

Extended Arguments

13. Background: This passage is an excerpt from an article, "Of Two Minds About Abortion," by Andrew Hacker. It appeared originally in Harper's in September, 1979:

The idea persists that equipping an adolescent can only encourage promiscuity. Once armored, she will indulge in indiscriminate sex with an endless array of partners. This fear may be universal, but it runs especially deep among parents of teenage daughters. They prefer to hope their children will use good sense about sex, whatever that means.

What emerges is that for young people, abortion is not a 'last resort' at all. Rather, it is the first intervention of adult society. We are told that it must be available, lest hundreds of thousands of young women be hobbled by early motherhood. Due to our chariness about sex education, we are asked to accept a quick surgical remedy rather than face our own misgivings about providing preventive measures. It is only after an abortion that we feel we can give her the equipment she clearly needed earlier. At this point it should be admitted that abortion has become a major mode of birth control. And it will continue to be one until adults resolve their own dilemmas about teenage sexual experience.

Comment: "This example seems to me to be interesting because of the way it combines explanation and argument. The author explains how it is that abortion comes to be a means of birth control for teenage women, and then argues, on the basis of his proffered explanation, that adults should resolve their thinking about teenage sexuality." (Trudy Govier, Trent University)

14. Background: This passage is taken from Richard Taylor's book, Good and Evil (pp. 199-200). Taylor is discussing nature and convention, and he is trying to show that some things which are, in a sense, conventional, do nevertheless have a foundation in the psychology, or aesthetic sensibility, of human beings.

Such persons [viz. Taylor's opponents] are apt to suppose that the use of clothing is but an arbitrary convention that might be cast aside without loss. I believe that anyone having that view could be promptly disabused of it, however, by performing a simple experiment in two parts. The first part consists of entering a crowded bath house and really taking the whole thing in, exactly as it presents itself to the eyes, without romantic embellishment. The second part consists of entering a crowded social gathering, in the garden or parlor of some prominent person, for example, and imagining the scene of the bath house suddenly repeated there--in other words, everything would be as it is, but unadorned by any clothing. It is impossible to suppose that this would present no significant change to the mind, equally impossible to suppose that

the scene now present to the imagination would be an enhancement of the reality before the eyes and finally, I think, quite impossible to suppose that one's comparison of these two scenes is entirely a product of arbitrary convention. Convention it is, but it has its roots deep in aesthetic sensibility.

Comment: "This passage is difficult to analyse and involves a kind of thought-experiment as a crucial stage in the argument. Imagining scenes is supposed to play an important role in convincing you of the conclusion, and it is hard to capture the force of this in words when you try to set the argument out.

I would be inclined to set this argument out as follows:

- P1: A crowded bath house is not attractive.
- P2: A social gathering would not be enhanced if people appeared there as they do in a bath house.
- P3: No one could imagine defrocking everyone at a social gathering without comprehending the significant change this would make.

C: Clothing is not an arbitrary convention; it has its roots deep in aesthetic sensibility.

This argument is difficult to classify on versions of the deductive/inductive distinction which use a 'purports to claim' clause, for it's not clear just how to take the repeated phrase 'impossible to suppose'." (Trudy Govier, Trent University)

15. Background: This article appeared in the Calgary Herald, December 5, 1979:

"The key to homicides, child abuse and other kinds of violent behavior may be rooted in the most primal instinct--reproduction," says a McMaster University psychologist.

That's the theory of Martin Daly, whose statistical studies show, among other things, that more males are murdered in their peak breeding years than at any other time of life.

Daly calls this the "reproductive strategy"--something akin to the ancient jungle law of survival of the fittest--and he recently laid it out before a zoology seminar at the University of Western Ontario.

"Perpetrators of homicides show the same general age characteristics as their victims," Daly said. "It seems the same bunch who are killing are also being killed." Using data compiled from homicides in the United States and elsewhere, Daly noted that a significant percentage involve "squabbles over women."

While much of Daly's lecture seemed simply to underscore fundamental anthropological information, he and colleague Margo Wilson have some up with the figures to prove it.

