

## Murray N. Rothbard: Mr. Libertarian

di Wendy McElroy

Murray N. Rothbard (1926-1995) – the greatest libertarian theorist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – expressed what he considered to be the central political issue confronting mankind. He wrote, “My own basic perspective on the history of man...is to place central importance on the great conflict which is eternally waged between Liberty and Power.”<sup>1</sup> Liberty v. Power. In its most blatant form, the struggle manifests itself as war between the peaceful, productive individual and the intrusive State that usurps those products. The tension between freedom and authority is hardly a new subject for political commentary. But Rothbard managed to bring a newness to everything he touched intellectually.

Rothbard was a system builder. Unsatisfied with past attempts to present a “philosophy of freedom,” Rothbard sought to create an interdisciplinary system of thought that used the struggle between Liberty and Power as its integrating theme. He explained, “Strands and remnants of libertarian doctrines are, indeed, all around us. ... But only libertarianism takes these strands and remnants and integrates them into a mighty, logical, and consistent system.”<sup>2</sup> Without such a systematic world view, he believed Liberty could not succeed.

In forty-five years of scholarship and activism, Rothbard produced over two dozen books and thousands of articles that made sense of the world from a radical individualist perspective. In doing so, it is no exaggeration to say that Rothbard created the modern libertarian movement.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, he refined and fused together:

- natural law theory, using a basic Aristotelian or Randian approach;
- the radical civil libertarianism of 19<sup>th</sup> century individualist-anarchists, especially Lysander Spooner and Benjamin Tucker;
- the free market philosophy of Austrian economists, in particular Ludwig von Mises, into which he incorporated sweeping economic histories; and,
- the foreign policy of the American Old Right – that is, isolationism.

As a result of the fusion, libertarianism blossomed in the ‘60s as the philosophy of absolute individual rights based on natural law – of rights that were expressed domestically through the free market and internationally through non-aggression (isolationism) with its corollary of unbridled free trade. But more than this. Following in the footsteps of his mentor, the pioneering Austrian Economist Ludwig von Mises, Rothbard grounded human liberty in human nature. Developing an explicit philosophy of Liberty, he drove his insights through history to re-examine the real implications and meaning of events, such as the American Revolution. He laid a moral foundation for freedom, then used it to springboard into a strategy by which to achieve it. The integration was a stunning accomplishment. And one that stirred the love of Liberty within a generation of scholars and activists who proudly called themselves ‘Rothbardians.’ I include myself in those ranks.

Given that he was a lightning rod for controversy and critical analysis, it may seem that all aspects of Rothbard’s work have been exhaustively explored. But Rothbard has not received sufficient credit for the monumental task of integration that he achieved with such elegance. There are a number of reasons for this oversight. One of them is the short shrift that academia gives to system-building in preference to extreme specialization within disciplines that are already carefully defined.

Rothbard once complained, “Probably the most common question that has been hurled at me – in some exasperation – over the years is: ‘Why don’t you stick to economics?’” “Calling the question a

“said reflection on the hyperspecialization among intellectuals,” Rothbard continued, “...this syndrome has been carried so far that they scorn any attention to politico-economic problems as a demeaning and unclean impurity...”<sup>4</sup>

Yet, Rothbard observed, the economists he knew “became interested in economics because they were interested in social and political problems and because they realized that the really hard political problems cannot be solved without an understanding of economics.”(ix) Rothbard simply refused to give up the youthful passion for solving social problems. Instead, he quoted the call-to-arms of Randolph Bourne, “The secret of life is then that this fine youthful spirit shall never be lost.... To keep one’s reactions warm and true is to have found the secret of perpetual youth, and perpetual youth is salvation.”<sup>5</sup>

