

Jeff Graubart. *AFFEERCE: A Business Plan to Save the United States and Then the World* (Second draft -- 2013).

[Disclaimer. This is a paid review. I was assured by Jeff Graubart that negative reviews were fine – he expected only honesty. And I received 40% of the payment up front, with the rest to come after writing the review.]

Graubart's vision of a future society, like the whole of Gaul, is divided into three parts:

We need free markets on steroids and we need universal entitlement on steroids. If you can't see past what appears to be an absurd contradiction, then you haven't put that together with the third thing that is essential for the survival of the planet: reproductive control: parents must pay for their child's entitlements before they are allowed to give birth or adopt. These are outlined in the fundamental relations.

For Graubart, these three basic features of his proposed society are a three-legged stool. Without all three of them, it won't stand. Remove any one, he warns, and the result will be barbarism.

The first feature, the free market itself—the maximum possible degree of economic freedom—is a goal for Graubart in its own right. But without a universal entitlement, a totally free and unregulated market will lead to barbarism through the concentration of capital, technological unemployment and mass impoverishment, and eventually class war and revolution. And without reproductive control, the universal entitlement will lead to an underclass breeding out of control for the sake of the additional entitlement money their kids will bring into the household, and eventually to mass impoverishment and social bankruptcy from overpopulation.

I don't see either of these outcomes as necessary or inevitable absent his proposed remedy, and therefore for me the chain of logic by which the three parts of his agenda cohere into a whole is weak (as I will explain later in this review).

Graubart explains the basic principles in more detail with the acronym AFFEERCE, with AF standing for Alternative Family, FE for Free Enterprise, E for (Universal) Entitlement, RC for Reproductive Control and E for Enlightenment.

Alternative Family does not mean you have to run off and join a commune or have a 5-way sexual relationship. You have every right to structure your family on 1 man + 1 woman + children. Or you can choose to live alone....

Free Enterprise means laissez-faire. It means government keeps its hands off business. It means no minimum wage and no inflation. It means no corporate income tax of any kind. It means the marketplace will determine if monopolies should form and the effectiveness of collusion. It also means no civil rights protection and no right to a job....

Universal Entitlement – ...Entitlement is not based on need. A billionaire receives the same entitlement for food and housing as a pauper. Each person in a family of 50 receives the same dollar amount for food and housing as a person who lives alone.

Personal entitlements include nutritious food, safe shelter, unlimited free education, and quality medical....

Reproductive Control – Families must pay the present value for a lifetime of entitlements before they are allowed to adopt or raise a child. This is approximately \$600,000 but it is tax free. However, this goal might not be met for a century or more. In the beginning, families

might pay only half the cost of entitlement or \$300,000 before being allowed to adopt or raise a child. Even this amount might be phased in over 100 or more years.... Regardless of cost, if the parents cannot pay, the child will be placed with a family that can afford the child....

Enlightenment – In a free society, all religions, spiritualities, beliefs or lack thereof, are welcome. The AFFEERCE enlightenment is a reliance of the truths in nature following the deconstruction of postmodernism....

The postmodern age will lead to the synthesis between objectivism and subjectivism; an age of the union of science with spirituality, of mind and body, of freedom and entitlement, of Eros and Agape.

About the last item, Enlightenment, I have little to say, because metaphysics and epistemology are pretty far outside the subject matter I feel competent to discuss. Before I finish up with a detailed critique of the logical connections between the three major parts of Graubart's agenda, though, I will take some time to comment on the other individual components of AFFEERCE with my own positive and negative observations.

Graubart's Alternative Families are quite similar to what I've written about elsewhere as “primary social units.” Rather than “Alternative Families,” I think “households” might be a more apt description, since many of them bear a closer resemblance to what we would think of as multi-family cohousing projects. They exist mainly as economic expedients for pooling incomes and risks, and reducing costs of living by minimizing the unused spare capacity of housing and household capital goods that normally exists when separate nuclear family households predominate. Of course large Alternative Families can also function as polyamorous sexual units or group child-rearing institutions, but they don't have to. And people can still form families based on one couple with children, but the economic incentives in Graubart's society would be strongly in favor of larger household units.

Graubart's picture of how a Free Enterprise economy would work is, in my opinion, one of the weaker parts of his book.