Comment: "If Daly's study is reported correctly, it would seem to embody a gross causal fallacy. For the correlation between age and violence could be interpreted in a number of ways, and need not be taken to show reproductive strategy, or, indeed, strategy of any

kind. For example, unemployment is highest among people in their late teens and early twenties, and economic discontent or hardship might well cause crime and violence in this age group." (Trudy Govier, Trent University)

Background: This newspaper article bore the title, "Christopher Columbus: A Hero to the Flat Earth Society":

The president of the 1500 member International Flat Earth Society spends his time trying to prove that the world is "flat as a penny." Still, one of the society's superheroes is Christopher Columbus. . . . "Contrary to the history book, we claim that Columbus proved the world flat," said Johnson, president of IFES. "At the time Columbus made his voyage everyone believed the world was a ball--except for Columbus. He was not one of them. They were afraid they would fall off the edge of the earth because it was round, not flat. Columbus was one of our heroes because he didn't fall off--gravity wasn't invented yet. Gravity was invented by a priest in England. There was no gravity in Columbus' day."

Every year around Columbus Day . . . there is a "great controversy" about the earth's shape. "The average person believes the world is round because modern science says so," Johnson said. "But it's just not true. Columbus did not fall off so that proves it."

"We publish the Flat Earth Quarterly with the objective to restore the world's sanity," Johnson said. "We consider this the world's most superstitious age. From integration to going to the moon, the world is a vast and complex place. We try to get people to use their minds logically."

But what about the space shots? Millions remember living pictures from space showing the earth spinning in the distance. "The whole thing was a science fiction TV movie," Johnson replied. "We aren't accusing the government of anything. The whole thing is a plot by Nazi German scientists. They are the nucleus of the U.S. space program. The movie "Capricorn One" proved that the moon shot did not happen--that it was faked. The idea that the earth is round came from Greek superstition."

Surprisingly, the flat earth concept is usually met with polite interest, rather than rudeness or hysteria. "There is a lurking sanity in the American public's mind, no matter what the American space program claims," Johnson said. "People don't condemn us." But how is it that one can go "around" the world? "Simple," Johnson said. "Magnetic north is the center of the world and a ring of ice surrounds the land which is floating in a sea of flat water. It has nothing to do with the earth's being a ball. It's like going around an island. Ships disappear on the horizon, but it's only an optical illusion."

Comment: The question raised by this article is whether or not we are to take Johnson's reasoning seriously. On the surface, the arguments seem outrageous. But the principle of charity, supplemented by a bit of research on the IFES, might suggest a different verdict. (Thanks to Robert Hollinger, Iowa State University, for submitting this example, and the one that follows.)

Background: An excerpt from a news report entitled, "She Didn't Protest Enough, Rape Charges Dismissed":

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The judge said the woman protested, but not too much, and dismissed rape charges against a fast-talking bachelor who lured a Wellesley College girl to an apartment and seduced her. The judge said that the man may have been a cad, but he was no rapist. "Bachelors and other men on the make, fear not," the judge said. "It is still not illegal to feed a girl a line." He said that the complainant . . . was incredibly trusting, gullible and naive.

The woman alleged she met the man at La Guardia Airport last July, accompanied him to a singles' bar and went with him to a West Side apartment because he told her he was a psychologist working on a book about women. She testified that he forced her onto a sofa bed "by the weight of his body," but that he otherwise used no physical force in the alleged rape.

The judge, who presided at the non-jury trial, said in his decision, "The only restraint on her body was his body weight, which is normal during the sexual act. The question in this case is whether the sexual conquest by a predatory male of a resisting female constitutes rape or seduction." While allowing that any overt force used would constitute criminal behavior, the judge said, "We recognize that there are situations that do not deserve the extreme penalty and in which the male objective was achieved through charm, guile, protestations of love, promises and even deceit." Somewhat ruefully, the judge added, "This we label seduction, and society may condone it even as we despair. Every man is free to be a gentleman or a cad; but take heed--violence, force or threats are totally out of bounds."

However, the man's court victory was not total. The judge ruled that the apartment that served as the scene of the seduction was used without the owner's permission. The judge found the man guilty of criminal trespass. . . .

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Background: The following passage comes from a column in the Medicine Hat News (September, 1975):

There is a futile exercise in logic in which city council has been indulging itself lately. It could even be dangerous if followed too closely and too seriously. It goes something like this:

Boys are tall, girls are short.

Mary is a girl.

Therefore Mary is short.

The essence of this logic is so full of holes that, as a rule, it can be entirely incorrect. Mary could be 7'4".

Council's recent decision over hitch-hiking has been following this path of logic, and it is quite upsetting to observe some of the conclusions several of the alderman have reached.

Hitch-hikers smell bad; bad smells are not good business; therefore hitch-hikers are bad for business.

