



# Tommy Raskin

*IT'S HARD  
TO BE HUMAN*

poems

essays

fragments

sources



<b>EM Forster, <i>What I Believe</i></b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Note on Nietzsche</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Letter to my former Master,     Jourdan Anderson 1865</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Explaining Reparations to the Anti-Tax Crowd</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>The Creation of 'Black Crime'</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Mikhail Bakunin, <i>God and the State</i></b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Breaking Away: on the Defense of Government</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>The Left-Libertarian Balancing Act</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>The Irony of Colonial Apologetics</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Against Misanthropy</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Effective Altruists as Anarchist Subversives</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>The Anti-Natalist Abyss</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Eulogy for Tommy</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Tommy Raskin Videos</b>	<b>65</b>



I believe in aristocracy, if that is the right word.

Not an aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence,  
but an aristocracy of the sensitive,  
the considerate and the plucky.



Its members are to be found  
in all nations and classes,  
and all through the ages,  
and there is a secret understanding  
between them when they meet.

They represent the true human tradition,  
the one permanent victory of our queer race  
over cruelty and chaos.

Thousands of them perish in obscurity,  
a few are great names.

They are sensitive for others as well as themselves,  
they are considerate without being fussy,  
their pluck is not swankiness but power to endure,  
and they can take a joke.

- EM Forster, *What I Believe*

# **Note on Nietzsche**



**Who remembers  
what Nietzsche  
once sneered?**

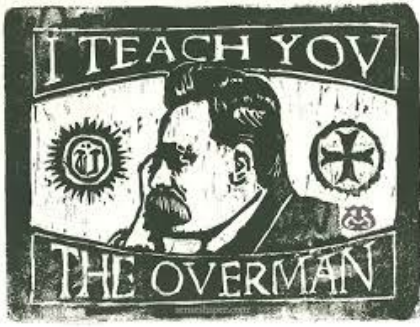
**The world is slavers  
and slaves,  
and the slaves are all  
here for the masters.**



**Though pastors may castigate men who would fight**



**for themselves and  
decline to defend all the  
paupers and paladins  
of self-abnegation, it's  
the pastors who err in  
their craven prostration.**



In conflation of “goodness” with “kindness,” they miss that the man of true worth will achieve his own bliss without heed to the fools who would temper his ways and drag him straight down to their dreary malaise.

Indeed, “kindness,” to Nietzsche, is but the recourse of men with no skill in the world, all forced to pretend that they’re “good” in some way that the master is not



When in fact they’re just daft and drew twigs as a lot in Darwinian games from which humans once flowered with a craving to tower in a dark will-to-power.

The liberal alleges that Nietzsche is scum—

benighted, short-sighted  
mistreating the ones  
all beset by the rest  
who are evil and  
gun for themselves  
in a hell where they  
torture for fun.



But if Nietzsche's mistaken, good liberal, then why  
do we shear the shy sheep and then feast on the  
thigh of the chicken and sicken the cattle and fry  
these creatures in fear and rear piglets to die?







It could never be just  
that they're clueless  
and dumb when they're  
smarter than kids with  
no circuits to plumb

The depth of our rights or the basics of math  
or the trifles that pass as our basis for wrath  
against birds and the swine of the earth who we bind  
in freezing trucks lined with frail bodies we grind.



Surely it's not that they wish to die so.  
Tens of billions have passed through sheer terror  
to go to their deaths, all screaming when pried  
from their families then grieving and cooped up inside  
some putrid old shacks



where their fate had been sealed  
by sadistic, fascistic, sophistical spiels

Of deceivers  
and beaters  
who glorified war  
on the beasts and  
viewed peace  
as unnatural  
and swore



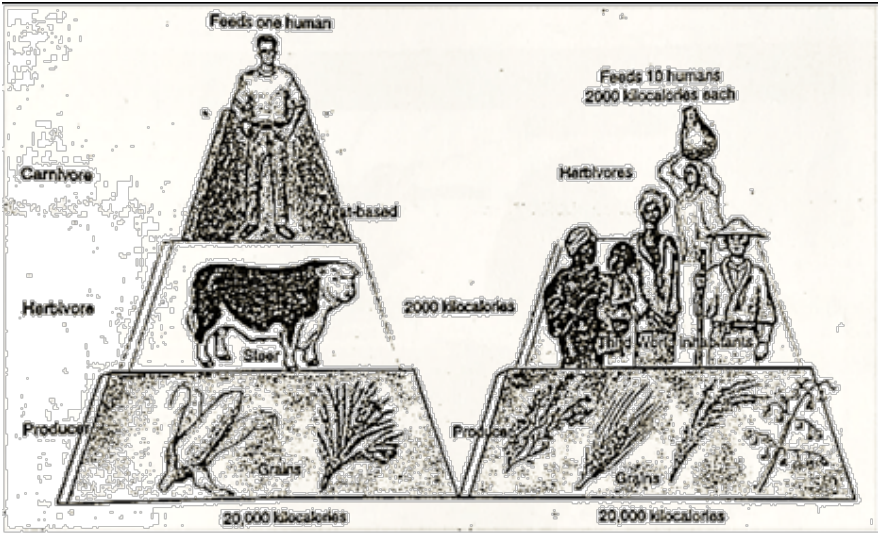
that they'd rout out the hippies, those deviants born  
of an outsized rapport with the squealing and sore.



**That they're weaker is just a prerequisite for  
the assault upon pigs and the chicken and boar.**



**It's insufficient alone, as betrayed by the fact  
that we'll nourish the sick and forgo the attack  
when the weak are like us,  
with no pouches or wings--  
when they walk on two legs and can blush in a fling.**



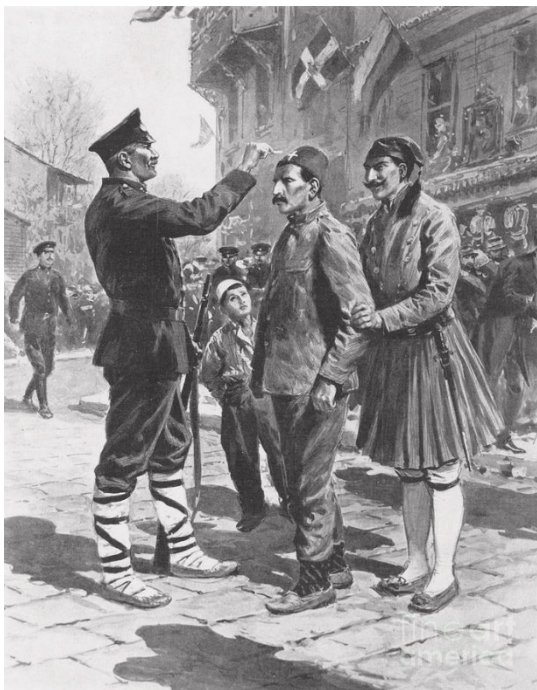
At the end of it all, our excuse will be that the poor nayers and brayers, conveyers of fat are separate from men in life's pyramid.