Another reason Rothbard has been denied due status as an integrator has been his tendency to include what most academics would view as “dubious” cultural references in his economic and ethical writings. For example, in his iconoclastic essay “Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature,” Rothbard unabashedly discusses the plot of “the British anti-Utopian novel *Facial Justice*, by L.P. Hartley.”<sup>6</sup> This unpretentious approach to ideas reflected Rothbard’s eagerness to popularize the ideas of liberty in addition to providing a scholarly basis from which to argue toward strategy. He had a rare talent: he could express the same argument in pop-culture or in academic terms. As he once wrote, “Especially in an age of galloping statism, the classical liberal, the advocate of the free market, has an obligation to carry the struggle to all levels of society.”<sup>7</sup>

Although Rothbard’s popularizing of ideas is a key ingredient that makes his works fresh and entertaining, even when read repeatedly, academia would certainly frown upon using science fiction to illustrate ethical points. In short, not only did Rothbard stray outside of a narrow specialty – not only did he not know “his place” – Rothbard displayed an irreverent and joyous love of ideas, no matter where they came from. Translation: his more popular books were not deemed ‘serious’ works.

I have sympathy with at least one reason for which people overlook Rothbard’s status as a system builder. His “philosophy of liberty” is a superbly consistent whole but, for those who browse it casually without being familiar with classical liberalism, his system may appear to be a ill-fitting synthesis of opposites. To those steeped in the traditional left/right analysis of politics, his insistence on radical civil liberties may seem utterly at odds with his championing of laissez-faire capitalism. His anarchism may seem antagonistic to individualism, since that political position is far more generally presented in collectivist terms.

To clear up what might be a reasonable confusion as to the consistency of Rothbard’s meticulous system, it is valuable to explore the manner in which it was constructed.

### **The Construction of a World View**

Rothbard self-consciously built upon traditions. The tradition that was core to his passion and vision may well have been Austrian economics. He considered Mises’ great work *Human Action* (1949) to be pivotal in his intellectual formation because it resolved the many contradictions in economics with which he had grappled as a doctoral student at Columbia University. When Mises held his famed seminars at New York University, Rothbard attended eagerly from the very beginning.

Mises emphasized the key role that human psychology and behavior – that “acting” man – played in economics. He contended that the marketplace was not an equation that functioned according to mathematical calculations. It was not a precise machine, but one driven by uncertainties. It was the

collective expression of human preference and judgment, and many of its ‘mechanisms’ were best described in psychological terms. For example, marginal utility is analysis of how human beings value goods more as they become scarcer and, thus, each unit must be put to its highest use. I do not shower with water that is essential for drinking purposes.

In *Man, Economy, and State: A Treatise on Economic Principles* (2 vols., 1962), Rothbard embodied and extended Mises’ broad approach to economics. Llewellyn Rockwell, head of the Ludwig von Mises Institute wrote, “Beginning with the philosophical foundation, Rothbard built an edifice of economic theory and an unassailable case for the market.... The book treated economics as a humane science, not as a branch of physics.” He concluded, “...Rothbard’s great work, was the key to the resurgence of Austrian economics after Mises’s death.”<sup>8</sup> It is difficult to overstate the impact of *Man, Economy, and State* in certain circles of scholarship. Its influence was not limited to students of economics. For example, Rothbard’s magnum opus was solely responsible for turning me from the advocacy of limited government to a lifetime of work within the individualist-anarchist tradition. My experience was a microcosm that repeated itself within thousands of others, each reacting in his or her own manner.

For several years after the appearance of *Man, Economy, and State*. Rothbard focused on historically documenting his case for economic liberty by dealing with specific issues. The books from this period included *The Panic of 1819: Reactions and Policies* (1962, and his Ph.D. dissertation), *America’s Great Depression* (1963), *What Government Has Done to Our Money* (1964), and *Economic Depressions: Causes and Cures* (1969). These works fleshed out and gave context to his economic insights. They also defied the common economic wisdom of the day.

