Robert Anton Wilson, who along with Robert Shea wrote the *Illuminatus* trilogy, is the creator of yet another cult. The really neat part is that this is a cult of hard-core libertarian-anarchist-occult-mind expansionists whose demand for the *Illuminatus* books is making SF retail history. Walk into your corner bookstore and chances are excellent the books have been back-ordered. Borrow a copy or wait in line if you must — it’s worth it. The trilogy is truly mind-boggling, outrageous, and curiously familiar. With this in mind we set out to interview one of its authors, Robert Anton Wilson (hereafter R.A.W.)

Interviewing him by mail was an exciting, albeit frustrating job. His provocative answers triggered seemingly never-ending digressions. We had to more or less learn to limit our responses. Several of the questions in the following interview appear to be asked by R.A.W. himself. These are not misprints — he does give himself questions. To give you some insight into Wilson’s psyche we offer
you this tidbit of data — to wit, his return address rubber stamp has his name misspelled “Robert Antoon Wilson.” Make of this what thou wilt. — Jane Talisman and Eric Geislinger (hereafter the CRNLA).

RAW: I never heard of any of those people except Kerry Thornley and Sharon Presley. Kerry is one of the co-creators of Discordian atheology, which is why volume one of *Illuminatus* is co-dedicated to him. Sharon is a fine person who I’ve only met twice but liked vastly. I’m sure all those others are excellent people, too, but I’ve never met them.

CRNLA: The editor of *New Libertarian Weekly*, SEK3, would like you to write for them — “… we’re a hell of a lot better than SRAF and can even pay a token amount, and can run stuff he can’t get past Playboy and Oui.”

RAW: I’d be delighted.

CRNLA: Do you have any concluding thoughts for our readers?

RAW: Absolutely not. As Korzybski said, nothing is conclusive, and every sentence should end with an *et cetera*. Or perhaps Woody Allen said it better: “Not only is there no God, but you can’t even get a plumber on weekends.” The answer to that, of course, is to become your own god and your own plumber. That may be the fundamental secret of the Illuminati.
solid earthlings! You’d think there’d be at least a couple of aliens strolling around looking at the shops, etc.”?

RAW: Curiously, I belong to a loose association of skeptical Contactees — people who have had a Contact experience but are too skeptical to take it literally. There are over a hundred of us in the U.S. alone, most scientists, and I think that the gradual surfacing of this story will be one of the major cultural shocks of our time. Right now, Martin Gardner has already registered his viewpoint and I trust that MIT will have the courtesy to print Dr. Sarfatti’s rebuttal. I must add that most of us who are involved in this have grown extremely doubtful about the now-conventional extraterrestrial explanation and are trying out various explanatory models that are even more mind-blowing. Those who are interested in this subject might look up my article, “The Starseed Signals,” in Gnostica for June 1975, and Dr. Jacques Vallee’s book, The Invisible College. As the divine Mullah Nasruddin said, “If you haven’t seen me before, how do you know it is me?”

CRNLA: What are your plans for future books?

RAW: Prometheus Rising will be published by Llewellyn next year. It’s a collection of my essays on space age occultism and post-LSD consciousness. I hope it will knock holes in the Christian revival, the Hindu revival, the Buddhist revival and all the other neolithic metaphysics going around these days. A book on immortality research, possibly entitled Death Shall Have No Dominion, is going around New York seeking a publisher. A book on Dr. Timothy Leary, and a new novel called Schrödinger’s Cat, about quantum paradoxes and parapsychology, are also in the works. Leary and I are working on a collaborative venture called The Game of Life which started out as one volume and became three. It modestly attempts to deduce the next four billion years of evolution from the data of Leary’s brain-change research.

CRNLA: Who did you know in the old Berkeley crowd such as Danny Rosenthal, Sharon Presley, Tom McGivern? How about Kerry Thornley?

CRNLA: Tell us a little about your background.