We find them strange and in chains they may serve our designs.





For the world is  
the Balkans:  
a clash of the clans,  
each eager to build on  
the lands it expands  
whenever it can,  
as the blunders of foes  
open doors as the  
poor and weak nations  
implode.



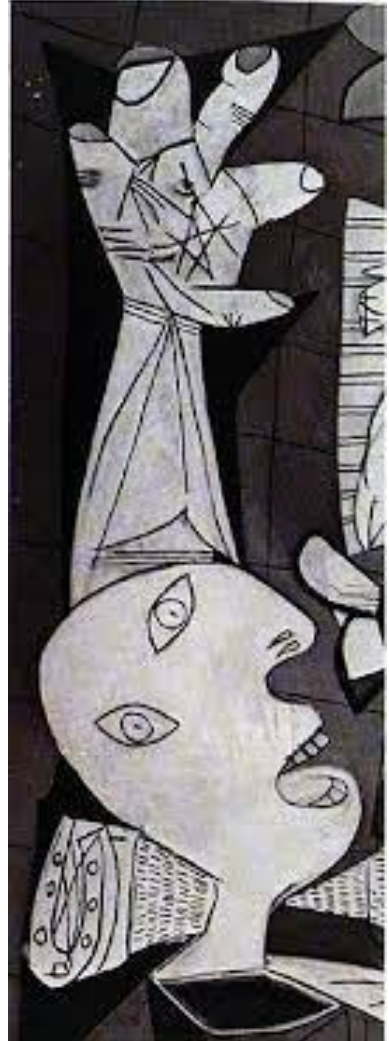
And the beasts, we've concluded, are nothing but  
lunch:

just a frightening,  
unsightly,  
delectable bunch.

So what if we burn  
a dumb monkey alive  
as a means for  
the genes of our  
queens to survive?



Exploitation, invasion are life at its core.  
It's strife and the poor are blights  
And the war is good and the more  
They cudgel the whore  
The greater the score for  
Winners who store  
Goods for themselves  
And plunder the shelves  
And cling to the helms  
To bludgeon the dumb  
And the bum in the slum  
With whiskey and rum  
In a cup with a chum  
Who savor the crumbs  
Of the dead and the bread  
That they slather him on.  
They batter the fawn.  
They're clever to pawn  
Off her leather, to tether  
The weathered and fettered  
And feathered of beasts they butcher for meat  
In a marvelous feat as a savory treat.



**“But I’m nothing like  
Nietzsche!”  
the good liberal cries,  
“That bellicose brutish  
base booster of lies.”**



**For I defied Mussolini when he kidnapped my boy**



**And I stuck it to  
Johnson when he  
leveled Hanoi  
and conscripted  
my brother into  
hunting down reds  
while the  
country club crawlers quaffed cocktails in bed.**

**I made plans with Mandela from dusk until dawn  
And was pummeled by day till apartheid was gone.  
And wherever else tyrants have struck a good lad  
There, too, was I struck by a truculent cad.**

But who still believes the aggrieved are above all the shooting and looting that their captors once loved?

Young Germans were starved by the Allies, converged with old Eichmann to liken the Jews to a scourge on the great.



And the State of our people was born for Kahane to scorn all the Arabs as foreign, a cancer, a thorn in

our side. “Never mourn their demise,” he advised.

“They just lie,” he would warn.

Like the Tutsi once snatched from their families who then rushed to ravage the Hutu like the Hutu did them, or Albanians killing good Serbs on the spot, as revenge for the men whom Milosevic shot.





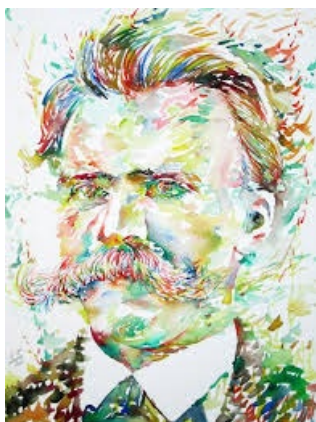


**“It’s nature,” they said, “if X can kill Y then Y is quite free to kill Z” as the guy whom this Nietzsche deplored as a nothing, a means to an end as we wend our way up to the top**





**Of the heap upon sheep, upon pigs that we chop  
upon geese that we choke, upon cows that we pop  
in the head till they're dead like they're nothing  
but sticks as we smash them on bricks  
and call ourselves great.**



**Which could only be true if  
Nietzsche was straight  
in his thought, but if not,  
and it's wrong to beat blue  
a man who's different from us,  
then this killing's wrong, too.**

Dayton, Ohio, August 7, 1865.

To my old Master, Colonel P. H. Anderson,  
Big Spring, Tennessee.



*Sir: I got your letter, and was glad to find that you had not forgotten Jourdon, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again. Here I draw my wages every Saturday night; but in Tennessee there was never any pay-day for the negroes any more than for the horses and cows. As to my freedom, which you say I can have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free papers in 1864. I served you faithfully for thirty-two years, and Mandy twenty years. At \$25 a month for me, and \$2 a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to \$11,680. Add to this the interest for the time our wages have been kept back, and deduct what you paid for our clothing, and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to. Please send the money by Adams Express, in care of V. Winters, Esq., Dayton, Ohio.*