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If council decides, like Ald. Sissons has suggested, that "our merchants are more important than hitch-hikers," and bans hitch-hiking because the youngsters smell bad and are bad for business, then we may really be in trouble. Besides, I wasn't aware that Canada recognizes the racist philosophy that any person or any particular group of persons were "more important" than others.

If we adhere to that logic, then we can assume that the people living in the Flats are less important than the people living in mansion row over by the hospital. They certainly don't pay as much in taxes.

Following this path, the council would also have to ban from the highway almost anyone who works up a good sweat, be it from playing tennis or digging a ditch. I've eaten in most of the establishments on the highway and found even the most solid citizens of the community covered with grime and sweat from some honest toil. Are they just as offensive as the "dirty hippies" who ply the highways and byways of the nation?

Ah! Maybe then, it's more than that. Could it be the people who, as Ald. Helen Gibson said, have gotten caught up in the "hobo fad" aren't as honest and hard working as we would like? Could it be they don't separate themselves with as many hard-earned pesos as those using Chargex cards and traveller's cheques?

Is it the root of all evil that we're talking about when it comes to hitch-hikers--that they're not as well off as the average Canadian who follows the Puritan ethic of WORKING for a living? I suspect this has something to do with the merchants' objections--and to invalidate it is difficult, for it is true that more money can be made from someone ordering steak than a cup of coffee.

But it is against the principles of the Human Rights Act. To pass a bylaw from the wrong reasons is just as bad as not passing it at all . . . sort of the "end justifying the means" philosophy.

Something should definitely be done about the hitch-hiking situation. No one has convinced me that it should be banned altogether. But it should be controlled to the extent where the people aren't standing directly on the highway--endangering themselves and the motorists who pass by.

There is nothing morally wrong with hitch-hiking. As a matter of fact, such a mode of travel in these days of threatened gasoline shortages may become quite desirable. The more people sharing a car, the less gas is used.

But making the roads safe for the pedestrian, cyclists and motorists should be considered first. No one ever got hurt because they hadn't taken a shower in a couple of days . . . and I haven't noticed any of the highway merchants closing down for lack of business.

Comment: This rather loosely organized collection of thoughts, sent to us by Elmer Thiessen, Medicine Hat College, exemplifies a number of common logical flaws: the author spends much time speculating about the motives of the alderman and merchants rather than addressing himself to their position, and so commits the fallacy of ad hominem.

19. Background: In 1977, President Carter approved a proposal to set new federal standards for the enforcement of the 55 m.p.h. speed limit. That occasioned the following letter from A.H. to the Arizona Republic (December, 1977).

Big Brother is watching you when you drive your car. He will be watching a lot more closely in the future if the Carter administration has its way. If Congress accepts the proposal sent by the Carter administration, the states will be saddled with "federal compliance standards." In other words, the states will be required to prove that they are actually enforcing the 55 m.p.h. limit. That means more Big Brother harassment: more snooping (the feds call it "monitoring" of motorists) and stiffer penalties for drivers who exceed the speed limit.

All this will require reinforcement of an army of snoopers-- more police, more electric gadgets to trap motorists, more statisticians to analyze the reports, more state and federal paper shufflers. As a result, there will be considerably more oppressive government.

It's all so absurd. The Carter administration says (how can they prove it?) that more than 15 % of all drivers are routinely breaking the 55 m.p.h. limit. Has Big Brother an eye on every motorist in the land? The administration even claims to know how many drivers in each state are exceeding the limit. The administration asserts that 77% of all drivers in Wyoming exceed the limit.

One wonders how the federal bureaucrats acquired that statistic. Wyoming is a vast, empty place. There aren't many billboards where snoopers can hide and keep motorists under surveillance. Could it be that the feds took a tiny sample of arrests for speeding and came up with a categorical statement about all drivers in Wyoming? If so, the statistics aren't worth the paper they are printed on.

One also wonders how the Carter administration proposes to persuade motorists to slow down. Will federal surveillance teams be dispatched to the desolate reaches of Nevada, Montana, and West Texas? Or will the federal government assign arrest quotas to highway patrolmen in the 50 states? They tried that last year in an Arkansas town, as a condition for the town receiving some new police equipment. If that's the route the feds intend to take, they can expect massive grassroots protest.

The country already has too many federal quota systems, too much dictation from Washington, too many rules and regulations handed down from afar. Compelling states to "prove" that X number of motorists are obeying the 55 m.p.h. limit is an unwarranted federal harassment. Indeed, it's outrageous interference with police matters that are properly the responsibility of states.

The Carter administration should be slapped down on this Big Brother proposal.