RAW: I was born into a working class Irish Catholic family in Brooklyn 44 years ago, at the brutal bottom of the Great Depression. I suppose this early imprinting and conditioning made me a life-long radical. My education was mostly scientific, majoring in electrical engineering and applied math at Brooklyn Tech and Brooklyn Polytech. Those imprints made me a life-long rationalist. I have become increasingly skeptical about, or detached from, the assumption that radicalism and rationalism are the only correct perspectives with which to view life, but they remain my favorite perspectives.

CRNLA: What are your favorite novels, movies, TV shows and music?


CRNLA: What do you think of M*A*S*H, the Freak Brothers, Bob Dylan?

RAW: I loved Altman’s film of M*A*S*H but I can’t stand the TV series. The Freak Brothers are funny, but I deplore the lifestyle it celebrates. Of course, Einstein and Michelangelo were sloppy, too, but only because they were too busy with real work to fix their attention on sartorial status games. Hippies generally aren’t busy with anything except feeling sorry for themselves. Dylan seems to me a totally pernicious influence — the nasal whine of death and masochism. Certainly, this would be a more cheerful world if there were no Dylan records in it. But Dylan and his audience mirror each other, and deserve each other; as Marx said, a morbid society creates its own morbid grave-diggers.

CRNLA: How about Anderson, LeGuin and Heinlein?
I haven’t taken Anderson seriously since 1968, when he wrote an account of the police-riot at the Chicago Convention which was totally false, according to my observations on the scene. I decided Poul loved the Vietnam War so much, that he could actually watch a cop hit an old lady and remember it as a young communist hitting the cop. I haven’t bothered keeping up with Anderson’s hallucinations since then. LeGuin is great already, and getting better book by book. Heinlein has been an idol to me for more than 20 years. He can do no wrong, no matter how much he loves wars and hates pacifists. (I’m the kind of anarchist whose chief objection to the State is that it kills so many people. Government is the epitome of the deathist philosophy I reject.)

CRNLA: Are you a pacifist?

RAW: Hell, no. I like pacifists, as a rule, and people who have a heavy emotional identification with deathism and war would probably call me a pacifist, but I am a non-invasivist rather than a non-violentist. That is, I believe that an invaded people have the right to defend themselves “by any means necessary” as the expression goes. This includes putting ground glass or poison in the invaders’ food, shooting at them from ambush, sabotage, the general strike, armed revolution, all forms of Gandhian civil disobedience, etc. It’s up to the invaded to decide which of these techniques they will use. It’s not up to some moralist to tell them which techniques are permissible. As Tucker said, “There is nothing sacred in the life of an invader.”

CRNLA: What magazines and newspapers do you read?

RAW: I read everything, including the labels on canned food. I’m a hopeless print addict, a condition alleviated only by daily meditation which breaks the linear-Aristotelian trance. (Most rationalistic libertarians would do well to try the same circuit breaker, or LSD.) National Lampoon, Scientific American and Green Egg are what I read most obsessively. I also read at least one periodical every month by a political group I dislike — to keep some sense of balance. The overwhelming stupidity of political movements is psychology or general semantics or neurology or whatever, will not liberate you; one needs actual re-training, in Tantra or Crowley or Leary, to experience what I’m talking about here. It is a great privilege to be conscious in this universe. Those who understand, shine like stars.

CRNLA: I was just speaking in relative terms. Actually, I’m quite excited about reality — it’s probably my favorite thing. I was just wondering if sometimes all the fnords tend to get you a little pissed-off.

RAW: Never. As Tim Leary says, the universe is an intelligence test. The things that hinder me are opportunities to learn more and develop further. That’s where amoral thinking is distinctly superior to moral thinking. If you recognize that your latest problem is totally without moral significance — for instance, you have a disease which you can’t, by the wildest stretch of imagination, blame on anybody — then it’s just a question of coping with the situation as best you can. When you realize that people are just as automated as bacteria or wild animals, then you deal with hostile humans the same way you deal with infections or predators — rationally, without claiming you’re “right” or they’re “wrong.” Then you begin to understand Crowley’s great Law of Thelema (Do What Thou Wilt) and you’re free, really free, instead of being an actor in a soap opera written by the superstitious shamans who created morality 30,000 years ago. You are also free of anger, hatred and resentment, which are great burdens to drop. They live happiest, my friend, who have understood and forgiven all.