The main way his Free Enterprise economy deviates from the real article is the VOS:

In AFFEERCE, a government agency, The Bureau of Standards, through volunteer standards groups, will coordinate industry standards, and require that industries either adopt the standards of the industry, or display in a consistent way across all industries, those standards that are violated, the VOS. Omission of violated standards from the VOS and failure to properly display or get customer sign-off on the VOS constitutes fraud. The VOS is a legal document that protects against liability, so businesses will pay inspection agencies to certify their VOS.

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Once you have properly revealed how your entity deviates from acceptable standards, you no longer are liable for that deviation.

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Each category of enterprise has an associated set of standards determined by volunteer consumer and business standard's groups (VSG's) whose members are members of these enterprises or engage in the marketplace with these enterprises. The Bureau of Standards coordinates these VSG's, and makes suggestions for consistency across types of enterprises, but does not control the set of standards.

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Secondly, any business that does pollute would have to indicate the extent of its pollution on its VOS. Should the pollution markedly exceed the amount disclosed, that would likely constitute fraud. The VOS is a public document that limits liability. There are no officials to

bribe or arcane EPA regulations to hide behind.

This strikes me as a poor alternative to the use of a fully liberated tort law and a wide variety of self-organized reputational systems for punishing corporate malfeasors. But Graubart's attitude toward such approaches is quite dismissive.

The point is that there are literally billions of cases where fraud is ambiguous. Certainly an industry can collude on a set of standards, and even display an “Underwriter’s laboratory” type of seal, but there is nothing to prevent another business, or even one of the companies from producing the product at less cost by violating those standards and selling to customers who have neither the time nor energy nor inclination to study labels.

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The argument that bad practices will quickly destroy a business is false. Companies change names. People are mobile and do not spend their time researching companies. Even major news exposés can be lost amongst the information overload....

Graubart, in critiquing the standard libertarian vision of a free market regulatory state, frequently refers to the “objectivist” position on this or that, seemingly taking the Randians as a stand-in for libertarianism in general. I get the impression that he has little exposure to the free market tradition or libertarian literature outside the Objectivist milieu, and in particular I get no indication that he's familiar with such writers on the mechanics of a free market regulatory regime as David Friedman or Morris and Linda Tannehill.

I think Graubart underestimates the extent to which a liberated tort law, in its full vigor and without liability caps and other forms of right-wing “tort reform” promoted by business lobbyists, would strike fear into the hearts of potential defrauders and malfeasants.

A genuinely libertarian common law of torts would restore the notions of liability that existed before state court judges changed the law to make it more business-friendly in the early-to-mid-19th century (as recounted by Morton Horwitz in *The Transformation of American Law*). Before these judge-made modifications to the classical law of torts, it wasn't necessary to prove negligence. If you did something that resulted in an unforeseen harm to your neighbor, you were liable for it, regardless of intent. And “standard business practices” weren't a defense—if a new business imposed negative externalities on neighbors who were already there, it was liable for them.

The 20th century regulatory state further weakened what civil damages were available to punish corporate wrongdoers. In many cases regulations like the EPA's environmental standards were dumbed-down, least-common-denominator standards that preempted common law standards of liability and created safe harbors against civil liability. So a company that destroys the watershed of an entire region through mountaintop removal, or poisons the air and water of surrounding communities and creates a cancer cluster by fracking, can say “Hey, we meet the EPA regulatory standard” and use that as a shield against liability in court.

I also think—something about which I'll have more to say below in my evaluation of his argument for the necessity of the Universal Entitlement—that Graubart underestimates how drastically a genuine free market economy would differ from our present one in structural terms. He seems to envision an economy still characterized by lots of corporate firms and an atomized society with lots and lots of anonymous transactions in the cash nexus.

But I believe that, absent state subsidies to long-distance transportation and economic centralization, and to large-scale enterprise and hierarchy, the pressure would be overwhelmingly toward decentralization and relocalization, and more demographically stable localities. The great bulk of

manufactured items that are now imported from large factories across the United States or sweatshops in China would be produced in small garage factories with the surrounding neighborhood or community as their primary market. A great deal more—especially in the way of foodstuffs and clothing—would be produced in the informal economy of the large household itself, or informal barter and gift networks of multiple households. Rather than one-off transactions on the anonymous cash nexus, most economic exchange would overlap with the social ties of neighborhood and community, with people producing for customers they know by face and name.

In such a society, where most enterprises depended on repeat business from their neighbors, and selling dangerous or tainted goods that resulted in harm would get you assessed damages by a jury of your angry neighbors, both reputational and tort mechanisms would carry a lot more weight.