(Thanks to Merrill Provence Hintikka, Florida State University, for submitting this example, and the two that follow.)

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10. Background: The following argument by Glenn T. Seaborg originally appeared in Chemical Education News in the early 1970s:

Let us say it's a few years hence and all nuclear power plants have been operating safely. But opponents of nuclear power succeed in enforcing a national moratorium on nuclear power. All nuclear power plants are shut down, pending complete re-evaluation in terms of public safety.

First this moratorium causes a rush by electric utility companies to obtain more fossil fuels--particularly because oil and gas are in tight supply. Coal prices soar, and the government reacts by setting a price ceiling. Coal supplies dwindle, and power cutbacks are put into effect. Finally, restrictions on burning high-sulphur coal are relaxed somewhat, and air pollution rises. Miners, disgruntled over a wage freeze and laxness of employers regarding safety standards, go out on strike. Coal stockpiles diminish and many power plants are forced to shut down; others, overloaded by power demands, begin to fail. Miners battle with federal troops who have been ordered to take over the mines. A chain of black- and brown-outs creeps across the nation.

Lights go out and electric motors grind to a halt. Many airports use emergency power systems to light runways and operate communication systems. Services are reduced, and some airlines cancel all flights as pilots begin to rebel because of hazards in safety.

Throughout cities, elevators stall. Subway and commuter trains become unreliable. Gasoline becomes unavailable because filling stations cannot operate without electricity. As the situation worsens, factories and businesses close. In food markets, warehouses, and homes, huge quantities of frozen food spoil. People stand in line for hours to get canned and powdered foods. Darkened stores are looted at night. At home, people burn candles and wash in cold water. Hospitals begin to use emergency generators, and deaths are reported in intensive care wards because of equipment failure. Ill or injured persons have difficulty getting to a doctor or hospital. Medical supplies begin to lag behind growing demand.

Children who can get to school wear sweaters and coats in unheated classrooms. At night, there is no television, and people listen to battery powered radios where they hear hope of miners going back to work. But as time goes on, great doubt appears that things will ever be the same again.

It's up to you to speculate whether they would be.

11. Background: This argument for population control was presented by Garrett Hardin in Science in 1970:

★ Birth control is not population control. Individual goals, not community needs, motivate individual actions. In every nation women want more children than the community needs. How can we reduce population? Persuasion must be tried first. Tomorrow's mothers must be educated to seek careers other than multiple motherhood. Community nurseries are needed to free women for careers outside the home. Mild coercion may soon

be accepted--for example, tax rewards for reproductive nonproliferation.

But in the long run, a purely voluntary system selects for its own failures; noncooperators outbreed cooperators. So what restraints shall we employ? A policeman under every bed? Jail sentences? Compulsory abortion? Infanticide? Memories of Nazi Germany rise and obscure our vision.

We need not titillate our minds with such horrors, for we already have at hand an acceptable technology: sterilization. The taboo on this subject is fast dissolving, thanks to Arthur Godfrey and Paul Ehrlich, who have confessed their sterilizations in public. Fear (mostly unjustified) about the safety of the "pill" has motivated multitudes to follow in their footsteps.

It should be easy to limit a woman's reproduction by sterilizing her at the birth of her n th child. Is this a shocking idea? If so, try this "thought experiment": let $n = 20$. Since this is not shocking, let n diminish until population control is achievable. The Woman's Liberation Movement may not like it, but control must be exerted through females. Divorce and remarriage play havoc with assigning responsibility to couples or to men. Biology makes women responsible.

Many who want no third child would fight resolutely for the freedom to have that which they do not want. But what is freedom? Hegel said that "Freedom is the recognition of necessity." People need to recognize that population control is needed to protect the quality of life for our children.

The "right" to breed implies ownership of children. This concept is no longer tenable. Society pays an ever larger share of the cost of raising children. And on a biological level, the idea of the ownership of children has not been defensible for almost a century. Biologically, all that I give "my" children is a set of chromosomes which have been sequestered in the germinal area long before my birth and have lived a life of their own beyond my control. Mutation has altered them. In reproduction, my germ plasm is assembled in a new combination and mixed with another assortment of a similar history. "My" child's germ plasm is not mine; it is really only part of the community's store; I was merely the temporary custodian of it.

If parenthood is a right, then population control is impossible. If parenthood is only a privilege, and if parents see themselves as trustees of the germ plasm and guardians of the rights of future generations, then there is hope for mankind.