CRNLA: Are there real people, alive or in history, who resemble any of your characters (Hagbard in particular)?

RAW: Absolutely. There are hundreds of thousands of Hagbards around, and all the sleep-walkers are potential Hagbards. They only need to be shaken a bit and awakened. As Jesus said, “Ye are all gods, ye are all children of the Most High.”

CRNLA: Have you ever walked into some public place like a shopping center and said to yourself something like, “Christ, it’s
ocratic forms: SMI2LE = infinity. (Space Migration plus Intelligence Increase plus Life Extension = cosmic consciousness.

CRNLA: Any word on how sales are doing?
RAW: Fine. I might not have to take up highway robbery and murder to get rich after all.

CRNLA: That’s good. Who is Tarantella Serpentine and why is she working for Limit newsletter?
RAW: The Discordian conspiracy has been radically decentralized from the beginning, in accordance with Malaclypse the Younger’s principle that “We Discordians must stick apart.” The last I heard, Tarantella was a fictional character, working in a San Francisco massage parlor (in my other novel, The Sex Magicians.) It doesn’t surprise that she has a life of her own, outside my imagination. Illuminatus is only part of a total art work, or “happening” known as Operation Mindfuck. A group of New York Discordians, for instance, celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Illuminati with a public reading of Principia Discordia (which also exists) outside the UN building on May 1 this year. A lodge of Crowleyan magicians in Texas has officially changed their name from the Temple of the Hidden God to the Ancient Illuminated Good Old Boys of Houston. Emperor Norton posters, endorsed by the Illuminati, are for sale through Solidarity Books in Chicago. Everything the Birchers ever claimed about the Illuminati is gradually coming true.

CRNLA: Do you feel frustration living in the “real” world? After reading Illuminatus it’s a downer to get back to reality — even my usual escapist literature is depressing. How do you feel about that?
RAW: Every nervous system creates its own “reality,” minute by minute — or, in the language of Don Juan Matus, we live inside a “bubble” of neural abstractions which we identify with reality. In metaprogramming systems like Tibetan Tantra, Crowleyanity, or Leary’s Exo-Psychology, you can make this neurological fact into conscious experience, and you will never be bored or depressed again. Just reading the scientific evidence that this is true, in social

caused by the fact that political types never read anything but their own gang’s agit-prop.

CRNLA: Any more artistic opinions?
RAW: If I must. James Joyce is more important than Jesus, Buddha and Shakespeare put together. Pound is the greatest poet in English. Thorne Smith should be reprinted immediately, and would be enormously popular with the current generation, I wager. The novels that get praised in the NY Review of Books aren’t worth reading. Ninety-seven percent of science fiction is adolescent rubbish, but good science fiction is the best (and only) literature of our times. All of these opinions are pompous and aggressive, of course, but questions like this bring out the worst in me. Artistic judgments are silly if expressed as dogmas, at least until we get an “artometer” which can measure objectively how many micro-michelangelos or kilo-homers of genius a given artifact has in it. Do you know that at UC-Berkeley, Dr. Paul Segall has a lab full of rats who are twice the age at which rats normally die of senility? And these rats are not only alive but still reproducing. This may be the most important fact I know. Dr. Segal hopes to have a life-extension formula for humans ready in the early 1980s.

CRNLA: Has Dr. Segall published any papers on his research?
If so, where?
RAW: A good, non-technical article by Dr. Segall on his own work and on other approaches to longevity, is in the new issue of Spit in the Ocean, edited by Dr. Timothy Leary and published by Ken Kesey. That issue, incidentally, is also worth reading for Sirag and Sarfatti on quantum consciousness, and Leary himself on higher intelligence.

