierre, Marat, Saint-Just, and the others who had controlling force were minds of a different breed from any yielded by the American Revolution. ...Tocqueville added, "The French Revolution's approach to the problems of man's existence on earth was exactly similar to that of the religious revolutions with respect to his afterlife.

Page 120. No treatment of fanaticism would be complete without mention of the remarkable Jeremy Bentham. ...Bentham had a brilliant and wide-ranging mind. No one can take from him his valuable reforms of the common law and his instigation of the public service. ...But in time his rationalism overcame him. Everything must be subjected to the test of utilitarianism and to what he called the "hedonistic calculus," the exact measurement of pains and pleasures in order to determine the desirability of an action. His early disapproval of old traditions ... became a burning hatred, and he sought with every power in his being to have them obliterated. His faith in reason, especially his own, reached the point where he was able to declare that, without leaving his study, he could govern all India.