*From your old servant,  
Jourdon Anderson*

HB.  
**ONWARD TO VICTORY!**



I. H. DICKERSON.



HEADQUARTERS OF THE



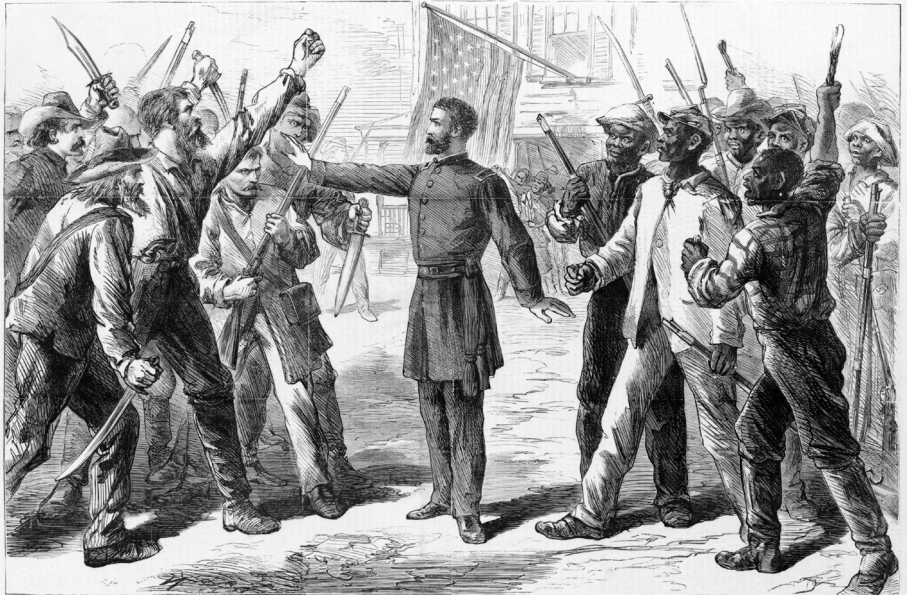
MRS. CALLIE HOUSE.

**Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty & Pension Association**

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

## *Explaining Reparations to the Anti-Tax Crowd*

November 4, 2013



Some libertarians believe it's "theft" to tax an estate passed down from one generation to the next. The "death tax" takes away hard-earned bucks that industrious people intended for their descendants to inherit. As one editorial put it, "People should not be punished because they work hard, become successful and want to pass on the fruits of their labor, or even their ancestors' labor, to their children."

It's a sentiment we can all appreciate:  
 let people enjoy the fruits of their ancestors' labor.

131  
Record for Henry Somers.  
 Date and No. of Application, Oct. 8, 1867  
 Name of Master, Raised in Fayette Co.  
 Name of Mistress, Kentucky: <sup>Christina</sup>  
 Plantation, <sup>It has been here about 4000.</sup>  
 Height and Complexion, <sup>between Dark Brown</sup>  
~~Black Shirley~~ <sup>Married</sup> ~~Married~~ <sup>Wife Rhody Brock die</sup>  
 Father or Mother? <sup>in Ky. 5 yrs before war</sup>  
 Name of Children, <sup>Wesley (19) + Maria (18) + Mary Frances</sup>  
 Regiment and Company, <sup>2nd Light Art 13th St.</sup>  
 Place of Birth, On Rappahannock Va.  
 Residence, At Frank Tyler's - Deal St. near Hickman St.  
 Occupation, Cooking  
 REMARKS, <sup>was sold from Fayette Co. in Kentucky to Smith</sup>  
<sup>Walter's mother is in Va. heard from Walter about</sup>  
<sup>2 months ago. He was in Washington a year ago.</sup>  
<sup>Pros - Don't know names - Sister - Don't know name.</sup>  
<sup>Somers was sold from Va. when 5 yrs old - Don't</sup>  
<sup>remember name.</sup>  
 signature, Henry <sup>Sr.</sup> Somers  
 mark

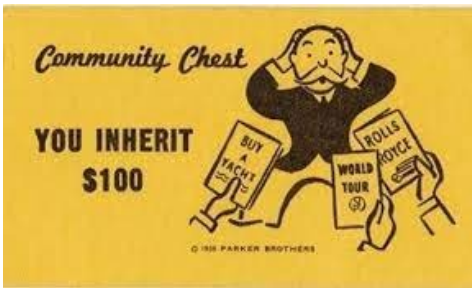
Free-market  
 economists railed  
 against the 1964  
 Civil Rights Act  
 for "violating  
 economic privacy,"  
 but they ignored  
 the demand that  
 descendants of the  
 enslaved be  
 compensated for

centuries of their ancestors' forced labor.

One estimate settles on an  
 accumulated debt of \$97 trillion,  
 based on 222,505,049 hours of  
 forced labor between 1619 and  
 1865, compounded at 6% interest  
 through 1993.





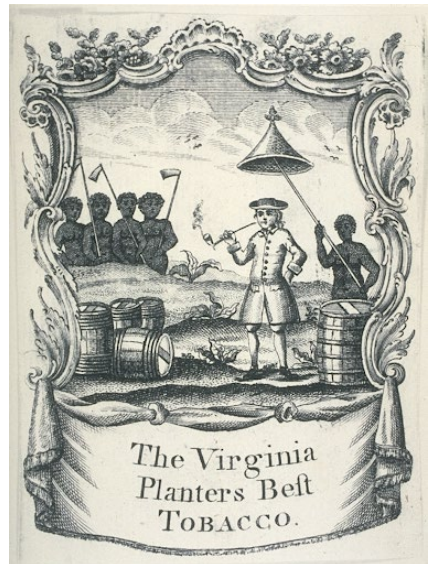


Interestingly, we never hear the “let my family keep what it earns” crowd call for the restitution of trillions

of dollars to slave-descended African-Americans.

If we declare that everyone deserves everything for which their ancestors labored, then we must not only allow Bill Gates to pass down his wealth to his descendants, but we must fully compensate the descendants of slaves whose wealth was stolen from them. Corporations with a role in slavery, like JP Morgan and Wachovia, will have to pitch in millions of dollars for this project.

The US government, which itself used slave labor to construct the Capitol, White House, and other government buildings, will be liable for billions more.



We could start by paying people for the economic harms afflicted by the Black Codes. We will be obligated to pay off the descendants of African-American WWII veterans who were denied bank loans and saw their claims for GI Bill benefits denied by the US Department of Veterans Affairs at a time when the white middle-class was soaring to prosperity.



The anti-“death tax” crowd might protest that no living American was either enslaved or owned

slaves. That’s true, but coming from them, the point is irrelevant. If we’re not willing to hold people financially accountable for the wrongs from which their ancestors benefited, then why should we reward those same people with the money their ancestors made? In apportioning wealth, the two propositions must go hand-in-hand—we either consider the economic work of people’s ancestors, or we don’t.

## *The Creation of 'Black Crime'*

November 23, 2013

The laziest pundits in this country would have us believe that there are two types of crime: crime and black crime. Michael Savage and Bill O'Reilly



and Bernard Goldberg and Colin Flaherty and Thomas Sowell and others insist that black crimes committed against white people apparently require a special type of repudiation.

What's the difference between a crime and a black crime? Simple. A crime reflects a moral failing of the individual who commits it, whereas a black crime reveals a moral failing of the entire Black community.

