

5/4/2019



THE SQUIRREL'S NEST 2019

Terrence McGarty

Table of Contents

<i>Friday, May 3, 2019</i>	5
Morals, Politicians, and Facts	5
Microsoft and Control of Their Customer	9
<i>Wednesday, May 1, 2019</i>	10
What if Julius Caesar Survived?	10
<i>Monday, April 29, 2019</i>	10
Universal Healthcare and Utter Nonsense	10
Russian Investigations by Congress: A Hundred Years Ago!	12
<i>Saturday, April 27, 2019</i>	25
Facebook Redux: I wrote this 10 Years Ago! It has just Gotten Worse.	25
<i>Friday, April 26, 2019</i>	26
Trust but Verify	26
<i>Wednesday, April 17, 2019</i>	27
More on Public Libraries	27
<i>Friday, April 12, 2019</i>	28
SAT, Politics, and a Dumb Test	28
<i>Wednesday, April 10, 2019</i>	29
Economists are Not Technologists	30
<i>Tuesday, April 9, 2019</i>	31
Exosomes, miRNA and Cancer	31
<i>Monday, April 8, 2019</i>	31
Academics, Charts, Presentations	31
<i>Sunday, April 7, 2019</i>	32
More Taxes	32
College Admissions	32
<i>Saturday, April 6, 2019</i>	33
Savings Bonds Anyone?	33
<i>Thursday, April 4, 2019</i>	34
Socialism: Over a Century	34
<i>Wednesday, April 3, 2019</i>	34
It Arrived; Now the Bill	35
UPS Redux	36
<i>Tuesday, April 2, 2019</i>	37
Other People's Money	37
Regulating the Internet	38
UPS and Its Business	39
Humanities, Universities and the Absurd	39
<i>Monday, April 1, 2019</i>	41
Social Justice, Paine and Others	41
<i>Sunday, March 31, 2019</i>	47
A Critique of Public Libraries	47
Rights, and their Loss	48
<i>Friday, March 22, 2019</i>	51
The Crow and the Sheep: Politicians	51
Treasury Spreads	51

Tuesday, March 19, 2019..... 52
On the one hand, on the other hand 52
LY6, PCa, Mets and Again..... 54
Tuesday, March 19, 2019..... 54
Federalist 68 - Just a Read (Again) 55
Monday, March 18, 2019..... 58
EHRs: A Remnant of Obamacare..... 58
Sunday, March 17, 2019..... 59
Happy St Pat's..... 59
Sunday, March 10, 2019..... 59
Connectors 59
Wednesday, March 6, 2019..... 60
Now This is Socialism!..... 60
Sunday, March 3, 2019..... 61
Dante and His Inferno 61
Monday, February 25, 2019 61
You Can't Make This Up 62
Sunday, February 24, 2019 62
Exosomes and Cancer: A New Paradigm?..... 62
Friday, February 22, 2019..... 67
Voting Rights in New Jersey? 67
Thursday, February 21, 2019 68
Well Said..... 68
Monday, February 18, 2019 69
Russia, the Internet, and Deja Vu 69
Generics 70
Thursday, February 14, 2019 72
The Passing of an Age..... 72
Friday, February 8, 2019..... 72
Told You So..... 72
Wednesday, February 6, 2019 73
New Jersey and Taxes..... 73
Saturday, February 2, 2019 74
Look Up! 74
Saturday, February 2, 2019..... 75
Fake News?..... 75
Friday, February 1, 2019..... 76
Medicare for All? 76
Monday, January 28, 2019 77
CBO and the Next Ten Years 77
Saturday, January 26, 2019..... 77
The Three Body Problem: Or Could AI Get us to the Moon and Back? 77
Sunday, January 20, 2019 80
And the Economists Keep Rolling On! 80
Saturday, January 19, 2019..... 81
Happy 100th!..... 81

Friday, January 18, 2019..... 81
If All You Have is a Hammer..... 82
Thursday, January 17, 2019 83
Microsoft At It Again?..... 83
Intellectual Dissonance 83
Wednesday, January 16, 2019 84
Yikes, Another Global Calamity 84
Tuesday, January 15, 2019..... 85
Rosa Redux..... 85
Sunday, January 13, 2019 86
Born In/On Staten Island 86
Sunday, January 13, 2019 87
Privacy? 87
Saturday, January 12, 2019..... 87
More on Rosa..... 87
Have we no Prisons, Have we no Jails?..... 89
Friday, January 11, 2019..... 89
I Am Spartacus! 89
Technology Transfer?..... 90
Thursday, January 10, 2019 91
MOOCS, Not The Smashing Success 91
Tuesday, January 8, 2019..... 93
Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transitions and Cancer..... 93
Sunday, January 6, 2019 104
Latest Book..... 104
Happy Epiphany 105
Wednesday, January 2, 2019..... 105
The Green Trojan Horse 105

Friday, May 3, 2019

Morals, Politicians, and Facts

It seems that from time to time we hear politicians call other politicians all matters of derogatory terms but at the bottom is when they call them immoral. I suspect that none have the slightest clue what the term moral means. Frankly neither do I, but at least I will admit it.

I examined my files to see how many documents contained the term moral. More than 4,000 files and when I checked the word was even used in an employee manual. I wondered what would have happened if we ever had to litigate that phrase.

As noted by de Tocqueville in commenting on his experience in America he states:

*Amongst these documents we shall notice, as especially characteristic, the code of laws promulgated by the little State of Connecticut in 1650. The legislators of Connecticut begin with the penal laws, and, strange to say, they borrow their provisions from the text of Holy Writ. "Whosoever shall worship any other God than the Lord," says the preamble of the Code, "shall surely be put to death." This is followed by ten or twelve enactments of the same kind, copied verbatim from the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Blasphemy, sorcery, adultery, and rape were punished with death; an outrage offered by a son to his parents was to be expiated by the same penalty. **The legislation of a rude and half-civilized people was thus applied to an enlightened and moral community.** The consequence was that the punishment of death was never more frequently prescribed by the statute, and never more rarely enforced towards the guilty.*

It seems that in this context the world moral came from what was considered as such from the then accepted translation of the Bible. Thus for a Protestant regime, Holy Writ, the Calvinistic document, was deemed the basis of all laws. In a sense it is very much akin to what one sees in the demands for Sharia Law in certain countries today. de Tocqueville continues¹[1]:

*The chief care of the legislators, in this body of penal laws, was the maintenance of orderly conduct and **good morals in the community**: they constantly invaded the domain of conscience, and there was scarcely a sin which was not subject to magisterial censure. The reader is aware of the rigor with which these laws punished rape and adultery; intercourse between unmarried persons was likewise severely repressed. The judge was empowered to inflict a pecuniary penalty, a whipping, or marriage on the misdemeanants; and if the records of the old courts of New Haven may be believed, prosecutions of this kind were not unfrequent. We find a sentence*

¹[1] de Tocqueville, Democracy in America.

bearing date the first of May, 1660, inflicting a fine and reprimand on a young woman who was accused of using improper language, and of allowing herself to be kissed.

Now one can assume that in Connecticut today these types of laws based upon a well-accepted moral code are neither extant nor if still on the books, enforced. However the newer laws have become profligate in controlling human behavior. Drug laws, gun laws, speech laws, "equality" laws, "privacy" laws all have exploded to name just a few. What was deemed immoral at the beginning is now protected behavior, and what was allowed before is often deemed illegal.

Thus if the basis of the first set of laws was morality as deemed as such by Holy Writ, what is the basis of the new laws?

Thus one should examine the meaning of "moral". For if all of our politicians are accusing others of immoral acts, are they speaking of those of 1660 or of the present day. What is basis of these moral acts? From whence does a moral act get defined as well as its opposite. Is it fair to say that murder is not moral but speaking askance to Congress, setting aside truth or falsity, is somehow classed in an equal manner?

We have the "Ten Commandments" A short list of dos and don'ts. I can't murder, can't steal, can't lie, can't honor a false god and can't do a bunch of other things. Then there are a few things I must do, such as honor the Sabbath. A simple list, easy to remember, fits well on two stone tablets even. I don't need all that Leviticus stuff, just the tablets. Seems good for three major religions but somehow we seemed to expand these.

Thus one may ask: What is the basis of moral law? A similar question could be: What is the basis of Natural Law? Finally: Are Moral Law and Natural Law the same, similar, independent of one another?

Pope John Paul II wrote²[2]:

*Although times change and knowledge increases, it is possible to discern a core of philosophical insight within the history of thought as a whole. Consider, for example, the principles of non-contradiction, finality and causality, as well as the concept of the person as a free and intelligent subject, with the capacity to know God, truth and goodness. **Consider as well certain fundamental moral norms which are shared by all.** These are among the indications that, beyond different schools of thought, there exists a body of knowledge which may be judged a **kind of spiritual heritage of humanity.** It is as if we had come upon an implicit philosophy, as a result of which all feel that they possess these principles, albeit in a general and unreflective way. Precisely because it is shared in some measure by all, this knowledge should serve as a kind of reference-point for the different philosophical schools. Once reason successfully intuits and formulates the first universal principles of being and correctly draws from them conclusions*

²[2] Fides et ratio To the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the relationship between Faith and Reason 1998.09.14

which are coherent both logically and ethically, then it may be called right reason or, as the ancients called it, orthós logos, recta ratio.

He asserts that there is a set of universally accepted moral norms. But if there exists such norms, and if all accept, even those who do not accept or even reject Holy Writ, then whence do these norms arrive and how can we find them. For if we were to assert the lack of moral behavior in a person, again what is our basis?

Now consider an interesting exchange between Copleston and Russell on the BBC3[3]:

C: Well, I brought in moral obligation because I think that one can approach the question of God's existence in that way. The vast majority of the human race will make, and always have made, some distinction between right and wrong. The vast majority I think has some consciousness of an obligation in the moral sphere. It's my opinion that the perception of values and the consciousness of moral law and obligation are best explained through the hypothesis of a transcendent ground of value and of an author of the moral law. I do mean by "author of the moral law" an arbitrary author of the moral law. I think, in fact, that those modern atheists who have argued in a converse way "there is no God; therefore, there are no absolute values and no absolute law," are quite logical.

R: I don't like the word "absolute." I don't think there is anything absolute whatever. The moral law, for example, is always changing. At one period in the development of the human race, almost everybody thought cannibalism was a duty.

C: Well, I don't see that differences in particular moral judgments are any conclusive argument against the universality of the moral law. Let's assume for the moment that there are absolute moral values, even on that hypothesis it's only to be expected that different individuals and different groups should enjoy varying degrees of insight into those values.

R: I'm inclined to think that "ought," the feeling that one has about "ought" is an echo of what has been told one by one's parents or one's nurses.

C: Well, I wonder if you can explain away the idea of the "ought" merely in terms of nurses and parents. I really don't see how it can be conveyed to anybody in other terms than itself. It seems to be that if there is a moral order bearing upon the human conscience, that that moral order is unintelligible apart from the existence of God.

R: Then you have to say one or other of two things. Either God only speaks to a very small percentage of mankind -- which happens to include yourself -- or He deliberately says things are not true in talking to the consciences of savages.

^{3[3]} Fr. Copleston vs. Bertrand Russell: The Famous 1948 BBC Radio Debate on the Existence of God

Copleston the Jesuit and Russell the atheist truly reached no conclusion. But Russell's argument has merit, for it feeds the temporal-spatial argument of morals. They seem to change from time to time and from place to place. For example, does China follow the dictate of "thou shall not steal"? Well it all depends. Does our Congress follow the mandate of "Thou shall not lie" or is it a pandemic characteristic of a politician. Thus space as well as time often dictates what is right or wrong. Should we than accuse someone of being immoral?

Now to Natural Law. Is Natural Law truly existent and if so what is its basis? I will avoid any Kantian argument here and try to relate a more scientific bent. Tierney in his work on Natural Rights and Ockham noted as follows⁴[4]:

Suarez and Grotius distinguished a subjective meaning of ius from other connotations of the word. It was left for Hobbes to insist that the subjective meaning was the only proper one:

"The RIGHT OF NATURE which writers commonly call jus naturale, is the liberty each man hath, to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature.... A LAW OF NATURE, lex naturalis, is a precept or general rule found out by reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life ... law, and right, differ as much, as obligation and liberty... ,"

Later he explained that the sphere of liberty was defined by "the silence of the law"; where laws did not command or forbid, a person was free to act as he wished. Hobbes seems to deviate from the preceding tradition, not only in giving an exclusively subjective definition of ius, but also in excluding the idea of moral rightness from his definition. (For Suarez and Grotius ius was a moral power, a moral quality.) But later authors developed Hobbes's distinction between natural rights and natural law in ways that restored the moral content of a natural right.

*Perhaps the most clear and coherent account of natural laws and natural rights in a fully developed, eighteenth-century Enlightenment form of the doctrine is that given by Christian Wolff. For Wolff, law (lex) is a rule that obliges us. Natural law, law inherent in the rational nature of man, obliges each person to seek self-perfection. But the fulfillment of moral obligation requires a certain freedom of action; and, Wolff declared, "**This faculty or moral power of acting is called a right (ius)**"*

Carrying the argument further, Wolff explained that "What the law of nature obliges to as an end, ius gives as a means." He gave as an obvious example the right to food as a means of self-preservation. Wolff also held that, besides commanding and prohibiting, natural law could be merely permissive, indicating behavior that was licit but not obligatory; natural rights existed in this area of permissive natural law. One is reminded again objective right are clearly distinguishable, but in medieval discourse the word ius could oscillate easily between the two meanings.

⁴[4] Tierney, The Idea of Natural Rights

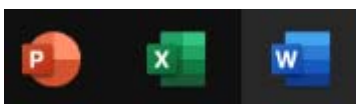
Thus there seems to be a basis for Natural Law, existing pervasively, but without basis. But perhaps as we better understand man and his genetic structure we can assert a basis, a commonality. I would posit looking towards the human limbic system, the amalgam of hippocampus, amygdala, thalamus and hypothalamus, that region of the brain where we see the impact of emotions, aggressiveness, sexuality and the like. There may very well be a fundamental genetic basis for what we see as Natural Law and Natural Rights, and that the moral law, or morals is nothing more than a reflection of this complex and yet not well understood portion of the human brain. But I digress.

Why should one call another immoral? What basis does that person have, what religious belief is being promulgated? Or perhaps we should just ask; what is wrong with their limbic system? Just a thought.



Labels: [Politics](#)

[Microsoft and Control of Their Customer](#)



They did it again. Microsoft snuck in and rearranged my desk top. You see, if you are like me, your desk is a bit messy as you work, but underneath that mess you really know where everything is.

For example you have imprinted in your brain the Excel icon when you go through your daily process of working on a few spreadsheets. The same for Word. Massive visual dissonance, smashing through my limbic system.

But wait! Sometime in the past twenty four hours Microsoft snuck into my computer and changed the icons, reshuffled my entire life! I never knew they were even here. I automatically turned to my Excel icon, GONE! There was this stranger, in fact three strangers, looking up at me. Who were these new icons, dare I click on them, were they Russian plants, Chinese intruders?

NO! They were Microsoft letting me know they were in total control. I kind of am reminded of this every time I try to work on an older machine in my lab but it keeps trying to update a W10 from 1703 to whatever. I think of the mega hours/days spent trying to work around another Microsoft blunder.

But my sacred desktop, never before have these brutes tried that. But now I know how to work around them. I saw where they hid these things. I wonder if I can revert to my old desk top, perhaps I will try.

This act is akin to say the movement of a mass of tubas into the string section of a symphonic

orchestra, or the placement of axes on the surgical tray in a neurosurgical suite. It not only creates visual dissonance but disrupts one's total mindset.

The real problem is that Microsoft does not have the common courtesy to even ask no less let you know what happened. The just come in an rearrange stuff. It is like that old college roommate who had the annoying tendency to move all your stuff around for his own personal benefit.

Bur remember, Microsoft is always watching you! Like the Devil himself!



Labels: [Microsoft](#)

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

[What if Julius Caesar Survived?](#)

As Antony stated:

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears; I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones; So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus Hath told you Caesar was ambitious: If it were so, it was a grievous fault, And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.

Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest-- For Brutus is an honourable man; So are they all, all honourable men-- Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral. He was my friend, faithful and just to me:

But Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is an honourable man. He hath brought many captives home to Rome Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill: Did this in Caesar seem ambitious? When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept: Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious; And Brutus is an honourable man. You all did see that on the Lupercal I thrice presented him a kingly crown, Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious; And, sure, he is an honourable man. I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke, But here I am to speak what I do know. You all did love him once, not without cause: What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him? O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts, And men have lost their reason. Bear with me; My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar, And I must pause till it come back to me.

Just think a bit, a little bit.



Labels: [Politics](#)

Monday, April 29, 2019

[Universal Healthcare and Utter Nonsense](#)

For the past twenty seven years I have been writing on healthcare. Since the original Hillary Care plan which was cooked up in secret and then unloaded with no explanation, through Obamacare and now Socialist Medicine.

The [NY Times](#), the 21st Century Daily Worker, has a writer who opines sans facts. It seems that facts are a burden that they cannot sustain. The author states:

Although the financing details of Medicare for All remain provisional at the moment, a RAND report on a more concrete single-payer proposal for New York State found that the plan would cut health care costs dramatically for the lowest income group, while increasing them by about 50 percent for the highest income group. Middle-class people would also experience net savings on health care equal to around 10 percent of their income, with only those earning 10 times the federal poverty line or above — that's \$134,000 for an individual or \$276,000 for a family of four — paying more than they do now.

I wrote and commented on this report. It is weak at best and outright wrong at worst. It is for a New York Plan that forces everyone into the State controlled plan. Read it if you want to see what it does.

Now here are some facts.

1. Healthcare currently costs about \$12,000 per person per year. Really.
2. However, 80% of the expenses are for 20% of the people.
3. And surprisingly it is not those in Medicare. They seem to just die off.
4. Those in Medicare now have paid into the system for fifty years or more. Furthermore they still pay in.
5. However, the costly Medicare patients are mostly those who are under 65 and are under Social Security because of some massive health problem. For example a 19 year old with Hodgkin's Lymphoma and no insurance and a subsequent cardiac problem needing a transplant.

These are just a few. So for a family of 4 that would be a \$48,000 bill! Every year! But 80% of these people cost near to nothing. It is the very few who have massive costs.

The problem is how do we deal with these people. Take a leukemia patient of say 10 years old. We can use CAR-T cell therapy and it costs \$500,000 plus most likely another \$200,000. That is about the costs for 14 people, or six and a half families.

Thus details count and simple sops like the one mentioned does no good unless and until it deals with facts.



Labels: [Healthcare](#)

Russian Investigations by Congress: A Hundred Years Ago!

1 RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA.

2

3 April 14, 1920.—Ordered to be printed.

4

5 Mr. Moses, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, submits the following R E P O R
T; [Pursuant to S. Res. 263.]

6

7 By resolution of the Senate adopted December 20 1919, the Committee on Foreign
Relations, through the Full committee or the subcommittee, was authorized to make inquiry into
the status of the activities of Ludwig C. A. K. Martens, the representative in the country of the
Soviet regime in Russia.

8

9 On the 23d of December a subcommittee was designated to with the subject, and its
membership comprised Messrs. Messrs. Borah, Knox, Pomerene, and Shields. Messrs. Knox and
Pomer found it impossible to render the necessary service, and they were replaced by the
appointment of Messrs. Brandegee and Pittman respectively.

10

11 Subsequently, the Senate, by resolution, authorized the subcommittee to employ counsel,
and the Hon. Wade H. Ellis, of Ohio was retained in this capacity. Mr. Ellis was assisted by John
Trevor, Esq., of New York City, who served the committee whose knowledge gained through
service with the committee was of great value.

12

13 The resolution under which the committee acted is as follows

14

15 [Senate resolution 263, Sixty-sixth Congress, second session.]

16

17 Whereas one Ludwig C. A. K. Martens claims to be an ambassador to United States from
the Russian Soviet Government; and

18

19 Whereas, according to newspaper reports, he refuses to answer certain questions before
the Lusk investigating committee in the city of New York, committee appointed to investigate
propaganda against this Government on the ground that he is such ambassador and entitled to
diplomatic privilege and

20

21 Whereas said Martens has headquarters in the city of New York and is alleged to be
directing propaganda against this Government; and

22

23 Whereas, according to his testimony before said Lusk committee, he came to this country
as a German citizen and is a member of the Communist Party pledged to overthrow capitalistic
systems of government the world over;

24 ...

25

26 In consequence, it is unnecessary to go beyond the record to sustains the findings of the
committee further than to point out certain evitable and wholly warrant-able deductions.

27

28 *Following seriatim the items of inquiry enumerated in the resolution of the Senate, the status of Martens is disclosed by the testimony under several heads:*

29

30 *(1) What alleged Government or power in Europe does he represent ?*

31

32 *His credentials (p. 14) were issued by the "People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs" of the "Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic," from Moscow, under date of January 2, 1918. They were signed by G. Chichearin, "People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs," and were sealed with the official seal of the commissariat. This Government, as was brought out in the course of testimony (p. 23), was set up in November, 1917, by a communist revolution to the movements of March in that year, which accomplished the overthrow of the dynasty and government of Romanoff Czars. This republic operates under a constitution, the terms of which (p. 160) "all property rights in the treasures of the earth, water, forest, and fundamental natural sources within its boundaries are abolished" ; which confirms "transfer of all banks into the ownership" of the Government; which there "pass over without indemnification to the disposition of the county, provincial, regional, and Federal Soviets," all private livestock and inventoried property of homesteads; and under which "private merchants, trade and commercial brokers" (p. 162); "monks and clergy of all denominations" (p. 194), and in general all persons who do not "perform useful, social functions" (p. 163), have no right either to vote to be voted for.*

33

34 *For instance (p. 39) Martens explained that a man who own farm in Russia and who leases it to another may not vote or be voted for. Under this constitution all banks were converted into a state monopoly (p. 168), and holdings of bonds in excess of 10,000 rubles were confiscated (p. 169) ; these confiscations having taken place prior to the adoption of the constitution and were confirmed by the instrument. Under this constitution no Russian is permitted to vest his capital or to ship it out of the country or to receive interest upon it (p. 173). This constitution also provides for the disarming of the property classes, the arming of "all toilers" and the organization of "a Socialist red army" (p. 164). Under this constitution; in an election, the records are received by a Soviet (p. 200) who appoints a commission of verification; which in turn reports to the Soviet and the Soviet "decides the question when there is doubt as to which candidate is elected." By this means deputies ; elected to "the All-Russian Congress of Soviets" and by this process the prime minister is chosen, to hold office during the pleasure of his electorates (p. 200).*

35

36 *From this government Martens took his letters of credence above stated; and there were later supplemented, under day of March.*

37

38 *Whereas said Martens, according to his said testimony, regards this Government as a capitalistic government: Now, therefore, be it:*

39

40 *Resolved, That the Committee on Foreign Relations is hereby authorized and directed, through the full committee or through any subcommittee thereof to investigate as speedily as possible the status of said Martens; what allied government or power in Europe he represents; what, if any, recognition of any kind has been accorded him by this Government; whether or not*

is an alien enemy; what propoganda, if any, he is carrying on for the overthrow of governments; and all facts and circumstances relating to his activities in this country and his alleged diplomatic representation, and all facts relative to the activities of any other party, parties, or organization bearing upon or relating to Russian propoganda in this country, and make report to the Senate of such findings.

41

42 *The said committee is hereby empowered to sit and act at such time and place as it may deem necessary; to require, by subpoena or otherwise, the attendance of witnesses, the production of books, papers, and documents; to employ stenographers at a cost not exceeding \$1' per printed page. The chairman of the committee, or any member thereof, may administer oaths to witnesses. Subpoenas for witnesses shall be issued under the signature of the chairman of the committee or subcommittee thereof. Every person who, having been summoned as a witness by authority of said committee or any subcommittee thereof, willfully makes default, or who, having appeared, refuses to answer any question pertinent to the investigation heretofore authorized, shall be held to the penalties provided by section 102 of the Revised Statutes of the United States.*

43

44 *The expense thereof shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate, on vouchers ordered by said committee, signed by the chairman thereof, and approved by the Committee on Contingent Expenses.*

45

46 *The subcommittee held its first meeting January 12, and continued its sessions from time to time until March 29-, when the hearings were formally declared closed. It was the constant purpose of the subcommittee to restrict the inquiry to the narrow lines set for it by the resolution above cited, and this effort was measurably successful, although, as is natural in cases where counsel appear—Martens being represented by former Senator Thomas W. Hardwick, of Georgia—much matter of a controversial or argumentative nature will be found in the record.*

47 *Inasmuch as the major line of inquiry under the resolution dealt with the subject of Martens's activities in this country, the committee deemed Martens himself to be the most competent source of information. 'Accordingly, he was the chief and almost the only witness to be heard, and his examination was developed naturally along the lines of his own admissions and from documentary assistance, which in substantially every case was fully authenticated before being made use of..*

48

49 *The rights of Martens were fully protected not only through the presence of his counsel, who sat with him from the beginning of the inquiry to the end, whereas four sessions of the committee were held before suitable counsel could be obtained for it; and he was permitted at the outset to state his case from prepared manuscript with the utmost vigor of expression and with only slight interruption or interrogatory. The committee deems this statement essential by reason of Martens's protest in the closing days of the inquiry that he had not been permitted to make suitable explanatory replies to the inquiry to which he had been subjected. On this point the record will speak for itself.*

50

51 *The committee finds itself unable to reconcile the self-evident contradiction in much of Martens's testimony. He is a thorough by further Certificate signed by Chichearin and - addressed "to whom it may concern" in which Martens was given certain authorization to take*

over and administer all property in America belonging to the Russian Federative Socialist Soviet 99 and to exercise further functions cognate to those of a diplomatic or consular representative.

52

53 *Aside from his own declarations the committee found no means to ascertain Martens's real mission in the United States. His letters of credence and documents supplementary thereto were not in a form to warrant his assumption of diplomatic privilege. They were not indeed even in the form attaching to the commission upon which a consular officer receives his exequatur. The policy which he adopted in pursuance of his authorization as he interpreted it was equally unique and nebulous. For example, he protested throughout the entire course of his examination that his sole purpose in this country was to establish and develop cordial relations between Soviet Russia and the United States, especially through the building up of commercial intercourse. In support of this purpose he declared that he had attempted to enter into contractual relations with many American enterprises to whom he offered contracts for tools, machinery, clothing, etc., to be sent to Russia. These proffers, however, proved to be wholly tentative; and the form of contract which he employed in the few instances where such engagements were executed was wholly unilateral and the burden not only of supplying the wares in question, but of securing their shipment to Soviet Russia, was placed entirely upon the producer and no earnest money was ever deposited in a single instance; while the American contractor by one means or another was led to bring pressure upon the Government of the United States for the purpose of forcing either a modus vivendi with or an actual recognition of the Russian Soviet Government. To the committee, therefore, the conclusion is inescapable that the entire fabric of trade negotiations which Martens unrolled was part of an ingenious scheme of propaganda to create sympathy, based upon cupidity, for the Russian Soviets and to produce by indirect means the admission of Soviet Russia into the companionship of international relations which other means had failed to secure.*

54

55 *The next inquiry suggested by the resolution of the Senate:*

56

57 *"What if any recognition of any kind has been accorded him by this Government?"*

58

59 *It has been observed that neither Martens's original letter of credence nor the supplementary certificate was in the usual form of diplomatic credentials; and in fact he testified (p. 36) that he is not familiar with the ordinary manner of diplomatic procedure, but that he knows of no reason why the usual form of such communications should have been departed from in his case. He testified that he filed his letter of credence with the Department of State on the 19th of March, 1919, accompanying it with a memorandum (p. 23) dealing with the intentions of the Government of Russia, as well as with the internal affairs of that country." He had other communications with the State Department (p. 27); but to none of them was any reply vouchsafed. He never presented himself in person at the State Department (p. 89) or sought the usual audience with the Secretary of State, which is customary for diplomatic representatives; and he "totally abandoned all efforts to secure personal recognition" (p. 81) after having sent his letter of credence to the department by mail.*

60

61 *He testified (p. 89) that "he was still trying to get recognition: but that no official representatives had ever been sent by him to the State Department (p. 90). Unofficial*

representatives had conversations with officials at the State Department, including the Under Secretary of State, and from these Martens received oral reports.