CRNLA: Speaking of Ken Kesey, What did you think of Cuckoo’s Nest, and where can I get a copy of Spit in the Ocean?
RAW: One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest is certainly one of my favorite recent novels, but I like Kesey’s Sometimes a Great Notion even better. In fact, a great deal of the structural rhythms of Illuminatus, especially the space-time warps, were suggested by Kesey’s
similar techniques in *Sometimes a Great Notion*. The way the producers of the movie of *Cuckoo’s Nest* swindled Kesey is entirely typical of the way producers and publishers rob writers — it’s perfectly normal Capitalist ethics and typically mammalian.

The last I heard, Kesey was supposed to have the new *Spit in the Ocean* out by mid-Summer. (Write: 85829 Ridgway Road, Pleasant Hill, OR 97401).

CRNLA: What route did you travel to get to libertarianism?

RAW: Arlen, my wife, discovered Kropotkin’s article on anarchism in the *Britannica* and it immediately convinced us both (1961). We were both highly cynical about the alleged values of Capitalism and State Socialism already, and happy to find an alternative.

CRNLA: What is your present involvement in “movement” activities?

RAW: I’m more involved in space migration, intelligence increase and life extension which seems to me more important than any mammalian politics. What energy I have for terrestrial brawling goes into Wavy Gravy’s Nobody for President campaign, the Firesign Theatre’s Papoon for President campaign, and the Linda Lovelace for President (which I invented myself, since we ought to have a *good-looking* cocksucker in the White House for once.) I think these campaigns have some satirical-educational function, and, at minimum, they relieve the tedium of contemplating the “real” candidates, a more-than-usual uninspiring lot this year. Voting wouldn’t excite me unless it included electing the directors of the big banks and corporations, who make the real decisions that affect our lives. It’s hard to get excited about the trained seals in Washington. Of course, if voting could change the system, it would be illegal. Teachers would be handling out pamphlets for children to take home proving that voting machines cause chromosome damage, and Art Linkletter would claim that a ballot box drove his daughter to suicide.

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obstacles, then we don’t deserve to carry off the mutation at this stage of evolution. The thing to do, in that case, is to sit down and have a good Taoistic laugh at our own presumption. Meanwhile, until the game is over, I happen to think we’re winning. The other side is very, very stupid. Concretely, I say that if we have colonization of L5 by 1990, and longevity at about the same time, I think the game is won; some human seed will become cosmic and immortal. Robert Phedra, M.D., has already predicted life extension to 1,000 years.

CRNLA: A thousand years is OK for a start, but it’s not enough. Would you settle for “indefinite life extension” if it means transferring your thoughts to a synthetic storage system?

RAW: I’d consider it, but temperamentally I’d rather blast off for the stars when lifespan reaches about 400 years. I think in a 400 year cruise around the galaxy we’d contact races who have immortality already and we might arrange a trade for the technology of it. (Maybe they’d want an unexpurgated Illuminatus. I’m for space, actually, whether there are immortals out there or not. Aside from that bias, I’d support life extension by whatever means, from cryonic suspension to cyborgism to coding ourselves into our computers or whatever. Contrary to the last 2,500 years of “philosophy” among the domesticated and neurotic carnivore species we adorn, there is nothing noble or beautiful or dignified about dying. Like poverty, it is ugly, nasty, brutal and primitive. The function of intelligence is to do better than those mammalian norms.

CRNLA: Could you give us a bibliography on everything you’ve had published and who published it and if it’s still in print?

RAW: Hell, no. I’ve got about 1,000 articles in print and I can’t remember where most of them were printed and don’t really care to. The things I’m willing to stand by, in addition to Illuminatus, are the essays being collected in Prometheus Rising: Sex and Drugs, a Playboy Press paperback; my piece on “The Future in Sex” in Oui, November 1975; the article on brainwashing by Leary and me
writing anarchist essays myself. I soon discovered that, in addition to the 99.8 percent of the morons who make up any political movement, every gang has its own intellectuals defending it (with every variety of sophistry the Jesuits ever devised.) To defend anarchism more effectively, I had to read Marx and Douglas and Gesell and H. George and William Buckley Jr. and so weirder, on and on into the depths of ideological metaphysics — “the great Serbonian bog where armies whole have sunk,” as Burke (the best conservative) once said. Such omnidirectional reading, alas, tends to produce a certain degree of agnosticism, but my basic axioms have remained that (1) a system which consigned me to poverty at birth and Nelson Godawful Rockefeller to riches, is demonstrably insane, and (2) I will do anything, including highway robbery and murder, to avoid leaving my children in poverty. In that sense, the political thinker I probably agree with most is Bernard Shaw, who presented that position, with equal bluntness, in his Major Barbara. I might add, to be even more offensive, that I regard morality and ideology as the chief cause of human misery. I am even more committed to unmitigated skepticism than I am to anarchism — or to life extension, space migration or high intelligence. With doubt all things are possible. Doubt and courage.