The Universal Entitlement is Graubart's version of a proposal that's been around for a long time (basic income, guaranteed minimum income, negative income tax, citizen's dividend, social credit, etc.).

And I find it attractive, at least as a transitional measure. As Graubart points out himself, a guaranteed minimum income would do away with the entire welfare state bureaucracy at federal, state and local levels, with its enormous administrative costs. But I find it far more attractive when packaged, as it is in proposals by the Geolibertarians, with a funding system based on taxing economic rents (primarily the site value of land) and negative externalities (i.e. Pigovian taxes on pollution and resource extraction). A libertarian society in which the welfare state was replaced by a universal basic income funded by a tax on unearned wealth, the regulatory state was replaced with prohibitive taxes on emissions of CO₂ and toxic chemicals, and the market was otherwise completely free, would at least be a huge step in the right direction.

So I'm somewhat surprised that Graubart reinvents the wheel with a funding mechanism based on a 70% flat tax on consumption, instead of these other, more attractive funding proposals.

Of course Graubart's flat tax isn't nearly as regressive in practice as it sounds. First of all, it's a tax only on consumption spending over and above the Universal Entitlement, which is slightly over \$1000 a month (and includes food, housing and healthcare among other necessities). So for those in the bottom three quintiles of the population, at least, a 70% tax on consumption over \$1000 a month would probably be less than the total federal and state income tax, Social Security and Medicare payroll tax, and state and local sales and property taxes, that they're paying now.

And the consumption tax is only a temporary expedient for paying the Universal Entitlement while Reproductive Control (enforced by a requirement to pay the entire capitalized lifetime value of a future child's Universal Entitlement, \$600,000, up front before having a child) is phased in. As Reproductive Control is implemented—Graubart proposes to gradually work up to the full \$600,000 per child over many years—the consumption tax will be steadily lowered and replaced by revenue from the payment for having children.

The Universal Entitlement is deposited into an account that can be accessed for spending via a universal biometric identification system. An individual, say, buying food or clothing, or paying rent from this account simply swipes their hand, speaks or submits to a retinal scan to make a cashless payment. The Entitlement cannot be transferred from one person to another, with one big exception: between members of an Alternative Family. The Alternative Family, with its formal legal charter and bylaws, is the official building block of the AFFEERCE society, and all its members' Entitlements are shared within the family unit as a condition of membership.

The Transition. One thing I like about this book is, it's one of those visions of the future that falls within the category of (in the words of the Wobbly slogan) “building the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Graubart's book, first and foremost, is an appeal for investors. He intends to build lots of miniature local AFFEERCE societies as business corporations with joint land trusts as a platform for member households and business enterprises. These nuclei he calls "...AFFEERCE nations," or "AFFEERCE enclaves that develop under the current government of the United States."

Of course, the third and fundamental problem of all movements is how do we bring such a society about? There is only one sure way: a business plan. Relying on both the profit motive and the AFFEERCE spirit, AFFEERCE will grow into a corporation so large and powerful, it will swallow Washington whole. I promise you, when the time for capitulation comes, the people of the United States will vote nearly unanimously to turn power over to the AFFEERCE Nations. And until that fateful day, the United States Government and the AFFEERCE Nations shall coexist in complete harmony.

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Keep in mind that AFFEERCE nations will form within the United States of America and be subject to its laws: most importantly, the code of the Internal Revenue Service. While our tax lawyers will utilize every loophole, and our representatives will work to make the code as favorable as possible for the AFFEERCE nations to flourish, AFFEERCE is built on honesty. The VIP will issue 1099s for every AFFEERCE citizen, and maintain automatic withholding into a dollar-denominated tax account...

...In pre-capitulation AFFEERCE, the AFFEERCE nation is a privately held corporation....

These AFFERICIANADO pioneers will form an AFFEERCE land corporation by purchasing shares and electing a board. The land corporation can buy contiguous foreign land, register it as AFFEERCE territory, optionally develop the land, and sell AFFEERCE territory to citizens (encumbered by an AFFEERCE lien).

I find this very attractive. The classic example of this approach was Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities, to be built on cheap colonized land in the countryside, and developed with funds from a land value tax on the appreciating real estate values. Dmytri Kleiner's "Venture Communism" takes a similar approach. So does the movement in Vinay Gupta's short story "The Unplugged," based on "buying in at the bottom" and building a comfortable subsistence lifestyle on the superior efficiency of small-scale high technology. The idea of an alternative economy movement forming as a voluntary association within the existing capitalist society, relying for its inputs primarily on the waste byproducts of inefficient corporate dinosaurs and doing a far better job efficiently extracting value from them, and growing within the belly of the beast until it ultimately takes over from within, is something that I find—to repeat—very attractive.