62

63 *Protesting constantly that his sole purpose in the United States was to develop trade relations between this country and Soviet Russia, and testifying (p. 91) that he had never communicated in any manner with the War Trade Board or with any other department of the Government, he asserted, however, that certain American industrial companies with whom he sought to make contracts had communicated with the President (p. 135), and with the Attorney General (p. 75), with a view to securing a change in the policy of the Government toward the Soviet Government to the end of opening up trade relations.*

64

65 *He made no effort to claim for himself or for any member of his staff, any of the usual privileges accorded a diplomatic officer (p. 43) such as to bring any household effects without payment of custom etc.; and he never asserted his diplomatic quality (p. 43) until he was summoned for examination before the so-called Lusk committee of the Assembly of the State of New York.*

66 *In fact, his appointment as representative of the Soviet Government appears to have been shrouded in some mystery. He testified (p. 100) that he had had no knowledge concerning his designation prior to receiving his appointment and that his credentials were brought to him by a courier. It appeared from documentary evidence, however (p. 308), that a bureau had been organized in the city of New York for the purpose of establishing communication with Russia, the membership of this bureau embracing eight persons, among whom were Martens himself, Santeri Nuorteva, who was secretary of the Martens bureau, Gregory Weinstein, who was Martens's personal secretary, and a Prof. Lomonosoff, who, having been earlier connected with the regularly accredited Russian era Embassy in this country, later cast in his allegiance with the Soviet government and with Martens's bureau. According to this evidence (p. 309), it was at first proposed that Weinstein should become the Soviet representative in the United States; but a question regarding Weinstein's integrity having arisen and two weeks' time being allotted to him to clear himself, at the expiration of this, Weinstein came before the committee with the information that Martens had received the appointment. The discrepancy between this evidence and Martens's assertion that the first intimation of his appointment had come when the courier handed him his credential is apparent. But in whatever manner his appointment was brought about, it is wholly clear that he received no recognition, even personally, from the Government of the United States.*

67

68 *His communications to and from his Government, or its representatives, were almost invariably carried by couriers—whose names were withheld from the committee and whose travels, it is fair to assume, were facilitated by spurious passports or otherwise in direct violation of the statutes covering foreign intercourse during the period of Martens's supposed representation here.' These couriers brought to him not only letters, instructions, and other written communications, but also brought in large sums of money in the aggregate at least \$150,000 in violation of the trading with the enemy act, and of other statutory and regulatory restrictions. These couriers, in the number of about 20, he testified, comprised both American citizens and foreign subjects.*

69

70 *The inquiry whether or not Martens is an alien enemy, which the resolution of the Senate directs, brought out that Martens was born at Bachmut, in the Province of Ekaterinoslav, in Russia, in 1874, and that his parents were German subjects. His birth was registered in Russia as of German parentage and he was educated in Russia as an engineer, following that profession until 1899, when, after having spent three years in prison for revolutionary activities (pp. 7 and 8), he was deported by the Russian authorities to Germany, where he was held as a German subject to the military service which the German Government required. In 1906, Martens took up residence in England, where he remained for 10 years (p. 10). Until the beginning of the war in 1914, no occasion arose in England for the determination of his citizenship; but in October of that year (p. 11) a registration, in most cases accompanied by internment, of German subjects, was set on foot. Martens then registered as a German subject, "as a purely technical matter," according to this testimony (p. 11), alleging that to be the reason why he was not interned. Following his decision to come to America, permission to make the journey was accorded by the British inspector under the alien act, and Martens and his wife came to the United States on the 2d of January, 1916 (p. 11), and, upon landing at New York, he declared himself to be a German subject (p. 11), making the regular declaration under oath. He contended before the committee, however, that he did this solely because of the British permit which he carried and which identified him as a German subject.*

71

72 *Upon the issuance, December 31, 1917, of the rules and regulations for the registration of German enemy aliens in the United States, Martens did not so register; basing his claim (pp. 18-19) upon the assertion that he had been made a Russian citizen by virtue of a decree of the provisional government of Prince Lvov. This, citizenship, he testified (p. 19), was procured for him by an application made by his relatives in Russia without special authority from him and with no formal paper from him in any manner. He was unable to furnish any copy of this decree (p. 20), though he declared (p. 20) that a document to this effect was issued to him, given into the possession of his sister in Russia and that she dispatched it to him by mail. This information, he declared (p. 20), came to him in a letter from his sister, but she was unable to produce the letter in question. He expressed the belief (p. 17) that the letter containing his certificate of citizenship had been seized by the British censor of mails, but from the American embassy in London came information that no such letter had ever come into the possession of the British censor.*

73

74 *Martens's citizenship has been called in question more than once. By his own testimony (p. 15) he applied for Russian citizenship, which was refused on the ground (p. 16) that he had not performed his military duty in Germany. He insisted throughout that his German citizenship was merely "technical"; but he further testified (p. 17) that his German citizenship sufficed to bar him from amnesty proclaimed against political offenders in Russia upon overthrow of the Czar's Government, and it became necessary for him to obtain Russian citizenship by other means. He was in a privileged class in this respect for he testified (p. 19) there were exceptional circumstances applying to his case and another, not as well-known as he, could not be given citizenship without formal application. In this connection it may be well knowing that the letter from Martens's sister, which constitutes only written evidence he ever received touching the application decree involved in his assumption of Russian citizenship, was deemed of sufficient importance to have been kept by him with official papers, and in consequence it could not be produced in evidence (p. 31).*

75

76 *In view of the fact that Martens refused to disclose the names of any of his couriers it is impossible to say whether those who he described as American citizens also owed allegiance to At the Asian Soviet Government, where citizenship is procured in so shady a manner that it might be possible for one, either native born naturalized in America and in consequence exercising suffrage other functions of citizenship here, to be at the same time a citizen of Soviet Russia, whose only prerequisite for citizenship as shown by the testimony is an application, which may be made in absentia accompanied by a declaration that the applicant is an honest n In any event these couriers, whether American citizens or not, share with Martens the responsibility for the repeated violation of Am can statutes which their actions involved.*

77

78 *It is perhaps questionable whether those who have associated v Martens in this country, and who have been paid by him for services, have also been guilty of violation of the law; although this connection reference may be had to those sections of the penal code which will be found in the record.*

79

80 *In the absence of evidence other than that of Martens's own assertion, unsupported except by his presumed letter of credence—which it may be observed, issued from a government which the Uni States does not recognize—the normal international relations which the United States has constantly adhered would continue place him as a German subject and hence as an enemy alien.*

81 *In seeking to determine what propaganda, if any, he is carry on for the overthrow of governments, as directed by the resolution of the Senate, the testimony is somewhat complicated. It is evident from the constitution of the Government which he affects to ref sent (p. 165) that the “fundamental problem” of Soviet Russia to bring about a the victory of socialism in all lands.” In this Martens admitted (p. 166) the United States is “absolutely included. There were also adduced in evidence two letters, copies which were furnished by Martens himself, purporting to have b addressed by Nicholas Lenin, prime minister of Soviet Russia, American workingmen. The first of these letters (p. Ill), da August 20, 1918, counted “ on the inevitability of the international revolution” (p. 116), while the second, dated January 21, 1919, 1 emphasis (p, 117) on the tremendous rapidity with which “workers in various countries have gone over to communism and bolshevism,” and boasted (p. 120) “ that the soviet power is great and spreading, growing and establishing itself all over the world.”*

These documents, the authenticity of which Martens admitted (p. 121), were justified by him—the earlier appeal on the ground that this was necessary counter-propaganda against the activities which, as he asserted, the so-called Creel committee had carried on in Soviet Russia (p. 122). He pointed out that this letter was written prior to his appointment as Soviet representative in this country. But the second letter, dated January 21, 1919, and also offered by himself in evidence (p. 117), was written some three weeks after Martens's appointment, and he justified it (p. 179) upon the ground that American troops were in Russia opposing Bolsheviks, though he qualified this justification by declaring (p. 180) that propaganda of this character a few months later would have no justification.

82

83 *It appeared, however, that even at this time when, as he contended, propaganda of this character would be unjustifiable there met in Moscow the so-called Third Internationale, which is the parent body of all Communist organizations and, in fact, its international court of last*

resort. From this body issued a manifesto, signed, among others, by Nicholas Lenin, the soviet prime minister, and by Leon Trotsky, the soviet minister of war, who are the ruling spirits in the Soviet Government. It is addressed "to the proletariat of all lands," and purports to contain (p. 182) "the authentic direct message from the conquering proletariat of great Russia to the toiling masses of the world"; it pictures "alongside the dethroned dynasties of the Romanoffs, Hohenstaufen, and Hapsburgs and the capitalistic cliques of these lands the rulers of France, England, Italy, and the United States revealed in the light of unfolding events and diplomatic disclosures in their immeasurable vileness."

84

85 With these sentiments (p. 183) Martens said that he agreed; and (p. 185) in an article signed by him and published in the *New York Call* on Thursday, May 1; 1919, he declared that "the attitude of the workers of the world' toward the Russian workers' revolution has proved that the spirit of international solidarity of the workers is not dead. It is resurrecting in the Third Internationale a new glory," and he concluded his article with the exclamation, "Long live the Third Internationale!" He later (p. 185) testified that he approved of the Third Internationale and its principles. It also appeared (p. 187) that the Russian Soviet Government by a decree issued in December, 1917, appropriated 2,000,000 rubles "for the needs of the revolutionary international movement for the disposition of the foreign representatives of the commissariat for foreign affairs." Martens himself, by the *prima facie* evidence of his own letter of credence, is such a representative; and this appropriation of money for the purpose of propaganda in foreign lands he justified (p. 189) on the ground that at this time "Russia was in the throes of a revolution and civil war and was attacked by all governments."

86

87 He added that he supposed the amount thus allocated was much more than 2,000,000 rubles. He declared that the bureau through which this money was to be expended has now passed out of existence, but admitted that his information on this point was gained through the Russian newspapers (p. 190). In this connection it developed that a report alleged to have been sent by Marten Frederick Strom (p. 191), the soviet representative at Stockholm spoke of Martens's agents being u busy in the western States and Canada where they are creating secret committees propaganda and becoming acquainted with professional organizations and local press," and that "American workers' association' passionately interested in the state of Russia and they are becoming more and more firm in the creed that nothing but bolshevism c advance the proletariat." Martens admitted to have sent many communications by courier to Strom; but he denied that any character was among them.

88

89 In line with the foregoing it may be significant that Marten his closing words of testimony before the committee, testified u it would be an improvement to have the Soviet Government h€ and that he u would call that revolution."

90

91 It further appeared (p. 208) that a newspaper published in the interest of the trade-unions of that city, and know the Truth, on November 10, 1919, published an article declaring soon "the victory of the proletarian dictatorship in the whole w will be guaranteed," that "with the proletarians of all countries agreement would be reached without any diplomats. But with Messrs. Imperialists, we shall carry on conversations just as you with us—behind every word force; behind every condition force hind every demand force." In commenting upon this Martens testified that he did not believe "in force as such," but that he did be] in it "if necessary."

92

93 *Martens admitted (p. 239) that he has been a revolutionist for years, and in every country where he has ever lived; that he was a revolutionist when he came to the United States; and that he is a revolutionist now.*

94

95 *In his revolutionary character Martens was evidently well known. In the issue of the Class Struggle for May, 1919, in a comment on his appointment as soviet representative in this country, Mai was thus described:*

96

97 *Comrade Martens is a well-known figure among Russian socialists. * While a student he became interested in the revolutionary socialist move and became allied with a group of revolutionists among whom Lenin was of the most active members. Shortly after his matriculation he was imprisoned for revolutionary propaganda and spent three years in the prisons. Later he was banished and carried on his activities in the various countries in Europe. About three years ago he came to this country. Here he was employed as the American representative of the great Demidov steel world Russia. He combines, therefore, a knowledge of business affairs with an impeccable record as a socialist and revolutionist, a combination that will make him an ideal representative of revolutionary Russia during the trying difficult time of international economic reconstruction that lies before us.*

98

99 *From this background Martens emerged into his diplomatic quality; and it is fair to remark that if his conduct in that capacity has been as simple as he asserts, it is a reversal of form equally complete and gratifying. But it is difficult to believe that a man like Martens's previous record, involving a lifetime of revolutionary activities and with his declared quality of a revolutionist, not always, could have suddenly changed his entire method of thought through the simple talismanic influence of an appointment as diplomatic representative; and while, on the face of the record, his utterances and his personal activities—shaped doubtless by competent advice, as well as by his own previous experience—bore superficial evidence of a determination to act correctly, the whole collateral deduction must be that his concealed course was in line with that which he had hitherto pursued, namely, of hostility to the existing order wherever he has found himself.*

100

101 *Even, however, if it should be conceded that his constant association with organizations of foreign origin and of a purpose hostile to the Government of the United States had been thrust upon him by the nature of his mission here, there is no justification for the detached and indifferent attitude which he manifested toward revolutionary, inflammatory, and even anarchistic utterances of his associates on the public platform and elsewhere. His constant asseveration that these episodes had nothing to do with him, were none of his business, and that he was too busy to allow them to find judgment in his mind contrasts strangely with the solicitous haste manifested by his letter to Emma Goldman; and it is wholly proper to conclude that his knowledge of events was equally complete in all cases and that his action, or non-action, in each was gauged by his own sense or sentiment as to how a given course of conduct would affect either his personal standing here, or his ultimate purpose in this country.*

102

103 *As indicating the difficulty of separating Martens and his activities from propaganda carried on for the purpose of replacing the existing Government of the United States with*

Sovietism, it is instructive to note (p. 52) his emphatic testimony that he never attempted in any way to have the people of this country advocate a soviet form of government ”; that he was not connected directly or indirectly with any organization or association which advocated Sovietism in this country; and that he had never given support, either moral or financial, to such an organization. This testimony, however, was followed immediately by an admission (p. 52) that he was “very often in touch with these organizations ” and that “ on several occasions ” he accepted their invitations and spoke about Russia, but never in regard to the internal affairs of the United States.” These speeches, he testified (p. 53) were fully reported in the New York Call, yet in connection with speeches made by others, and likewise reported in the New York Call, he protested vehemently that they were incorrectly reported (p. 24). This leads to the suggestion that Martens possibly occupied a privileged position in the columns of the New York Call such as he testified attended him when he sought to obtain Russian citizenship.

104

105 *Referring to the secret activities of Martens it will be noted from the testimony (pp. 212, 220, and elsewhere) that he denied all knowledge or relationship with the Russian Socialist Federation, except in so far as the evidence presented by counsel for the committee compelled qualifications in reply to interrogations. For example, the telegram addressed to the convention of the Russian Socialist Federation in Detroit (p. 284) is documentary refutation of the witness’s statement that he never gave, directly or indirectly, moral support to an organization which advocated a soviet form of government in the United States. The record shows (p. 251) that in spite of repeated denials on the part of the witness he was regarded by his most important assistant, Mr. Nuorteva, and his friend, Dr. Mislig, treasurer of the Russian federation, as an actual member of the association. This association, be it noted, not only advocates a soviet form of government but is organizing for the purpose of overthrowing the present form of government under which we live by force a violence. Martens denied explicitly (p. 281) that he had engaged secret political activity, yet when confronted with the minutes of the secret convention held by the Russian Socialist Federation in Detroit in August, 1919, he was compelled to admit making a speech before the delegates. On at least two other occasions also he had tried reach a basis of cooperation in conference with the executive committee. of the association. In this connection attention should be directed* to the unusual admission by the witness (p. 318) that not one of the 10 or 12 men who attended the executive committee’s meetings arose the convention to substantiate his account of the proceedings before the committee, and nobody denied the statement of Gurin regarding the affair except himself. In other words, Martens by his own testimony admits that all the testimony as to these occurrences is direct against his sole contention.*

106

107 *Reports of the public meetings he testified (p. 58) were sent to him to his Government; and he testified further that he had knowledge of the “ parties or organizations interested in this kind of pro] agenda,” and that his reports to his Government dealt with “ the sympathies expressed by the different political parties.” He informed his Government as to the character of speeches made by him at these meetings, and as to the character of speeches made by other speakers (p. 58), accompanying his report by newspaper clipping containing printed accounts of the meetings. Yet when questioned* regarding some of the speeches which were made in his presence these meetings and which are readily classified as inflammatory revolutionary, and anarchistic, he declared that he paid no attention to them and did not know what they contained—though he was equally positive in his assertions that these speeches had been incorrectly reported.*

108

109 *In pursuing the inquiry, directed by the resolution of the Senate into his activities in this country, the testimony developed that, without waiting for recognition on the part of the Government to which he assumed to be accredited, Martens established himself and his bureau in offices in the city of New York (p. 40); and that he made a demand upon Boris Bakhmeteff, Russian ambassador in this country, for the delivery to him of all property, moneys, credits, furniture, archives, papers, etc., in his possession (p. 32). This demand was not complied with; and Martens proceeded to the organization of his general offices, where he employed a staff of some 35 people among whom were 13 American citizens—two of whom, Rennet Durant and Wilfred R. Humphreys, had been connected with the so-called Creel bureau, officially known as the Committee on Public Information of the American Government (pp. 41-43). Martens bureau was maintained at an expense of about \$2,500 a week (p. 45 which was met by funds transmitted “mainly by couriers from Russia” (p. 44) for whom no diplomatic immunity was asked, whose names were refused by Martens when they were demanded by the committee, and who traveled clandestinely so far as any evidence permits a deduction. The carefully planned innocuousness of Martens’s public activities here do not extend, however, to some of the more intimate and necessary procedure growing out of his position. It is evident that he regarded customary and legitimate means of communication as unsuited to his purposes. So far as can be learned, it is only within the past few weeks that he made use of the cable to communicate with his Government or its representatives on neutral European soil; and the ordinary course of the mail was apparently never utilized by him.*

110

111 *In connection with his bureau Martens published a weekly newspaper known as Soviet Russia, which has a circulation of from 15,000 to 30,000, about one-half of this number going to subscribers, some 2,000 being “sent without charge to public men in the country,” and the balance distributed by news agencies (p. 57). He also contemplated opening a technical school for Russians purposing to return to their country (p. 57), but this plan was never consummated. He proposed “to call a technical conference of those who desired to help Soviet Russia” and for this purpose registered over 20,000 people. This registration took place not only at the office of the soviet bureau in West Fortieth Street, in New York City, but also at the Rand School, where some form of branch office was maintained (p. 345). A questionnaire was furnished to each registrant, and in its original form a registrant was asked if he preferred “to remain in America to work with the Soviet Government” (p. 347). Martens adduced no adequate explanation of what this “work with the Soviet Government” in this country would comprise.*

112

113 *Martens himself appeared to have had very little to do with the practical management of his bureau. He seems to have been something on the order of a show figure, and he frequently responded in tactful terms of gratitude to letters and resolutions of greeting which were sent to him by numerous organizations of a socialist nature, both American and Russian in their membership. One of these letters of greeting presented in evidence (p. 279) came from the Socialist Party of the eighth assembly district of New York, in which the members of this organization pledged themselves “to work unceasingly for the propagation of those principles and policies and tactics that will aid directly in the establishment of a socialistic federated soviet republic in America.” Against such sentiments Martens testified (p. 280) he did not protest, saying that he regarded this as none of his concern, and adding that he did not regard it as a crime “to propagate the soviet idea in the United States” (p. 281).*

114

115 *Prominent among Martens's activities was his attendance upon public meetings generally held under the auspices of some of the numerous branches of the Socialist Party. One such (p. 215) was addressed by Gregory Weinstein, who was reported in the newspapers to have said "we have come here to tell Comrade Martens that we intend to prepare to take over this great country just as the working class has taken over Russia." Another held April 1, 1919, presided over by Nicholas Hourwich, a near relative of whom later became the head of a department in the Martens Soviet Bureau, and who was quoted in the New York Call as having said in his opening address that "the left wing proposed to bring Bolshevism to America" (p. 218). Martens declared that he did not remember having heard either of these declarations, that he made no protest about it at any rate, that he is a Bolshevist, that he would be very glad to : America Bolshevistic " and that "any means which would provide this condition would be justified" (p. 218). At this same meeting one Louis Baske, editor of a Hungarian newspaper published in Ni York, also spoke and declared u there is only one way to help i Hungarian and Russian Soviet Governments. That is to revolutionize America " (p. 219). Martens testified that he did not remember hearing this statement and that he would not have felt him called upon to disavow it if he had heard it (p. 219). Numerous other meetings of like nature were held, and the list of the speak* who participated in them bristles with the names of men who w(under either indictment or sentence for violation of the laws of \ United States or who have since enjoyed such notoriety or who has become fugitives from justice. Two of these gentry, it is probably worth noting, were harbored by Martens following their trial a sentence for sedition in New Jersey, and were given a place upon l pay roll of his bureau (p. 245).*

116

117 *The Weinstein meeting above referred to was a subject of controversy in the testimony which the committee brought out. Mart* himself asserted (p. 269) that Weinstein—and also Hourwich—w " reported wrongly," although, as above cited, he had at first den having any recollection of what they said. A reporter for the New York Sun, who was present at the Weinstein meeting, testified 394) that he saw both Weinstein and Martens sitting close to get] on the stage at this meeting, and that he heard Weinstein make declaration of their intention to take over America as the work: class has taken over Russia; that Martens made no reference or p test to these statements though he spoke after Weinstein had uttered them; and it was testified further (p. 395) that the audience applauded wildly, stamped, and cheered whenever the Soviet Government of Russia was mentioned " and that "they always his; when reference was made to the United States Government." It proper to state, however, that Martens, though he had previous testified that he remembered nothing about Weinstein's speech, la asserted that Weinstein had spoken at this meeting in the Russian language.*

118

119 *Martens testified (p. 269) that he paid no attention to the application in the press of inflammatory speeches u published wrong! as he declared, in reports of meetings which he attended, explaining that "it was absolutely physically impossible " for him to do But he appears (p. 269)—possibly because he was then in hid from the process of the Lusk committee—to have had leisure observe reports which were published to the effect that he had "utterly insulted" Emma Goldman when she was undergoing trial in a sentence for deportation; and, on December 15, 1919 (p. 271), were to Emma Goldman, then at Ellis Island under sentence of deportation, saying that he had not the pleasure of her acquaintance, that he sympathized with*

her for the “ insults ” to which she I been subjected in this country and, on behalf of Soviet Russia: offered her asylum as a political refugee.

120

121 *The impropriety of Martens’s persistent public appearance meetings held under the auspices of organized partisan groups. where his speaking companions were so frequently selected fi men under surveillance, indictment, or sentence for their seditious and anarchistic activities, is plainly manifest. Had he been regularly accredited in the ambassadorial quality which he affects, such conduct would have secured for him the speedy severance of his personal relations with this Government, the immediate tendering of his passports, and his prompt departure from the country. That he has greatly impaired, if not wholly destroyed, his diplomatic usefulness by such a course seems wholly clear; and even if the recognition which he has sought to bring about for his Government could now be obtained, it is wholly improbable that Martens would be held by the executive department to be a suitable representative.*

122

123 *The resolution of the Senate further directed the committee to investigate “ all facts relative to the activities of any party, parties, or organizations bearing upon or relating to Russian propaganda in this country.*

124

125 *The natural source of inquiry under this head is the diplomatic establishment maintained here under the title of the Russian embassy, whose head is Boris Bakhmeteff, and who has been recognized under such quality since his accrediting to this Government, and who, by a certificate of the State Department, still enjoys the privileges and immunities which accompany such recognition.*

126

127 *In consequence, both he and his staff were not subject to the process of the committee; and recourse was had to the Department of State, which furnished full documentary evidence dealing With the disposition of moneys which had been advanced to earlier Russian Governments from the Treasury of the United States, and with which purchases of war and industrial materials had been made in this country. In this connection Martens, in his testimony, had given the committee to understand that a misappropriation of American money had taken place. His testimony on this point, however, was of a most cursory and hearsay nature; and the documents furnished by the State Department and contained in the record provide a complete accounting for all these moneys and materials purchased therewith. From these documents it appears, also, that the maintenance of the recognized Russian Embassy in this country and the carrying on of its related activities are provided for by funds accruing from a loan privately negotiated in this country and in England.*

128

129 *Other organizations more or less sentimental in character were also found to exist in this country for the carrying on of activities in opposition to the soviet regime in Russia; but in most cases they were discovered to have only nominal or “ paper ” existence, and the committee deemed it unprofitable to pursue this line of inquiry.*

130

131 *In sum the committee finds in obedience to the instructions of the resolution of the Senate that—*

132

133 (1) *Martens has no status whatever in this country in any diplomatic or other governmental representative quality.*

134

135 (2) *Martens assumes to represent the Russian Federated Soviet Republic—a regime established in Russia by revolution and functioning under a constitution which has been above summarized; a regime which has never been recognized by the Government of the United States and which in international law has no standing as a constituted authority.*

136

137 (3) *Martens has received no recognition officially or even personally by the Government of the United States.*

138

139 (4) *Martens, by the accepted practice of this Government or its treaty or other international obligations and usages, is a (man subject, and in consequence an alien enemy.*

140

141 (5) *Martens's propaganda in this country for the overthrow governments is established by his own testimony, as shown in body of the report, that he has publicly associated and sympathy with those advocating such a course. He admitted to the committee his persistent revolutionary character, his desire to see the establishment of the " dictatorship of the proletariat " in all lands, his opinion that it would be better for this country if the such government were established here. It was also proved that he tinned to employ in the staff of his embassy persons who have publicly and in his presence advocated the bringing of Bolshevism America and he admitted to the committee that by any means would produce this condition would be justified."*

142

143 *All this leads the committee to the conclusion that Martens activities here have been of a nature to render him more suitable investigation and action by the Department of Justice than by committee of the Senate.*



Labels: [Congress](#), [Russia](#)

Saturday, April 27, 2019

[Facebook Redux: I wrote this 10 Years Ago! It has just Gotten Worse.](#)

Facebook gets \$200 million from the Russians, says [Bloomberg](#). Specifically Bloomberg states:

"Facebook Inc., the world's largest social-networking service, received an investment from Russia's Digital Sky Technologies that values the company at \$10 billion, more than Starbucks Inc. or Safeway Inc.... Digital Sky will buy \$200 million in preferred stock, gaining a 1.96 percent stake in the company, Palo Alto, California-based Facebook said today in a statement"

Let me tell a story about my Russian subsidiary and investors. You see I started one of my companies in Russia with "you know who". Frankly they were great people, managed the political scene, made money, worked well with others, and generally made things work well. I knew when things were going astray because when they said "nyet problemi" it meant all hell has broken loose, they were great for understatement.