For example, in the words of Rockwell, *America’s Great Depression* the Misesian theory of the business cycle to show that the 1929 crash resulted from Federal Reserve credit expansion.”<sup>9</sup>

The true intellectual sequel of *Man Economy and State*, however, was *Power and Market: Government and the Economy* (1970) which carried on the earlier book’s logic by providing an overview of the devastation caused by state intervention, with special emphasis on the destruction wrought by taxation. The book also offered a tantalizing but sketchy model of the stateless society.

Rothbard was acutely aware of the deficiencies of these works with regard to establishing a solid base for freedom. He wrote, “Economics can help supply much of the data for a libertarian position but it cannot establish that political philosophy itself. For political judgments are necessarily value-judgments, political philosophy is therefore necessarily ethical, and hence a positive ethical system must be set forth to establish the case for individual liberty.”<sup>10</sup>

Much of Rothbard’s subsequent writing aimed at providing the necessary “political philosophy” that would allow liberty to flourish. *Ethics of Liberty* (1982) became his overriding moral defense of a free society. *Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature and Other Essays* (1974) was a popular version of this defense. It is useful to examine both works.

### **The Popular Moral Case for Liberty**

The collection of his essays entitled *Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature* is a much neglected tour de force in terms of popularizing the basics of liberty.

In the foreword to this collection, the political commentator R.A. Childs, Jr. remarked upon a contention he had heard bandied about in intellectual circles: namely, that anarchist theory contains no great system-builders. By this criticism, critics meant to observe that anarchism has not benefited

from the presence of profound thinkers who have integrated divergent schools of thought – e.g. philosophy, history, psychology, economics – into a coherent and cohesive world view. Anarchism has lacked a system-builder, like Karl Marx, who could create the stern stuff of ideology.

Childs disagreed. The anarchist world – and, specifically, individualist (or libertarian) anarchism – had produced at least one great system-builder: Murray N. Rothbard. Although Childs gave a well-deserved nod of respect to the theoretical contributions of Spooner and Tucker, it is to Rothbard whom he points as the integrator and synthesizer of theory. It was Rothbard who provided “the entire libertarian worldview, the unique way of viewing history and world affairs...”(v)

The essays in *Egalitarianism* express this integration and achieve, in a popular non-scholarly style, nothing less than “the discipline of liberty” upon which modern libertarianism rests. The lead essay, bearing the same title as the book itself, sets the tone by going back to absolute fundamentals in human nature. That is, the essay establishes a biological case for human diversity, a diversity upon which individual liberty must rest. As Rothbard noted, “if individuals were as interchangeable as ants, why should anyone worry about maximizing the opportunity for every person to develop his mind and his faculties and his personality to the fullest extent possible?”(x-xi) Following the example of his mentor, Mises, he looked to ‘acting man’ in order to ground “libertarianism in individualism and individual diversity.”(xi) Indeed, the denial of diversity (individualism) is a denial of “the very structure of humanity and of the universe.”(p.13)

In its broadest terms, then, this was Rothbard’s framework for liberty. Human diversity, and the need to respect that condition as one of the most basic facts of human nature, formed the immense outer structure within which Rothbard rolled up his sleeves to construct the specifics.

The next essay in the collection, entitled “Left and Right,” begins the task of sculpting specifics by placing the “current movement and ideology [of individualism] in a world-historical context and perspective...”(xi) It asks the empirical question, “What...of the prospects of liberty?”(p.14) In a spirit of optimism, Rothbard contended “while the short-run prospects for liberty at home and abroad may seem dim, the proper attitude for the Libertarian to take is that of unquenchable long-run optimism.”(p.15) He based his optimism on a sweeping worldview of the struggle between Liberty and Power, which transcended the traditional Left/Right political distinction.