Mainstream acceptance of this distinction means that more than 49,936 individual white people can commit murder between 2000 and 2010 in the United States







Conversely, when a black crime is committed, Bill O'Reilly takes the opportunity to enumerate for Black people all of the things they're doing wrong.

He contends that it “goes back to an alienation of young black men in this country for a number of reasons, but primarily they're angry that they didn't have a family and their father abandoned them” and that “they're sold a bill of goods by the civil rights people—that white society is at fault—that because you're unhappy, it's the whites doing it to you.”

Never mind that no more than 0.017% of black children in fatherless homes have participated in one of these “wilding” crimes and that only about 0.7% of African-Americans violently attack a white person each year. For some reason, pundits still warn us that

“this thing could really get out of control” and that folks pushing for racial equality are actually provoking feral black-on-white hatred.

Bernard Goldberg loves to argue that if white people were committing the crimes that black people commit so frequently, “there would be an outcry among the media.” Does such a widespread anti-white bias really exist though? If it

did, then every arrest of a young white male drunk driver would spark a national discussion



about how “young white Americans” are being neglected by their parents and brainwashed by their leaders to disrespect the laws of our land. Such claims would be corroborated with real statistics proving that white adolescents are more likely to drive drunk than their black counterparts. For good measure, some pundits would probably mention the fact that “white students are more than twice as

likely as non-white students to use illicit drugs including marijuana and ecstasy,” and for that reason, are in dire need of “better role models.”



We can start talking about a media bias against whites once major news outlets make a habit out of dissecting “white crime.” Until then, let’s not lose sight of the real bias in the media.

Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State* (1882)



*I reverse the phrase of Voltaire, and say that, if God really existed, it would be necessary to abolish him. We ask nothing better than to see men endowed with great knowledge, great experience, great minds, and, above all, great hearts, exercise a natural and legitimate influence, freely accepted, and never imposed in the name of any official authority, celestial or terrestrial.*

*If God entire could find lodgment in each man, then each man would be God. We should have an immense quantity of Gods, each limited by all the others and yet none the less infinite. In the midst of this state of barbarism and animal brutality, these divine particles, human souls, retain as it were a vague remembrance of their primitive divinity, and are irresistibly drawn towards their whole; they seek each other, they seek their whole. It is Divinity itself, scattered and lost in the natural world, which looks for itself in men, and it is so demolished by this multitude of human prisons in which it finds itself strewn.*

## *Breaking Away: On the Defense of Government*

June 10, 2016

According to some, the use of government services justifies citizens' obligations. By attending government schools, walking on government sidewalks, and calling 911, citizens "tacitly agree" to taxation, jury duty, and military registration. Or so the argument goes.



But this is not how political obligations usually work. On tax day, the State does not ask how frequently we use its services. A woman who never calls the fire department still must subsidize it. A man without children still must pay for government schools. Citizens who vote for losing candidates, or none at all,

still have obligations. When a democratic government requires your obedience, it does not care whether you voted for the obligation—only that *someone* did.

The government is not an ordinary waiter who submits a bill for services rendered. Instead, the government is a “waiter” who shows up at our homes and declares, “I am here to offer you a meal. You may accept the meal or refuse the meal, but I demand compensation no matter what.”



*“Stick to the specials and no one gets hurt.”*

Some proponents of the State respond that citizens incur obligations because we receive State assistance whether we like it or not. The fire department keeps fires from spreading to our homes. The military deters foreigners from invading. The police deter thieves from robbing us.



In this view, the State is like a fairy godmother who, with or without our permission, painlessly cures our illnesses while we sleep.







Another response is that we consent to State power when we choose to live in the “government’s” territory. But why should we concede that the US government legitimately owns all the land from New York to San Francisco or that the Turkish State rightfully possesses every natural resource from Bodrum to Kars?

This is a stretch of the Statist imagination, echoing Sir Robert Filmer’s contention that God granted exclusive dominion to the world’s kings, that governments simply “get” to own vast swaths of the earth.

**At its core, the State is not an instrument of dialogue. In disputes, it does not agree to disagree. No, the state is a monopoly on violence. If not for the threat of violence, government decrees would just be suggestions. Laws are laws and orders are orders because their promulgators back them up with force.**



**Breaking away: We can begin by fighting laws against free association. Protest the government's war on drugs, intrusion into homeless communities, bans on loose cigarette sales, bans on sex work, fare evasion crackdowns, civil asset forfeiture, e-cigarette regulations, anti-panhandling ordinances, sit-lie ordinances, and the glut of other statutes that police**



use to accost nonviolent people. As laws disappear, so will opportunities for police brutality.

Second, continue policing the police by recording their public

encounters. Neighbors may even take a cue from the Black Panthers by forming independent community associations to patrol policed streets. Although these processes will not strip the government of its monopoly on force, they will discourage assaults on civilians.

Third, wean Americans off the police by using alternative methods of dispute resolution when possible. Independent community associations may help here as well. Start by urging people in domestic discord, adolescent squabbles, and other low-level



conflicts to call conciliators rather than 911. Unarmed third parties can de-escalate

conflicts that heavily armed police might otherwise escalate.

If people are inclined to establish independent systems of governance, supporters of free association should defend their right to try. If it was legitimate for beleaguered subjects to separate from Britain in the 18th century, then it is legitimate for beleaguered subjects to separate from the United States in the 21st century.

Finally, embrace nonaggression and respect as both ends and means.



Everyday civility advances the cause of free societies by discrediting the myth that we need State police to keep the peace.

## *The Left-Libertarian Balancing Act*

October 6, 2016

Left-libertarians understand that interpersonal aggression is not the only impediment to liberty.

Hunger, thirst, illness, heat, and cold have insidious ways of “aggressing” against people and limiting human maneuvering as well.