We wanted to build a fiber to Moscow and one of the routes was through Belarus. One of my bankers, a Brit, was with me at a meeting in which one of our "senior partners" was present, a "retired" Government "security type". When the banker expressed concern about the political stability and resulting safety of the fiber through Belarus the individual in question slammed his fist down and said in no uncertain terms that he would insure "our" network with tanks. Remember Georgia, perhaps Ukraine. When the banker and I left he asked how he would write this up for his due diligence, I deferred comment.

Now to Facebook. It is a fantastic personality profiling device. If one wants to seek out possible compromisable people what better place to do so other than on Facebook, just analyze their inner-most verbiage. It is an intelligence goldmine. Thus why would the US allow such an investment in what may very well be a strategic asset or a potential strategic threat.

Facebook as currently used provides the innermost examination and analysis of any human willing to expose themselves to the world. It also develops linkages. Any smart analyst can take that information and process it to develop profiles of accessible "groups" which many be manipulated for whatever reason. Thus any entity "owning" a considerable share, even in their own minds alone, can possibly exert such influence. You would not even have to recruit any future terrorist, you just have to check your data base, and perhaps inject "moles" to nudge the group. The thought is terrifying!



Labels: [Russia](#)

Friday, April 26, 2019

[Trust but Verify](#)

Most of us do not know that a significant amount of prescription as well as over the counter drugs are manufactured in China and India. The result can be a dramatic reduction in quality and at times a dramatic risk in preparation. The [New England Journal of Medicine](#) discusses a recent issue with blood pressure medications. They note:

Angiotensin-receptor blockers (ARBs) are one of four drug classes recommended for the initial treatment of hypertension. These medications are commonly used not only for hypertension — a condition present in 45.6% of U.S. adults — but also for heart failure and chronic kidney disease. On January 25, 2019, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Scott Gottlieb and Director of the FDA Center for Drug Evaluation and Research Janet Woodcock released a statement updating the public on large-scale voluntary recalls of various products containing ARBs. Two probable carcinogens had been identified in active pharmaceutical ingredients used by some manufacturers of valsartan, irbesartan, and losartan. The impurities arose during manufacture of the ingredients in two factories located in China and India. The same day, the Wall Street Journal reported that as many as 2 million patients had probably been exposed to the impurities, N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA) and N-nitroso-N-diethylamine (NDEA). Most recently, a third impurity, N-nitroso-N-methyl-4-aminobutyric acid (NMBA), has

been identified in an ARB product, resulting in a new recall. These recalls are of growing concern to patients, clinicians, and organizations delivering primary care or complex, multidisciplinary health care, and they highlight several issues related to the readiness of our health systems to respond to drug recalls, trust between patients and providers, uncertain drug-dose equivalences, and the regulation of drug manufacturing in the global marketplace.

This is becoming a global problem. Not only the US population but globally we are potentially threatened with massive drug alterations. Drugs as simple as aspirin and other OTC formulations are manufactured and boxed in China, and sold as branded medications. The monitoring of OTCs is much weaker and presents a major threat to the US as well as other countries.



Labels: [Health Care](#)

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

[More on Public Libraries](#)



Libraries, supposedly the home for knowledge. But wait. Who selects what goes into this library? The Librarian. And thus what we get is a filter as strong as any we see in Facebook or Google. But in the case of public libraries they are the local librarian, in New Jersey a person we are taxed to support every year as part of our property taxes. Is there any contact with them? No! They quite frankly do whatever they want.

Information access has changed dramatically in the past thirty years. In my opinion, libraries are defunct. Information, old and new is available on line. Not in a library. My own personal library is just over 10,000 books, I try to keep it at or below that number.

Now the [NY Review of Books](#) has a piece praising Libraries. They note:

The public loves the public library. ...a Pew Research Center study from 2016 that showed that more than 90 percent of Americans consider the library “very” or “somewhat” important to their community. Pew researchers also found that about half of all Americans sixteen and older had used the library in the past year. Even so, libraries are often convenient targets for budget cuts. After the financial crisis, in the years 2008–2013, for example, New York City eliminated \$68 million from the operating budget of the New York Public Library, which resulted in a dramatic drop in staff hours and in its acquisition budget. (A fair amount of Ex Libris is given over to poignant behind-the-scenes discussions about budgets.) But it wasn't just the New York Public Library that was suffering. A study by the American Library Association around the same time found that twenty-one states reported cuts in library funding.

I really do not know what the basis for this is. My personal experience with Pew is that they are in my opinion highly biased. But that is my opinion based upon my experience. They continue:

In 2008 the private-equity billionaire donated \$100 million to the cash-strapped NYPL. The library's flagship Beaux-Arts building on Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, which opened in 1911 and took sixteen years to complete at a cost of \$9 million (plus \$20 million for the land on which it sits), now bears his name. One hundred million dollars is a lot of money, but it pales in comparison to the philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie, the patron saint of libraries (and rabid industrialist), whose \$55 million largesse—the equivalent of \$1.6 billion today—funded 2,509 libraries worldwide, 1,679 of them public libraries in the United States, between 1886 and 1919. Sixty-seven of them were in New York City, sixteen of which are still in use.

Now the unmentioned donor now has his name on my Alma Mater, so my donations go elsewhere, but alas, I have never been to the 42nd Street Library. I have no need to. There is this thing called the Internet, eighteen books and still going strong! I remember my first book, Xerox copies of documents and working in un-air conditioned desks at MIT, the sweat pouring down my arm marking the writing on lined yellow pads. Now, I can sit with multiple screens access indexed files and write and rewrite as necessary. I have been to our town Library once, the have nothing of interest. It is a social gather hole, that is all.

So are Libraries useful? Good question. Perhaps it should be asked.



Labels: [Libraries](#)

Friday, April 12, 2019

[SAT, Politics, and a Dumb Test](#)

My experience with the SATs started in 1959. Going to a New York Catholic High School, they told us nothing about the PSAT. So I thought it was a joke, and a waste. So much for Catholic education. Then I spent time with my friends at the Jewish Community Center, instead of CYO basketball, and saw that it was not a joke. I took the Bronstein and Wiener course at the old Commodore Hotel, studied the heck out of the prep book and as well, got 1500+. I even found mistakes on the exam and notified the College Board. Needless to say they did not respond.

But what is the point? Back then they said you could not study for the test, that is measured you, and no matter how much you prepped you could not improve your score. Nonsense! If you took it seriously then you could ace it. That was and still is the secret.

But now it has become so overtly political. From the [New Hampshire Dept of Education](#) we have:

During the 2019, students taking the SAT test were requested to write an essay featuring a passage from a column by a current presidential candidate, unbeknownst to the New Hampshire Department of Education. The opinion piece – “There’s No Need to End Saturday Mail Delivery” – was authored by U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-VT, and published in the Wall Street Journal on March 4, 2014. As part of the essay section of the SAT, students were given a section of a topical column to analyze and are required to read it, explain how the author builds an argument to persuade an audience, and support their explanation with evidence from the section. Students are not asked to agree or disagree with the position taken in the section or asked to write about their personal experience. In New Hampshire, about 13,000 students took the SAT. The written test was given on March 27, and the digital test was administered through April 9. The NH DOE found out about the column section from a concerned parent on April 10.... “The column in question was probably a poor choice, in hindsight,” said ...the commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Education. “However, it doesn’t affect the ability of students to be able to read and process the concept of the piece and whether or not the author made a persuadable argument – which is the purpose of the essay in the first place.”

Essays always have strong political bents. Personally you never know who grades them and what basis they use to grade them. Put and loaded political question and what does one expect? If you are critical the chance you have an even handed grader is less than zero.

In my experience and in my opinion the College Board slowly deteriorated into a sinecure for politically well connected resulting in the need to feed back what one is expected to do. I am reminded of one of my doctoral students whose success was predicated on his achieving the highest grade in Communist Theory in college. Not that he was a believer but that by asserting the right responses he achieved what he sought, a PhD at MIT.

Is this entity becoming the equivalent filter for this country? If so there will be two results. First, humans are adaptive and smart, they will give back what is expected. Yet, second, it will turn them into the opposite of what the political propagandists want. Perhaps this may be beneficial after all.

These well paid folks at the College Board should have some balanced integrity. Stay away from politics! You are not the propagandists for whomever.



Labels: [Academy](#)

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

Economists are Not Technologists

Carbon emissions, carbon dioxide, methane etc, are technical facts. The impact on the climate is also a technical fact, with some degree of uncertainty, but put that aside for the moment. How does one solve this problem? One would assume with additional technical means. Less carbon intensive production, carbon capture, and the list goes on. Input, less output equals net accumulation.

Now economists are always at taxing problems out of existence. But reality seems to show otherwise. Let's consider a simple example. If the workforce at Harvard, the real workers doing such things as cleaning and cooking, not thinking stuff, commute from afar, and thus produce carbon emissions, will taxing them reduce emissions? Only if you terminate them and have the other folks clean up after themselves. How can taxing reduce emissions when demand is essentially inelastic? I think that is something from economics.

The only solution is technical. Really.

But [NY Times](#) writers again note:

...people use too much dirty energy because they don't have to pay the true costs it imposes on the world: pollution-related health problems in the short term and climate change in the long term. Economists refer to these costs as externalities, because they are not naturally part of the market system. "We have a climate problem," ..., "because markets fail, and fail badly, in the energy sector." The only solution, he argued, was for governments to raise the price of emissions. Economists and other policy experts have long focused on this idea of carbon pricing. It can take the form of a carbon tax, ... Or the pricing can be embedded in a system of permits known as cap-and-trade, as President Barack Obama and other Democrats proposed in their 2009 bill to address climate change. Either way, the underlying concept is simple. When a product becomes more expensive, people use less of it. Carbon pricing is an elegant mechanism by which market economics can work on behalf of the climate rather than against it.

Just collecting more taxes from the people who can afford it the least is not the answer. We have the answer but the problem is economists and not carbon.

Now the most, in my opinion, shameful of all the ones I have seen so far is the [MIT presentation](#) of an economist bemoaning climate change. They note:

As dire as those scenarios seem, Stern also expressed some optimism, saying that policymakers are now much more likely to believe that we can combine continued economic growth with zero-emissions technology — a change from common views expressed at, say, the 2009 global climate summit in Copenhagen. "What we've seen I think in the last five years or so is a change of understanding of the policy toward climate change," Stern said, "from 'How much growth do we have to give up to be more responsible and sustainable?' to 'How can we find a form of growth that's different and sustainable?'" However, he warned, a world with a net of zero carbon dioxide emissions within a few decades will be absolutely necessary for society to maintain its current form. "The net zero is fundamental," Stern said. "That's not some strange

economist's aspiration. The net zero is the science. If you want to stabilize temperatures, you're going to have to stabilize concentrations. Stabilizing concentrations means net zero."

Again it is the economist bemoaning something that the technologists can mitigate. But alas no technologist saying what can be done. Net zero carbon dioxide means just what? Plants consume this essential nutrient, do we kill off all plants, my backyard would be in revolt.



Labels: [Global Warming](#)

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

[Exosomes, miRNA and Cancer](#)

A few months back we published a paper on [Exosomes and Cancer](#). Today the [NCI has published](#) a summary of this area relating to a batch of recent papers in Cell discussing this topic.

They note:

It was once a central tenet of biology that RNA molecules did their work inside the cell. But it's now clear that RNA molecules are also active outside the cell, with potentially major implications for our health. To learn more about these unrecognized roles, the NIH Common Fund has launched the Extracellular RNA (exRNA) Communication Program. This month, members of this research consortium described their latest progress in unraveling the secrets of exRNA in a group of 18 papers in the Cell family of journals. And it's not just RNA that the consortium is studying, it's also proteins. Among the many exciting results just published is the serendipitous discovery that proteins carried inside tiny, bubble-like vesicles, called exosomes, may influence a cancer's response to immunotherapy. The work sheds light on why certain cancers are resistant to immunotherapy and points to new strategies for unleashing the immune system in the fight against cancer. The new findings center on a type of immunotherapy drugs known as checkpoint inhibitors. They are monoclonal antibodies produced by industry that can boost the immune system's ability to attack and treat cancer.

We have speculated that these transmitters of miRNA may be much more portent than currently viewed and that by attacking the unique exosomes we can attack metastasis.



Labels: [Cancer](#)

Monday, April 8, 2019

[Academics, Charts, Presentations](#)

Decades ago we used transparencies and overhead projectors to make a presentation. No PowerPoint. If we presented a curve, it had to have axes labelled and with units.

I have noticed with all the presentation materials that somehow we just get the curve, at least we

have axes. Some academic throws up a chart, curve, data set, and then walks around mumbling.

I sat through six of these today and despite the fact that I know what they are talking about I wonder if they do. Neural networks everywhere whether you need them or not.



Labels: [Academy](#)

Sunday, April 7, 2019

[More Taxes](#)

I guess economists really have no idea as to technology. They just have a hammer and everything is a nail. The hammer is taxes.

One of the [left wing economists](#) is talking about that deal being pushed about. He says:

Bottom line: Forget all the MMT hocus-pocus. Any major new spending program will be paid for with conventional taxes, preferably right now. And the opportunity cost will be lower private spending. That's not to say that all proposals for new government spending are unjustified. But in the case of global warming we don't need more spending; we need more carbon taxes. K.I.S.S.

Yep, that's it folks. Just tax, tax, tax, and it will solve everything.

We can tax people with cancer, it will cure it, we can tax the poor, it will make them rich, we can tax, well you get the point.

If it is a technology problem, that carbon stuff, the solution is a technical solution. We have dozens. Taxing will not solve the problem. Implementing the technology, improving it, enhancing it, enabling it, will solve the problem. Hammer, hammer, hammer. Try a test tube.



Labels: [Global Warming](#)

[College Admissions](#)

[The Hill](#) reports:

... article ...in "Forbes" cites data that should alarm us, "A 5-plus year nationwide study of the history of college grading finds that, in the early 1960s, an A grade was awarded in colleges nationwide 15 percent of the time. But today, an A is the most common grade; the percentage of A grades has tripled, to 45 percent nationwide. Seventy-five percent of all grades awarded now are either A's or B's. The National Association of Colleges and Employers reported in 2013 that 66 percent of employers screen candidates by grade point average.'" The Forbes article continues: "The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation also has studied college grading. The foundation confirms the alarming findings cited above. It found that in 1969, only 7 percent of students at two- and four-year colleges reported that their grade point average was A

or higher. Yet in 2009, 41 percent of students reported as same. During the same period, the percentage of C grades given dropped from 25 to five percent.”

Yet one should look a bit closer.

1. The benchmark was 1969, when things had already started a steep slid with grade inflation
2. Also the students in 1969, better yet in 1959, were dramatically fewer than those now. Why? Because college admissions standards were higher and focused solely on performance, academic performance. I never recall any essays. All they were interested in were grades and SATs. No extra curricular, no sports, no social justice movements etc.
3. Also the Draft help males focus. Fail and off you went, by 1964 it was to South East Asia.
4. Today, I doubt I could get into college. I worked through High School, shoveling stuff for the NY Sanitation Dept, not a lot of social justice there, but it did teach how to mingle with some of the folks.
5. Today's admissions are also done by a "team" who seem to have no connection with the university. Back in the 60s faculty got a batch of applications and rated them. Today the team seems to be folks who have the right political bent yet have no academic involvement. For example the [MIT Admissions Officers](#) would most likely reject Feynman and Newton and Einstein. Really, just look how they identify themselves; favorite songs, musical artists etc. Who are these people? They are defining the future of MIT, really!

So if you think grade inflation is bad, look closer at admissions and what is considered important. BTW China is NOT like this. Perhaps DC could look at this as well.



Labels: [Academy](#)

Saturday, April 6, 2019

[Savings Bonds Anyone?](#)

One of the Presidential Candidates is promoting a Government run and funded (?) savings bond program for each child. The [NY Times](#) notes:

....was introducing the audience to what is becoming a central component of his emerging platform, an economic proposal known as baby bonds that would create a government-run savings account for every child born in the United States. The program is designed to aggressively address the nation's growing wealth gap, and the government's contributions would grow based on a family's economic standing.

Now as one of the "Quiet Generation" those of us born too young to be in WW II and yt born before its end, we had US Savings Bonds. In fact if you worked for some big corporation you had to buy them every year along with United Way contributions. Now sometime in the 70s I

discovered this pile and thought I was rich! They were all \$25 bonds, some almost 30 years old. But wait. They paid about 1.75% annual interest for first 20 years and then zero interest. Inflation was averaging 8-10% per year. So I was losing 6-7% per year on those dumb things.

Folks, Government anything is a total disaster. You are better off investing in Peruvian Turkey farms, high altitude turkeys are alleged to be healthful. Unless of course if you are a Vegan.

Income inequality will will always have with us. Getting a good education in a field with real jobs and working your but off and not trusting any company to take care of you is the best advice one can get. Government savings bonds are not. Oh yes, I forgot, I had to pay taxes on my 1.75% interest, not even compounded! Good Luck Senator!



Labels: [Politics](#)

Thursday, April 4, 2019

[Socialism: Over a Century](#)

I just read an excellent little piece on [Cafe Hayek](#). The issue discussed was inequality and income redistribution. The point was well made. Now a century ago, when my grandmother was a Socialist the issues were a bit more germane. It was related to problems such as clean drinking water, functioning sewers, and preventing mass TB epidemics. That was the socialist agenda. Now it would seem main stream. Back then the socialists wanted the Government to control the drinking water rather than independent companies who had no reason to keep it clean. TB was rampant, and there was a need for public education and health care to isolate the infected people and hopefully allow them a better existence.

Now the issue is inequality. Yes, the poor we shall always have with us, and yes as individuals we have a moral duty. The question is; do we have the Government execute that duty? Is it moral? Despite what certain religious state, Christianity was a religion where individual duties were imposed. One sought individual salvation, not group salvation. It was dramatically different than other religions at the time. Give to Caesar and then give to God meant just that. They were two different groups.

It is worth reacquainting oneself with Francis of Assisi. The Friars were individuals who individually took vows and individually sought salvation. It was their acts not the acts of the King or Pope. In fact it was Ockham and his understanding of individualism which made for the changes which eventually led to the understanding of Natural Rights, rights as applied to the individual. One should remember that justice is the Government taking control of our rights and hopefully supporting them. Thus the Bill of Rights, not the Bill of Justice.



Labels: [Socialism](#)

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

It Arrived; Now the Bill

In case one were following:

Delivered	04/03/2019 12:02 P.M.	BOSTON, MA, US	DELIVERED	
		04/03/2019 9:59 A.M.	Boston, MA, United States	The suite number is either missing or incorrect. This may delay delivery. We're attempting to update the address.
Past Event	Out for Delivery	04/03/2019 9:02 A.M.	Boston, MA, United States	Out For Delivery Today
		04/03/2019 7:22 A.M.	Boston, MA, United States	Loaded on Delivery Vehicle
		04/03/2019 7:12 A.M.	Boston, MA, United States	Destination Scan
		04/03/2019 5:03 A.M.	Boston, MA, United States	Arrival Scan
		04/03/2019 3:53 A.M.	Warwick, RI, United States	Departure Scan
		04/02/2019 10:46 P.M.	Warwick, RI, United States	Arrival Scan
		04/02/2019 10:06 P.M.	Dartmouth, MA, United States	Departure Scan
		04/02/2019 12:51 P.M.	Dartmouth, MA, United States	We've incorrectly sorted this package which may cause a delay.
		04/02/2019 6:58 A.M.	Dartmouth, MA, United States	Arrival Scan
		04/02/2019 4:41 A.M.	Hartford, CT, United States	Departure Scan
		04/02/2019 1:40 A.M.	Hartford, CT, United States	Arrival Scan
		04/01/2019 10:51 P.M.	Parsippany, NJ, United States	Departure Scan
		04/01/2019 10:15 P.M.	Parsippany, NJ, United States	Origin Scan
Past Event	Shipped	04/01/2019 7:57 P.M.	Parsippany, NJ, United States	Pickup Scan

Wow! I guess the read the Blog....Thanks Google.



Labels: [UPS](#)

UPS Redux



Now it is worth continuing the journey!

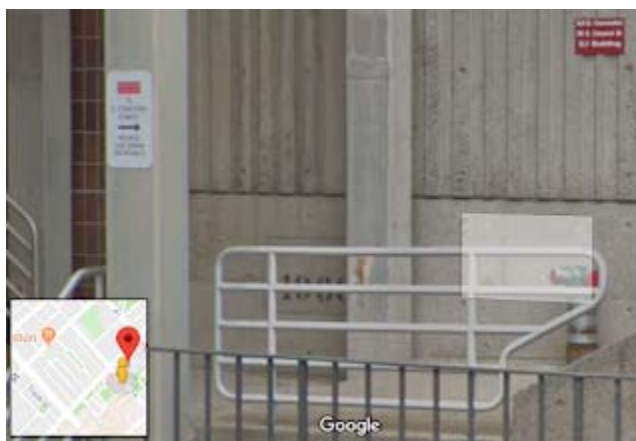
In Transit	04/03/2019 9:59 A.M.	Boston, MA, United States	The suite number is either missing or incorrect. This may delay delivery. We're attempting to update the address.	
Past Event	Out for Delivery	04/03/2019 9:02 A.M.	Boston, MA, United States	Out For Delivery Today
		04/03/2019 7:22 A.M.	Boston, MA, United States	Loaded on Delivery Vehicle
		04/03/2019 7:12 A.M.	Boston, MA, United States	Destination Scan
		04/03/2019 5:03 A.M.	Boston, MA, United States	Arrival Scan
		04/03/2019 3:53 A.M.	Warwick, RI, United States	Departure Scan
		04/02/2019 10:46 P.M.	Warwick, RI, United States	Arrival Scan
		04/02/2019 10:06 P.M.	Dartmouth, MA, United States	Departure Scan
		04/02/2019 12:51 P.M.	Dartmouth, MA, United States	We've incorrectly sorted this package which may cause a delay.
		04/02/2019 6:58 A.M.	Dartmouth, MA, United States	Arrival Scan
		04/02/2019 4:41 A.M.	Hartford, CT, United States	Departure Scan

	04/02/2019 1:40 A.M.	Hartford, CT, United States	Arrival Scan
	04/01/2019 10:51 P.M.	Parsippany, NJ, United States	Departure Scan
	04/01/2019 10:15 P.M.	Parsippany, NJ, United States	Origin Scan
Past Event	Shipped 04/01/2019 7:57 P.M.	Parsippany, NJ, United States	Pickup Scan

Yep, there is a name on the door and the Suite was correct but this poor package seems destined to circulate in UPS Hell forever! Last year I tried USPS and they lost a Certified letter to a street address some 6,000 feet away! Now the creatures at UPS seem to be befuddled!

Try Pony Express? Blame the school system, they cannot read, the humans that is.

Oh, BTW here it is guys, the door!



They have this thing called Google Maps, it really works, but it requires you to "read". Too bad!



Labels: [UPS](#)

Tuesday, April 2, 2019

[Other People's Money](#)

Louis Brandeis wrote a book on Other People's Money a century or more ago. It is worth the read:

President Wilson, when Governor, declared in 1911:

“The great monopoly in this country is the money monopoly. So long as that exists, our old variety and freedom and individual energy of development are out of the question. A great industrial nation is controlled by its system of credit. Our system- of credit is concentrated. The growth of the nation, therefore, and all our activities are in the hands of a few men, who, even if their actions be honest and intended for the public interest, are necessarily concentrated upon the great undertakings in which their own money is involved and who, necessarily, by every reason of their own limitations, chill and check and destroy genuine economic freedom. This is the greatest question of all; and to this, states-men must address themselves with an earnest determination to serve the long future and the true liberties of men.”

The Pujo Committee—appointed in 1912—found:

“Far more dangerous than all that has happened to us in the past in the way of elimination of competition in industry is the control of credit through the domination of these groups over our banks and industries.” . . . “Whether under a different currency system the resources in our banks would be greater or less is comparatively immaterial if they continue to be controlled by a small group.” . . . “It is impossible that there should be competition with all the facilities for raising money or selling large issues of bonds in the hands of these few bankers and their partners and allies, who together dominate the financial policies of most of the existing systems. . . The acts of this inner group, as here described, have nevertheless been more destructive of competition than anything accomplished by the trusts, for they strike at the very vitals of potential competition in every industry that is under their protection, a condition which if permitted to continue, will render impossible all attempts to restore normal competitive conditions in the industrial world.

Interesting set of observations.



Labels: [Economics](#)

[Regulating the Internet](#)

The [EFF](#) has a piece about the Facebook CEO and his proposal that the Government should regulate the Internet.

While I agree with their analysis one should also look at regulation. It tends to entrench the incumbents, set barriers up for new entrants, and creates quasi if not total monopolies. The regulations are often a produce of the incumbent and meets their needs to inhibit any competitor, raising a cost to entry, and establishing other barriers.

On the other hand Governments love regulations. It gives them more reasons to expand and control.

To quote the EFF:

If governments and regulators want to explore new rules for the Internet, Mark Zuckerberg is the last person they should ask for advice. Instead, they should talk to users, small innovators and platforms, engineers (including the people who built the Internet), civil society, educators, activists, and journalists – all of whom depend on robust protections for both privacy and the freedom to express and communicate without running through a gauntlet of gatekeepers.

Indeed.



Labels: [Internet](#)

[UPS and Its Business](#)

It seems that recently half my UPS packages get misplaced. Today the package was to Boston and here is the record thus far:

In Transit	04/02/2019 12:51 P.M.	Dartmouth, MA, United States	We've incorrectly sorted this package which may cause a delay.
		04/02/2019 8:32 A.M.	Dartmouth, MA, United States Destination Scan
		04/02/2019 6:58 A.M.	Dartmouth, MA, United States Arrival Scan
		04/02/2019 4:41 A.M.	Hartford, CT, United States Departure Scan
		04/02/2019 1:40 A.M.	Hartford, CT, United States Arrival Scan
		04/01/2019 10:51 P.M.	Parsippany, NJ, United States Departure Scan
		04/01/2019 10:15 P.M.	Parsippany, NJ, United States Origin Scan
Past Event	Shipped	04/01/2019 7:57 P.M.	Parsippany, NJ, United States Pickup Scan

Now it is on the way to BU, next day price, but only God knows if it ever gets there but I will still be paying as if it were on time! Perhaps Amazon could get into this business as well.

Oh but for a reliable company.....oh well it could be the cable company!



Labels: [Commentary](#)

[Humanities, Universities and the Absurd](#)

The [New York Review of Books](#) has a piece bemoaning the death of the humanities. They seem to make two points. One is that more students are being pushed into education so as to get a job.

Second, that the humanities enable students to work in the entertainment industry making new Netflix programs.

Point One: If you are dumping over \$200,000 into a child's education, well would you not want them to be employed and off of your books! For most and education is the first step in getting a job, yes real work. That means you bring something to the table.

Point Two: Are you out of your mind! Humanities and Netflix, script writing! Perhaps the author did not notice but the preponderance of disoriented humanity is on these screens. That is not humanities.

The author notes:

The social value of the humanities will surely grow as Big Tech confronts its proliferating problems, from election meddling, data mining, and anti-competitive practices to the spread of hate speech, collaboration with the military, and hostility to labor unions. The heady early days of tech-utopianism seem a dim memory. Critical perspectives like John Carreyrou's book Bad Blood and Alex Gibney's documentary The Inventor about the downfall of Theranos have alerted people to the moral mire into which biochemists, software engineers, and tech entrepreneurs can fall when cut off from people knowledgeable about ethics, psychology, and social history. The search for fixes in the tech world should create new openings for humanities graduates. In June 2018, for instance, Google announced a set of seven principles to guide it in developing artificial intelligence, and just last month it unveiled an external advisory board to monitor their application. But the board is top-heavy in computing specialists, and it includes the head of a company that collects and analyzes drone data (as well as the head of the Heritage Foundation). It is, says Mike Ananny, who teaches communication and journalism at the USC Annenberg School, "a fig-leaf exercise"—one that leaves the technologists and engineers in charge. It's not enough for Facebook to hire a few dozen liberal arts grads to monitor its platforms for hate speech, he says; its owners and managers need to address the incentives that encourage people to use its platforms in this way in the first place. The technologists, Ananny warns, "are not going to willingly give up their power." In the battle ahead, the crucial players will be those trained in how the humanities, social sciences, and technology intersect—what he calls the "missing middle."