Rothbard pushed his theme of Liberty vs. Power through centuries and through the works of such divergent writers as Lord Acton, Karl Marx and George Bernard Shaw to arrive at post World War I America. Here, even with the surging socialism of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Rothbard saw nothing but hope. He chided the reigning individualists of that day – Albert J. Nock and H.L. Mencken – for adopting “the great error of pessimism” and “despairing.”(p.28) They simply did not understand that the world had become industrial and “only liberty, only a free market, can organize and maintain an industrial system, and the more that population expands and explodes, the more necessary is the unfettered working of such an industrial economy.”(p.29)

Thus, with a broad framework of Liberty based in human nature and set in the historical perspective of optimism, Rothbard marched with a jaunty step straight toward the single greatest enemy of Liberty: the State. The next essay is entitled “The Anatomy of the State” and it systematically argues that statism is the antithesis of individualism. In religious terms, it is the Antichrist. This essay begins by addressing “What the State Is Not” (pp.34-35), “What the State Is” (pp.35-37) and, then, proceeds into a now-classic analysis of how the State acts primarily to preserve and expand itself. (pp.37-52) The concluding section on Social Power v. State Power briefly describes the conflict between those who live through productive labor (society) and those who live by usurping

the products of others (the State). It springboards directly into the fundamental principles through which Social Power can be encouraged and maintained.

The essay, “Justice and Property Rights,” provides the “philosophic groundwork for the libertarian axiom of non-aggression against person and property” then goes on to derive a theory of “justice in property rights.”(xi) In a traditionally libertarian manner, Rothbard grounds property rights in what he calls two “fundamental premises”: “(a) the absolute property right of each individual in his own person, his own body; this may be called the right of self-ownership; and (b) the absolute right in the material property of the person who first finds an unused material resource and then in some way occupies or transforms that resource by the use of his personal energy. This might be called the homestead principle...”

The essay applies these premises to a panorama of issues, from land to intellectual property to so-called ‘animal rights.’ In non-scholarly terms, it provides broad guidelines by which to translate the principles of property rights into a system of justice. “To sum up: all existing property titles may be considered just under the homestead principle, provided (a) that there may never be any property in people; (b) that the existing property owner did not himself steal the property; and particularly © that any identifiable just owner (the original victim of theft or his heir) must be accorded his property.”(p.69)

(At this point in *Egalitarianism*, Rothbard skipped an important step in the construction of a philosophy of liberty; it was an oversight that he corrected elsewhere in his writings. Namely, *Egalitarianism* gives no sense at all of how the free market institutions of justice could be best constructed or encouraged to evolve. There is no hint of a blueprint. Without the institutionalization of liberty through the establishment of e.g. anarchist defense agencies, the prospects of freedom are diminished.)

In the fifth essay of *Egalitarianism*, entitled “War, Peace and the State,” Rothbard explicitly interwove the isolationist foreign policy attitudes of the Old Right into the core of libertarian theory. Having noted elsewhere that war is the single most destructive Statist activity – both to individualism and to morality – he aimed at the essential task of constructing a countervailing “libertarian theory of war and peace.” Rothbard applied the “axiom of non-aggression to an area where most Libertarians have been weakest: war and foreign policy.” (xi) With a policy of “no compromise,” Rothbard consistently applied the principle “it is completely impermissible to violate the rights of other innocent people,” and concluded that libertarians should condemn “all wars, regardless of motive.” (78)

The remainder of the essay collection is more haphazard, mostly reflecting Rothbard’s specific application of the broad principles he sketched in the first half of the book. For example, the initial and defining essay “Egalitarianism” had stated “since egalitarians begin with the priori axiom that all people, and hence all groups of peoples, are uniform and equal, it then follows for them that any and all group differences in status, prestige or authority in society must be the result of unjust ‘oppression’ and irrational ‘discrimination.’” (7) This observation springboards into the latter essays “Kid Lib” and “The Great Women’s Liberation Issue: Setting It Straight,” in which Rothbard analyzes two groups who are popularly believed to be oppressed because they are ‘different.’