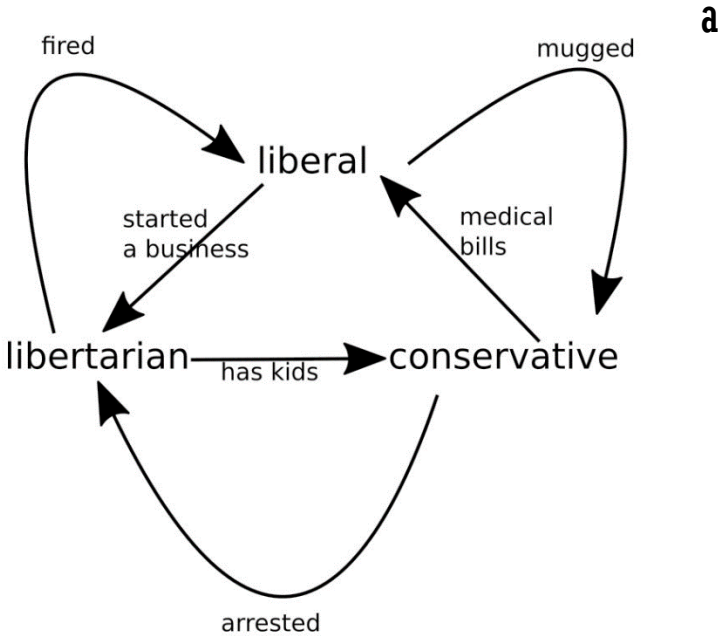


Like mainstream

leftists, left-libertarians fight to achieve “freedom from want.” Like mainstream libertarians, left-libertarians reject statist policies that intensify human aggression against other humans.

But left-libertarians bemoan two significant omissions in mainstream leftism and libertarianism. For their part, many American leftists say too little about state aggression against civilians. Although they condemn

government for bombing civilians abroad and locking up nonviolent drug offenders at home, they seem to ignore the root of the problem: namely, that governments arrogate to themselves the unique “right” to seize civilians’ bodies and property at the point of



gun. Thus, such aggressive State acts as taxation very often get a free pass from leftists.

Meanwhile, libertarians understand the dangers of government. Indeed, most of their political activity centers on limiting (or outright abolishing) governmental action. But in basing their entire philosophy on this non-aggression principle, classical

libertarians tolerate the possibility of mass suffering in their desired society.

We left-libertarians stick ourselves in the middle. This is a difficult political balancing act. Some become “bleeding-heart libertarians,” small-government advocates who support only enough governmental intervention to shield people from the pain of dire poverty. Others become free-market anarchists, confident that human altruism and totally free markets can deliver all necessary goods to deprived people. Other left-libertarians admit to temporary agnosticism, waiting to see whether non-state organizations are adequately equipped to fulfill every human need in the 21st century.



It would be easy enough for us to abandon this uneasy position by blending into mainstream leftism or libertarianism. But left-libertarians proudly occupy the middle. We understand, as libertarians do, that the coercive State subordination of one human being to

another obstructs human freedom. We also understand, as leftists do, that freedom is a vacuous concept if ostensibly “free” people lack the food, clothing, shelter, and medicine necessary to stave off aggression from nature.

Although these positions are bound to provoke accusations of inconsistency, left-libertarianism is actually one of the most consistent political outlooks. We fight for human freedom, whatever its enemies.





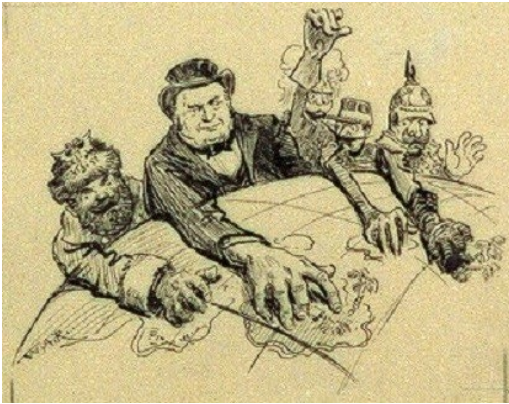


## ***The Irony of Colonial Apologetics* February 17, 2015**

As some formerly colonized countries in Sub-Saharan Africa still grapple with resource disputes and sectarian violence, it is hardly unusual to hear people wonder aloud whether colonialism was actually a solution, not a problem, for the non-Western world. Some pontificators eventually conclude that, yes, “almost all of sub-Saharan Africa...[was] better governed by Europeans” and that formerly colonized countries are themselves to blame for favoring an anti-market “grievance culture” over colonialism’s free market values.

Daniel Kruger writes that “Africa’s problem today is not the after-effects of colonialism” but rather that many Western universities’ African alumni returned home committed to “nationalisation and big government.” Keith Windschuttle tells us to take comfort in the fact that colonialism actually imparted to colonized people another valuable gift: ideas of “liberal democratic government” and “British concepts of sovereignty and the rule of law.”

These colonial apologetics are not merely wrongheaded and borderline sadistic— they are painfully ironic. For while they praise colonialism’s diffusion of liberal values throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, they willfully ignore the fact that colonial precepts, when actually enacted, wreaked illiberal havoc most places they went. Moreover, when laissez-faire capitalists like Kruger contend that the West has applied “the values of liberty... most successfully, and grown rich on the proceeds,” they forget that Western colonialism was chock-full of generous government benefits for European settlers, stratospheric militarization and slavery, and governmental subversion of native African economies.



These economic points are worth repeating because, for one, they discredit the idea that Sub-Saharan Africans were simply waiting around for European empires to save them from destitution. In reality, groups like the

Khoi were already herding Nguni cattle and making use of their land when 17th century Europeans settled the Cape. West Africans produced and sold palm oil in the 1800s, and the Herero of Namibia, widely renowned for their animal husbandry, economically outpaced their German occupiers in South-West Africa all throughout the 1880s. In contrast, the French, British, and German colonists often made their mark in Sub-Saharan Africa by using “scorched earth” to incinerate civilian villages and agricultural resources.

Colonialism's economic realities are also worth noting when colonialists are today remembered as self-reliant individualists. In truth, colonial enterprises were welfare cesspools replete with military protection, relocation subsidies, and exceedingly cheap land for European settlers. The German government, for instance, paid for German women's tickets to South-West Africa. The British violently



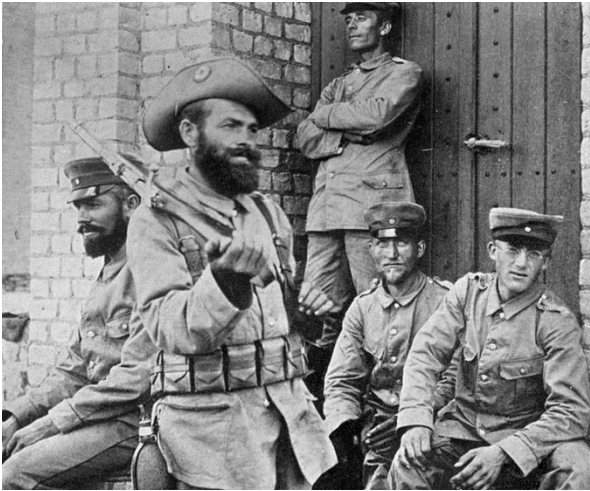
expropriated hundreds of acres of Kenyan land and then gave it to European farmers for free. The Portuguese bestowed tens of thousands of acres to families like the Paiva, a clan whose sugar plantation spanned over 45,000 acres in Mozambique. The

Belgians' breathtakingly lazy and barbaric king, Leopold II, established vast swaths of the Congo as his own private property.