The problem is not that the people have not had a humanities education, in today's world the humanities is an amalgam of political correctness and does not venture into any depth of ethics. After all that stuff is from those old guys who have nothing to tell us. The running of Silicon Valley companies is a reflection of the investor mindset in the Valley. Theranos was a problem of having not one person ask a question as to the viability of the services offered, not because they did not want to but because they "believed". If the author read the book the author would have noted that it was a few biochemists who asked what was going on, they left and ran for the hills.

As for the AI rant, all AI is just one solution after another tailored to meet a specific need, using some similar underlying techniques. AI is not some pervasive system that can be applied universally. It is truly a silo after silo approach to one issue after another.

The humanities provides a useful set of tools to understand. We need to have a grasp on other languages, I can stumble about in six, but that was because I needed it in specific environments. To understand the current arguments of socialists one needs to understand not just the current political theories but how we got there. That you will not learn at a university, you will just learn why socialism is good, whatever that means.

So should someone major in history? If you want a job, there are not many that require that skill. If you have a large trust fund, do whatever you want.



Labels: [Academy](#)

Monday, April 1, 2019

[Social Justice, Paine and Others](#)

We examine some interesting observations from the book by Howe and Coser⁵[1]. We all too frequently assume that any "new" movement is just that, new and unseen before in any manner. I would suggest the contrary, most movements are just repackaging of older ones. We have discussed Individualism and the construct of Natural Rights. Now we consider the alternative, namely the collective structure of Social Justice, the commitment of the many to the few and the redistribution of individual gains to those more worthy.

Howe and Coser (the "Author") wrote at a period of major Communist threat and a post Stalinist era. Their observations on Stalinism are compelling especially when we now try to examine movements such as Social Justice movements as well as those in the Climate Change space. Movements have been prolific over the course of mankind, from political to religious to economic. As the authors have noted:

Participation in "the movement" gave many of them a feeling of personal dignity as well as of communal strength, for they could learn to accept and transcend the frequent misery of their existence by binding themselves in a fraternal effort to remove it.

Now the authors commence by considering the early Socialist movement in contrast to Stalinism. They note:

Nor need one idealize these early Socialists in order to stress the contrast with Stalinism. A good many of them must obviously have fallen short of the ideal type that has here been sketched. What matters, however, is that autonomy and freedom of personality was the ideal, and that the early Socialist movement created conditions favorable to the growth of human personality. No achievement of early Socialism is more impressive or testifies more decisively to its affection for

⁵[1] Howe and Coser, *The American Communist Party*, Praeger (New York) 1962, pp 518-525

freedom than the way in which it helped a small but significant minority of the working class to absorb portions of serious culture and raise itself to a certain intellectual self-awareness.

Early Socialism was filled with great freedom and often resulted in dramatic contrasts and intellectual battles. For example, the Princeton Thesis of Justice Kagan purports to discuss Socialism in New York City in the early 20th Century⁶[2]. Her approach focuses primarily on the Eastern European Jewish elements and fails to consider the German Jewish elements or the otherwise mixed non-Jewish elements. Having discussed the latter two, the dominant ones in fact headed by Debs, one sees that perhaps a reassessment is needed⁷[3]. But it also should be noted that it was the group described by Kagan who became the catalyst for the nascent Communist Party in the US.

Now the Communist Party in the US slowly morphed into the Stalinist movement, the Communist Party as seen through the eyes and mind of Stalin. As the Author notes:

By contrast, the Stalinist militant was usually characterized by a fear of independence. So completely did he identify himself with the Soviet Union and the Communist Party that the former, through a corrupt fantasy, became the emblem of the good society and the latter, through an abject surrender of the critical faculty, took on the aura of a chosen instrument of history. If he were truly one of the faithful, this identification reduced him to little more than a series of predictable and rigidly stereotyped responses: his personality became a function of his "belonging." Nothing is more typical or tragic in our time than this surrender to an invisible yet absolute "We," this surrender which is a major source of the mystifications and terrorism characteristic of totalitarian movements. Indeed, the politics of our century could be called the politics of the Counterfeit Collective.

The Communist became a Stalinist and as a Stalinist lost any semblance of personal identity and subsumed themselves in the "Party". Any dissension was banned. The Author then continues:

A considerable proportion of the Stalinist militants harbored feelings of powerlessness and personal inadequacy which they tried to overcome by identifying with authorities who seemed potentially invincible and immediately omniscient. 'Such persons could achieve a semblance of balance only by submitting themselves to authority....Every threat to the self could be compensated and overcompensated by passive reliance on the strength of the leaders to whom they surrendered themselves.

⁶[2] Kagan, E., TO THE FINAL CONFLICT: SOCIALISM IN NEW YORK CITY, 1900-1933, April 15, 1981

A senior thesis submitted to the History Department of Princeton University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

⁷[3] McGarty, The Public Intellectual: Individualism vs Progressivism, 2012.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270647761_The_Public_Intellectual_Individualism_vs_Progressivism

The impoverished self-sought security in the mystical body of the party, while the total belief in the authority of the party was linked with a readiness to attack all those outside of it, who, unless they were pliable "progressives" to be privately mocked for their naivete, were by definition enemies. The faithful Stalinist found enormous satisfaction in contemplating the physical power of the Soviet Union, and soon it became difficult, as indeed unnecessary, for him to distinguish between approval of Russia because she was right and adoration because she was strong.

As he grew adept in Stalinist apologetics—which, it is important to note, were almost always a form of self-persuasion—he learned to convince himself that when the Soviet Union showed strength this was proof her policies were correct; that when she betrayed weakness this was proof she still stood on the side of the oppressed; that when she engaged in a cynical maneuver this was proof she commanded the guile of those skilled in the struggle for power; and that when she was tricked by an enemy's still more cynical maneuver this was proof she possessed the innocence of those committed to an ideal.

Note the rationality of the above believer. If reality presents one view he can find it affirmative of the belief set, if however reality presents another view of the facts then he can twist the reality again to meet his belief sets.

Judgment was not related to fact; fact was adapted to judgment. And in the end the Stalinist felt that he commanded the most important fact of all: the Soviet Union exists, the Soviet Union is powerful, and he, puny little party member, "shares" in its power.

Facts no longer mattered. The believer had the conclusion and the facts were twisted to satisfy the conclusions. Does this sound familiar?

It is this mind set that empowers the Party members. They belong, they no longer need think, they believe. Unlike even the early Christian Church, with its Councils and debates, opinions for the Stalinist were handed down from above and questioning of any type was abjured. Heretics were scorned and ejected. Identity of self was eliminated and any identity was identity in the Party and in what the Party stood for.

The Stalinist has sometimes been described as the man who knows, but while this description holds for a sophisticated minority it seems more accurate to say that generally the Stalinist was the man who knows Who knows. His faith rested not so much in the total world-picture of Stalinism (for he was only too sensitive to the possibility that he might be in error or prove inadequate to the demands of world history) as in the certainty that the movement would sooner or later proclaim the correct line, which was all he knew or needed to know. And it was not so much this or the other leader in whom he placed his faith, for he had learned that those on high were as fallible as he and frequently even more vulnerable, but in the institution and the idea of leadership—which is one reason that the anonymous grayness of the party leadership, so disconcerting and bewildering to outsiders, could be so comforting to the faithful. It told them that they did not have to depend on mere human error: one leader has gone, another may go, a third may return, but the leadership remains.

The Author then presents a telling footnote as below. It talks of totalitarian societies, a term and phrase we see tossed about so freely today that it may have lost its understanding. Yet as noted below it is of great significance:

But doesn't the description of the past few pages hold for all totalitarian movements? Where are the critical points of difference between the Stalinist and Nazi movements? Adequate answers would require another hook; here a few words will have to do. Stalinism and Nazism are "symmetrical" phenomena, two kinds of totalitarianism; but it would be a serious mistake to ignore the distance between them. The Stalinist tends to identify with the workings of an impersonal apparatus, the Nazi with the person of an exalted leader. The Stalinist movement claims to be the rightful heir of the Western Enlightenment, while the Nazis openly proclaim their contempt for Western thought.

The Stalinist movement declares its commitment to rationality, while the Nazis celebrate the "depths" of irrationality. The Stalinists claim science, the Nazis surrender themselves to myth. The Stalinists have gone much further in the elaboration of a consistent ideology, while the Nazis have been able to develop little more than strands of ideology, each of which is often at odds with the other and most of which decline into demonology. Finally, if one were to continue the comparison between the two movements, the difference in the societies they establish when in power would have to be specified in detail.

Ideology and adherence, blind adherence, is the hallmark of both forms of totalitarian regimes. There is a belief set and one must adhere in toto. There would be no Conciliar movement as in the Church where sides are debated, there would only be an ex Cathedra movement wherein debate of any type is abhorred. Ideology formation, propagation, and adherence is critical. Participation means abandoning any chance at individual belief.

In a recent talk by Fraser she notes^{8[4]}:

In today's world, claims for social justice seem increasingly to divide into two types.

First, and most familiar, are redistributive claims, which seek a more just distribution of resources and goods. Examples include claims for redistribution from the North to the South, from the rich to the poor, and from owners to workers. To be sure, the recent resurgence of free-market thinking has put proponents of redistribution on the defensive. Nevertheless, egalitarian redistributive claims have supplied the paradigm case for most theorizing about social justice for the past 150 years.

Today, however, we increasingly encounter a second type of social-justice claim in the "politics of recognition." Here the goal, in its most plausible form, is a difference-friendly world, where assimilation to majority or dominant cultural norms is no longer the price of equal respect.

^{8[4]} Fraser, Nancy, Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation, THE TANNER LECTURES ON HUMAN VALUES, Delivered at Stanford University, April 30–May 2, 1996

Examples include claims for the recognition of the distinctive perspectives of ethnic, “racial,” and sexual minorities, as well as of gender difference. This type of claim has recently attracted the interest of political philosophers, moreover, some of whom are seeking to develop a new paradigm of justice that puts recognition at its center.

In general, then, we are confronted with a new constellation. The discourse of social justice, once centered on distribution, is now increasingly divided between claims for redistribution, on the one hand, and claims for recognition, on the other. Increasingly, too, recognition claims tend to predominate. The demise of communism, the surge of free-market ideology, the rise of “identity politics” in both its fundamentalist and progressive forms - all these developments have conspired to decenter, if not to extinguish, claims for egalitarian redistribution.

Calls for the above types of Social Justice are redistribution, also ironically a claim made by Paine in his Agrarian Justice wrote:

To Pay to every Person, when arrived at the Age of Twenty-One Years, the Sum of Fifteen Pounds Sterling, to enable HIM or HER to begin the World! and also, Ten Pounds Sterling per Annum during life to every Person now living of the Age of Fifty Years, and to all others when they shall arrive at that Age, to enable them to live in Old Age without Wretchedness, and go decently out of the World.

This was a distributive form of justice he advocated before returning to the United States. This is a form of redistributive claims. It is based upon the belief that those who had possession did so in some inappropriate manner and those without deserve to share in the largesse of those who have. This is a classic case of income inequality. But it is a form whereby some person or persons of authority deem it appropriate to settle who owns what and when and then all fall in line with the principle. Any dissent is met with global approbation. In many ways it becomes a Stalinistic approach to governance, no less justice.

Justice is in a manner as has been discussed is the use of civil law, civil control, to delimit Natural Rights. Paine notes in his Rights of Man^{9[5]}:

The natural rights which he retains, are all those in which the power to execute is as perfect in the individual as the right itself.

Among this class, as is before mentioned, are all the intellectual rights, or rights of the mind: consequently, religion is one of those rights.

The natural rights which are not retained, are all those in which, though the right is perfect in the individual, the power to execute them is defective. They answer not his purpose. A man, by natural right, has a right to judge in his own cause; and so far as the right of the mind is concerned, he never surrenders it: But what availeth it him to judge, if he has not power to

^{9[5]} Paine, Thomas; Mark Philp. Rights of Man, Common Sense, and Other Political Writings (Oxford World's Classics) (Kindle Locations 2171-2172). OUP Oxford. Kindle Edition.

redress? He therefore deposits this right in the common stock of society, and takes the arm of society, of which he is a part, in preference and in addition to his own. Society grants him nothing. Every man is a proprietor in society, and draws on the capital as a matter of right. From these premises, two or three certain conclusions will follow.

First, That every civil right grows out of a natural right; or, in other words, is a natural right exchanged.

One would agree here. We have a Natural Right to self-preservation. But we may surrender that to a civil right of having a police force. However the police force may take away other Natural Rights to execute its duty. For example, if self-preservation mandates self defense and if that mandates owning a gun, then if the civil right controls gun possession than we may have seen a diminution in our rights.

Secondly, That civil power, properly considered as such, is made up of the aggregate of that class of the natural rights of man, which becomes defective in the individual in point of power, and answers not his purpose; but when collected to a focus, becomes competent to the purpose of every one.

Defective is the operative phrase. and further it is an aggregate, and as we know, aggregates mean centralized control, and loss of individual autonomy.

Thirdly, That the power produced from the aggregate of natural rights, imperfect in power in the individual, cannot be applied to invade the natural rights which are retained in the individual, and in which the power to execute is as perfect as the right itself.

This is Paine and "on the one hand, then on the other hand" We would ask if we lose all rights when we have civil rights or is it only when those civil rights become social justice.

Here one wonders how Paine can surrender a Natural Right to a civil authority. For are not Natural Rights superior to Civil Rights. Civil Rights then give the civil authority a right to interpret, a right to attach, a right to transfer, a right to negate, as is found in any civil authority. Furthermore in extremis the civil authority may readily become Stalinistic, and the citizen becomes less a citizen than a subject.

Justice, in any form, is abrogating to the state the right to litigate prior Natural Rights under the guise of a civil right. Social Justice is the process whereby the select under the guise of representing the many decide on allocations, allocations of earnings, property, and even prior Natural Rights. Social Justice in the form as described demands a consistency of mindset and belief, it demands followers, followers doing so in the belief that they are a part of a movement, followers whose very identity is in the organized entity they are following.

Thus the Stalinistic interpretation has merit. Individualism is left behind along with any Natural Rights and conformity under the rubric of Social Justice rules. Common adherence to a belief set, one not to be questioned, make the individual believe that there is merit in such participation.

There is a continuing struggle to define social justice, and its dimensions keep changing as well. Hayek had difficulty, and that was half a century ago, the current Bishop of Rome seems also to have some difficulties but that does not prevent him from espousing his views. But what is clear is that as social justice evolves and expands two things occur. Natural Rights are diluted if not eliminated and the nature of open dialectic regarding the constructs of social justice become delimited. In fact, the belief sets become such that even a mention of social justice in other than a fully supportive manner meets with societal approbation. Thus a nexus to Stalinistic belief sets.



Labels: [Politics](#)

Sunday, March 31, 2019

[A Critique of Public Libraries](#)

In a recent article in the [New York Review of Books](#) the author notes:

Years ago, I lived in a remote mountain town that had never had a public library. The town was one of the largest in New York State by area but small in population, with a couple thousand residents spread out over about two hundred square miles. By the time my husband and I moved there, the town had lost most of its economic base—in the nineteenth century it had supported a number of tanneries and mills—and our neighbors were mainly employed seasonally, if at all. When the regional library system's bookmobile was taken out of service, the town had no easy access to books. The town board proposed a small tax increase to fund a library, something on the order of ten dollars per household. It was soundly defeated. The dominant sentiments seemed to be "leave well enough alone" and "who needs books?" Then there was the man who declared that "libraries are communist."

In contrast, I grew up in New York City where there were a lot of libraries and generally filled with useless stacks of books selected by librarians who seemed to think less of the taxpayers and more of their own view of the world. Try and get a math book, a science book, and the list goes on. If one likes fiction then you were happy.

Also, yes be quiet, at best you got the book for two weeks. You could not teach yourself calculus in two weeks, no less learn Russian.

The haven was the used book stores. Once you found a good one then for a dollar or so you could own a book. It was yours, it did not have to go back, you could read it at your own pace, mark it up, digest its contents. The hell with novels, you had something that you could build on in the real world. You could learn chemistry, learn how to design a bridge, and learn about those fellows Watson and Crick.

Why are used book stores great? Simple, for two reasons. First at some time a real person paid

real money to buy a book that they thought was worthwhile. Second, a bookseller then paid real money for a book that they thought was worthwhile. The first purchase was a real customer, and the second a real market maker. None were librarians, all had some economic calculus afoot. Librarians on the other hand often have some socio-political set of reasons and they want to spread them to their captive audience.

You could not have access to the best scientific journals in libraries but you could get a subscription to Scientific American, in the days when it had some worthwhile content, not like today, where it is filled with junk.

You also started what would become a library. Then if you went to Barnes and Nobel to their section on Dover books, for about \$1.50 you could get paperback copies of great books, pushing the edge of the envelope.

Thus why go to any library when the real stuff was outside. Today in New Jersey the Libraries are guaranteed substantial funds from the Real Estate taxes. But try and get anything useful from them. At best they are a Starbucks without coffee and food.

Is there a place for Public Libraries today? As a taxpayer subsidized social club perhaps, if that is what one seeks. But as a source of information, hardly.

Stay with the used books stores and that new thing called the "Internet" I think.



Labels: [Libraries](#)

[Rights, and their Loss](#)



A letter from Thomas Paine to Thomas Jefferson, 10[1]:we have the following

AFTER I got home, being alone and wanting amusement I sat down to explain to myself (for there is such a thing) my Ideas of natural and civil rights and the distinction between them— I send them to you to see how nearly we agree.

Thus there was and still remains a distinction. Herein Paine describes Natural Rights, those stated expressly in part in the Bill of Rights, and enshrined in the Constitution. Yet which of the Rights in the Bill of Rights are Natural or civil?

Suppose 20 persons, strangers to each other, to meet in a country not before inhabited. Each would be a Sovereign in his own natural right.

Now this pre-dates Rawls and in a sense exceeds the complexity of Rawls and the development of the inhibiting construct of Social Justice.

His will would be his Law, but his power, in many cases, inadequate to his right, and the consequence would be that each might be exposed, not only to each other, but to the other nineteen. It would then occur to them that their condition would be much improved, if a way could be devised to exchange that quantity of danger into so much protection, so that each individual should possess the strength of the whole number.

Note, Paine comes back to the singular entity of the individual, the basis of any and all Natural Rights.

As all their rights, in the first case, are natural rights, and the exercise of those rights supposed only by their own natural individual power, they would begin by distinguishing between those rights they could individually exercise fully and perfectly and those they could not.

Here he comes and reflects on the Natural Rights and what limits if any could be imposed as a result of entering into some form of compact. I would argue that in Rawls discussion, the assembly is formed by individuals without any rights, Natural or Civil, and in such a de novo situation the outcome is skewed. However Paine foresaw the problem that Rawls was blind to, namely the inherent rights of the individual, the Natural Rights.

Of the first kind are the rights of thinking, speaking, forming and giving opinions, and perhaps all those which can be fully exercised by the individual without the aid of exterior assistance— or in other words, rights of personal competency.—

Here Paine attempts to law forth the Natural Rights. These rights were well understood by 18th Century people, they were the basis for our own Bill of Rights.

^{10[1]} Paine, Thomas; Mark Philp. Rights of Man, Common Sense, and Other Political Writings (Oxford World's Classics) (Kindle Locations 1615-1622). OUP Oxford. Kindle Edition.

Of the second kind are those of personal protection, or acquiring and possessing property, in the exercise of which the individual natural power is less than the natural right.

It is interesting to see Paine place property rights as being a lesser than a Natural Right. For it was in the writings of Ockham that we first see individual rights and amongst them the right to property. The right to own, to use, to transfer property, a right resulting from the work of the individual and a construct handed down to Locke. As for personal protection, one would assume self defense is a prime Natural Right, it is a corollary of self-defense, of self-survival.

Having drawn this line they agree to retain individually the first Class of Rights, or those of personal competency; and so detach from their personal possession the second class, or those of defective power and to accept in lieu thereof a right to the whole power produced by a condensation of all the parts. These I conceive to be civil rights or rights of Compact, and are distinguishable from Natural rights, because in the one we act wholly in our own person, in the other we agree not to do so, but act under the guarantee of society.

Rights of Compact or civil rights are those which we as a society would agree to assert and enforce. The Natural Right as Paine asserts is the right to act in one's own person. Then is not self-preservation such a right? For Paine perhaps not because it asserts an act upon another. What of the Natural Right of Free Speech, again Paine may argue it impacts another. Paradoxically many of what we assert are Natural act upon another. Why do we need a guarantee of society to worship as we so choose, to have property, to speak, to have a free press?

It therefore follows that the more of those imperfect natural rights, or rights of imperfect power we give up and thus exchange the more security we possess, and as the word liberty is often mistakenly put for security Mr. Wilson has confused his argument by confounding his terms.

Here is the essence, the battle between liberty and security.

But it does not follow that the more natural rights of every kind we resign the more security we possess, because if we resign those of the first class we may suffer much by the exchange, for where the right and the power are equal with each other in the individual naturally they ought to rest there.

The statement is quite powerful. If we give up our natural rights we do not gain security! The individual suffers. We must assert and sustain our natural rights, and the security that is sought is done so only at the peril of the mob. Those who assert that society as a whole can be more secure, say in health care or environmental concerns, do so at the diminution of the primal individual or Natural Rights. As Paine notes they do so at their peril.

Mr. Wilson must have some allusion to this Distinction or his position would be subject to the inference you draw from it. I consider the individual sovereignty of the states retained under the Act of Confederation to be the second Class of rights. It becomes dangerous because it is defective in the power necessary to support it. It answers the pride and purpose of a few men in each state— but the State collectively is injured by it.

Where Paine failed in regards to the French Revolution was understanding the power of the mob, of Robespierre and of Danton, of the many who used the Revolution to assert their power. One need just look back to the 14th Century in France and England and the mobs in both. In France it was the Jacquerie who roamed about slaughtering at will, the power of the mob, while in 1381 we have the Peasants Revolt in England the confronting of the King. Chaucer may have been fearful but not the King. The result was no slaughtering but the evolution of the law.

By the time of the 18th Century we again see the brutality of the French Revolution as compared to the rather "gentler" American Revolution. The French tend to show the impact of the mob. That should be a warning for any who seek the libertine stands of the Social Justice warriors.



Labels: [Politics](#)

Friday, March 22, 2019

[The Crow and the Sheep: Politicians](#)

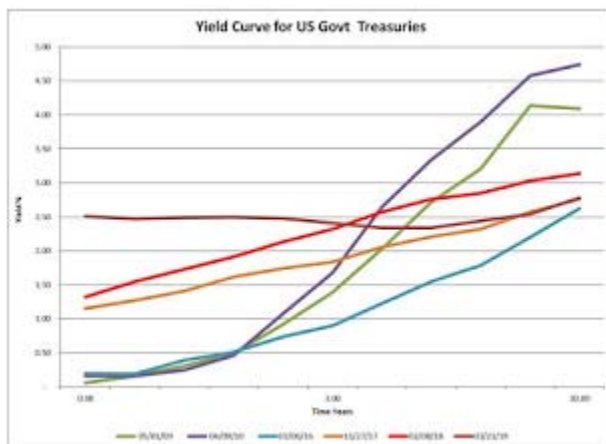
A TROUBLESOME CROW seated herself on the back of a Sheep. The Sheep, much against his will, carried her backward and forward for a long time, and at last said, "If you had treated a dog in this way, you would have had your deserts from his sharp teeth." To this the Crow replied, "I despise the weak and yield to the strong. I know whom I may bully and whom I must flatter; and I thus prolong my life to a good old age."

Translated by George Fyler Townsend. Aesop's Fables (Amazon Digital Services, Inc..)

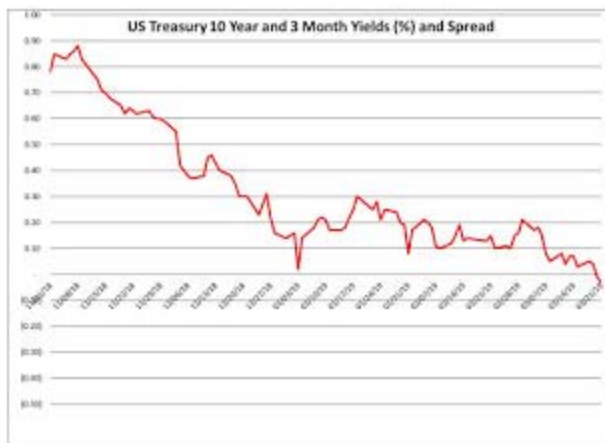


Labels: [Commentary](#)

[Treasury Spreads](#)



Above are a few Yield Curves. Look at yesterdays. It is really inverted. The dip in the 10 year region is significant. Short Term yields are the highest yet.



The above is the spread of 10 year to 90 days. It is negative in the current period. It had gotten close before but now it is in real negative territory.

So you can buy a house and the rates are not too bad. But if you are the US Treasury and most of your debt is short term, you are in deep trouble. If we assume a 22 trillion debt at 2.5% annual interest rate that is \$550 billion debt payments. So if you look at the Budget, you have \$550 billion for interest, and still some \$300-400 billion for the obligations under Obamacare.

There is zero chance of solving this problem. I think. Oh yes, massive inflation!



Labels: [Economy](#), [Yield Curve](#)

Tuesday, March 19, 2019

[On the one hand, on the other hand](#)

There is an interesting but I feel confused piece in [Nature](#) by some "philosopher" at some state school opining on science. I will admit I am not a scientist by profession, engineering and medicine is my forte, but perhaps my botanical and mathematical studies will assist. I also was a philosophy minor so again a foot in the door as they say.

Now what does this person say. Let us start:

Today, St Paul is making a comeback: the authority of science is again under attack. In areas of national and global consequence — from climate to medicine — political leaders feel confident that they can reject scientific claims, substituting myths and cherry-picked facts. I have spent five years investigating why this has happened and what can be done.

First, I am not a fan of Paul, he sort of showed up late, and then wandered all over making

claims that somehow were askance of what was said back in Jerusalem. Grace and all that stuff. Out with the good works and in with grace. But I digress. Science is interpretative. It interprets what we observe. It is iterative. As we get better tools to observe we do change our science. Science is also a true dialectic process. Marx never saw it at work but just look at Darwin. Then Watson and Crick, and just look at what we see today. Science is a continual conflict. It seems never to be settled. It is the challenge and joy of science. Climate science will continue to change as we learn to measure better, calculate better, get better tools and the like. Medicine is changing every hour, and just what politicians are doing there, well I leave it to the scholar.

He continues:

It is tempting to think that scientific authority is natural and will soon reassert itself like a sturdy self-righting boat knocked over by a rogue wave. The ugly truth is that science is more like Facebook, whose positive features are also vulnerabilities. Precisely because it allows us to connect and share, Facebook creates opportunities for misuse. Similarly, science is an exemplary form of enquiry because it is technical, fallible, done in communities and able to reshape our values. But these very features allow detractors to reject the authority even of eminent experts.