In terms of Rothbard’s heritage as a system-builder, two remaining essays within *Egalitarianism* are of particular interest: “The Spooner-Tucker Doctrine: An Economist’s View” and “Ludwig von Mises and the Paradigm for Our Age.” In “The Spooner-Tucker Doctrine,” Rothbard praised the two great 19<sup>th</sup> century American anarchists not only for realizing that government and individual liberty were incompatible, but also for exploring the ways in which individuals could cooperate

together without the State to achieve what Tucker called a ‘society by contract.’ They were, in essence, social utopians as much as they were political theorists.

Despite his deep respect for the 19<sup>th</sup> century American tradition, Rothbard was painfully aware of his predecessors flaws. He critiqued a point of economic error that they both shared, “...it was their [Tucker’s, Spooner’s] adoption of the labor theory of value that convinced them that, rent, interest and profit were payments exploitatively extracted from the worker.” (129)

Rothbard’s remedy for this weakness, his attempt to correct the errors of the past century so that they did not cripple the 20<sup>th</sup> century world view, is embodied in the last essay of *Egalitarianism*. It is entitled “Ludwig von Mises and the Paradigm for Our Age.” He explained, “There is, in the body of thought known as ‘Austrian economics,’ a scientific explanation of the workings of the free market (and of the consequences of government intervention in that market) which individualist anarchists could easily incorporate into their political and social Weltanschauung.” (133) This was the point at which radical civil liberties embraced the free market and became virtually indistinguishable: that is, economic and civil liberties became points on the same continuum of freedom.

### **The Scholarly Moral Case for Liberty – *The Ethics of Liberty***

*Egalitarianism* was a popular work. In the Preface to *The Ethics of Liberty*, Rothbard continues the theme that dominated his life in a more scholarly fashion. He wrote, “All of my work has revolved around the central question of human liberty. For it has been my conviction that, while each discipline has its own autonomy and integrity, in the final analysis all sciences and disciplines of human action are interrelated, and can be integrated into a ‘science’ or discipline of individual liberty.”<sup>11</sup>

Through *The Ethics of Liberty* – a scholarly work in political philosophy – Rothbard laid the theoretical underpinning of liberty. He believed, “The key to the theory of liberty is the establishment of the rights of private property, for each individual’s justified sphere of free action can only be set forth if his rights of property are analyzed and established.” (vi)

Thus, Part I of *Ethics* comprehensively deals with the importance of Natural Law, which has long been considered the moral underpinning of private property. It includes Natural Law’s relationship to reason and science; its irreconcilability with positive law; and, its role as the foundation for natural rights.

Part II continues in a logical flow from Natural Law into “A Theory of Liberty.” Here, Rothbard began by using what he called “one of the most commonly derided constructions of classical economic theory” – the Robinson Crusoe model. This approach of considering man in isolation has been widely criticized, most prominently by Karl Marx and his followers who believe that man cannot exist as human being qua human without socialization. But Rothbard insisted that it was necessary “to isolate man as against nature, thus gaining clarity by abstracting at the beginning frontier-personal relations.” Moreover, Rothbard did not believe Crusoe lost his essential humanity by being in isolation. For example, Crusoe still judged the goods he had – e.g. coconuts – according to marginal utility. He also had to produce before he could consume and used human judgment (reason) to survive.

The Crusoe example facilitated clear, unambiguous analysis. In isolation, Rothbard contended that Crusoe “owns his body; his mind is free to adopt whatever ends it wishes, and to exercise his reason in order to discover what ends he should choose, and to learn the recipes for employing the means

at hand to attain them....” (p. 31) Then, Friday is introduced “to show how the addition of other persons affects the discussion.” (29) The discussion being ‘man in society,’ man in relation to other human beings. Friday is introduced in order to go beyond the economic principle of production to the principle of exchange, both economic and psychological. Yet the opportunity for exchange introduces the possibility of Friday exerting force on Crusoe, or vice versa.