But all of these unearned goodies pale in comparison to the colonialists' exploitation of native slave labor to build settler communities. The erection of Windhoek's extant parliament building, an ostensible "gift" from the Western world, was one such project foisted on the backs of German-owned African slaves. Private German companies' construction of Namibian railways, settler homes, and renovated docks in Lüderitz was also slave-based. The colonial Belgians and French both had similar ideas, enlisting more than

68,000 colonized Africans to build railroads in the Belgian Congo and well over 18,000 more to “modernize” the French colonies. The Portuguese put forced laborers to work on cocoa plantations in the 1920s, and even the “anti-slavery” British compelled natives to work in Kenya. Needless to say, these colonial markets were many things—oppressive, lethal, coercive—but “free” they were not.

The irony does not end there though; colonial apologists who evangelize for classical liberalism lament the demise of a settler movement premised not only on statist economics but also on distinctly illiberal conceptions of human rights. When Captain Curt



von Francois ventured to South-West Africa in 1889 to secure German control of the region, he initiated a horrific massacre bearing no signs whatever of human rights awareness. Impoverished and

indebted, the Herero began sparring en masse with their German overseers in 1904 and were eventually forced into the Omaheke desert to die of thirst. After the government in Berlin ordered the new General Lothar Von Trotha to end his onslaught against the natives, the Germans took the Herero out of the desert and forced them into concentration camps. By the end of it all, the German colonialists had exterminated more than 60,000 Herero and 10,000 Nama in order to expand the German homeland.

The French, the Portuguese, the Belgians, and the oft-cited British were not much better. As mainstream colonial apologists like Dennis Prager painstakingly assemble laudations for the British Empire's global dispersal of liberal values, they avoid the fact that the British interned hundreds of thousands of Kikuyu Kenyans in the 1950s, raped innocent prisoners and "cut off inmates' ears and fingers and



gouged out their eyes. They dragged people behind Land Rovers until their bodies disintegrated." The British authorities were by that point masters of the internment business, having led over 20,000 incarcerated Boers and approximately 13,000 black civilians to their deaths during the Second Boer War.

When colonial apologists acknowledge that these facts are facts, they frequently reply that colonialism, however inhumane, was nonetheless preferable to

the non-colonial alternatives of despotism, slavery, and savage warfare. If the colonialists had stayed in business longer, their logic goes, Sub-Saharan African tribes would not have reverted to their inferior, pre-colonial doctrines of authoritarianism.



But reality tells a distinctly different story. Authoritarian mechanisms like concentration camps did not exist in Sub-Saharan Africa until the British brought them to South Africa, nor did African genocide exist until the Germans initiated it in Namibia. The Herero leadership, revealing a human rights doctrine miles more evolved than that of Namibia's colonizers, condemned Germany's indiscriminate attacks and took great pains to avoid killing women, children, and other civilians during the anti-German rebellion.

Nama Chief Hendrik Witbooi similarly took issue with German military tactics, writing that it did not behoove a purportedly "civilized nation" to kill noncombatants so recklessly. Tyranny

and slavery certainly existed in Africa before colonization, but the colonialists, however rhetorically committed to emancipation, hardly improved anything when they themselves mutilated people's bodies and commandeered African slaves to build lavish communities. Though an excuse for colonization, humanitarianism usually was not a colonial product.



Sub-Saharan Africa faces a wide set of issues in many different places for many different reasons, but at least one thing can be said of the aggregate region: its problem is not that the “liberal, free market” values of European colonialism have abated. In the first place, colonialism was a statist movement, meaning that there never were any liberal or free market colonial values to abate; in the second place, the actual colonial values of racism, greed and violence were great detriments to Sub-Saharan Africa, destroying civilian families, psychology and infrastructure.

All of which is to say that colonial apologists, blissfully unaware of their ideology’s sick irony, should take a closer look at their own values and history before insinuating that an extension of illiberal colonialism would have done wonders for the rest of the world.





*Against Misanthropy* (2011)



**I hate all sorts of people  
but misanthropes most.  
They peck as my parasites,  
and I cringe as their host**



as they pollute  
the clean earth's  
most viable air  
and I inhale to endure  
the last round of despair.

**The human-hater's world  
is one of  
amoral acidity,  
diffuse in  
civility  
and colossal  
iniquities**



**the most searing of which  
is the depression contagion.**



**The jaded man spawns  
a despondency game,  
a dystopian sty of  
pigs squealing in pain.  
Wallowing in stress  
of equivalent  
proportions,  
manufacturing force  
with psychological distortions.**



# PUBLICK NOTICE

*The Observacion of CHRISTMAS having been deemed  
a Sacrilege, the exchanging of Gifts and Greetings,  
dressing in Fine Clothing, Feasting and similar  
Satanical Practices are hereby*

## FORBIDDEN

*with the Offender liable to a Fine of FIVE SHILLINGS*

**If we invest all our might  
in a singular fashion,  
we'll lose all our traction  
and swarm to inaction  
when we realize at once  
that the disciples are flawed  
and when they smile and nod,  
they're still hurting for God**

**An empath is sickened  
by the person he helps**



**but  
continues on  
aiding  
in spite of  
himself.**

**Don't frame the  
debate  
as one jerk  
versus the other,  
between the  
arsonist son  
and his  
tyrannical mother.**





**A rotten lot we may be,  
but apathy entrenches us  
for the sick thing puts  
big dents in us,  
then dispenses us  
to senselessness.**