Just what this is saying I really do not know. Science requires understanding. One cannot understand the metastatic basis of cancers by using Facebook. One must read the literature, observe the cases, test the hypotheses and start over again when one's assumptions fail, as they often do. You communicate with others who are competent. You subject your ideas to critiques, to those who object, to those who know more. You learn by mistake and errors, and correcting them.

Science denial, however, is like crime: combating it requires both short-term and long-term strategies. A crucial clue to a long-term solution comes from studying the experiences of non-Western nations that imported Western science. They had to work out how to incorporate it while convincing sceptics that it would not destroy their culture and values.

Science denial is what? Criminal? China has "imported" western science, and frankly they are peers in the process. Russia has always had expertise in science. India likewise. The list goes on.

The final remark is as follows:

I conclude my book with a discussion of the German-American philosopher Hannah Arendt. Arendt barely escaped the Holocaust — she was briefly imprisoned by the Gestapo in 1933 and shipped to an internment camp for a few weeks in 1940 — and lived through a time when human rights vanished and moral authority disappeared. Her writings on politics, truth and lying have been much cited in recent discourse on the sorry state of politics. Most relevant are her writings on authority. This, she thought, is neither innate nor automatic, and facts alone don't have it. It is possible only thanks to institutions that create what she called public space. Without that, it is possible for people who are not personally accomplished, who pontificate in recycled stock phrases, who polarize situations and who are insatiable braggarts coveting media coverage, to acquire power and influence. She could explain that only by telling the full story of how

humanity got itself in that position in the first place, in books such as [The Origins of Totalitarianism \(1951\)](#).

Now I have studied Arendt in some detail. Her commentary on Eichmann is confusing at best, banal? But her study of totalitarian regimes was reflective of Hitler, and trying to make a nexus with the US today is more than a stretch, but the left seem to feel it is essential. Arendt is a student and former lover of Heidegger, the German and Nazi philosopher whose work is a bit heavy, but after all it is German. Heidegger had his day, and one suspects it has come and gone. The French version was Sartre, again, it came and went. But Arendt did have some influence on the New York "intellectuals" of the post war period in the 50s. Pleasant she was not, but authority she could opine on, after all she was educated in Germany. Authority must be questioned, if we learned anything from the 1960s it was just that. Beware of anyone who says, "Because I am an expert". The expert must be back by facts, by a process, by an analysis, and by it you will have a cross examination of that. It is a continuing dialectic that ensures a convergence, a synthesis in Hegel's world.



Labels: [Commentary](#), [Political Analysis](#), [Science](#)

[LY6, PCa, Mets and Again](#)

Several years ago [we wrote a piece on the LY6 markers](#) and actually considered a company in that space. Too early. But a recent paper in [Cell](#) indicates that we were close and they seem to have gotten closer.

They note:

The exact identity of castrate-resistant (CR) cells and their relation to CR prostate cancer (CRPC) is unresolved. We use single-cell gene profiling to analyze the molecular heterogeneity in basal and luminal compartments. Within the luminal compartment, we identify a subset of cells intrinsically resistant to castration with a bi-lineage gene expression pattern. We discover LY6D as a marker of CR prostate progenitors with multipotent differentiation and enriched organoid-forming capacity. Lineage tracing further reveals that LY6D⁺ CR luminal cells can produce LY6D⁻ luminal cells. In contrast, in luminal cells lacking PTEN, LY6D⁺ cells predominantly give rise to LY6D⁺ tumor cells, contributing to high-grade PIN lesions. Gene expression analyses in patients' biopsies indicate that LY6D expression correlates with early disease progression, including progression to CRPC. Our studies thus identify a subpopulation of luminal progenitors characterized by LY6D expression and intrinsic castration resistance. LY6D may serve as a prognostic marker for advanced prostate cancer.

Perhaps this is the useful marker we have been looking for.



Labels: [Cancer](#)

Tuesday, March 19, 2019

[Federalist 68 - Just a Read \(Again\)](#)

To the People of the State of New York:

THE mode of appointment of the Chief Magistrate of the United States is almost the only part of the system, of any consequence, which has escaped without severe censure, or which has received the slightest mark of approbation from its opponents. The most plausible of these, who has appeared in print, has even deigned to admit that the election of the President is pretty well guarded.

I venture somewhat further, and hesitate not to affirm, that if the manner of it be not perfect, it is at least excellent. It unites in an eminent degree all the advantages, the union of which was to be wished for. It was desirable that the sense of the people should operate in the choice of the person to whom so important a trust was to be confided.

This end will be answered by committing the right of making it, not to any preestablished body, but to men chosen by the people for the special purpose, and at the particular conjuncture. It was equally desirable, that the immediate election should be made by men most capable of analyzing the qualities adapted to the station, and acting under circumstances favorable to deliberation, and to a judicious combination of all the reasons and inducements which were proper to govern their choice.

A small number of persons, selected by their fellow-citizens from the general mass, will be most likely to possess the information and discernment requisite to such complicated investigations. It was also peculiarly desirable to afford as little opportunity as possible to tumult and disorder. This evil was not least to be dreaded in the election of a magistrate, who was to have so important an agency in the administration of the government as the President of the United States.

But the precautions which have been so happily concerted in the system under consideration, promise an effectual security against this mischief.

The choice of several, to form an intermediate body of electors, will be much less apt to convulse the community with any extraordinary or violent movements, than the choice of one who was himself to be the final object of the public wishes.

And as the electors, chosen in each State, are to assemble and vote in the State in which they are chosen, this detached and divided situation will expose them much less to heats and ferments, which might be communicated from them to the people, than if they were all to be convened at one time, in one place.

Nothing was more to be desired than that every practicable obstacle should be opposed to cabal, intrigue, and corruption.

These most deadly adversaries of republican government might naturally have been expected to make their approaches from more than one quarter, but chiefly from the desire in foreign powers to gain an improper ascendant in our councils.

How could they better gratify this, than by raising a creature of their own to the chief magistracy of the Union? But the convention have guarded against all danger of this sort, with the most provident and judicious attention. They have not made the appointment of the President to depend on any preexisting bodies of men, who might be tampered with beforehand to prostitute their votes; but they have referred it in the first instance to an immediate act of the people of America, to be exerted in the choice of persons for the temporary and sole purpose of making the appointment.

And they have excluded from eligibility to this trust, all those who from situation might be suspected of too great devotion to the President in office. No senator, representative, or other person holding a place of trust or profit under the United States, can be of the numbers of the electors.

Thus, without corrupting the body of the people, **the immediate agents in the election will at least enter upon the task free from any sinister bias.** Their transient existence, and their detached situation, already taken notice of, afford a satisfactory prospect of their continuing so, to the conclusion of it.

The business of corruption, when it is to embrace so considerable a number of men, requires time as well as means.

Nor would it be found easy suddenly to embark them, dispersed as they would be over thirteen States, in any combinations founded upon motives, which though they could not properly be denominated corrupt, might yet be of a nature to mislead them from their duty.

Another and no less important desideratum was, that the Executive should be independent for his continuance in office on all but the people themselves.

He might otherwise be tempted to sacrifice his duty to his complaisance for those whose favor was necessary to the duration of his official consequence. This advantage will also be secured, by making his re-election to depend on a special body of representatives, deputed by the society for the single purpose of making the important choice.

All these advantages will happily combine in the plan devised by the convention; which is, that the people of each State shall choose a number of persons as electors, equal to the number of senators and representatives of such State in the national government, who shall assemble within the State, and vote for some fit person as President. Their votes, thus given, are to be transmitted to the seat of the national government, and the person who may happen to have a majority of the whole number of votes will be the President.

But as a majority of the votes might not always happen to centre in one man, and as it might be unsafe to permit less than a majority to be conclusive, it is provided that, in such a contingency,

the House of Representatives shall select out of the candidates who shall have the five highest number of votes, the man who in their opinion may be best qualified for the office. The process of election affords a moral certainty, that the office of President will never fall to the lot of any man who is not in an eminent degree endowed with the requisite qualifications.

Talents for low intrigue, and the little arts of popularity, may alone suffice to elevate a man to the first honors in a single State; but it will require other talents, and a different kind of merit, to establish him in the esteem and confidence of the whole Union, or of so considerable a portion of it as would be necessary to make him a successful candidate for the distinguished office of President of the United States.

It will not be too strong to say, that there will be a constant probability of seeing the station filled by characters pre-eminent for ability and virtue. And this will be thought no inconsiderable recommendation of the Constitution, by those who are able to estimate the share which the executive in every government must necessarily have in its good or ill administration.

Though we cannot acquiesce in the political heresy of the poet who says: “For forms of government let fools contest—That which is best administered is best,”—yet we may safely pronounce, that the true test of a good government is its aptitude and tendency to produce a good administration.

The Vice-President is to be chosen in the same manner with the President; with this difference, that the Senate is to do, in respect to the former, what is to be done by the House of Representatives, in respect to the latter. The appointment of an extraordinary person, as Vice-President, has been objected to as superfluous, if not mischievous.

It has been alleged, that it would have been preferable to have authorized the Senate to elect out of their own body an officer answering that description. But two considerations seem to justify the ideas of the convention in this respect.

One is, that to secure at all times the possibility of a definite resolution of the body, it is necessary that the President should have only a casting vote. And to take the senator of any State from his seat as senator, to place him in that of President of the Senate, would be to exchange, in regard to the State from which he came, a constant for a contingent vote.

The other consideration is, that as the Vice-President may occasionally become a substitute for the President, in the supreme executive magistracy, all the reasons which recommend the mode of election prescribed for the one, apply with great if not with equal force to the manner of appointing the other.

It is remarkable that in this, as in most other instances, the objection which is made would lie against the constitution of this State. We have a Lieutenant-Governor, chosen by the people at large, who presides in the Senate, and is the constitutional substitute for the Governor, in casualties similar to those which would authorize the Vice-President to exercise the authorities and discharge the duties of the President.

PUBLIUS

Labels: [Commentary](#)**Monday, March 18, 2019****[EHRs: A Remnant of Obamacare](#)**

The Electronic Health Record was mandated by the ACA. It was imagined and managed by a physician from Boston and its implementation can at best be called poor. We have been opposing its implementation for a decade and have been examining it for well over three decades. Simply stated the fatal flaw was that instead of being the patient's record, it was a health provider's record of a patient and as the patient went from site to site the systems could not communicate with each other.

Now [Kaiser](#) presents a sad tale of how this thing has started to cost lives. They note:

But 10 years after President Barack Obama signed a law to accelerate the digitization of medical records — with the federal government, so far, sinking \$36 billion into the effort — America has little to show for its investment. KHN and Fortune spoke with more than 100 physicians, patients, IT experts and administrators, health policy leaders, attorneys, top government officials and representatives at more than a half-dozen EHR vendors, including the CEOs of two of the companies. The interviews reveal a tragic missed opportunity: Rather than an electronic ecosystem of information, the nation's thousands of EHRs largely remain a sprawling, disconnected patchwork. Moreover, the effort has handcuffed health providers to technology they mostly can't stand and has enriched and empowered the \$13-billion-a-year industry that sells it. By one measure, certainly, the effort has achieved what it set out to do: Today, 96 percent of hospitals have adopted EHRs, up from just 9 percent in 2008. But on most other counts, the newly installed technology has fallen well short. Physicians complain about clumsy, unintuitive systems and the number of hours spent clicking, typing and trying to navigate them — which is more than the hours they spend with patients. Unlike, say, with the global network of ATMs, the proprietary EHR systems made by more than 700 vendors routinely don't talk to one another, meaning that doctors still resort to transferring medical data via fax and CD-ROM. Patients, meanwhile, still struggle to access their own records — and, sometimes, just plain can't. Instead of reducing costs, many say, EHRs, which were originally optimized for billing rather than for patient care, have instead made it easier to engage in “upcoding” or bill inflation (though some say the systems also make such fraud easier to catch).

In my opinion it is due to the gross incompetence of the Government and the influx of politically motivated individuals into this system. As noted, I can use my bank card in almost any country in the world. Get off a flight in Paris, go to a Kiosk, get Euros, stop at an ATM in Nova Scotia and get Canadian dollars. Fast, secure, interconnected. Not the EHR.

It had added a burden to every physician. There is now another employee sitting there typing into a computer hopefully getting it right. Or the physician is looking at the screen typing away as the

patient wonders if they hear them.

I believe these systems can be a tremendous support to physicians. However as currently embodied, by law, they are a disaster. As noted, I cannot access images. If I did a CAT in location one and an MRI at location two then it is unlikely I could do a correlation. I would have to take everything to location 3!

Worse, a key to patient care is looking for trends and changes. I would watch blood sugar, HbA1c, weight, creatinine, etc. The systems for the most part still enter and display by visit, not by patient history. Generally if nothing changed you are fine, if it is changing, I would try to find out why and then see if that is normal. Not with any of these systems.

Finally, any Government mandate and designed system is subject to massive flaws. So now you want Universal Medicare! They can't get the trains to run on time.



Labels: [Electronic Medical Records](#)

Sunday, March 17, 2019

[Happy St Pat's](#)



Just thought this would work.



Labels: [Commentary](#)

Sunday, March 10, 2019

[Connectors](#)

I have had the good fortune to have worked with computers for almost 60 years, starting in late 1962. I know I am stretching a bit but it was in college and we got an old IBM punch paper tape machine. My first introduction to interfaces or connectors.

Now I am in the process of replacing an old flat screen monitor. It had a VGA interface. That was all I needed. But now the new ones come with six or more different versions, and then you need a VGA to HDMI to DP1.2 to USB 3 etc. Every few months a new connector or interface is added and you need some x:y connector and then a y:x connector or an a:b:c:....:x:y combo. But then there is DP 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 etc.

Stop for a moment!

I now have boxes of cables and connectors and I guarantee you the one I need is not there!

I also have Ethernet, WiFi, coax, fiber, and the list goes on.

What do people who do not have 60 years experience, actually more if you consider my amateur radio days, plus a PhD from MIT in EECS and decades doing this stuff do if they get a new monitor!

Guys, get a hold of yourselves. I just want to type, send a few emails, look at news feeds! Enough already!



Labels: [Commentary](#), [Computers](#)

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

[Now This is Socialism!](#)

Again for those not knowing, my grandmother was head of the New York Socialist Party in the early 1900s and actually ran for Congress when Debs ran for President and ran for New York Treasurer in 1922. So I have first hand knowledge of Socialists. One of the things they pushed for was Government control of utilities, water etc. Kind of happened.

Now also the Government controls trains and bridges. If you think that is good try Amtrak or NJ Transit or the NY Subway! It makes the third world look great! NJ Transit is a classic example, all westbound trains have been cancelled for today! Just an example.

Now some Academic proposes in the [NY Times](#) that a "Trump" proposal for takeover of all 5G should occur. This non technical academic notes:

The concept, promoted by Republican operatives such as Newt Gingrich and Karl Rove, is for a network supporting fifth-generation (5G) wireless technology to operate on a wholesale basis. Carriers such as AT&T, Comcast and Verizon could buy capacity. So could anyone else: Apple, Amazon, Walmart, Uber or small operators serving rural areas. No company could use exclusive control over spectrum to block competition. Last year, a leaked National Security Council

presentation called for nationalization of 5G networks to improve cybersecurity and better compete against China. The proposal was ignominiously killed and its author left the White House. The Trump re-election campaign's proposal wisely dropped the government takeover. It shifted the focus to wholesale access, which could be overseen by an independent nonprofit organization, like the independent system operators that manage electricity markets.

This is Socialism pure and simple. Imagine the nations communications infrastructure controlled by politicians, worse than New Jersey and the trains, worse than the New York City subway! This is truly the most idiotic proposal I have ever seen! Truly moronic. You see I was also the COO of NYNEX Mobile, now Verizon Wireless. So unlike the dreamy academic I actually have some knowledge. I have built networks in over twenty countries, so perhaps unlike the characters at the White House bemoaning the would be Socialists they have become the enemy they fear!

The want to nationalize bandwidth! They want Government employees to run a network. Are they truly out of their minds!

Let us hope this dies a quiet death and please let the academics go back and warp our children's minds. That is damage enough!



Labels: [Broadband](#)

Sunday, March 3, 2019

[Dante and His Inferno](#)

Just a thought for all out there. The ninth circle of Hell has the following:

Treacherous to Kin
Treacherous to Country
Treacherous to Guests and Hosts
Treacherous to their Masters
Satan!

From time to time it is worth reading Dante. Florence was in the 14th century what DC is today, in my humble opinion.

I will let you choose your own correlations.



Labels: [Commentary](#)

Monday, February 25, 2019

[You Can't Make This Up](#)

From the [National Post](#) we have the following:

*The voracious use of toilet paper in the United States — with the average American using almost three rolls each week and major manufacturers spurning alternative fibres — is destroying Canada's forests and causing widespread environmental damage, two international environmental groups say. A report on tissue paper use gave failing grades to the leading toilet paper, tissue and paper towel brands for using only virgin fibre pulp, mostly from Canada's old boreal forests. "Forests are too vital to flush away," says the report, called *The Issue With Tissue*, released Wednesday by Natural Resources Defense Council and Stand.earth, international nonprofit environmental organizations that cooperated on the study.*

Yep, back to the old sandpaper material I remember from the Navy. This is part of the Green New Deal stuff we are hearing about. How about the bucket and left hand routine, corn cobs, oak leaves?

What I do not understand is that trees are plants. In fact I have in process some 72 Ginkgo seedlings which are to be transported to New Hampshire next year for my tree farm. Yes, I may not live to see their full growth, takes 300-400 years, but those trees outlive Hiroshima! Try a wipe on that paper!

Now tree farms are everywhere. It takes about 30 years to get a mature white pine suitable for harvesting. That is in New England. Now there are millions of acres and each tree needs just a small fraction for maturity, some 1,000 square feet. Thus 40 trees per acre for good growth. Play the math, it works, most of northern Maine is covered this way, not to mention much of Canada.

So plants have been farmed by humans now for well over 10,000 years and we are pretty good at it. I guess, except for TP! Oh Canada!



Labels: [Global Warming](#)

Sunday, February 24, 2019

[Exosomes and Cancer: A New Paradigm?](#)

Exosomes and small vesicles, less than 100 nm, released by cells and containing parts of DNA or RNA, miRNAs, proteins, and other matter released by the cell. They become free in the extracellular areas and can find their way to other cell sites. The exosomes with miRNA may find other cells, attach, enter, and activate the cell in such a manner to result in the damage in the originating cell.

This paper is a combination of fact and speculation. It attempts to refer to many significant works presented in the literature while attempting to knit together an alternative view of metastasis. There is a great deal of evidence for this new paradigm, but the reader should be warned that there is no definitive acceptance. Thus the speculation. Paradigm shifts are always difficult. Kuhn and his followers have posited ways in which this occurs. I am hardly suggesting that there is any sudden or great insight, I am merely suggesting an alternative view. This view looks at the exosome and miRNA.

One could look at this as an example of a cancer cell of origin and metastatic cells at distant points. In this paradigm the cancer stem cell, "cell of origin", just sends out exosomes of miRNA which somehow float about until they find a cell to attach to. If one accepts this paradigm, it changes in material ways how we see metastasis and more importantly how we see possible therapeutics. Namely if a melanoma mets to the lung, does it do so via an miRNA in an exosome and moreover is it the lung because the lung tissue has a receptor that allows the entry of the miRNA.

Thus exosomes with miRNA can be powerful transmitters of cancers. The actual malignant cell does not have to move, it just has to send out the right miRNA.

As Rak noted regarding the work of Leyden and his Lab:

The metastatic dissemination of cancer cells from their site of origin through the bloodstream to distant organs is a major cause of cancer-related deaths. This process is not random; instead, certain populations of cancer cells preferentially seek out and colonize specific organs, under the control of a range of molecular programs. Such homing implicitly involves interactions between cancer cells that escape the primary tumour, sometimes known as seeds, and the microenvironment, or 'soil', of target sites.

But less intuitive is the discovery by Hoshino et al. that seeds can influence the soil before their arrival, sending out extracellular vesicles called exosomes that precondition specific organs for metastatic invasion. There is growing support for the provocative notion that a build-up of systemic responses to a primary tumour might precede, and even enable, the eruption of metastatic cancer.

These responses might involve complex alterations in the body's vascular, coagulation and inflammatory systems — for example, cancer-related changes in the composition of soluble proteins, in cell populations or in the characteristics of exosomes in the blood. Hoshino et al. define exosomes as small extracellular vesicles — membrane-bounded compartments that transport proteins, lipids and nucleic acids from one cell to another, and which can travel considerable distances in bodily fluids or the bloodstream.

This information-transfer process has attracted considerable interest in cancer research, because some extracellular vesicles carry cancer causing genes called oncogenes, or oncogenic proteins that promote cancer formation and disease progression. The involvement of extracellular vesicles, including exosomes, in metastasis has been studied for some time, and

contributes to several key events that prepare a distant site for colonization — a process called premetastatic niche formation.

Simply stated, it could be postulated that it is the exosome that initiates and facilitates metastatic growth, not necessarily the flow of the cells to new locations.

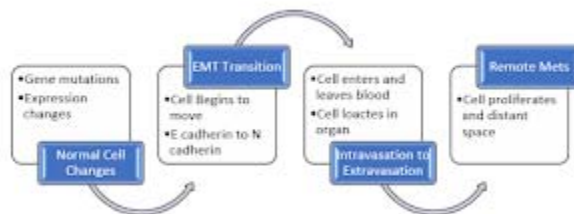
A great deal of effort is underway to resolve the extent of the functions of EVs in cancer metastasis and in turn the possibility of targeting them as a therapeutic.

There are two paradigms that we now work with in metastasis. The classic involves the movement of the malignant cell across the body. The second, the EV model, is the movement of EVs across the body, influencing distant phenotypes. The EV model makes sense in many cancers, because of the ease of the EV going into and out of the circulatory systems; blood and lymph.

We demonstrate these two paradigms below:

1.1 CLASSIC PARADIGM

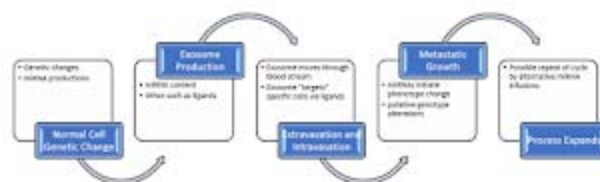
The classic paradigm is shown below. It fundamentally assumes that a single cell mutates and becomes malignant and then that cell proliferates as a cell and enters and leaves the blood system and finds a location where it can again proliferate, perhaps undergoing additional genetic changes. The key here in the classic paradigm is that the malignant cell is the mechanism for proliferation. The literature here is significant.



Key to this Classic Paradigm, is the belief that it is the malignant cell itself which migrates, and even more so, the cell is a stem cell. Namely it can migrate and do so in a manner that allows it to establish its own outpost of a malignancy. The cell maintains and carries with it the identical genetic flaws which made it what it is at its site of origin. Then as part of this paradigm, it is this cell which must go into and out of the blood stream. This behavior of the Classic Paradigm is a complex and oftentimes highly questionable type of behavior.

1.2 EV OR NEO-CLASSICAL PARADIGM

The new EV paradigm is shown below. It is not the actual cell but elements of the cell such as miRNA which go forth and multiplies. Note it first does a phenotype change still requiring fueling and then may actually have a genotype change resulting in the classic "whack a mole" results in metastasis.



The essence of the Neo Classical paradigm conjecture is severalfold:

1. A malignant cell is changed and produces exosomes which contain, for want of a better alternative, miRNAs which if and when absorbed by target cells are oncogenetic in nature. The malignant cell can best be called a stem cell.
2. The target cells absorbing and activating the miRNAs phenotypically become malignant. Their genetic structure has not changed but they are responding to the miRNA exosome. The target cells may be local or distant.
3. The target cells are targeted by ligands or receptors on the exosome that match those of the target cells. Thus there is a specificity of targeting, much like what we see in many metastatic events.
4. The exosomes are small enough and unencumbered with surface proteins that they are easily sent into and out of the blood stream. In addition they are almost invisible to the immune system.
5. Long term exposure is inductive to a genotypic change of the target cell, thus enabling it to become its own stem like cell.
6. Properly characterize exosomes may be targetable.
7. Early extraction of the stem cell before genotypic change can be curative. Once the target cell genotypically changes that cell must be excised or deactivated.
8. However, if the exosome itself is identifiable then perhaps an immune targeting may be achieved.

If the above conjecture, which we argue may have some validity, is correct, it argues for a dramatically different approach to cancer treatment.

1.3 ISSUES

Exosomes have become a significant factor in examining cancer metastasis. One could argue that they are paradigm shifting. Our focus herein is to examine exosomes as a significant if not primary driver of many metastases. This is a dramatically different view of cancer progression. It does allow for the explanation of many of the issues that we see in examining such progression.

[1.3.1 What are exosomes](#)

We use the literature to examine the exosomes and its kindred spirits. Exosomes are fundamentally ad double wall lipid carriers of cellular elements, predominantly parts of DNA, RNA, proteins, and most importantly miRNA.

[1.3.2 What are the theories of metastasis](#)

What is metastasis and how does it work. Again in a simplified sense, metastasis if the propagation of malignant behavior to other sites in addition to the primary site. Now trees and other plants get tumors. But these tumors do not spread. Large galls on the sides of trees are compartmentalized tumors plus viral materials. Thus what makes animals have such diseases and how do they function?

[1.3.3 What are miRNAs and how do they relate to Exosomes](#)

Micro RNAs are small RNA strips, about 22 base pairs in length, that can target and suppress mRNA inhibiting translation.

[1.3.4 What is the impact of epigenetic factors on Exosomes](#)

Epigenetic factors such as the impact of miRNAs can be significant. They silence or activate genes, they can also impact histones which in turn may silence or activate genes. We examine both to a degree. There is a complex network of positive feedback where miRNAs can induce via other genes favorable growth environments.

[1.3.5 How do we understand the dynamics of cancers using the Neo Classical Model](#)

In the Classical model we have the mutation of genes, the creation of a putative cancer stem cell, and the movement from one place to another via initially an EMT and then intra and extra-vasation. Now the Neo-Classical model assumes that it is the exosome and its contents, putatively the miRNA, that moves about. This can be a fundamental paradigm shift but arguably verifiable. Thus how then does one consider the dynamics of metastasis in this case?

[1.3.6 What is the impact on therapeutics](#)

Dealing with the exosomes one considers ways to block them via multiple therapeutics. If one can block them after initial tumor recognition then is there a way to mitigate metastasis?

[1.3.7 How does Immunotherapy get applied](#)

Immunotherapy has made great strides however to be effective the cells targeted must be recognizable. Thus understanding the surface of the exosomes or even more so to be able to target them and insert markers may be effective. One wonders if CAR-T approaches may be effective.

[1.3.8 What can we do with diagnostics and prognostics](#)

This is a key question which may be easier to deal with. We can now access many of the exosomes, examine their contents and then assess the specific malignancy and ascertain its progression.

We proceed to review, examine, and consider these issues. This is not a fundamental research paper since it relies on the work of others, it is not a review paper since it does not present a summary of others, but it is an attempt to consider a new paradigm. This may or may not prove to have sustainable capacity but the author believes it is worth the consideration in light of recent investigations.

We have [published a paper](#) discussing this topic in detail.



Labels: [Cancer](#)

Friday, February 22, 2019

[Voting Rights in New Jersey?](#)

Since New Jersey has been taken over completely by the Democrats, we are well into bankruptcy, technically, we see taxes exploding, roads collapsing, new government entities and entitlements exploding, and now the folks in Trenton want to delimit our rights to vote! Mussolini must be turning over in his grave, he never got this far. At least he got the trains to run on time, our folks keep having them fall off the tracks!