In other words, a desert island offers absolutely unbridled individual freedom to Crusoe. In society, he always confronts the threat of possible violence. Why would he run such a risk? To Rothbard, the answer is clear. “The process of exchange enables man to ascend from primitive isolation to civilization: it enormously widens his opportunities...” (p. 36) Moreover, society maximizes Crusoe’s choices if only because many of his decisions, and some of the most important ones he could make, require the presence of other people, e.g. the decision to have a child.

The primary concern of man, therefore, should not lie in how to remain in isolation, but in how to interrelate in a manner that maximizes opportunity: that is, in a manner that minimizes the possibility of violence. To Rothbard, the key lies in two concepts that are at war with each other – property and crime. Indeed, Rothbard attempts to define property in large part as a means by which to define crime. Crime is viewed as the violation of property rights and, thus, the usurpation of another person’s opportunities. In Chapter 9 of Part II, entitled “Property and Criminality,” Rothbard concludes, “We thus have a theory of the rights of property: That every man has an absolute right to the control and ownership of his own body, and to unused land resources that he finds and transforms....We also have a theory of criminality: A criminal is someone who aggresses against such property.” [Emphasis in original] (p. 59)

Property v. Crime as the defining themes of civil society were a refinement on and a subcategory of Rothbard’s overriding theme of Liberty v. Power. Having defined these concepts as the essentials of society, Rothbard built upon them as a foundation to address property and criminality as it affects such issues as land, children, animal rights, self-defense, and the theory of contracts. Then, Rothbard proceeded – as he inevitably did – to an analysis of the State as the penultimate foe of Liberty.

Part III of *Ethics* is entitled “The State Versus Liberty.” Chapter 22, located within this section, is entitled “The Nature of the State.” The chapter begins, “So far in this book we have developed a theory of liberty and property rights, and have outlined the legal code that would be necessary to defend those rights. What of government, the State?” Rothbard pointed to the many essential functions performed by the State, such as fire fighting and postal delivery, then asked, “But this in no way demonstrates that only the State can perform such functions, or, indeed, that it performs them even passably well.” (p. 161)

The stage was set to present the concluding two sections, the first of which is entitled, “Modern Alternative Theories of Liberty.” He wrote, “Having presented our theory of liberty and property rights, and discussed the inherent role of the State vis a vis liberty, we turn in this part of the work to a discussion and critique of several leading alternative theories of liberty brought forth in the modern world, by those who are very roughly in the free-market, or classical liberal, tradition. Whatever the other merits of these theories, they will be seen to provide a flawed and inadequate foundation for a systematic theory of liberty and the rights of the individual.” (199)

The last section of *Ethics* proclaims itself to be moving “Toward a Theory of Strategy for Liberty.” This is different than moving toward a strategy – a blueprint – for liberty. Instead, it is a discussion of the methodology which should be used in order to create a blueprint appropriate to liberty. To Rothbard, “Libertarianism...is a philosophy seeking a policy,” and it was “the responsibility of

philosophy to deal with strategy.” It is precisely the goal of moving “from the present...state of affairs to...consistent liberty” that impelled Rothbard to lay such a meticulous foundation of theory. (p. 253)

Having laid the necessary groundwork, however, Rothbard does not plunge into a specific vision of liberty. He pauses to carefully establish the boundaries of such a vision. Liberty, he declared, is not necessarily the highest value of libertarians: it is merely the highest political value....politics being the form of ethical philosophy that deals with the role of violence in human society.

Always building on a former insight or argument, Rothbard then asked, “If liberty is to be the highest political end, then this implies that liberty is to be pursued in the most efficacious means,....” He sets up the parameters by which a sincere libertarian must abide to achieve Liberty. He writes, “This means that the libertarian must be an abolitionist, i.e., he must wish to achieve the goal of liberty as rapidly as possible.” Abolitionism, then, was a key to the policy of libertarianism. Absolute consistency was another. “[A] strategy for liberty must not include any means which undercut or contradict the end itself...” (p. 255-256) The rejection of utilitarian arguments in favor of the moral grounding provided by natural law was also part of the policy of liberty.