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22. Background: Professor W. A. de Pater, from Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, sends the following example which he found in a Dutch newspaper in October 1979:

Father Daniel Berrigan, S.J., who is well-known for his opposition to the Vietnam war, and to all killing of people, had heard that his friend E. Cardenal, also a priest (and now Minister of Culture in Nicaragua) had joined the resistance

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army. Berrigan deplored this, and he wrote to Cardenal that he should not use violence: "No principle (for instance, that of social justice) can justify the death of even one person. Therefore: stop killing."

Fr. Cardenal responded: "You are perfectly right: no principle, even that of non-violence, can justify the death of even one person. Therefore I have to go on killing the killers." In his argument, Cardenal said that in Nicaragua Somoza's people continuously kill innocent people. No principle justifies Cardenal in letting them do this; he must do what is possible to stop that killing, and the only way to do this is to kill the killers. If he does not do this, he feels responsible for the deaths of the innocent.

Prof. de Pater comments: "It seems to me the fallacy of amphiboly or of equivocation was committed by Cardenal. Berrigan meant: 'No principle can justify that you kill even one person'. Cardenal took it to mean: 'No principle can justify that you allow people to be killed'. So the ambiguity is in how 'the death of even one person' is construed."

13. Background: This example is from a news report (CKCK Regina, May 19, 1979) concerning an incident in which shots were exchanged between Indians and Whites on the Pasqua River, near Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. The Whites had been entering the Indian Reservation to fish; the Indians objected, claiming that the fish were still spawning. A spokesman for the Whites explained that the problem concerned spawning; he said:

Spawning is over now. That's why the government introduced a closed season from the first Saturday in May to May 19th, to allow the fish to spawn. This year has, of course, been a bad year with a late Spring but one expects that if the government with its fishery biologist and so on had doubts about whether spawning was still going on then they would have closed the river. They didn't close the river, so spawning is now over.

Comment: Is the White spokesman playing on an ambiguity in "the spawning is over", or does he have he have a point?

Thanks to William Berriman of the University of Regina for the above and the following two examples.

14. Background: Last summer the Regina city council was considering introducing cat licenses "in order to make someone responsible for the actions of problem cats". This occasioned the following letter to the Regina Leader-Post from A.L. of Regina on Aug. 7:

After reading Thursday's issue of the Leader-Post (Readers' Viewpoints) I wish to thank P.R. and K.D. for expressing their views on the situation of the control of cats in this city.

Why all this condemning of the family pet? Why can't the city council come to some agreement, and have enough funds to care for all animals who need help?

A person who is alone would benefit by having a cat or dog to fill the lonely hours. A pet, in return for care and attention, gives love and devotion to the one whose home it shares.

People speak of cats and dogs as dumb animals, which is not true. Our Siamese cat Misty could teach many a person a lesson. He is fun to have around and wise in many ways, for he teaches himself many tricks.

The one at fault is not the cat (dog) but the so-called humane-race, who ill-treat a pet and often end up by killing it. Others take pets out in the country or on busy highways, and leave them frightened and alone, not caring what happens to them; and they call themselves human beings.

I hope the city council will take an interest in the plight of the unwanted pet, and give a helping hand to the Humane Society and the City Pound.

Comment: We smell red herring and just outright irrelevance here, as well as straw man and ambiguity. But a query: is one not permitted to wander a little in a letter-to-the-editor? Is hard-nosed logical criticism pedantic here? (Eds.)

25. Background: The National Union of Students is a Canadian university student organization which, among other things, lobbies for student interests. NUS has been lobbying against recent tuition increases at Canadian universities (almost all of which are mainly supported by Provincial grants). The following letter appeared in the Regina Leader-Post in October 1979:

The professional whiners of the National Union of Students (NUS) tax one's patience.

Tuition fees today probably represent a smaller percentage of the total cost of education than 20 years ago. I understand that they account for 11 per cent of the cost in Saskatchewan.

Contrary to NUS statements, university budgets are not declining nor is funding by government. The rate of increase might not meet the unrealistic expectations of some students--notably those in liberal arts.

The shaggy, shouting, banner waving yahoos who seem dedicated to making confrontation a way of life whether with university administration or government would have minimal representation from faculties like commerce, engineering, medicine, law or agriculture.

The student should feel some moral obligation to contri-

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bute a small percentage of the total required for his or her education. The middle class taxpayer becomes a bit weary of carrying them on his back with their hands in both his pockets.

Canada spends close to \$20 billion a year on education. West Germany and Japan spend less than four per cent of their GNP on education, whereas the figure in Canada is eight per cent. We have much to learn from these countries and little to teach them.