CRNLA — Your economic views still seem very much in the Benjamin Tucker tradition (especially on rent and interest.) Have you read any of the “Austrian” economists, such as Von Mises and Rothbard? What do you think of them?

RAW: Tucker is certainly a major influence. My economic ideas are a blend of Tucker, Spooner, Fuller, Pound, Henry George, Rothbard, Douglas, Korzybski, Proudhon and Marx. I always try to be inclusive, rather than exclusive. Read to see what I can learn from every school, rather than condemning any idea in its entirety. “Every man has the right to have his ideas examined one at a time,” as Ez Pound once wrote. Rothbard is, like Marx and Pound, a brilliant closed mind: excellent for stimulation but anybody who gets dragged into a Rothbardian dogmatic trance should take LSD and

and, of course, the altruistic forms of socialism and communism are equally unacceptable to me, and I predict they would be equally unacceptable to a band of self-owners in the Stirnite, Tucker or Crowley sense. What would emerge in such a rationalistic-egoistic context would, in a general way, probably follow the guidelines suggested by Stirner, Spooner, Proudhon and Tucker — except that this would only be in a general way, as all of those writers realized. The specific individuals in each situation would define their own demands according to the specific situation always. The only contracts that would be acceptable to them, as Tucker indicated, would be those that require no enforcement — that is, those that are so obviously in the enlightened self-interest of each member that their wording would be accepted with the satisfaction the scientific world feels when a hard question is finally answered. If the proposed contract did not have that self-evident feeling character about it — if it didn’t provoke the general feeling, “This is the answer to our disagreements” — it would not be accepted. I speak with some experience here, being part of an occult order who do indeed govern themselves that way. My only general rules are Crowley’s “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law” and Leary’s Three Commandments for the Neurological Age, to wit: “Thou shalt not alter the consciousness of thy neighbor, 2. Thou shalt not prevent thy neighbor from altering his or her own consciousness, 3. Thou shalt make no more commandments.” The so-called “resources” problem is a terracentric delusion. The Universe is a Big Mother.

CRNLA: To return to life extension, space migration and higher intelligence, I worry about the potential of all that being screwed up by the politicians. How do you feel about that?

RAW: If the oncoming mutation to interstellar immortality is screwed up by the politicians (or the corporations), it will be because those of us who see the opportunities in modern science are not adroit enough to outmaneuver the forces of inertia, stupidity and greed. Well, if we’re not intelligent enough to overcome such
as smoothly and efficiently and with the least amount of head-
cracking as possible. Like the use of language, the use of the
concept of "property" doesn’t necessarily have to be enforced.
When people discover it they use it because it’s in their long-
range self-interest to do so. (This is not to say that particular
instances don’t require enforcement — just that the concept is
usually retained without it.) The whole system of ownership/div-
ision of labor/rent transactions etc. is merely designed to allo-
cate resources so that they maximize the "vector sum" of every-
one’s satisfaction — or more accurately, that this system has the
potential to maximize. You don’t have to use it. Without this sys-
Austrians, naturally arises to prove rationally that the kicking is
not only necessary but just, inevitable, beautiful and altogether glo-
rious. If there were big profits in cancer, there’d undoubtedly be an
Austrian school of medicine, proving that carcinoma is good for us.