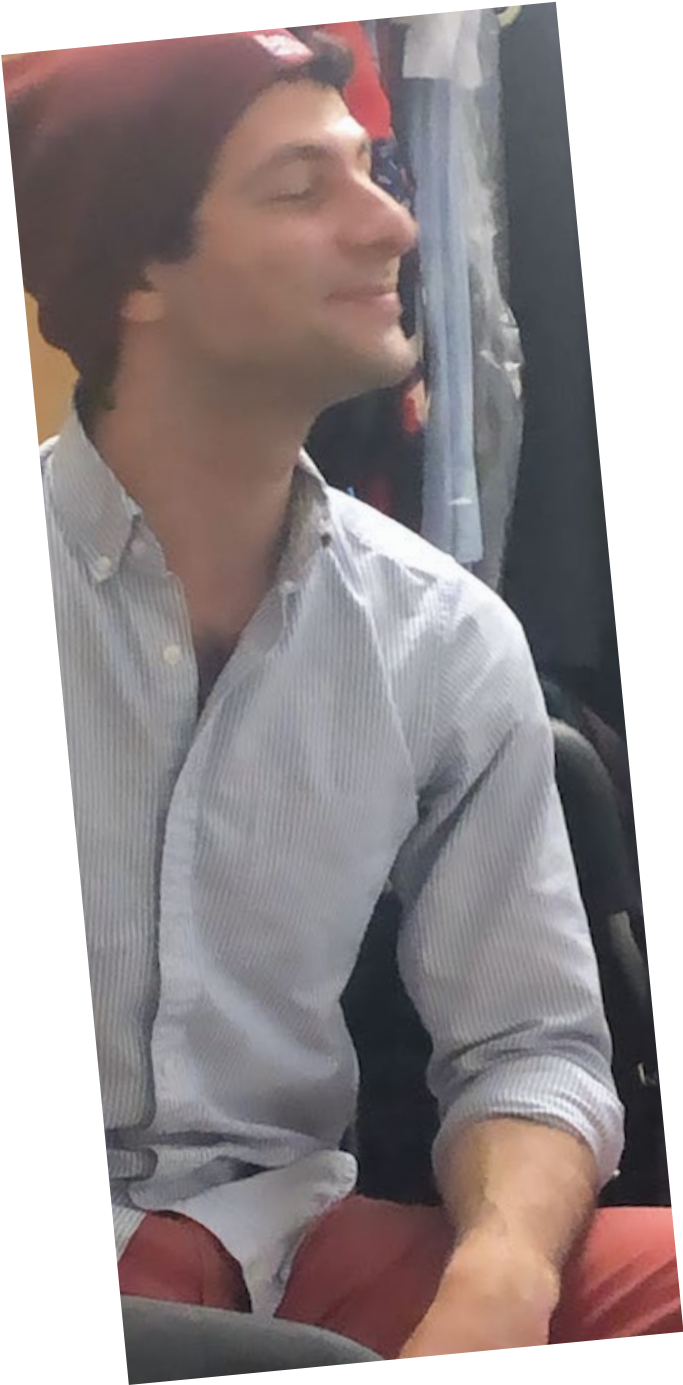


**The antidotes to misanthropy  
are comity and comedy  
that hush up the cacophony  
of hatred and sophistry.**



**We prevent the spread of venom  
with the fortress that's around us,  
behind which we spread bouts of joy  
and levity that grounds us.**





## *Effective Altruists as Anarchist Subversives*

Nov. 5, 2020

Most Effective Altruists don't look like anarchists. The latter have a (charmingly) grungy flavor, the aura of half-dazed rebels perennially stumbling their way out of Woodstock reunions. By contrast, Effective Altruists have the trappings of recent MIT and Tufts graduates, lanky tech nerds and philosophy majors with an incomprehensible infatuation with "Pi Day" and something called "preference utilitarianism." But Effective Altruism, as a movement inviting us "to do the most good," contains the seeds of something far more radical than its adherents may suggest. Done right, Effective Altruism



can add to the anti-authoritarian coalition that we need to break up the unholy marriage of materialism, authoritarian government, and corporate power. Granted, Effective Altruism (EA) does not have its roots in Kropotkin or Goldman. EAs are more likely to take their inspiration from Peter Singer, a

utilitarian philosopher who advises his followers to design their lives with an eye to maximizing the amount of happiness that they produce in the world. To live morally, says Singer, those of us with money to spare should donate to charities that relieve suffering at the lowest cost possible. While this might sound like a relatively uncontroversial instruction, Singer goes further than most; as he sees it, even our seemingly benign purchase of a coffee this morning was probably

morally wrong if the dollars expended to that end could have helped prevent the transmission of malaria in the Global South.



Although Singer's position may strike us as extreme, his EA followers—often working within existing political and economic structures to address poverty—tend not to come off as fiery

agitators. Non-EAs, as a consequence, tend not to view EAs as radicals. But in fact, there is room to interpret EA, in both its actual and its ideal forms, as something quite radical indeed. Understood properly, EAs can be downright anarchistic in the best ways possible: supportive of stateless routes to justice; hostile to immoral laws; and averse to the hoarding of wealth and the concomitant contempt for poor people that plague our society. Building on that radical foundation, EAs could very well become the subversives of authoritarians' worst nightmares.

Lacking non-anarchists' knee-jerk reliance on and deference to the state as a vehicle of moral change, the diehard EA necessarily has an equivocal relationship with the law. On the one hand, the EA is prepared to obey those laws—tax laws, for example—that reliably redistribute goods from the comfortable to the needy. On the other hand, the EA is prepared to violate laws that impede the promotion of happiness. That is why, as Peter Unger has argued, stealing from the rich to benefit the poor should not be completely off the table.

Refusing to pay taxes for a chaos-inducing war may make sense as well, assuming that any such refusal could actually help grind the war machine to a halt.



By demonstrating that one can be happy while consuming modestly, in other words, the EA dilutes the potency of a culture that places a premium on getting rich and consuming extravagantly. Insofar as that subversion of a wealth-obsessed culture is an authentic anarchist project, EA is indeed moving the anarchist ball forward.

None of this is to say that EA, in its current

form, will be quite radical enough for radicals' taste. To the extent that EAs resignedly treat our neoliberal economic arrangement as an immovable backdrop against which our benevolent acts must forever take place, EAs are insufficiently committed to getting at the roots of the poverty problem. But no matter. With the right sort of prodding and cultivation, EA could very well become a radical force to be reckoned with. For that reason, we ought to give it a chance.

# The anti-natalist abyss

Tommy's earliest work, like his high-school piece *Against Misanthropy*, was joyful, even defiant, against the demons of depression.

As he grew up, he identified with Effective Altruism, the pan-utilitarianism associated with vegan thinkers like Peter Singer. But the “greatest good for the greatest number,” applied to all sentient creation, had a hidden downside. It disabled Tommy's humanist resistance to despair. It led Tommy toward the end of his life to dark “anti-natalist” thinkers like David Benatar. Benatar argues that human life inflicts so much suffering, on humans as well as all other species, that humanity should stop procreating and become voluntarily extinct. This anti-humanist version of utilitarianism became the intellectual counterpart of Tommy's depression.