The latest, reported by [North Jersey News](#), notes:

New Jersey Democrats are reviving a controversial effort to force President Donald Trump to release his tax returns or be denied a spot on the state's 2020 ballot. The state Senate on Thursday approved a bill — which the Legislature passed once before, in 2017, but which then-Gov. Chris Christie blocked by issuing a scathing veto — that would prohibit candidates for president and vice president from appearing on the ballot unless they make their tax returns public. Similar legislation has been introduced in at least 30 states but never enacted, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, meaning New Jersey would be the first to impose such a disclosure requirement if its measure is also approved by the Assembly and signed by Gov. Phil Murphy, a Democrat.

The Governor will in my opinion sign this attempt to delimit the vote. Why not, he seems to be doing whatever will enshrine a one party system. Voting is a classic right. Boston is known for electing mayors while in prison. In New Jersey we have mayors who are getting multiple pensions while imprisoned.

So why not just go all the way, abolish voting and let the Democrats in Trenton decide for all of us! And I was concerned when in Russia!



Labels: [Politics](#)

Thursday, February 21, 2019

[Well Said](#)

The [Telegraph](#) has an interesting piece which I agree with. They note:

Teaching children coding is a waste of time, the OECD's education chief has said, as he predicts the skill will soon be obsolete. Andreas Schleicher, director of education and skills at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, said that the skill is merely "a technique of our times" and will become irrelevant in the future. "Five hundred years ago we might have thought about pen literacy," Mr Schleicher said. "In a way coding is just one technique of our times. And I think it would be a bad mistake to have that tool become ingrained. "You teach it to three-year-olds and by the time they graduate they will ask you 'Remind me what was coding'. That tool will be outdated very soon." Comparing it to trigonometry, he said: "We are going to get into the same dilemma. I think is very important that we strike a better balance about those kinds of things. "For example, I would be much more inclined to teach data science or computational thinking than to teach a very specific technique of today." The Government has championed the teaching of coding and computing skills, with the Chancellor allocating £84 million to treble the number of computing science teachers in 2017's Autumn Budget. A new National Centre for Computing was set up to train up the 8,000 new teachers in the subject. Computing became part of the national curriculum in 2014, and the GCSE in Information and Computer Technology (ICT) was axed in favour of a new qualification in computing which includes more coding and programming.

Let me provide a simple example which counters a [recent press release](#) with one of my own:

The new Purpleperson College of Typing has selected its new Dean, Prof Swifty Fingers, a world renowned expert in the new field of typing and more importantly shorthand. Prof. Fingers is a known leader in STEM, the "Shorthand, Typing, Erasing, and Margins" field, for which there is an explosion of new opportunities. Prof Fingers also is an advocate of the new field of shorthand, also known as Automated Inscription, or "AI", an exciting new technology that allows for the capture of human utterances and placing them in a coded manner on small pieces of paper, which in turn may be readily transcribed using the new typewriter technology currently infusing every academic discipline.

This new technology accompanied by AI has become an indispensable element of every field of knowledge from classic Greek to Botany, to the study of Law. As such the new Purpleperson College of Typing will have all of these Departments subsumed under its new Dean and a major

thrust will be the training of STEM to a multicultural groups as an essential part of the country's global competitiveness.

As Prof. Fingers had noted in the inaugural address"

"There has been no other technology that has spanned all areas of knowledge in such a short period of time as the typewriter and no adjunct to that technology such as AI which will create a competitive edge to every field."

Prof. Fingers then demonstrated his own ability to copy from a record produced by Mr. Edison a speech of President Grant at some 90 words per minute and then he had one of his post doc students use the newest Remington typewriter to type it in the same 90 words per minute. The audience was aghast as such a technological breakthrough.

The White House issued its own typed press release saying that the US would remain at the forefront of this new revolution.

Yes the above is fiction, but not that much of fiction. You see, a hundred plus years ago young men were trained on these devices. Then as they needed more and more they created secretaries, and we all know where that ended. Any reasonable person now does their own typing most likely on some highly sophisticated electronic device.

Thus the who coding thing is a waste of time. I spent years on Latin, and I actually still use it. I spent time on Greek, it helped when I was in Athens, still took a year to catch up. I use trigonometry, I use algebra, calculus, and use data manipulation and calculation skills.

Teaching skills such as BASIC is now defunct, Python, may have use for specific purposes. Who knows COBOL, FORTRAN, and the list goes on. Critical thinking and organizational skills are useful. C+++++ may not be, for all.



Labels: [Academy](#)

Monday, February 18, 2019

[Russia, the Internet, and Deja Vu](#)

In 2001 I proposed an architecture I called [MAE Europe](#). It would have been in Vienna and would have allowed for rapid interconnection of Internet traffic in Central and Eastern Europe. I had built our fiber across that area much on GasProm lines and we served countries from Czech Republic and Poland to Russia and Greece, Romania and Bulgaria amongst others.

Now this would have used DNS in that area so that traffic would not go back to the US and then switched back to the area. It would stay in the area, lower costs and increase speeds. Did not sell. I remember speaking with my Russian partners, some of whom were the first to get the Internet in Russia.

Now the [Hill](#) reports the Russians are planning on finally doing what was proposed. They remark:

Russia is taking steps to tighten its grip on the internet within its borders, as the nation's legislature advanced legislation this week that would test temporarily disconnecting Russia from the global internet. The first version of the bill was approved by the legislature on Tuesday. It still has two more steps to go before it gets final approval. The bill would require that all internet traffic move through servers physically based in Russia. And it will expand the state-run communications office to oversee that routing. In a separate move, the Kremlin has also announced that it is planning to build its own version of the Domain Name System (DNS), the records systems used for the internet to direct users to specific domains for websites. Both decisions are raising eyebrows on Capitol Hill.

Surprise. It took only 20 years! Actually a bit more since I had pitched it to the Russian Parliament in 1998! They did not want to be lectured by an American.

Controlling the DNS is controlling traffic. In a sense the old MAE entities did just that, US control. What about that story about the goose and the gander?



Labels: [Internet](#), [Internet Neutrality](#), [Russia](#)

[Generics](#)

The book [Generic by Greene](#) is best described as a history of the early days of the introduction of generic therapeutics. The approval of any new therapeutic by the FDA has been an evolving process. The current process is in a simple manner a three step process in humans, which itself occurs after in vitro and animal testing . Phase I typically examines the safety of the drug. Phase II looks at efficacy. Namely does it work. Phase III examines clinical effectiveness. The FDA process does not look at such things as comparative effectiveness and post approval there is no standard requirement for monitoring, and thus many effects that may result from usage are at best reported and catalogued.

Overall the process tries to limit harm while attempting to deliver drugs which do what they are purported to do. The question however is: just what is the drug being tested? The drug is often an active ingredient which may be patented. The active ingredient may then be patented but the actual drug tested and approved, under a non-disclosure agreement with the FDA, may have inactive or even compounding ingredients that facilitate the activation and utilization of the patented drug. Thus the actual drug sold by the initial holder of the patent is the publicly identified chemical structure, plus other elements that may facilitate the utilization and assist in the overall efficacy. Such things may be the delaying of the breakdown of the prime element until well within the digestive tract or the enabling of timed release.

Now along come the generics. A generic is a copy of the prime patented molecule after the patent has expired. The other proprietary elements are not necessarily there, since they have never been disclosed. Thus if the drug only works by getting it to the small intestine and the

NDA protected elements facilitate that, the exclusion of those elements may make the drug generic ineffective. Thus generics are same "but for" the key proprietary ingredients which are secret to the original patent holder and the FDA, never to be disclosed.

How does a generic get approved ? The FDA requires the following:

- The generic drug is "pharmaceutically equivalent" to the brand.
- The manufacturer is capable of making the drug correctly.
- The manufacturer is capable of making the drug consistently.
- The "active ingredient" is the same as that of the brand.
- The right amount of the active ingredient gets to the place in the body where it has effect.
- The "inactive" ingredients of the drug are safe.
- The drug does not break down over time.
- The container in which the drug will be shipped and sold is appropriate.
- The label is the same as the brand-name drug's label.
- Relevant patents or legal exclusivities are expired.

Note, it does not require the same inactive ingredients. It does require "pharmaceutically equivalent". Now just what does that mean? The FDA notes:

generic drug needs to show that it is the same type of product (such as a tablet or an injectable) and uses the same time release technology (such as immediate-release, meaning for immediate effect of the drug, or extended-release, meaning one that is intended to slowly release the active ingredient over time).

There may be many issues here as well. But there are several interesting questions. First, not that these are the current 2019 FDA rules and generics have been around for quite a long time. Thus do these rules apply to all those previous generics? If not, what has been the evolution process? What risks if any do generics pose? Are generics the panacea for explosive pricing on all therapeutics? And the list goes on.

Green presents a history of the generic movement. It clearly is a battle between and amongst the members of Congress as well as the major Pharmas and they growing generic makers. The book presents the growth of this industry in a readable fashion and one can see the issues from the Mylan controversy going back decades not just of recent times.

Words like substitutability and similarity are examined in the context of the generic battle. The major Pharmas roles are presented and the development of various generic entities discussed.

The main weakness of the book in my opinion is that it lacks structure and seems to be limited to the earlier days of the generic introductions. The structure issue is that there is a going back and forth over the same ground and no linear temporal progression of the topics. The temporal issues in my opinion is the discussion of the early days and a lack of discussion of the more recent period.

One of the concerns we should have in my opinion is the outsourcing of generic drug production

in China, India, and other countries. Although the FDA alleges it does maintain quality controls these controls can often be circumvented. Thus generics like levothyroxine could readily be adulterated by various means and since 10% or more of the US population is exposed this could be a massive threat. Add all the generics together and the global outsourcing of production and we could have a major threat to US security, well in excess of any cyber threat.

Thus it would have been useful in my opinion of this tale had been equally focused on current times as well. Yet, overall this is a highly useful and timely presentation of a topic needing more effective consumer education.



Labels: [Books](#)

Thursday, February 14, 2019

[The Passing of an Age](#)

The MIT Coop, bookstore and overall "stuff" location, is closing to be replaced by a megalith office building occupied by Google. So says [MIT Tech](#):

The MIT COOP will close its Kendall Square location Feb. 25 and relocate to a temporary location at 80 Broadway. The building it currently occupies at 325 Main Street will be demolished and replaced with a new commercial building.

This is an interesting change. They already closed the Harvard Medical Coop a few years back but this is I believe more important.

In the old days, say 1960s or so, one could go into the book store and examine a multiplicity of books, getting ideas from within the pages. It was more open than the library and of course there was no Amazon. I recall hundreds of new ideas collected from the rambling. The physical book said a great deal, it conveyed the attention and competence of the author, it created a nexus to other ideas, and it frequently went home with me. Most of which I still retain, and even use.

Now replacing a bookstore with a Goggle office complex say a great deal about our new world. There was no Google filtering our thoughts. There is now. One must use Google say to find out what is there. They track and share our every thought, monetize our daily needs and wants, and displace the watering holes of our minds with vapid office space.

So farewell to what has lasted for thousands of years, the market for ideas, and welcome to the new world of thought control.



Labels: [Commentary](#)

Friday, February 8, 2019

[Told You So](#)

A few years back when Google announced its fiber business I noted that they knew nothing about it and the people that were running it in my opinion also had little understanding. Today I see that they are slowly abandoning thier efforts, leaving Louisville.

[ArsTechnica](#) notes:

Google Fiber will turn off its network in Louisville, Kentucky and exit the city after a series of fiber installation failures left cables exposed in the roads. Google Fiber's customers in Louisville will have to switch ISPs and will get their final two months of Google Fiber service for free to help make up for the disruption. Google Fiber went live in Louisville late in 2017, just a few months after construction began. The quick turnaround happened because Google Fiber used a shallow trenching strategy that is quicker than traditional underground fiber deployment and doesn't require digging giant holes. Instead of a foot-wide trench, a micro-trench is generally about an inch wide and four inches deep. In Louisville, Google Fiber reportedly was burying cables in "nano-trenches" that were just two inches deep. But Louisville residents soon found exposed cables, "When you're walking around the neighborhood, [the lines are] popping up out of the road all over the place," resident Larry Coomes said at the time. "People are tripping over it."

As noted, the infrastructure business is dramatically different that software. I have been in both, and infrastructure requires experience and mistakes are costly to recover from. Clearly this team would not have been chosen by General Groves in the 1940s. Can't say we didn't warn them.



Labels: [Google](#)

Wednesday, February 6, 2019

[New Jersey and Taxes](#)

New Jersey with it new all left wing politicians sees that they can now tax everything, yes everything. The latest recommendation is the water we drink. We pay for it but they now want to tax it, for our benefit! Has a politician ever done anything for our benefit.

As [NJ.com](#) notes:

Critics of New Jersey's high taxes say residents have to pony up for everything but the kitchen sink.

Well, the kitchen sink could soon be added to that. A state lawmaker is proposing a tax on tap water to revamp New Jersey's aging pipelines. State Sen. Bob Smith, D-Middlesex, says water pipelines across the state are old, they're decaying, they pose a serious health risk and the issue is getting worse. "There is a big problem and it is a problem that affects your health, your kid's health and your grandchildren's health," Smith said. He introduced legislation that would impose a 10-cent tax on every 1,000 gallons consumed, which Smith estimates would cost the average New Jersey household about \$32 a year and would net the state about \$150 million annually.

Now facts are important. Let me lay out a few.

1. More than a million homes are served by American Water which has responsibility for the systems they manage. Thus they can upgrade their systems and do so with increased fees with no middle man.
2. Upgrading systems is not that difficult if you do so smartly. One can sheath PVC piping in old pipes and have the inside coated with a lipase so a nano surface impedes biofilm growth. This is not that costly and reduces the need for major construction.
3. Any and all government taxes seem to get lost, never ending up where they are supposed to. Especially in New Jersey! Oftentimes it appears in the pockets of the politicians.
4. Towns independently manage water in more than half of the NJ towns. They can issue bonds if they need an upgrade and thus users pay for use. Why then have the state do this? Reason, they get to keep the money and spend it wastefully as is their wont! Towns are still left holding the bag.

This is just another example of why people are starting to leave New Jersey. Thanks Trenton!



Labels: [Politics](#)

Saturday, February 2, 2019

[Look Up!](#)

When I was young, my sister required special shoes to go to Catholic School, and my mother tasked me with the charge to go from Staten Island to Manhattan to a store in the Empire State Building. Now I knew it was on 34th Street but not exactly where. So on the bus, to the ferry, to the subway, and now at 34th Street. Now I was lost. In those days one did not ask for directions, it would expose you as a foreigner. So what did I do, called mother.

Now my mother was not the kind and caring millennial helicopter mom. I would not have been stuck on 34th and Broadway with no GPS or the like, not even a map. I was I believe about twelve. So I did call mother. Her curt reply was simple: "Look Up!"

Oh yes, there it was, I got my bearings and completed my task.

Now to the new socialists of the world who want to denude the billionaires I say "Look Up" around Manhattan and see the names: Rockefeller, Sloan, Kettering, Weill, Gerstner, Vagelos, Millstein, and the list goes on. These are the wealthy that contributed to the health care system these folks bemoan. They accept patients from anywhere, from any means, because of the wealthy. So I say "Look Up" as you go past these hospitals that take care of you, your family, your fellow workers, your Supreme Court Justices.

Now imagine that you took this money and sent it to the Government, the most inefficient entity

known to man and woman. You would have ear marks for chicken museums in Oklahoma, corn fritter studies in Iowa, and the good Lord knows what else. Instead the money went directly to build and sustain institutions that cure cancers and save lives.

So the new socialists and the rest of you, "Look Up"! My grandmother was a Socialist, a real socialist, not spending time getting laughs but devoting her time to caring for TB patients as they attempted to deal with that deadly disease. So to the new socialists and their ilk, "Look Up" and see what has gone before. The signs of what those fortunate enough to give back are right in front of your face!



Labels: [Politics](#)

Saturday, February 2, 2019

[Fake News?](#)

Just what is "Fake News"? Let me take a ride down memory lane. Some sixty or seventy years ago in New York one had dozens of newspapers. Ride a subway and everyone's face was in a newspaper, oftentimes a different one. They came in dozens of languages. There was the Irish Echo, the Daily Worker, the Post, News, Times, Herald Tribune, Journal American, Telegram and the list goes on. Each and every one told a different story, often about the same news item. Each reflected a political viewpoint, and the spin their placed on stories and intensified the belief set of their readers.

Was this Fake News? Was there a real true story out there? The NY Times was famous for its support of the Soviet regime and they actually presented distorted, albeit favorable, tales of the success of Stalin. It was only later one found out his brutal tactics.

So again, was this Fake News.

In the Internet world one can access hundreds of different sites. In a single day I can read the Guardian, Breitbart, the NY Times, the WSJ, the Washington Post, the Telegraph, the Jerusalem Post, China Daily, RT and Sputnik, Le Monde, and dozens more. Each tells their audience what they feel they want to tell. Each has its own bent on Fake News. Would I ever use Facebook or Twitter, never! Why not go to the source, why waste any time on someone collecting the "real" new for me and allowing their point of view to be expressed.

News is propaganda in today's world, and frankly it has always been so. Propaganda is the telling of a story to reflect the interests and intents of the story teller. The NY Times hates Trump, so every above the fold story is anti Trump, true or not. Are they worth reading, sometimes, but with a grain of salt. Then Breitbart tells tales that are often exaggerated but can be independently verified. Do they have a propagandist's bent as well. It seems obvious that they do. Now China Daily gives us a view, albeit also a propagandist's one, of China. RT and Sputnik are surprisingly propagandists, but they lack the heavy handed approach of the old Pravda.

Thus if one seeks to understand what is happening one examines as many sources as possible and then make a decision. Unfortunately the existence of the social media platforms are superb tools for the propagandists, lazy people rely upon what is fed to them. It is akin to network television.

So again I would ask; what is Fake News? Simply it is any single source of information wherein the user relies solely upon the opinion of the aggregator of gatekeeper. Thus a Facebook or Google. If one wants to avoid Fake News, then one must read all the Fake News first hand and then make up their own minds. In reality, all new has an element of the "Fake". Thus caveat emptor.



Labels: [News](#)

Friday, February 1, 2019

[Medicare for All?](#)

We seem to be in a continuous political fray with health care at the center. The current call is Medicare for All, whatever that means, which if one takes Sanders et al at face value it is free health care no matter. Now [CMS](#) has given data for 2017. They note:

U.S. health care spending increased 3.9 percent to reach \$3.5 trillion, or \$10,739 per person in 2017. Health care spending growth in 2017 was similar to average growth from 2008 to 2013, which preceded the faster growth experienced during the 2014-15 period that was marked by insurance coverage expansion and high rates of growth in retail prescription drug spending. The overall share of gross domestic product (GDP) related to health care spending was 17.9 percent in 2017, similar to that in 2016 (18.0 percent).

Thus making a reasonable assumption we are looking at \$12,000 per person, sick or well, in 2020. Where is that to come from? Mainly because many of these people, more than half, make no money at all. One cannot get blood from a stone. Also if one takes the Marxists at their word it will come from the ultra rich, that class of people whose funds currently support entrepreneurial growth via their investments, and just think what will happen there.

This is another invention coming what are allegedly economists, Boston University educated economists one surmises. Details count, and as we have seen over the last fifty years those details have meant the death of many proposals.

Now there is another interesting fact, those damn facts. You see in the US specialist training is supported by Medicare, that Medicare that we all pay for and hopefully get when we reach a certain age. Thus urologists, immunologists, cardiologists etc are trained with medicare money, our contributions. Medical students are not. Also there are more medical schools opening training MDs but since the specialist resident schools are limited by Medicare in number, many of these MDs will fall in the market with no further training, no internists, no oncologists.

Four years of medical school and a year of internship can make a great physician assistant, but it takes a great deal more in today's complex world if one expects competent health care. Your

local GP can go just so far, especially if they are dealing with dozens of patients a day.

So we are seeing a perfect storm occurring. Those who can afford the best care will be able to buy it, the rest will suffer the problems of national health care. Thus in the UK and Canada it may easily take 6 months to get an MRI. If you have a resectable tumor when examined by the time you get the MRI, and worse to the surgery, you might as well skip that and buy your urn!



Labels: [Politics](#)

Monday, January 28, 2019

[CBO and the Next Ten Years](#)

It is worth a look at the [CBO report](#) on the next ten years.



Labels: [Economy](#)

Saturday, January 26, 2019

[The Three Body Problem: Or Could AI Get us to the Moon and Back?](#)

I have been considering the whole issue of AI. You see I have been looking at this for about fifty plus years now. In fact, when I arrived at Warner in 1980 or so, my boss, Gus Hauser, sent me a note I believe the third day to ask to report to him on AI. I knew Patrick Winston at MIT, he had published a book on AI from his perspective, but I also know Minsky, Papert and others, so I had been at the AI watering hole. To me AI was just the name of a watering hole, not a thing unto itself. Thus Gus got my opinion. Skip ahead to 1986 and as the new Executive Director of Research at NYNEX, now Verizon, I was being pressured to develop a whole area in Neural Networks. I knew this area well, but I was also assured that the then current computer systems were inadequate.

You see, back in 1971 I had a brief sabbatical at Bell Labs trying to track Soviet subs. Massive data focused on pattern recognition. I tried large scale data and deep learning algorithms. Did not work well. Fundamental problems existed in even gathering the data but that fact did not sink in, it may have hampered their contract. Thank God the Soviets never attacked.

Now back in the mid-60s I spent time at the MIT Instrumentation Lab, working on guidance and navigation systems for Apollo and other projects. That is when I became enamored by the three body problem. The force on a three bodies and the resultant sets of equation can be determined as follows:

$$F_1 = m_1 \frac{d^2 x_1}{dt^2} = k \frac{m_1 m_2}{|x_1 - x_2|^2} + k \frac{m_1 m_3}{|x_1 - x_3|^2}$$

and likewise for the other two accelerations. From the solutions of these three calculations we can determine the dynamics of a spacecraft going between the earth and the moon. Now these equations are a result of two of Newton's laws of gravity; (i) force mass and acceleration, and (ii) force, mass and distance.

Now let us consider how Newton may have approached this problem using massive amounts of data and neural networks. Namely let us assume Newton could not think but he was a great coder. So Newton sees this apple fall from the tree and he thinks that there may be something here he could use to predict lots of other things, such as the trajectory of a cannon used in battle. So Newton goes out and collects tons of data.

For example, since he has no underlying theory he must just collect whatever he can. He is interested in such things as inputs and outputs of this neural network so he must a priori define these elements. This is the first step. But, and this is critical, he can only measure what he can define and what he can measure with the tools available to him.

So Newton sits under the apple tree and gets hit on the head with a falling apple. He then wants to know why the apple fell and how fast it was going when it hits his head.

So what results would Newton like to get as the output of his neural network? They may be:

Speed of the apple when it hits his head
Time it takes to fall
Distance it fell from the branch

We of course must assume he has the tools to measure these things. But he does measure them and most likely with errors.

Also what inputs would Newton want to consider in his neural network as drivers of his outputs for which his neural network will determine from tons of data? They may be:

Temperature
Day of the week
Time of day
Color of his shoes
Species of tree
Amount of sunlight
Height of branch
Species of apple
Diameter of apple.
Weight of apple
Volume of the apple
Location of tree
Age of the tree
Latitude
Longitude

Angle of the sun
Color of the dress the Queen wore that day

and of course the list goes on. You see he has no idea what is driving his result so he just gathers tons of stuff he can measure just in case. Lacking a model he fills his network with "stuff" .

So now Newton goes out and spends days and weeks under apple trees, he recruits many others, under order of the King, to also sit under apple trees, and after a while half of England is sitting under apple trees measuring the stuff Newton wants to get. Tons of data, massive amounts of data arrive.

Alas Newton can enter this into his neural network and let it grind away. So what is the result? Does he get the equation? No, not at all, he now has a big machine that requires you to enter tons of data to determine the speed of the apple when it hit your head under a specific tree, falling from a specific height. Is there some equation? Nope! Just the machine. Did we solve the three body problem, not even close.

Now back to the three body problem. In my Apollo days we had a computer with 64K memory, yes computer geeks, 64K, not Meg, not Gig, not Tera, K. That meant we had to think "smart" and not "hard". We needed to viscerally understand that three body problem, when and where and how much to fire the rockets for return.

Now let us move this to health care, say cancer diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. We now move to the current date where we are trying to diagnose say a thyroid tumor. They come in several varieties, papillary, follicular, medullary, and others. Now each of those have some sub classes. Our output is three stages; diagnosis (what type), prognosis (knowing what type what is an outcome), and treatment (knowing the first two what should we do). Thus one can consider a three output system, and some of the outputs having a multiplicity of subtypes.

The input is now what we can measure, what we have tools to measure. That is an important fact to remember since as we progress in knowledge and in tools what we can measure today may be a small amount of what can be done in a decade. There is no underlying physical laws to enforce, just tons of data and hopefully an answer.

Now consider an alternative approach. Suppose as, first with Newton, we had his laws. Then all we need is to find k , and solve the complicated set of equations. That value could readily be found by a some what dumb neural net. That is called a system identifies. Been there done that. But we could use a well know system presentation of cancers, one where we identify a measure, call it $n(x,t)$, where n is an $N \times 1$ vector where each element is the local concentration of a cell of a specific genetic composition, say a melanocyte with BRAF V600, or RAS, or N-cadherin and all possibilities thereof. In fact here we have possibly hundreds of genetic profiles, starting with the most benign and to the most malignant. $n(x,t)$ may be a 1000×1 vector, and it is a function of time and space.

Now we ask how does this state, genetic state if you will, change in time, and on average. Well we have demonstrated the following. The rate of change is equal to a diffusion state, a flow state,

and a growth state. This is a fundamental law of any organic system. This is Newton's law for cells. [We show this below and have presented it elsewhere.](#)

Propagation Model: This equation provides a spatio-temporal model for the calculation of the number of specific cancer cells which are propagated by means of: (i) diffusion, (ii) flow, and (iii) proliferation.

$$\frac{\partial n(x,t)}{\partial t} = a \frac{\partial^2 n(x,t)}{\partial x^2} + b \frac{\partial n(x,t)}{\partial x} + cn(x,t)$$

Average Model: This model considers the calculation of the average number of malignant cells in a spatio-temporal manner when the cells mutate into N possible genetic variants. It calculates the average number by variant and thus is a vector equation containing the N variants.

$$\frac{\partial \bar{n}(x,t)}{\partial t} = \bar{L}n(x,t) + \bar{\Lambda}n(x,t)$$

Now if we were to collect massive amounts of data we could determine a, b, c as above and then it could lead us to diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. It becomes a system identification and in turn optimal control problem, namely identifying the offending gene progressions and identifying where and when to stop that process.

Thus AI should be more than blind data churning. For it may have led Newton to a law dominated by the color of the Queen's hats and not a function of the product of masses. AI, to properly work, must have a set of underlying verifiable paradigms, models, which need further specificity. It should not just be a black box which tells us nothing about reality.



Labels: [AI](#)

Sunday, January 20, 2019

[And the Economists Keep Rolling On!](#)

The [Worthwhile Canadian Initiative](#) site lay forth the most obfuscated discussion of carbon tax ever. Some of the folks there are not bad but there is not an engineer in the batch. Folks, it is a technology problem, not an economics problem. Tax Cancer, Tax War, Tax Poverty, just keep using your tax "hammer" and all we do is annoy people and enrich the politicians.