CRNLA: Tucker is one of my favorite people — but one of his
views with which I can’t agree is that in a free society interest
rates and rent would disappear. I think the Austrians have ad-
vanced economic knowledge sufficiently since Tucker’s day to
show why these things exist and how they would come about
even in an economy consisting totally of free trade. Your reply?

RAW: You can “prove” anything on the verbal level, just be ac-
cepting the necessary axioms at the beginning. Empirically, I don’t
think they can produce a single case in history where a free peo-
ple elected landlords to own the land; the land monopoly always
starts with conquest. Shot and shell are the coins of purchase, as
Herbert Spencer said. Except by force of arms, nobody “owns” the
earth, anymore than the moon, the planets, the stars themselves.
When did God disinherit the majority of humanity, and turn all
space over to the “ownership” of the Rockefellers and their friends?
Without armed power threatening us, why would anyone but a fool
continue to pay these conquistadores the extortion they demand?
And, even if the Austrians could convince me that rent is legitimate,
I still wouldn’t voluntarily pay it to the present landlord class who
remain receivers of stolen property. I would pay it to the nearest
Indian tribe.

As for interest, I’m not aware of any case in which the credit
monopoly has allowed a free currency to compete with them. In
fact, every case I know of (e.g. Wörgl in the 1930s), ended when
the Capitalists used the armed might of the State to stop the competition. The one laboratory experiment in this field, by Don Werkheiser at Central State University in Ohio, confirmed Tucker and refuted the Austrians. Money, after all, is an abstract artifact, like language — merely symbolized by the paper or coin or whatever. If you can fully grasp its abstractedness, especially in the computer age, it becomes quite clear that no group can monopolize this abstraction, except through a series of swindle. The average primate cannot distinguish the symbol from the referent, the map from the territory, the menu from the meal. If the usurers had been bolder, they might have monopolized language as well as currency, and people would be saying we can’t write more books because we don’t have enough words, the way they now say we can’t build starships, because we don’t have enough money. As Bucky Fuller says, you might as well argue we can’t build roads because we lack kilometers.

CRNLA: I think our differences in “rent” are basically in “land-rent” — you don’t see anything wrong if someone wants to rent out power tools and U-haul trailers — true? Your main argument with land-rent seems to be with the lack of legitimate owners. I’m assuming legitimate (i.e. non-conquistador) owners when I speak of legitimate rent. If two people went to Mars or the bottom of the ocean and one of them spent his time clearing rocks and fertilizing a section of land and the other spent his time assembling a tractor, and they reach an agreement to exchange the use of the land for one season for the use of the tractor for one season — has anyone been harmed or exploited or extorted? Should some third party come onto the scene and say, “Hey stop that, you’re committing rent?”

RAW: Land-rent, or ground-rent, is the most illegitimate aspect of the rent con, of course, and the main target of Tucker’s criticisms. The whole concept of any rent, however, appears somewhat dubious to me, since it seems to presuppose “the accumulation of property in a few aristocratic heaps, at the expense of a great deal of
mand that we pay interest to the dictionary publishers every time we speak or write?

You have to watch people playing Monopoly, and see them begin to “identify” the paper markers with real value, to understand how the mass hypnosis of Capitalism works. Fortunately, the Head Revolution is still proceeding and more and more people are waking up to the difference between our economic game-rules and the real existential situation of humanity.

Don Werkheiser might sell you a Xerox of his thesis on the Central State experiment if you write to him c/o General Delivery, Ponca, Arkansas. Similar experiments are recounted in Josiah Warren’s True Civilization, involving four communes in 19th Century America. Let me conclude this answer by emphasizing that I do not blame the money-monopologists for any of their hoarding behavior. I am sure you will find similar absurdities in the primitive stages of anthropoid civilizations on most planets of G-type stars. Mammalian patterns persist in many other aspects of our society, especially in organized religions.