Spending by liberal arts faculties of all Canadian universities could be reduced by 50 per cent with a proportionate reduction in the number of graduates and there would be no ill effects. If anything, the opposite result would occur.

26. Background: Newspaper editorialists and writers of letters to the editor do not, impressions gleaned from the pages of ILN notwithstanding, enjoy a monopoly on specious reasoning. This excerpt from Robinson's "Reason and Faith," in Burr and Goldinger's Philosophy and Contemporary Issues (Macmillan, 1976), contains a number of questionable points of logic:



If theology were part of reasonable inquiry, there would be no objection to an atheist's being a professor of theology. That a man's being an atheist is an absolute bar to his occupying a chair of theology proves that theology is not an open-minded and reasonable inquiry. Someone may object that a professor should be interested in his subject and that an atheist cannot be interested in theology. But a man who maintains that there is no god must think it a sensible and interesting question to ask whether there is a god; and in fact we find that many atheists are interested in theology. Professor H. D. Lewis tells (Philosophy, 1952, p. 347) that an old lady asked him what philosophy is, and, when he had given an answer, she said: 'O I see, theology.' She was nearly right, for theology and philosophy have the same subject-matter. The difference is that in philosophy you are allowed to come out with whichever answer seems to you the more likely.

In most universities the title of theology includes a lot of perfectly good science which is not theory of god, and which I do not reject. I mean the scientific study of the history of the Jews and their languages and their religious books. All that can be reasonable study, and usually is so. But it is a hindrance to the progress of knowledge that we are largely organized for research in such a way that a man cannot be officially paid to engage in these branches of research unless he officially maintains that there is a god. It is as if a man could not be a professor of Greek unless he believed in Zeus and Apollo.

Religious persons often consider gambling to be a bad thing. It certainly causes a great deal of misery. But much of the badness of gambling consists in its refusal to face the probabilities and be guided by them; and in the matter of refusing to face the probabilities religious is a worse offender than gambling, and does more harm to the habits of reason. Religious belief is, in fact, a form of gambling, as Pascal saw. It does more harm to

reason than ordinarily gambling does, however, because it is more in earnest.

It has been said that the physicist has just as closed a mind about cause as the Christian has about god. The physicist assumes through thick and thin that everything happens according to causal laws. He presupposes cause, just as the Christian presupposes God.

But the physicist does not assume that there is a reign of law; he hopes that there is. He looks for laws; but, whenever a possible law occurs to him, he conscientiously tries to disprove it by all reasonable tests. He asserts at any time only such laws as seem at that time to have passed all reasonable tests, and he remains always prepared to hear of new evidence throwing doubts on those laws. This is far from the Christian attitude about god. The Christian does not merely hope that there is a god and maintain only such gods as the best tests have shown to be more probable than improbable.

(Thanks to Elmer Thiessen for submitting this example.)

27.



Nancy Reagan: Which history books has she been reading?

Religion and politics

Detroit Free Press, May 22, 1980

I AM CONCERNED about the comments of Mrs. Reagan and Rev. Falwell at the Christian rally in Indiana, concerning Christian candidates for public office.

This is a country built on the concept of separation of church and state. If a person chooses to join a religion that does not advocate liberal causes, then it is that individual's private preference. The individual's freedom to pursue certain ideas is respected. So it does not seem right for a religious group to dictate its preference to the country that has allowed religions the freedom to flourish and develop.

The intermingling of church and state is a scary concept. The Spanish Inquisition is one example of this sort of idea.

JANE NUGENT
Warren

NANCY REAGAN says our country is a Christian country, founded on Christian principles.

I wonder what history books she has been reading. My history books tell me that the United States is a country for all religions — and no

religion. My history books tell me our Founding Fathers and the first seven presidents of the United States were Deists — which is definitely not Christian.

The Rev. Falwell says this country is not Jewish and not Moslem — but only Christian. Obviously, it falls into place that if the United States government overturns the 1963 Supreme Court ruling of forced Bible reading and prayer in public schools, that only Christian prayers will be allowed. It also follows that if we are a Christian nation and nothing but, then I wonder what we should do with the Jews, Moslems, non-Christians and atheists?

There was once a man who had the "final solution" to this "problem." While Nancy Reagan and her husband, candidate for president of this great nation, dangerously distort history, and while our Founding Fathers are twirling in their graves in sadness and shock, we better take a lesson from history — or else we are doomed to repeat it.

BARBARA SCHWARTZ
Oak Park