My main difference from Graubart on this score is I don't think it's necessary for such an alternative economy to ever take over the state or other institutional framework of the old society. No need for capitulation, or for the United States to formally amend the Constitution to make the new economic order the law of the land. The state and the large corporation exist for purposes that will be obsolete in a free society with cheap small-scale production technology, horizontal network communications and peer-to-peer organizations.

The Logical Necessity for the Universal Entitlement. The Universal Entitlement is necessary in a free market economy, Graubart says, because without it the natural trends of the free market will impoverish the great majority of the population and create an army of paupers ready to pull society down around their ears. "Universal entitlement allows for a free market economy, and it is the only thing that does." The reason is simple technology:

there is no question that given enough innovation, a single skilled human being can operate a machine that will do the work currently done by tens of thousands of workers. Massive wealth will be created. Where should it go? To build prisons for the unemployed underclass whose clergy instructs them to reproduce?

Graubart's technological unemployment argument, I believe, is based on a misunderstanding of technological history. Technological unemployment, like the wage system itself, presupposes a specific technological model: capital-intensive mass production, using expensive, product-specific machines—conventional factories, in other words, in just about every particular except the radically reduced need for people to work in them. They seem to be talking about something like a GM factory, with microcontrollers and servomotors in place of workers, like the Ithaca works in Vonnegut's *Player Piano*. If such expensive, capital-intensive, mass-production methods constituted the entire world of manufacturing employment, as they were in 1960, then the Graubart's technological unemployment scenario would indeed be terrifying.

But in fact the technological changes of recent years are destroying the material rationale not only for the wage system and factory system, but for technological unemployment. That rationale, originally, was a technological shift from individually affordable, general-purpose craft tools to extremely expensive, specialized machinery as the dominant means of production. Such machinery could only be afforded by rich people, who hired poor people to work it for them. The revolution in desktop information technology and cheap garage-scale digital machine tools is reversing this trend: We're going back to (a much higher-tech version of) cheap, general-purpose craft tools.

When the predominant means of production are individually affordable, the very distinction between being "employed" and "unemployed" becomes meaningless. A larger share of work becomes ad hoc and project-based rather than employer-based, and indeed a great deal of work shifts back to its original understanding as something you *do* to feed yourself rather than something you're *given* by an employer.

At the same time, the terminal crises of the corporate economy and the technological destruction of its material rationale are already to many of the kinds of changes that Graubart associates with his *Alternative Families*.

Large families allow some members to take on risk and provide a greater division of labor for startups.... Each additional family member allows a more efficient use for the total housing, food and sundry entitlements, thereby creating wealth.

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Most importantly, that which will render all of Marx's arguments on alienation and commodity fetishism moot is the freedom of the alternative family in an AFFEERCE society. Because of the entitlements, the division of labor and the economies of scale, every AFFEERCE family is free to form their own society. Each individual has a right to work at their own speed. Labors of love can be turned into small profits that large industrial giants would never even consider. Communes receive huge food and housing entitlements every month and they are free to combine pagan ritual with the harvest and still make money. What is important to each of us takes center stage in our lives. We are the means of production, and we shall not be alienated from ourselves.

According to the neo-Marxist James O'Connor, in *Accumulation Crisis*, the historic tendency of capitalism, during cyclical crises, has been for unemployed and underemployed workers to shift a portion of their needs satisfaction to self-provisioning in the informal and household sector. And given

that we're now in a crisis that's not *cyclical* but *structural*, there is a long-term shift toward increased satisfaction of needs through self-provisioning in the household and informal economy. As Ralph Borsodi showed eighty years ago, even then it was more economical in terms of total unit costs to grow and can one's own food than to buy it at the supermarket, or to make one's own clothing with a sewing machine. Since then the revolution in desktop information technology and tools for the home workshop has increased the share of production that can be undertaken at home, or in a neighborhood cooperative workshop with shared tools.

At the same time, the large household of an extended family or multiple families has a long history as a unit for pooling risks, costs and income. And in the years since we hit Peak Employment in 2000, there has been a drastic increase in multi-generational households.