In my experience, I might add, virtually all adherents of the Austrian economic theories are academics who have never had any dealings with Capitalist corporations. The rosy view the Austrians have of these matters, I think, would collapse in two weeks if they had to deal with the damned corporate pirates as an ordinary worker does. When Joyce went into business briefly, he told Italo Svevo after a while, “You know, I think my partners are cheating me.” Svevo answered, “You only think your partners are cheating you! Joyce, you are an artist!” Nixon is the typical Capitalist mentality, entirely identical in all aspects with every businessman I have ever encountered; his only real distinction is that he got caught. Of course, I’m not complaining — part of the humor of living on this backward planet is listening to the hominids rationalize their predations.

CRNLA: I don’t think that the Austrians have a particularly “rosy” view of business. I know a lot of them (Mises and Roth
The barter arrangement in your paradigm has nothing to do with perpetual tribute, which is the essence of rent — indeed, the factor distinguishing barter from rent.

Of course, since Austrian ideas exist as factors in human behavior, I will admit that some people, hoodwinked by those ideas, will continue to pay rent even in freedom, for a while at least. But I think that, after a time, observing that their Tuckerite neighbors are not submitting to this imposture, they would come to their senses and cease paying tribute to the self-elected “owners” of limitless space, on this and other planets, and in interplanetary communities.

Of course, I myself would not pay rent one day beyond the point at which the police (“hired guns, on guard to see that property remains stolen” as Emma Goldman said) are at hand to collect it via “argument per blunt instrument.”

CRNLA: Regarding interest: again I assume a totally free market, where there are no legal tender laws and anyone is free to mint, mine, print or grow anything that they feel the market will accept for money. I think that under these conditions the interest rate would be dramatically lower than it presently is but that it would not tend toward zero. Money generally performs at least three interrelated functions: (1) indirect exchange media, (2) provides a common “measuring scale,” (3) stores wealth. In the first two money is definitely an “abstract artifact” — a “cashless” society could exist merely using bookkeeping entries. But when it’s used to store wealth it causes trouble as an “abstract” — bankruns and the like. Wealth isn’t an abstract. It may be subjectively appraised, but it actually exists. When A wants to use B’s wealth for a period of time, B is generally compensated for his loss of its use for that period by A — interest. Among corporations (admittedly, a legal fiction) the issuing of “Tucker-money,” (i.e., stock) is a fairly unfettered means of obtaining credit — but the people who give it to them still expect a return and the corporations still expect to pay it. I’d be interested in seeing the Central State experiment. Usually because of the multiplicity of ever-changing factors involved in the market, it’s difficult if not impossible to ever prove anything empirically.

RAW: Of course, my position is based on the denial that money does store wealth. I think it’s a semantic hallucination, the verbal equivalent of an optical illusion, to speak at all of money containing or storing wealth. Such thinking should have gone out with phlogiston theory. The symbol is not the referent; the map is not the territory. Money symbolizes wealth, as words symbolize things, and that’s all. The delusions that money contains wealth is the mechanism by which the credit monopoly hof study, as gained a stranglehold on the entire economy. As Colonel Greene pointed out in Mutual Banking, all the money could disappear tomorrow morning and the wealth of the planet would remain the same. However, if the wealth disappeared — if squinks from the Pink Dimension dragged it off to null-space or something — the money would be worth nothing. You don’t need to plow through the dialects of the debate between the Austrians and the free credit people like Tucker and Gesell to see this; any textbook of semantics will make it clear in a few hours of study. Wealth is nature’s abundance, freely given, plus the exponential advance of technology via human intelligence, and as Korzybski and Fuller demonstrate, this can only increase at an accelerating rate. Money is just the tickets or symbols to arrange for the distribution — either equitably, in a free money system, or inequitably, as under the tyranny of the present money-cartel. As you realize, a cashless society could exist merely by keeping bookkeeping entries or computer tapes. Money is a primitive form of such computer tapes, serving a feedback function. If we are not to replace the present banking oligopoly with a programmer’s oligopoly, in which the interest will be paid to computer technicians, we must realize that this is all a matter of abstract symbolism — that it exists by social agreement and nobody owns it, anymore than Webster owns the language. Why is it, incidentally, that the Austrians don’t follow their logic to its natural conclusion and de-