*Each one of us was harmed by being brought into existence. That harm is not negligible, because the quality of even the best lives is very bad—and considerably worse than most people recognize it to be. Although it is obviously too late to prevent our own existence, it is not too late to prevent the existence of future possible people.*

- David Benatar, *Better Never to Have Been:*

*The Harm of Coming into Existence*

*Tommy asked me once whether I thought human joy outweighed human suffering. It was unrelated to our conversation at the time, and I thought little of it. Eventually, we pivoted to discussing the morality of having children, but I've thought about that moment a lot over the last couple of weeks. - Law school classmate*

## From Tommy's *The Procreative Gamble* (Sept. 1, 2020)

Our intuition that a person could be harmed by entering existence probably stems from our sense that nonexistence is a neutral psychological state, such that entering a torturous conscious existence constitutes a harmful “step down.”

There is a reason to doubt the moral permissibility of procreation: namely, that the possible joys of existence are less intense than are the possible harms.



We feel that the worst pains that humans experience are more intense than are the greatest joys that humans experience. If this asymmetry between the intensity of pains and the intensity of joys does indeed exist, then we have a reason to disfavor procreation.



*Sleep is good, death is better; but of course, the best would be never to have been born at all.* - David Benatar, quoting Heinrich Heine

*And by a sleep to say we end  
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to.*

# Eulogy for Tommy

April 3, 2021 - Michael Anderson

Losing to Tommy at Boggle was almost a spiritual experience. He spills out a grid of random letters, and



you have to find some kind of meaning in it. This has religious overtones, seeking

the Word in the Void. And you struggle to pick out words, “grin,” “grim,” because this is how Western liberals have been taught to think, to impose our rational minds on the chaos.

But Tommy goes into a fugue state. “Grind, grinder, migrate, migration, immigrant, immigration” And after three minutes you’ve got five words and Tommy’s got *fifty*. And he’s smiling behind his hand, the way ballplayers talk behind their gloves, because he just showed you how differently he thinks. See, Tommy didn’t force his mind into the world, he breathed the world in, like he was taking dictation from God.



Bakunin says that if there were a God who sends angels to the earth, they wouldn't come as priests or policemen, no, we would see them as fortunetellers, as magicians.

You're going to hear the word "magical" a lot today. This is not just happy-talk, this is a very specific truth about Tommy, his gift of conjuring, breathing the



world in and breathing it out as love. He had his mother's grace and his father's joyful ridiculousness, in a home where children performed skits and made up words and asked impertinent questions, he grew up in this magical kind of politics, if I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution.

And as he grew up, Tommy took the lesson of his bar mitzvah seriously, that when a boy becomes a man God expects him to take the love he has been given and pour it back into the world.

See, the hardest part of Tommy's death is that he wasn't self-destructive, not at all. He loved the world, with the same unfiltered love he got from his family and his friends.

But the world doesn't necessarily deserve our love, it's full of oppression and murder and lies. Most of us buffer ourselves from it, we compartmentalize, with hypocrisy and selfishness. You and I might read about the horror of factory farming, baby calves crying out for their mothers, about sentient beings whose entire lives are agony just so we

can devour them, and we might say "tsk tsk, I shall vote to reform that practice," but Tommy *felt* it, like a hand over a flame. We read about Yemeni schoolgirls maimed by drones, on page 12 of the *New York Times*, and

we might say "I object to that foreign policy," but Tommy *felt* it as much as if it was his own sisters, all the more because he couldn't save them.



And if we all now feel unbearable agony that we couldn't save our loved one from this heartbreaking end, then perhaps we are discovering how Tommy felt about the world. All he wanted was a world where we don't have to imprison and murder and devour each other. And when you put it that way, it doesn't seem like too much to ask.



Tommy left a huge digital footprint, a hundred essays in forums like the Center for a Stateless Society. My favorite is *The Left Libertarian Balancing Act*. Now, “left libertarian” is a polite phrase that you use when you realize that you're an *anarchist* but you don't want your parents to freak out about it. Tommy talks about how hard it is to share this label with people who just don't care about the world. If only Tommy



had been a selfish libertarian, he could have quoted Ayn Rand and complained about the income tax, then he never would have felt any pain, because he never would have felt anyone else's.



If only he'd been the kind of anarchist who hated the world, he could have wrapped his heart in barbed wire, worn scorn and resentment like a leather jacket. See, it's easy to be a rebel if you don't try to heal the world, the way Tommy tried.

Harvard Law School is a hell of a place if you don't believe in authority. You learn about property and contract and the criminal law, and you start to realize this has less to do with justice than it does power.

And all the old white men in their long black robes are whispering from their portraits: "soon you will become one of us, just submit." It's hard to hold on to a radical truth while you're being assimilated by the Borg.



When Tommy lived with us his first year, he kept his pain in secret but I knew what it was, his dad and I lived through this, when we were lonely law student radicals in Reagan's 1984, Jamie and I kept each other alive. We weren't even trying to change the world, just trying to keep the world from changing us. And I wish I could have saved Tommy the way his dad saved me, back in the day.

To see the promise of human freedom can be deeply depressing, when you're stuck in a world full of lies.



“What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! In action how like an angel! The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!” But Hamlet says to his friends “I have of late- but

wherefore I know not- lost all my mirth.” Or as Tommy would say, “it’s hard to be human.” I wish I could have convinced him, survival is an act of defiance, don’t let the bastards grind you down, bro, but he was too private, too polite, too unwilling to pollute his surroundings, to breathe his pain out.

**A hundred years from now they will know about**



**Tommy, they will have an intellectual hologram of who he was and what he thought, they will have algorithms that track how all of us bent toward the light because we knew him.**

**They will say he was a citizen of the future, the way Emma Goldman was 8000 years ahead of her time, the way Frederick Douglass or his namesake Thomas Paine had voices that speak from a liberated future, not to the barbaric time they were born in. Because if there is a future at all, it will be a place Tommy would feel at home in. A place of joy and laughter, more love, less murder, more freedom, less State.**

**In that kind of future they will say here was a soul that belonged to us: Thomas Bloom Raskin, *presente*, the year 2020 did not deserve him.**

**But I still want to say, selfishly, from this dark time: wish you were here, sweet boy, wish you were here.**





# Tommy Raskin Videos



*A Note on Nietzsche*

June 25, 2020

*Animal Rights:*

*A Debate between Walter  
Block and Tommy Raskin*

August 21, 2017



*Where War Begins*

September 2, 2017





*Justice for Animals?*  
with Democracy Summer  
August 10, 2018

*On Snobbery*  
September 17, 2014



Memorial Service  
April 3, 2021