This problem is readily solved with technology. We solved yellow fever and so too can we solve this.

God, let us pray that the economists somehow disappear. Please dear Lord!

And in a [Technology Review](#) article, hardly a technology rich rag in my opinion, an author risks being ostracized by stating:

That suggests the entire nation should run on wind, solar, and maybe some geothermal electricity. It's an absurd strategy for rapidly and affordably reaching the low-to-no-carbon

energy system required to limit the threat of climate change. Everything we know from recent research indicates that nuclear, carbon capture, and hydropower are essential, and that carbon pricing could be among the most powerful tools for driving the transformation.

At least this is a start.



Labels: [Global Warming](#)

Saturday, January 19, 2019

[Happy 100th!](#)



Today would have been my father's 100th birthday. He left me with such pearls of wisdom as "Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance" Such advice saved me many times. He also left me with: "Don't "who" me, I don't see any feathers on your a.."

Born in Brooklyn, mother dies at young age and all seven children were sent to Mt Loretto orphanage, then released after ten years and schooled on Staten Island, off to the Navy for WW II, then NYC Police and then his own business. Never would have started my own companies if I had not have seen him succeed.

So Happy 100!



Labels: [Commentary](#)

Friday, January 18, 2019

[If All You Have is a Hammer....](#)

Here they go again: (supported by those Harvard folks)

I. A carbon tax offers the most cost-effective lever to reduce carbon emissions at the scale and speed that is necessary. By correcting a well-known market failure, a carbon tax will send a powerful price signal that harnesses the invisible hand of the marketplace to steer economic actors towards a low-carbon future. II. A carbon tax should increase every year until emissions reductions goals are met and be revenue neutral to avoid debates over the size of government. A consistently rising carbon price will encourage technological innovation and large-scale infrastructure development. It will also accelerate the diffusion of carbon-efficient goods and services. III. A sufficiently robust and gradually rising carbon tax will replace the need for various carbon regulations that are less efficient. Substituting a price signal for cumbersome regulations will promote economic growth and provide the regulatory certainty companies need for long-term investment in clean-energy alternatives. IV. To prevent carbon leakage and to protect U.S. competitiveness, a border carbon adjustment system should be established. This system would enhance the competitiveness of American firms that are more energy-efficient than their global competitors. It would also create an incentive for other nations to adopt similar carbon pricing. V. To maximize the fairness and political viability of a rising carbon tax, all the revenue should be returned directly to U.S. citizens through equal lump-sum rebates. The majority of American families, including the most vulnerable, will benefit financially by receiving more in "carbon dividends" than they pay in increased energy prices.

Now just think.

I. There is no real evidence that taxing reduces anything. Especially if demand is inelastic. Please consider your cleaning staff dear Harvard. There is a great deal of evidence that technology solves this problem. Again, not something any economist seems to grasp.

II. So keep taxing until we drive down the poor folks who cannot afford it. Truly beastly.

III Now you folks are talking about our Government. They never saw anything they cannot regulate. Starting with the Whiskey Rebellion!

IV I thought these folks were against tariffs. Enough said here.

V The Government giving back! What iota of evidence do we have here. At best it is income redistribution.

And my poor grandson is studying economics! This whole proposal makes no sense, at least from a real world perspective.

The Chinese will solve this while we are taxing our civilization out of existence. Where is Marx when we need him?

Now imagine if we applied this theory to say cancer. Cancer is bad. We want to eradicate cancer.

So tax every person who gets cancer, if they get sicker, raise the taxes, if they die, confiscate all they have left.

Will that cure cancer? What do you think. Remember, do not ask an economist!

And one more thing, the above Manifesto reminds me of the many that were produced by the Marxists during the turn of the last century. Guess some folks never learn.



Labels: [Global Warming](#)

Thursday, January 17, 2019

[Microsoft At It Again?](#)

It seems that whoever is running Microsoft really must hate the customers, in my opinion. The most recent disaster is the Windows 10 KB4023057 download. You see this was done several months ago but the wizards at Microsoft tried again and the result is failures to update.

One of the [web sites](#) discussing this notes:

It looks like Windows 10 KB4023057 has been re-released and the update appears to be causing unexpected issues on some machines. We have come across some isolated reports from Twitter and Reddit which revealed that Windows 10 KB4023057 installation fails. A thread on Reddit claims that the system downloaded the update but the installation of KB4023057 failed with error 0x80070643.... "Windows Update just tried (and failed) to install a "KB4023057" update just now. I'm wondering, what on earth does it do? I can't seem to find a post on the official Microsoft website about it, and any news articles I find of it (from MONTHS ago) talk about it messing with files in the user directory and network settings," the Redditor explained.

Just think how many billions of hours are wasted remedying Microsoft's blunders. They have no shame, no credibility, in my opinion. It really in my opinion calls for a legal action of some type. So far Android has never been such a mess.



Labels: [Microsoft](#)

[Intellectual Dissonance](#)

Let us for the sake of argument make the following assumptions.

1. CO2 in the atmosphere is increasing
2. Increased CO2 will raise temperatures
3. Increased temperatures will have detrimental effects on life on the planet
4. The fundamental, principal and primary cause of increased CO2 is human use of fossil fuels

Now that I believe is the general argument. The problem then is; how do we mitigate the detrimental effects? One guesses that it is simply the reduction of human actions resulting in the

emission of CO2 if one accepts the above.

Thus how does one reduce CO2 emissions? There are two ways:

1. Reduce use of fossil fuels and the like which emit them.
2. Capture and isolate the CO2 emitted by fossil fuels so they do not enter the atmosphere

Namely the classic law of nature:

Input-Output=Net Accumulation

If we want no or negative accumulation then we need less input, namely fossil fuel usage, OR more output, which is CO2 extraction by technical means. Somehow the second step is forgotten.

Now how does one accomplish a reduction in Output? If one is an economist or politician you tax it. The old phrase is; "if all you have is a hammer then everything looks like a nail" So tax it. That my friends just means more "food" to the monster.

The second approach is; how does one accomplish Output? Simply, one uses the mass technical means available to us. Send a man, person, to the moon, no problem. Extract CO2, well we already have dozens of ways. So why not just do it? No taxes from this approach.

Now [Nature](#) has a piece which states:

Imposing a cost on carbon is the most economically efficient way to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and keep global temperatures within the targets of the Paris climate agreement. If heavy emitters must pay the most, they will shift to cleaner practices. Many jurisdictions have introduced carbon taxes (including Chile, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) and emissions-trading schemes (such as those in California, the European Union, Quebec, Ontario and South Korea). About 20% of global greenhouse-gas emissions are covered, or soon will be. But almost half of those are still priced below US\$10 per tonne of carbon dioxide — too low to make a dent in global emissions. A worldwide carbon-pricing system would speed up emissions cuts and prevent carbon-intensive industries from relocating to avoid charges. It would ensure that carbon pricing is effective and emissions are reduced at the lowest possible cost.

Now the principal author is allegedly an assistant professor of economics. Remember the hammer metaphor. Why in the good Lord's name in a science journal do we have this unopposed view. Tax not Technology! No wonder the French are in revolt.



Labels: [Global Warming](#)

Wednesday, January 16, 2019

[Yikes, Another Global Calamity](#)

[Nature](#) reports on the ever more faster moving magnetic North Pole. They note:

Second, the motion of the north magnetic pole made the problem worse. The pole wanders in unpredictable ways that have fascinated explorers and scientists since James Clark Ross first measured it in 1831 in the Canadian Arctic. In the mid-1990s it picked up speed, from around 15 kilometres per year to around 55 kilometres per year. By 2001, it had entered the Arctic Ocean — where, in 2007, a team including Chulliat landed an aeroplane on the sea ice in an attempt to locate the pole. In 2018, the pole crossed the International Date Line into the Eastern Hemisphere. It is currently making a beeline for Siberia.

Now the [German Press](#) notes a bit of excitement:

By 2018, scientists at US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the British Geological Survey realized they needed to release an updated WMM because it had become "so inaccurate that it was about to exceed the acceptable limit for navigational errors." The wandering pole is driven by unpredictable changes in liquid iron inside the Earth. Due to the US government shutdown, scientists have been unable to release the updated WMM. Instead, they have pushed back the date to January 30, hoping that the government will be running by then. But it's unclear if that will be the case.

The issue is that GPS is independent of the magnetic pole so who cares and second a shift in the pole has real issues not yet discussed, such as the flipping of the Pole to the South. Global Warming anyone?



Labels: [Commentary](#)

Tuesday, January 15, 2019

[Rosa Redux](#)

A hundred years ago today [Rosa Luxemburg was killed in Germany](#). The Spartacists had finally met the incipient German militarists in the beginning of the Revolution of 1918-1919.

It is interesting to review their demands (see Waldman, The Spartacist Uprising, Marquette, 1958):

Immediate release of all persons who because of their fight for the interests of the proletariat are suffering in prisons and jails, in protective custody or serving a sentence

Immediate abrogation of the state of siege.

Immediate cancellation of the compulsory labor law.

Beyond these, the proletariat must request:

Annulment of all war loans without compensation.

Expropriation of the entire bank capital, mines and foundries; substantial reduction of working hours, establishment of minimum wages.

Expropriation of all large estates and middle-sized estates. Transfer of the direction of production to the delegates of agricultural workers and small farmers.

Decisive changes in military affairs, such as:

- a. Granting to soldiers the right of free association and assembly for matters pertaining to official and non-official business.*
- b. Abrogation of the right of military superiors to discipline subordinates; discipline will be maintained by soldier delegates.*
- c. Abrogation of courts-martial.*
- d. Transfer of military superiors by majority decision of the subordinates.*

Transfer of the distribution of food to representatives of the workers.

Abolition of individual states and dynasties.

Just some thoughts if one can read this in the context of today's political fights.



Labels: [Politics](#)

Sunday, January 13, 2019

[Born In/On Staten Island](#)

The [NY Times](#) announces this week's new program, "Made In Staten Island". I give up on prepositions. But the point is that having mastered some six languages a bit, plus classic Latin and little classic Greek, words count. Ask a good contract lawyer or divorce lawyer. Slip up on a preposition and you have big problems.

Now I was born "on" Staten Island, above ground in a hospital, so I was told. In my early years I spent time at the Pro Seminary for Franciscans on Todt Hill, now owned by some other religious organization. But being there, and St Francis was Italian just to remind folks, we saw a great many come and go. On Todt Hill, "death" hill in Dutch, we also had a lot of neighbors akin to what is alleged in this series, yet they were often older, family oriented, both types of families, and their children were often sent to the best schools. The worker bees, my phrase not theirs, were often in Brooklyn. Back then there was no bridge, and any escape route was via New Jersey.

But on Staten Island then it was bi-lingual, English and Italian. Sunday Mass was in English and another in Italian. But to my surprise decades later, my Italian was not Florentine, it was Sicilian. Accent, phrases and the like.

As for crimes, I was a Lifeguard in charge of the Ocean Breeze area, and once a week some dead body would wash ashore having been dropped off the Belt Parkway in Brooklyn. There was no crime on Staten Island, back then folks were careful of where they lived.

But it should be interesting to see how they present my old home town. It certainly was not Kansas.



Labels: [Commentary](#)

Sunday, January 13, 2019

[Privacy?](#)

Despite the allegations to the contrary, there is no Constitutional Right of Privacy. There are laws, but no right. A while back I wrote a paper on [Privacy in the Internet Environment](#), in 2002, before the issues had become red hot. At the time no one seemed interested. I presented to colleagues in the White House Staff on one hand and to my Russian partners on the other hand. The Russians were interested. But that was almost two decades ago.

Now the [EFF](#), an excellent organization that all should defend, has noted the following:

The U.S. government sends a lot of emails. Like any large, modern organization, it wants to “optimize” for “user engagement” using “analytics” and “big data.” In practice, that means tracking the people it communicates with—secretly, thoroughly, and often, insecurely....Every time I open this email, my device sends Granicus my email address and a unique identifier for the email that I opened. Granicus knows exactly who I am, which email I’m reading, and when I opened it—and potentially, so might a network observer...The email also uses link shimming, the practice of obfuscating URLs in emails for tracking purposes, to track which links you click on. (Link shimming, and link tracking more generally, is commonly used on the web by search engines and social media companies.) Take a look at a sample link from the newsletter....The practice of link shimming poses a subtle security risk as well: it makes users more susceptible to phishing. If users are led to click links that look like garbage, they are much more likely to be duped into clicking links from less-than-reputable sources. 91% of cyber attacks start with a phishing email, including many attacks on the government itself. That means that training users to trust insecure, illegible links to unrecognizable domains is a serious problem.

So now we have the Government, and everyone else tracking such things as if you opened it, read it, printed it, and who you may have sent it to. All done on an open insecure transmission which not only gives the Government the information but anyone else who may try to get it.

At some time there should be some conversation regarding privacy, a real one, please!



Labels: [Privacy](#)

Saturday, January 12, 2019

[More on Rosa](#)

In an interesting paper by [Benjamin Zachariah](#) the author notes from [her writings](#):

Rosa Luxemburg's central statement on the national question came in a series of articles written for a Polish public in 1908-1909. The issue of national self-determination had arisen in Russia after the 1905 revolution, before which it was mainly an 'urgent' question in the Austro-Hungarian empire.

The occasion for her writing in this context was her criticism of the programme of the Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) of Russia.

In the tradition of Karl Marx's Critique of the Gotha Programme of the German Social Democratic Party, she explored the contradictory impulses of this programme.

Its 9th point read 'that the party demands a democratic republic whose constitution would ensure "that all nationalities forming the state have the right to self-determination."

She also drew attention to the 7th point, 'which demands the abolition of classes and the full legal equality of all citizens without distinction of sex, religion, race or nationality', and

the 8th, 'which says that the several ethnic groups of the state should have the right to schools conducted in their respective national languages at state expense, and the right to use their languages at assemblies and on an equal level with the state language in all state and public functions.'

And she cited in addition the 3rd, which asked for local self-government for those areas with special conditions or living conditions of the population.

She pointed out that those who formulated the programme clearly felt that 'the equality of all citizens before the law, linguistic rights, and local self-government were not enough to solve the nationality problem' and had therefore added another clause on national self-determination.

Now let us consider what she said over a century ago.

1. Self determination means that the groups so formed can select by themselves, as a collective, what rules they live by
2. That distinctions of people based upon religion, sex etc be abolished. This is much more than non discrimination.
3. Rights to their own language, superseding any "national" common language
4. Local self government

Sound familiar? Indeed, the Marxist agenda of Rosa and her allies have been here before, and it is here again. This is not Socialism of the 1910s in the US, Debs and my grandmother, it is what they rebelled against, Marxism.

History has examined and approached these domains before, and somehow the politicians rediscovering them are doing so devoid of any historical or economic perspective.



Labels: [Politics](#)

[Have we no Prisons, Have we no Jails?](#)

When I see the overflowing trash in Washington as shown graphically by the [NY Times](#) I think little of the Government worker but all of the people who dumped it there. This demonstrates a clear issue of physical causality.

The "cause" of the trash is not the political battle but the people who dumped it there. Now the DC police are not on strike, so why not hand out littering tickets. Why not enforce these misdemeanors with picking up of the trash. A self solving system. Not only that but one can then fine them as well and have a self funding system.

Causality is an important concept. It is a critical principle in understanding our very existence. Showing an overflowing trash heap and stating a false cause is not only poor journalism but is "fake news".

Now let me take it a step further. Look at the NY subways, often filled with trash. If one were to use facial recognition to identify the trash disposers then perhaps we could do the same here. Send them down on the tracks and fine them. Perhaps a bit harsh, but it is causality again.

But the overflowing trash is emblematic of politics in general, and unfortunately of the press in particular.



Labels: [Government](#)

Friday, January 11, 2019

[I Am Spartacus!](#)

In the late 1960s when I was in Cambridge (Massachusetts not England) there were massive political and antiwar assemblies. If I recall correctly one was the Rosa Luxemburg chapter of SDS. Now as a young Instructor and grad student in the technical space I had no idea who Rosa Luxemburg was, but the name was intriguing. Go some thirty years hence in a bar in Moscow and my Polish partner, a former member of Solidarity and imprisoned by the Soviets, ranted about Rosa. I was still ignorant.

But over the years I have become acquainted with the person. You see Rosa was a founder of the Spartacists, a group of Marxists in Germany in the early 20th century who were Communists in Germany but not fully aligned with the Bolsheviks such as Lenin. Yet Lenin expressed his loss at

the time of her assassination by the Freikorps in 1919. Thus 100 years ago Rosa was shot and dumped into the river in Berlin.

Her beliefs were true blue Marxist. One of particular interest today is Rosa and the National Question. Rosa was a bright Polish Jew working in Germany and having a doctorate from the University in Zurich. She viewed society as demanding an overhaul and it was her ideas as promulgated in the papers she wrote for that stated her positions. In many ways she was a pure Marxist and set apart from the Soviet Communists. She was argumentative, aggressive, assertive, and a promulgator of her social message.

Now the National Question I believe can be simply stated by Rosa herself:

“Nation-states” are today the very same tools and forms of class rule of the bourgeoisie as the earlier, non-national states, and like them they are bent on conquest. The nation-states have the same tendencies toward conquest, war, and oppression – in other words, the tendencies to become “not-national.” Therefore, among the “national” states there develop constant scuffles and conflicts of interests, and even if today, by some miracle, all states should be transformed to “national,” then the next day they would already present the same common picture of war, conquest, and oppression.”

But Lenin was a promulgator of the "right of self-determination" Yet Rosa noted:

“The right of nations to self-determination” is at first glance a paraphrase of the old slogan of bourgeois nationalism put forth in all countries at all times: “the right of nations to freedom and independence.”

She felt such a "right" was controlled by the bourgeois. For Rosa there should be no boundaries, no borders. Borders were artificial means of control of the proletariat.

Thus the Spartacists were a group of Marxists disavowing borders, against nations as false constructs.

Thus when one looks at Washington today we may readily see many Spartacists and many Luxemburg look alike.

One should recall what this battle did to Germany and regrettably what happened to Rosa.



Labels: [Politics](#)

[Technology Transfer?](#)

[NIH had completed a Director's conference](#) wherein an interesting issue was discussed.

They noted:

ACD member and working group cochair Dr. M. Roy Wilson walked the assembly through the

former topic, outlining the scope of a problem that involves intramural as well as extramural intellectual property potentially targeted for misappropriation by organizations outside the United States. Failure of visiting scientists to report financial conflicts and establishing so-called “shadow labs” that illegally copy U.S. resources are just two types of undue influence that have been documented by recent federal investigations. After taking a look at his own institution (Wayne State University), Wilson said he found warning flags of a similar threat within the research community there. He cautioned ACD members and NIH leaders to be vigilant about protecting the scientific enterprise from those who would take advantage of its culture of open information-sharing for their own personal gain. “The main message is that it’s real,” Wilson said. “There are significant breaches that are occurring at our universities...At the same time, when you look at the large number of investigators that are funded by the U.S. government in one way or another, [the problems account for] a relatively small amount. However it’s enough that it’s just not a random occurrence here and there. It seems to be more systematic and in some cases concentrated at certain institutions. It certainly warrants concern and a response.”

This is, was, and will continue to be a serious issue. Our universities are open to many international students and researchers and as such they all too often have access to the latest technology as well as poorly protected intellectual property. Also these individuals are funded by the US Taxpayer.

The technology is then often taken back to country of residence. There it is often used to compete with US entities.

This is ever more critical in the bio domain because of the IP in therapeutics as well as the use of the bio IP as a weapon.



Labels: [Intellectual Property](#)

Thursday, January 10, 2019

[MOOCS, Not The Smashing Success](#)

Back when MOOCs first started I was highly skeptical. As they evolved I became convinced that my initial assessment was correct. Now there are some good ones, yet they are far and few between. [Science](#) published a review of them in its recent issue.

They note:

It was clear from the first few years of MOOC research that MOOCs disproportionately drew their learners from affluent countries and neighborhoods, and markers of socioeconomic status were correlated with greater persistence and certification. In 2012 to 2013, 80% of learners came from countries rated with high or very high United Nations Human Development Index ratings. That proportion grew slightly through 2015 to 2016, so that the majority of new registrations and certifications came from the world's most affluent countries. Rather than creating new pathways at the margins of global higher education, MOOCs are primarily a complementary asset for learners within existing systems. Last, MOOCs' low completion rate has

barely budgeted, despite 6 years of investment in course development and learning research. A strategy that depends on bringing new learners into higher education cannot succeed if educational institutions cannot support learners in converting their time and financial investment into completing a course to earn a credential with labor market value....MOOCs will not transform higher education and probably will not disappear entirely. Rather, they will provide new supports for specific niches within already existing education systems, primarily supporting already educated learners. The 6-year saga of MOOCs provides a cautionary tale for education policy-makers facing whatever will be the next promoted innovation in education technology, be it artificial intelligence or virtual reality or some unexpected new entrant. New education technologies are rarely disruptive but instead are domesticated by existing cultures and systems.

Here are my observations:

1. My first one was an MIT course which I had actually taught decades before. The problem was that the software for the exams was defective, the information for using it was not there, and the overall structure was banal at best.
2. I took an Epigenetics course. After overcoming the language issue, Australian versus US, the most disturbing part was the usage of "peer evaluation" This means one is evaluated by those who know less and are often motivated to suppress those they feel are superior. The worst of the culture exploitation. The instructor was clearly in my opinion clueless on this dynamic. Peer Evaluation is one of the worst concepts in education.
3. Some instructors in courses were totally incomprehensible. Totally. One chemistry course had a few folks rambling across a board of stuff and one wondered if they just wanted to have a MOOC presence.

On the positive side:

1. A Hong Kong medical course was spot on, as was a US chemistry course, as was a Harvard Med Immunology course.
2. In contrast the Harvard Med Genetics course was driven by cartoons, yes real cartoons. It was as costly as the immunology one but in my opinion targeted for the millennial.

Overall I have tried well over two dozen of these. A recent couple from Mt Sinai in New York was exceptionally well done. They were short, on a specific topic, well articulated, and kept on topic.

I found Coursera much better whereas EdX was all too often an overdone attempt as a semester level course. Often missing the target.

The drop rate is significant yet there does not seem to be any attempt to find out why. With such an attitude one sadly sees them going by the wayside.

The best course was the MIT one on introductory Biology with Eric Lander. It was just a well done recording of his lectures with exceptionally well thought out problems. In contrast when a colleague tried a genetics course it lacked the vibrancy of the Lander lectures.



Labels: [MOOCs](#)

Tuesday, January 8, 2019

Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transitions and Cancer

When I was young and my father had returned from the Navy in WWII he had a phrase he used frequently to admonish my at times less than neat tendencies. Namely: "a place for everything and everything in its place". I thought I knew what he was saying but it was not until I started to understand cancer metastasis that this truly rang a bell. Cancer is not "neat". It just drops stuff all over the place, sending cells hither and thither, never putting things back where they belong.

We examine another process which is linked to cancer and metastasis, namely the Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transition, EMT. As we have noted in many other areas we have examined this has been argued to have significant therapeutic interest. There has been some examination here as of later but there is limited clinical application. What this area does do is shine a light on the issue of cell location and lost of location stability as an integral part of cell carcinogenesis.

Cells express genes in different ways depending when and where they are. Epithelial cells generally express genes that allow the cell to perform a specific function and to do so at a specific location. However from time to time, such as in the growth phase of an organism, this stable phenotype is suppressed and the cell has a characteristic that allows it to move freely as a mesenchymal cell. Thus transitions from mesenchymal to epithelial phenotypes are stabilizing transitions in a maturing organism (called MET). The reverse, EMT, are generally destabilizing transitions. For example a melanocyte with E cadherin expressed binds to the other keratinocytes and remain stable in the skin. When E cadherin is not expressed but N cadherin is, the melanocytes bind together and then wander, often first upward creating a carcinoma in situ, then downward creating a melanoma. Thus as expression of genes is effected the process of EMT allows for movement and thus metastasis.

In this note, we examine some of the recent advances understanding this process, especially as applied to several somatic malignancies. There is also the consideration of using EMT mechanisms as a means to target therapeutics to mitigate metastasis. The state of the art is still somewhat early but it does provide an interesting alternative. This paper is not meant to be comprehensive but suggestive.

Weinberg presents a detailed description of the EMT as a part of metastasis¹¹[1].

¹¹[1] Weinberg pp 657-669

As Heerboth et al note:

EMT and MET comprise the processes by which cells transit between epithelial and mesenchymal states, and they play integral roles in both normal development and cancer metastasis. This article reviews these processes and the molecular pathways that contribute to them.

First, we compare embryogenesis and development with cancer metastasis.

We then discuss the signaling pathways and the differential expression and down-regulation of receptors in both tumor cells and stromal cells, which play a role in EMT and metastasis.

We further delve into the clinical implications of EMT and MET in several types of tumors, and lastly, we discuss the role of epigenetic events that regulate EMT/MET processes.

We hypothesize that reversible epigenetic events regulate both EMT and MET, and thus, also regulate the development of different types of metastatic cancers.

The above is more of an outline of the issues that can be considered. Namely: (i) benign EMT processes versus malignant, (ii) downregulation and control of EMT pathways, (iii) specific EMT effects in specific cancers, and (iv) reversible controls regulating metastasis.

As Radisky notes:

The epithelial-mesenchymal transition (EMT) is an orchestrated series of events in which cell-cell and cell-extracellular matrix (ECM) interactions are altered to release epithelial cells from the surrounding tissue, the cytoskeleton is reorganized to confer the ability to move through a three-dimensional ECM, and a new transcriptional program is induced to maintain the mesenchymal phenotype.

Essential for embryonic development, EMT is nevertheless potentially destructive if deregulated, and it is becoming increasingly clear that inappropriate utilization of EMT mechanisms is an integral component of the progression of many tumors of epithelial tissues. Structural integrity is a key property of epithelial tissues: external epithelia serve as protective barriers against environmental hazards, and internal epithelia create defined and physiologically controlled subdomains within the organism. Epithelial structure is maintained by cell-cell interactions.

These involve tight junctions, cadherin based adherens junctions that are connected to the actin cytoskeleton, gap junctions that allow direct chemical interactions between neighboring cells, and desmosomes connected to the intermediate filament cytoskeleton, and cell-ECM interactions mediated by integrins and other molecules.

In this paper we address the following:

1. What is EMT and how does it function?

2. What are the critical drivers of the EMT process?
3. How does EMT effect a cancerous process?
4. What are the pathway elements involved in EMT?
5. What are the specifics of various cancers and EMT?
6. What is the interaction between the immune system and the EMT process?
7. What role does chronic inflammation play in EMT activation and in turn cancer?
8. What are the therapeutic opportunities available in the EMT context?
9. Does the presence of blood borne EMT markers present a diagnostic, prognostic, and therapeutic opportunity?

EMT is a process whereby a cell changes from a stable cell in a well defined matrix to a cell which has the ability to move about in a relatively unstructured manner. In essence the EMT process enables a metastatic change. We summarize some of these features herein.

EMT is simply the process whereby cells lose the ability to be at the right place at the right time. From Kalluri and Weinberg we have a definition:

An epithelial-mesenchymal transition (EMT) is a biologic process that allows a polarized epithelial cell, which normally interacts with basement membrane via its basal surface, to undergo multiple biochemical changes that enable it to assume a mesenchymal cell phenotype, which includes enhanced migratory capacity, invasiveness, elevated resistance to apoptosis, and greatly increased production of ECM (extra cellular matrix) components.

The completion of an EMT is signaled by the degradation of underlying basement membrane and the formation of a mesenchymal cell that can migrate away from the epithelial layer in which it originated.