I expect this only to rise in coming years, as both the state- and employer-based social safety net become hollowed out and are forced to retreat from social life. I expect a rise in primary social units like extended family compounds, multi-family cohousing projects, urban communes, neighborhood barter and sharing systems, intentional communities, friendly societies and lodges, mutual insurance systems, networked employment platforms like guilds and cooperative temp agencies, and a wide variety of other expedients, to replace the risk-, cost- and income-pooling functions currently provided by the state, employers and capitalist insurance policies.

I expect to see a society coalesce, over the coming decades, much like a high-tech version of the medieval peasant commune (e.g. the English open-field system or Russian *mir*), in which one is born into a primary social unit that supports its children and gives adults who choose to stay an aliquot share in the common productive land and access to the workshop, and either undertakes production in such facilities for common consumption or contributes income from an outside wage job in return for a guaranteed right to food and subsistence. In such a primary social unit (say a multi-family compound of twenty people) only a few might work at outside wage employment to earn the “foreign exchange” to buy goods available only on the cash nexus, others might work feeding the family by working in intensive raised-bed gardens or caring for chickens and guinea pigs, or working in the workshop. Surplus specialty crops or craft goods the household specializes in might be exchanged for other household surpluses in the neighborhood barter network.

In other words, the natural economic trends of shifting to an informal economy will replicate the effects of the Universal Entitlement.

As I argued above, I think Graubart drastically underestimates just how radically a genuine free market economy—one without state-enforced privileges, artificial property rights or artificial scarcities of any kind—would differ from our current one.

And while it will never be the case, as it is today, where the lower 40% of the population has .2 percent of the wealth in a truly free society, there is a level of inequality that has been shown to favor optimal success in business, science and economics. It is based on the work of Joseph Juran and named after Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto. The Pareto Principle shows that a natural and optimal inequality will tend to occur, where 20% of the population has 80% of the wealth...

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Currently, the top 20% of the population has 93% of the wealth, not the Pareto 80%.

I don't think Pareto was situated to make any such pronouncement, based on the observation of actually existing capitalism—a system in which the actual distribution of wealth reflects mainly rents on state-enforced artificial property, and the predominant model of business enterprise reflects massive state subsidies and entry barriers.

The elimination of direct and indirect rents on “intellectual property” (including the waste and planned obsolescence from the effect of patents on criminalizing modular designs with open-source replacement parts and ease of repair), the elimination of the portion of land rent that results from absentee title to vacant and unimproved land, the elimination of the portion of interest that results from entry barriers to cooperative banks and alternative barter currencies, the elimination of licensing, zoning and safety code barriers to running home microenterprises (micro-bakeries, hair salons, restaurants, daycare, unlicensed cab services, etc.) using the spare capacity of ordinary household appliances, legal barriers to self-built vernacular housing, etc., would both drastically lower the income of the top tier of the economy and also drastically lower the threshold for comfortable subsistence.

Far from technological employment, I think technological changes will lead to a society where employers have trouble hiring workers for enough hours or at a low enough wage to make a profit, because they face the nightmare scenario where they're competing with the possibility of self-employment and self-provisioning. This is the scenario that led to the Enclosures 250 years ago, when capitalist farmers in Britain complained that cottagers with independent access to a living on the common were unwilling to work as many hours, or for as low a wage, as the farmer desired.

There will still be differences in wealth from energy and effort, skill, and sheer entrepreneurial ability in anticipating and meeting needs. But there will no longer be the massive wealth resulting from compound returns on artificially scarce land and capital, or living off the rent of one-hit wonders by using patent and copyright to criminalize competition.

Instead of our present wealth differential of boulders and dust, the range will be more like good-sized rocks and pebbles.

Barbarism, in short, is not the only alternative to the Universal Entitlement.

The Logical Necessity for Reproductive Control. Graubart concedes that the idea of children as a source of wealth was originally one associated with pre-industrial societies with labor-intensive forms of production, extreme poverty, and high mortality rates. He concedes that this state of affairs ended when childhood mortality fell, children ceased to be an economic asset in the household, and income came mainly from adult employment outside the home. But “[y]ou might be surprised to find out that in a truly free society, many of the reasons to have children in pre-modern times will come back in a thoroughly modern context.”