Rothbard’s implementation of the “policy” of libertarianism to specific issues was scattered, in large measure, throughout hundreds of articles. It was also expressed in the powerful *For a New Liberty: The Libertarian Manifesto*, which is probably the work best known to libertarians. It also is to be found in the subtext of his sweeping four volume analysis of the American colonies and revolution from 1620-1780, entitled *Conceived in Liberty* (1975-1979). There, institutions evolve and one sees both the ennobling and the corruption of principles through human endeavor.

I have undoubtedly slighted many aspects of Rothbard’s contribution to the literature of liberty. The fault lies in Rothbard himself for having achieved so much in so many areas. For a more encompassing sense of his legacy, I recommend the chronology. For a focusing of his legacy, it is useful to quote Rothbard himself in a passage that could apply to virtually any of his writings. In doing so, I reiterate part of the first sentence of this essay:

“My own basic perspective on the history of man...is to place central importance on the great conflict which is eternally waged between Liberty and Power.... I see liberty of the individual...as the necessary condition for the flowering of all the other goods that mankind cherishes: moral virtue, civilization, the arts and science, economic prosperity.... I see history as centrally as race and conflict between ‘social power’ – the productive consequences of voluntary interactions among men – and state power.”<sup>12</sup>

## **A Personal Note**

Before closing, I want to render a sense of something that history books will not capture and future generations may not understand: namely, the profound and benevolent impact of Murray Rothbard’s charisma on young scholars. Although reprints of his work will display the stunning breadth of his scholarship, they will give no clue as to the humor that made his listeners literally laugh for hours in after-conference sessions and gatherings at his home. When people finally walked away from Murray – reluctant to leave a world in which ideas were so much fun – they scattered to libraries and typewriters to research and write up the articles he had inspired. Murray Rothbard believed that ideas mattered. He infused you with that belief. I still hear his voice – admittedly a bit squawky – insisting that a certain insight was “key! it’s key to the issue!,” and admonishing me to write it up.

Murray had a habit of sitting with his right arm draped over his head, the elbow resting about five inches above ear level. I remember walking into a room where Murray was holding court for three young men who sat attentively before him, lined up on the couch. Each one had his right arm draped over his head. Not one realized they were mimicking him. A whole generation of libertarian theorists wanted to be Murray Rothbard. We adopted his slang terms, his gestures, his eccentricities... hopefully some of his intellectual magic has rubbed off as well.

1. Murray N. Rothbard, *Conceived in Liberty*, Volume Two (Arlington House, New Rochelle, N.Y., 1975), p. 9.
2. Murray N. Rothbard, *For a New Liberty: The Libertarian Manifesto*, Revised Edition (Fox & Wilkes, San Francisco, 1994), p. 321.
3. By saying this, I do not demean the contributions of pioneering libertarians, such as Karl Hess or Leonard Reed, who infused their own unique radicalism into the movement. I mean only to say that modern libertarianism is an identifiable structure of interconnected beliefs, and Rothbard was the first theorist to make those connections complete.
4. Murray N. Rothbard, "Introduction," *Egalitarianism As a Revolt Against Nature and Other Essays*. (Washington, D.C.: Libertarian Review Press, 1974), p. ix-x.
5. *Ibid*, *Left and Right: The Prospects for Liberty*, p. 33.
6. *Ibid*, *Egalitarianism*, p. 4.
7. As quoted by Rockwell, Murray N. Rothbard: A Legacy of Liberty.
8. Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr. Murray N. Rothbard: A Legacy of Liberty.
9. *Ibid*.
10. "Introduction", *Egalitarianism*, v.
11. Murray Rothbard. *Ethics of Liberty*. Atlantic Highland, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1982, v.
12. Murray N. Rothbard. *Conceived in Liberty*, Volume II. New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1975, pp. 9-10.