Thus many cells are organized in a certain manner to effect certain functions. In the prostate, a glandular organ, there are basal and luminal cells surrounding the glands wherein secretion occurs. In the case of high grade PIN for example, the cells start to proliferate and no longer align properly. Then they slowly depart and create for wont of a better term, move out. They continue:

A number of distinct molecular processes are engaged in order to initiate an EMT and enable it to reach completion. These include activation of transcription factors, expression of specific cell-surface proteins, reorganization and expression of cytoskeletal proteins, production of ECM-degrading enzymes, and changes in the expression of specific microRNAs. In many cases, the involved factors are also used as biomarkers to demonstrate the passage of a cell through an EMT..

The pioneering work of Elizabeth Hay first described an “epithelial mesenchymal transformation” using a model of chick primitive streak formation. In the intervening time, the term “transformation” has been replaced with “transition,” reflecting in part the reversibility of the process and the fact that it is distinct from neoplastic transformation.

The phenotypic plasticity afforded by an EMT is revealed by the occurrence of the reverse process — a mesenchymal-epithelial transition (MET), which involves the conversion of mesenchymal cells to epithelial derivatives. Relatively little is known about this process; the best-studied example is the MET associated with kidney formation, which is driven by genes such as paired box 2 (Pax2), bone morphogenetic protein 7 (Bmp7), and Wilms tumor 1 (Wt1).

From Kalluri and Weinberg we have three types of MET cells are discussed:

(A) Type 1 EMT is associated with implantation and embryonic gastrulation and gives rise to the mesoderm and endoderm and to mobile neural crest cells. The primitive epithelium, specifically the epiblast, gives rise to primary mesenchyme via an EMT. This primary mesenchyme can be re-induced to form secondary epithelia by a MET. It is speculated that such secondary epithelia may further differentiate to form other types of epithelial tissues and undergo subsequent EMT to generate the cells of connective tissue, including astrocytes, adipocytes, chondrocytes, osteoblasts, and muscle cells.

(B) EMTs are re-engaged in the context of inflammation and fibrosis and represent the type 2 EMTs. Unlike the type 1 EMT, the type 2 EMT is expressed over extended periods of time and can eventually destroy an affected organ if the primary inflammatory insult is not removed or attenuated.

(C) Finally, the secondary epithelia associated with many organs can transform into cancer cells that later undergo the EMTs that enable invasion and metastasis, thereby representing type 3 EMTs.

Namely this details the three types; (i) those involved in a developing organism, (ii) those involved in a repairing organism, and (iii) those involved in a metastasizing organism. There is a similarity amongst these three.

As Kong et al have noted:

Cancer stem cells (CSCs) are cells within a tumor that possess the capacity to self-renew and maintain tumor-initiating capacity through differentiation into the heterogeneous lineages of cancer cells that comprise the whole tumor. These tumor-initiating cells could provide a resource for cells that cause tumor recurrence after therapy. Although the cell origin of CSCs remains to be fully elucidated, mounting evidence has demonstrated that Epithelial-to-Mesenchymal Transition (EMT), induced by different factors, is associated with tumor aggressiveness and metastasis and these cells share molecular characteristics with CSCs, and thus are often called cancer stem-like cells or tumor-initiating cells.

The acquisition of an EMT phenotype is a critical process for switching early stage carcinomas into invasive malignancies, which is often associated with the loss of epithelial differentiation and gain of mesenchymal phenotype. Recent studies have demonstrated that EMT plays a critical role not only in tumor metastasis but also in tumor recurrence and that it is tightly linked with the biology of cancer stem-like cells or cancer-initiating cells. Here we will succinctly summarize the state-of-our-knowledge regarding the molecular similarities between cancer

stem-like cells or CSCs and EMT-phenotypic cells that are associated with tumor aggressiveness focusing on solid tumors.

We now consider several observations resulting for the above analysis. We examine four areas:

1. We look at the issue of cancer stem cells and their relationship to the EMT process. CSC are interesting targets of interest since targeting them may be much more effective than targeting bulk tumors. All too often removing a bulk tumor without regard to a CSC presence just means recurrence. It is often the case where a surgeon gets a clear margin on an excision and declares victory while a CSC has escaped.

2. Circulating tumor cells or parts thereof have become of significant interest in what has been termed liquid biopsies. Namely constituents of tumor cells in the blood can be detected and analyzed. Here we look at markers for excess EMT process.

3. There has been an evolving understanding of the EMT process. We briefly discuss this change.

4. The area of new therapeutics is key. One specific area we have tried to open is based upon the following logic.

- a) EMT is related to and a putative driver of metastatic growth.
- b) EMT as a process is heavily influenced by immune system drivers
- c) Perhaps immunotherapeutic approaches to mitigating EMT processes may be effected and this down regulate any metastatic results.

Thus studying the EMT process can add significantly to our understanding of a multiplicity of cancers.

1. Cancer Stem Cells

Stem cells have been discussed at length in the context of many cancers. They are often closely associated with the EMT process. As Mitra et al note:

Tumor relapse and metastasis are the primary causes of poor survival rates in patients with advanced cancer despite successful resection or chemotherapeutic treatment. A primary cause of relapse and metastasis is the persistence of cancer stem cells (CSCs), which are highly resistant to chemotherapy. Although highly efficacious drugs suppressing several subpopulations of CSCs in various tissue-specific cancers are available, recurrence is still common in patients. To find more suitable therapy for relapse, the mechanisms underlying metastasis and drug-resistance associated with relapse-initiating CSCs need to be identified. Recent studies in circulating tumor cells (CTCs) of some cancer patients manifest phenotypes of both CSCs and epithelial-mesenchymal transition (EMT).

These patients are unresponsive to standard chemotherapies and have low progression free survival, suggesting that EMT-positive CTCs are related to co-occur with or transform into relapse-initiating CSCs.

Furthermore, EMT programming in cancer cells enables in the remodeling of extracellular matrix to break the dormancy of relapse-initiating CSCs. In this review, we extensively discuss the association of the EMT program with CTCs and CSCs to characterize a subpopulation of patients prone to relapses.

Identifying the mechanisms by which EMT-transformed CTCs and CSCs initiate relapse could facilitate the development of new or enhanced personalized therapeutic regimens.

We have discussed the CSC construct especially in the case of PCa. It could be argued that identifying the PCa and removing them would then make any of the other cells indolent. CSC development still is a complex area. Just how a CSC is formed and how it manages to survive and prosper is complex. Perhaps the nexus with the EMT process may assist in better understanding.

2. Circulating Tumor Cells

Circulating Tumor Cells, CTC, and parts therefrom, such as RNA fragments, even DNA fragments, are also a current topic of interest in detecting and monitoring cancers. Since EMT is considered an essential part of the metastatic process, then it would seem logical to also look for EMT markers as well.

As Heerboth et al note:

Another exciting area of research is the use of EMT markers in the analysis of circulating tumor cells (CTC). Diagnostically, CTC has been a mainstay of clinical practice in assessment of metastasis and prognosis. The presence of CTC in a patient's blood can be measured using the AdnaTest, a PCR assay for markers of EMT such as Twist, Akt, and Pi3k. The test employs a method for enriching the CTCs in a blood sample using antibodies conjugated to magnetic beads. Once the tumor cells have been pulled down, the mRNA can be isolated and expression of EMT markers determined. The test is reported to be sensitive enough to detect two CTCs in a 5 mL sample of blood.

Recent works have indicated that consideration of CTC EMT status is critical to achieve a more accurate prognosis. In studies of metastatic breast cancer, CTC were found to express known EMT regulators, including TGF- β pathway components and the FOXC1 transcription factor. These data support a role for EMT in the blood-borne dissemination of human breast cancer. Classical markers of EMT, Twist, and vimentin, have been identified in breast cancer patients and specifically show elevated expression in patients with metastatic cancer relative to patients with early stage cancer, supporting the hypothesis that EMT controls the metastatic potential of CTCs

Thus we see that a more complex set of blood borne markers may be identified and profiled to establish cancer diagnosis, prognosis and arguably even fine tuning on therapeutics and therapeutic targeting.

From Lee et al we have a list of putative markers. Whether any of these are specifically appropriate will take time to study. The issue one assumes is to better understand EMT as it pertains to a malignancy. For example, for decades in breast cancer, in melanoma, and other cancers, removal of lymph nodes was considered standard practice even if no overt sign of metastasis was present. The resulting morbidity was often significant. If however one seeks EMT processes then perhaps one may attain a more viable and specific alternative.

3. Contradictions

There has been a debate over the years regarding the nature of EMT and cancer. As Tian (2005) notes in an earlier paper:

Epithelial mesenchymal transition has been postulated as a versatile mechanism which facilitates cellular repositioning and redeployment during embryonic development, tissue reconstruction after injury, carcinogenesis, and tumor metastasis. The hypothesis originates from parallels drawn between the morphology and behavior of locomotory and sedentary cells in vitro and in various normal and pathologic processes in vivo.

This review analyzes data from several studies on embryonic development, wound healing, and the pathology of human tumors, including work from our own laboratory, to assess the validity of the proposal. It is concluded that there is no convincing evidence for conversion of epithelial cells into mesenchymal cell lineages in vivo and that the biological repertoire of normal and malignant cells is sufficient to account for the events and processes observed, without needing to invoke radical changes in cell identity.

The author then goes on with a detailed "on the other hand" discussion of EMT relevance. This is always a worthwhile analysis to come back to from time to time.

However Roche (2018) notes some thirteen years later:

The epithelial-to-mesenchymal transition (EMT) occurs during normal embryonic development, tissue regeneration, organ fibrosis, and wound healing. It is a highly dynamic process, by which epithelial cells can convert into a mesenchymal phenotype. However, it is also involved in tumor progression with metastatic expansion, and the generation of tumor cells with stem cell properties that play a major role in resistance to cancer treatment.

EMT is not complete in cancer cells, and tumor cells are in multiple transitional states and express mixed epithelial and mesenchymal genes.

Such hybrid cells in partial EMT can move collectively as clusters, and can be more aggressive than cells with a complete EMT phenotype. EMT is also reversible by the mesenchymal-to-epithelial transition (MET), thought to affect circulating cancer cells when they reach a

desirable metastatic niche to develop secondary tumors. The EMT process involves the disruption of cell–cell adhesion and cellular polarity, remodeling of the cytoskeleton, and changes in cell–matrix adhesion. It is associated with improvement in migratory and invasive properties.

In cancers, EMT inducers are hypoxia, cytokines, and growth factors secreted by the tumor microenvironment, stroma crosstalk, metabolic changes, innate and adaptive immune responses, and treatment with antitumor drugs. Switch in gene expression from epithelial to mesenchymal phenotype is triggered by complex regulatory networks involving transcriptional control with SNAI1 and SNAI2, ZEB1 and ZEB2, Twist, and E12/E47 among transcriptional factors, non-coding RNAs (miRNAs and long non-coding RNAs), chromatin remodeling and epigenetic modifications, alternative splicing, post-translational regulation, protein stability, and subcellular localization.

EMT is becoming a target of interest for anticancer therapy. However, more knowledge about the role of EMT in metastasis, its control, and its reversion is necessary. Indeed, alternative modes of dissemination, colonization via a MET-independent pathway, and investigation of circulating cancer cells in the blood support a more nuanced view of the role of EMT and MET in cancer metastasis.

The above argument seems to strengthen the assertion of the significance of EMT and as importantly the MET reversal process which we have discussed.

4. Therapeutics

The understanding of the EMT process presents opportunities for therapeutic development. Mladinich et al have noted:

Cancer stem cell (CSC) has become recognized for its role in both tumorigenesis and poor patient prognosis in recent years. Traditional therapeutics are unable to effectively eliminate this group of cells from the bulk population of cancer cells, allowing CSCs to persist posttreatment and thus propagate into secondary tumors. The therapeutic potential of eliminating CSCs, to decrease tumor relapse, has created a demand for identifying mechanisms that directly target and eliminate cancer stem cells. Molecular profiling has shown that cancer cells and tumors that exhibit the CSC phenotype also express genes associated with the epithelial-to-mesenchymal transition (EMT) feature.

Ample evidence has demonstrated that upregulation of master transcription factors (TFs) accounting for the EMT process such as Snail/Slug and Twist can reprogram cancer cells from differentiated to stem-like status. Despite being appealing therapeutic targets for tackling CSCs, pharmacological approaches that directly target EMT-TFs remain impossible. In this review, we will summarize recent advances in the regulation of Snail/Slug and Twist at transcriptional, translational, and posttranslational levels and discuss the clinical implication and application for EMT blockade as a promising strategy for CSC targeting.

Thus there may be avenues of access to controlling the CSC via the EMT process. The authors conclude:

These studies indicate that approaches which inhibit protein expression or activity upstream of EMT-TFs will have a better chance to achieve CSC eradication. Extensive work as reviewed above shed light on new approaches for the targeting of EMT-TFs. As our understanding of protein regulation of EMT-TFs advances, the ability to generate or repurpose new candidate molecules to target CSCs increases.

Specific inactivation of EMT-TFs in combination with chemotherapy will likely enhance patient survival long-term via targeting of both CSCs and differentiated tumor cells. We have reasons for optimism that future studies on structural information of upstream regulators of EMT-TFs and on the crosstalk between upstream regulators and EMT-TFs would yield new CSC therapeutics.

References

1. Biechele, T., et al, Wnt/ β -Catenin Signaling and AXIN1 Regulate Apoptosis Triggered by Inhibition of the Mutant Kinase BRAFV600E in Human Melanoma, *Sci. Signal.*, 10 January 2012 Vol. 5, Issue 206, p. ra3.
2. Cai, C., et al, ERG induces androgen receptor-mediated regulation of SOX9 in prostate cancer, *The Journal of Clinical Investigation* <http://www.jci.org> Volume 123 Number 3 March 2013.
3. Chen, Y., et al, TMPRSS2, a Serine Protease Expressed in the Prostate on the Apical Surface of Luminal Epithelial Cells and Released into Semen in Prostatomes, Is Misregulated in Prostate Cancer Cells, *The American Journal of Pathology*, Vol. 176, No. 6, June 2010
4. Demichelis, F., et al, Distinct Genomic Aberrations Associated with ERG Rearranged Prostate Cancer, *Gene, Chromo, Cancer*, V 48, 1999, pp 366-380.
5. Demichelis, F., et al, TMPRSS2:ERG Gene Fusion Associated with Lethal Prostate Cancer in a Watchful Waiting Cohort, *Onco* 2007 pp. 1-4.
6. DeNunzio, et al, The Controversial Relationship Between Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia and Prostate Cancer: The Role of Inflammation, *Euro Uro* 2011.
7. Dobi, A., et al, ERG Expression Levels in Prostate Tumors Reflect Functional Status of the Androgen Receptor, *Open Cancer Jrl*, V 3, 2010, pp 101-108.
8. Esgueva, R., et al, Prevalance of TMPRSS2-ERG and SLC45A3-ERG Gene Fusions in a Large Prostatectomy Cohort, *Mod Path*, V 2010, pp 1-8.
9. Fenouille, et al, The Epithelial-Mesenchymal Transition (EMT) Regulatory Factor SLUG (SNAI2) Is a Downstream Target of SPARC and AKT in Promoting Melanoma Cell Invasion, *PLoS ONE*, www.plosone.org, 1 July 2012, Volume 7, Issue 7, e40378
10. Flajollet, S. et al, Abnormal Expression of the ERG Transcription Factor in Prostate Cancer Cells Activates Osteopontin, *Mol Cancer Res*; 9(7) July 2011.
11. Goldstein, A. et al, Identification of a Cell of Origen for Human Prostate Cancer, *Science*, 2010 V 329, pp 568-571.
12. Gong et al, Epigenetic silencing of TET2 and TET3 induces an EMT-like process in melanoma, *Oncotarget*, 2017, Vol. 8, (No. 1), pp: 315-328
13. Goss, K., M. Kahn, *Targeting the Wnt Pathway in Cancer*, Springer (New York) 2011.

14. Hearing V., S. Leong, From Melanocytes to Melanoma, Humana 2011.
15. Heerboth et al, EMT and tumor metastasis, Clinical and Translational Medicine (2015) 4:6
16. Iljin, K., et al, TMPRSS2 Fusions with Oncogenes ETS Factors in Prostate Cancer, Cancer Res, V 66, 2006, pp 10242-10246.
17. Jagle et al, SNAIL1-mediated downregulation of FOXA proteins facilitates the inactivation of transcriptional enhancer elements at key epithelial genes in colorectal cancer cells, PLOS Genetics November 20, 2017
18. Jin, H., et al, Androgen Receptor-Independent Function of FoxA1 in Prostate Cancer Metastasis, Cancer Res; 73(12) June 15, 2013
19. Jue et al, Notch1 promotes vasculogenic mimicry in hepatocellular carcinoma by inducing EMT signaling, Oncotarget, 2017, Vol. 8, (No. 2), pp: 2501-2513
20. Kalluri and Weinberg, The basics of epithelial-mesenchymal transition, The Journal of Clinical Investigation <http://www.jci.org> Volume 119 Number 6 June 2009
21. Kalluri, EMT: When epithelial cells decide to become mesenchymal-like cells, The Journal of Clinical Investigation <http://www.jci.org> Volume 119 Number 6 June 2009
22. King, J., Cooperativity of TMPRSS2-ERG with PI3 kinase pathway Activation in Prostate Oncogenesis, Nature Gen, V 41, 2009, pp 524-526.
23. Kong et al, Cancer Stem Cells and Epithelial-to-Mesenchymal Transition (EMT)-Phenotypic Cells: Are They Cousins or Twins? Cancers 2011, 3, 716-729
24. Kong et al, Epithelial to Mesenchymal Transition Is Mechanistically Linked with Stem Cell Signatures in Prostate Cancer Cells, PLOS ONE, August 2010, Volume 5, Issue 8, e12445
25. Lee et al, The epithelial–mesenchymal transition: new insights in signaling, development, and disease, The Journal of Cell Biology, Vol. 172, No. 7, March 27, 2006 973–981
26. Lippolis, G., et al, A high-density tissue microarray from patients with clinically localized prostate cancer reveals ERG and TATI exclusivity in tumor cells, Prostate Cancer and Prostatic Disease (2013) 16, 145–150.
27. Mitra et al, EMT, CTCs and CSCs in tumor relapse and drug-resistance, Oncotarget, Vol. 6, No. 13, 2015
28. Mladinich et al, Tackling Cancer Stem Cells via Inhibition of EMT Transcription Factors, Stem Cells International, Volume 2016, Article ID 5285892
29. Mosquera, J., et al, Characterization of TMPRSS2-ERG Fusion in High Grade Prostatic Intraepithelial Neoplasia and Potential Clinical Implications, Clin Can Res, V 14, 2008, pp 3380-3385.
30. Mosquera, J., et al, Morphological Features of TMPRSS2-ERG Gene Fusion Prostate Cancer, Jrl Path 2007 pp 91-101.
31. Mosquera, J., et al, Prevalence of TMPRSS2-ERG Fusion Prostate Cancer among Men Undergoing Prostate Biopsy in the United States, Clin Can Res, V 15, 2009, 4706-4711.
32. Mulholland et al, Pten Loss and RAS/MAPK Activation Cooperate to Promote EMT and Metastasis Initiated from Prostate Cancer Stem Progenitor Cells, Cancer Res; 72(7) April 1, 2012
33. Murphy, M., Diagnostic and Prognostic Biomarkers and Therapeutic Targets in Melanoma, Humana (Springer, New York), 2012.
34. Park, K., et al, TMPRSS2:ERG Gene Fusion Predicts Subsequent Detection of Prostate Cancer in Patients With High-Grade Prostatic Intraepithelial Neoplasia, JCO December 2, 2013.
35. Protopsaltis, I., et al, Linking Pre-Diabetes with Benign Prostate Hyperplasia. IGF1BP-3: A Conductor of Benign Prostate Hyperplasia Development Orchestra, PLOS ONE,

www.plosone.org, 1 December 2013, Volume 8, Issue 12.

<http://www.plosone.org/article/fetchObject.action?uri=info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0081411&representation=PDF>

36. Radisky, Epithelial-mesenchymal transition, *Journal of Cell Science* 118 (19)
37. Reddy S., et al, The erg gene: A human gene related to the ets oncogene, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, Vol. 84, pp. 6131-6135, September 1987.
38. Roche, The Epithelial-to-Mesenchymal Transition in Cancer, *Cancers* 2018, 10, 52
39. Rubin, M., A. Chinnaiyan, Bioinformatics approach leads to the discovery of the TMPRSS2:ETS gene fusion in prostate cancer, *Laboratory Investigation* (2006) 86, 1099–1102.
40. Rubin, M., A. Chinnaiyan, Bioinformatics Approach Leads to the Discovery of the TMPRSS2:ETS gene Fusion in Prostate Cancer, *Lab Inv* 2006, pp. 1099-1102.
41. Rubin, M., et al, Overexpression Amplification and Androgen Regulation of TPD52 in Prostate Cancer, *Can Res* 2004 pp 3814-3822.
42. Savagner, The epithelial–mesenchymal transition (EMT) phenomenon, *Annals of Oncology* 21 (Supplement 7): vii89–vii92, 2010
43. Shih and Yang, The EMT regulator slug and lung carcinogenesis, *Carcinogenesis* vol.32 no.9 pp.1299–1304, 2011
44. Shtivelman et al, Molecular pathways and targets in prostate cancer, *Oncotarget*, Vol. 5, No. 17, 2014
45. Song et al, Loss of FOXA1/2 Is Essential for the Epithelial-to-Mesenchymal Transition in Pancreatic Cancer, *AACT Jrl* 2010
46. Suarez-Carmona et al, EMT and inflammation: inseparable actors of cancer progression, *Molecular Oncology* 11 (2017) 805–823, 2017
47. Takahashi et al, The role of microRNAs in the regulation of cancer stem cells, *Frontiers in Genetics*, January2014|Volume4|Article295 | 1
48. Thompson and Newgreen, Carcinoma Invasion and Metastasis: A Role for Epithelial-Mesenchymal Transition?, *Cancer Res* 2005; 65: (14). July 15, 2005
49. Tian, The Fallacy of Epithelial Mesenchymal Transition in Neoplasia, *Cancer Res* 2005; 65: (14). July 15, 2005
50. Tomlins, A., ETS Rearrangements and Prostate Cancer Initiation, *Nature*, V 448, 2007, pp 595-599.
51. Tomlins, S., et al, ETS Gene Fusion in Prostate Cancer, *Eur Jrl Uro* 2009 pp 1-12.
52. Tomlins, S., et al, Recurrent Fusion of TMPRSS2 and ETS Transcription Factor Genes in Prostate Cancer, *Science*, V 310, 2005, pp 644-648.
53. Tomlins, S., et al, Role of the TMPRSS2–ERG Gene Fusion in Prostate Cancer, *Neoplasia*, Volume 10 Number 2 February 2008 pp. 177–188.
54. Tsuji et al, Epithelial-Mesenchymal Transition and Cell Cooperativity in Metastasis, *Cancer Res* 2009; 69: (18). September 15, 2009
55. Vikash et al, Glomerular parietal epithelial cells of adult murine kidney undergo EMT to generate cells with traits of renal progenitors, *J. Cell. Mol. Med.* Vol 15, No 2, 2011 pp. 396-413
56. Wang et al, Role of tumor microenvironment in tumorigenesis, *Journal of Cancer*, 2017; 8(5): 761-773
57. Wehbe et al, Epithelial-Mesenchymal-Transition-Like and TGFb Pathways Associated with Autochthonous Inflammatory Melanoma Development in Mice, *PLOS One* Nov 2012 Vol 7 Issue 11
58. Weinberg, *Cancer*, 2nd Ed, Garland (New York) 2014

59. Weinberg, R., The Biology of Cancer, Garland (New York) 2008.
60. Wu, L., et al, ERG Is a Critical Regulator of Wnt/LEF1 Signaling in Prostate Cancer, Cancer Res October 1, 2013 73; 6068. <http://cancerres.aacrjournals.org/content/73/19/6068.figures-only>
61. Wyatt, A., M. Gleave, Targeting the adaptive molecular landscape of castration-resistant prostate cancer, EMBO Molecular Medicine, April 2015.
62. Xie et al, Role of DAB2IP in modulating epithelial-to-mesenchymal transition and prostate cancer metastasis, PNAS | February 9, 2010 | vol. 107 | no. 6 | 2485–2490
63. Yang et al, Twist, a Master Regulator of Morphogenesis, Plays an Essential Role in Tumor Metastasis, Cell, Volume 117, Issue 7, 25 June 2004, Pages 927-939
64. Yuan, L. et al, ETS-related Gene (ERG) Controls Endothelial Cell Permeability via Transcriptional Regulation of the Claudin 5 (CLDN5) Gene, J. Biol. Chem. 2012, 287:6582-6591.
65. Zeisberg and Neilson, Biomarkers for epithelial-mesenchymal transitions, The Journal of Clinical Investigation <http://www.jci.org> Volume 119 Number 6 June 2009 1429
66. Zhao et al, Inhibition of Snail Family Transcriptional Repressor 2 (SNAI2) Enhances Multidrug Resistance of Hepatocellular Carcinoma Cells, PLOS, October 19, 2016
67. Zong, Y., et al, ETS Family Transcription Factors Collaborate with Alternative Signalling Pathways to Induce Carcinomas from Adult Murine Prostate Cells, PNAS, V 106, 209, pp 12465-12470.



Labels: [Cancer](#)

Sunday, January 6, 2019

[Latest Book](#)



I have posted my latest book, [The Chronicles of Friar Brendan](#), a tale that goes from the death of King Edward I to just after the Peasants Revolt of 1381. Its thesis is that the move of the Papacy from Rome to Avignon combined with the explosion of the University systems created theories of political structure that led to Individualism and leaders be chosen by citizens not subjects and the abolition of Divine Right.

Its characters include Ockham, various English and French Kings, Popes, and Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Chaucer and Gower.

It is still in draft form but seems readable at this stage.



Labels: [Books](#)

[Happy Epiphany](#)

January 6th marks the day the Wise Men allegedly came to Bethlehem. Just a note: are there three Wise "People" around anymore?

Happy Epiphany.



Labels: [Commentary](#)

Wednesday, January 2, 2019

[The Green Trojan Horse](#)

The Green New Deal is another catch phrase from the extreme left. Now I am not arguing that such things like CO2 should be disregarded. To the contrary, it is a technical creation of our own

making and like many other such distortions to the environment should be recognized and dealt with technically.

However it seems to the far left taxing is the only solution to everything. It is akin to the adage that if all you have is a hammer then everything looks like a nail. But we have more. Yet starting anew in [Nature](#) we have the following:

Federal and state governments should eliminate harmful subsidies and use pollution taxes and carbon pricing to account for the toll on human health and on natural capital (clean air, functioning ecosystems, and so on). Fees, tradeable permits and other market mechanisms would put a cost on pollution, carbon emissions and excessive resource use. Such green incentives are doubly productive. They benefit health and the environment, and stimulate sustainable growth.

Yes, just tax everything. Yet from Nature, one would expect a more rational and scientific response, not the emotional and simplistic one of taxation.

If one starts to add up the taxes for Medicare for All, a Green New Deal, and the like brought by the new far left, there will be no money left.

Worse, we will have managed to destroy the incentives to technically mitigate the issues. Frankly nothing has ever been solved by taxation or by Government oppression, just look at liquor.

On the other hand we have a wealth of technology that can solve this problem. The Green Trojan Horse is just another mechanism to tax, not solve.



Labels: [Global Warming](#)