Unfortunately, Graubart's actual argument seems to consist almost entirely of a priori reasoning from his assumptions about human nature—assumptions that sound a lot like the anecdotes from a Ronald Reagan speech ca. 1970 about “welfare queens” driving Cadillacs and buying T-bones with food stamps. To show that this is not hyperbole or mischaracterization on my part, I produce an unusually long series of examples below:

Universal Entitlement creates a society where children add to the wealth of a household. If the household has little wealth to begin with, children would be treated as income. Without reproductive control to both fund entitlement and prevent unlimited births, resources would be depleted, taxpayers would rebel, and reactionary forces would lead us to barbarism.

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Every additional child means at least \$625 per month extra coming into the household. Families without a source of income could use bearing children as a path to wealth. This is not only an evolutionary catastrophe, but one that must inevitably lead to a collapse of society.

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The result of the conflict between Children=Wealth vs. Children=Poverty is that educated, middle class families are having fewer children and the impoverished are having more, and that

imbalance can only grow more acute.

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It is a simple fact of human nature: If having a child increases your wealth, some people will have as many children as they can. It is argued that women do not want to return to the era where they were baby factories. Women today are far more interested in a career and their own personal development. But this attitude is in an age where Children = Poverty. In an AFFEERCE society, it is precisely the women who do not have careers who will be enticed to increase their wealth in the easiest way they can.

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However, if we forego reproductive control, like the pigeons, the population will grow exponentially. And even if the economy is able to keep up, the limited resources of the earth will not.

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Now the taxpayer is assured the privilege of paying for nutritious food for your child, and for the social worker who will make certain you are feeding your child properly. But the social worker only comes twice a month, and you can feed the kids well on those days. In the meantime, you can get 75% on your link card for crack. Now the kids are screaming because they're hungry, but it doesn't bother you. You don't have a care in the world, feeling oh so nice on the taxpayer's dime. You figure if you had enough kids, perhaps there would be enough to get high every day of the month, and still fool the social worker. What can citizens do to stop this theft? Absolutely nothing! Families can churn out babies, one after another. There is no recourse....

Graubart himself goes on—in quite head-scratching form—to apparently concede in passing that all this loaded ideological language is a mere “diatribe,” perhaps not to be taken as based on actual evidence or logical necessity. But then he continues:

But the diatribe is important because it is an archetype of the truth. It is a fear hidden not far below the surface in many of us. And in other countries, the truth is even more apparent. In India, there are children who will blind or dismember themselves to increase their chances of getting something to eat.

Um, so is it true, or isn't it? Since his argument for the stark choice between Reproductive Control and barbarism seems to hinge on it being actually true and not just a useful myth, I will analyze it on the assumption he actually means what he spent so much time saying.

First of all, his very model of a society in which households are polarized between comfortable, educated people who exercise restraint and uneducated, impoverished breeders desperate for the six hundred bucks each child would bring, presumes—as I've already discussed at considerable length—a society much like our own in many respects. But I think it's much more likely a free society would be characterized by a more nearly even distribution of wealth.

Second, I'm extremely skeptical that multi-generation families of welfare mothers having children simply for the measly amount of income support they bring from the state exist beyond the level of statistically insignificant anecdotes. I think Graubart seriously underestimates just how much personal effort and equity is entailed in carrying a child to term for nine months and then spending years with a baby and toddler in the house. And to the extent that there's a grain of truth in it, it's only true because 1) the state has manufactured an artificially large destitute underclass by forcibly shutting off access to opportunities for production and comfortable subsistence; and 2) there are people living with the almost

unimaginable levels of destitution that would make six hundred-odd bucks a month seem worth the incredible personal investment of pregnancy and motherhood.

To the extent that this phenomenon really does exist, it results not from the incentives of the welfare state (as described in neoconservative lore by Marvin Olasky), but from the fact that northern cities were flooded by former black sharecroppers who'd been tracted off their land after WWII. They were essentially in the same predicament as the Okies who'd fled to California half a generation earlier, only without even the availability of migrant farm labor to make a living. In other words, it wasn't the presence of the Great Society, but the absence of forty acres and a mule, that created welfare families.

Assuming a society in which Graubart's Universal Entitlement is in place, and every person already alive is guaranteed shelter, groceries, clothing and healthcare far superior to what WISC or food stamps will afford today, the incentive to have children for welfare money (to the extent that it actually exists to a significant degree outside fevered Tea Party imaginations) would be far less than at present.

In short, the economic incentives that result in reduced birth rates in mature, prosperous societies would remain largely intact or even be strengthened. Reproductive Control is not the only alternative to barbarism.