

theory of minarchy. Thus he contends, in his chapter dealing with public policy case studies, that government has no role to play in regulating marriage, in providing education, or in controlling immigration. Some government regulation of these matters, however, has been characteristic of every real free society that has existed. As far as we can know, such regulation may be necessary to sustaining the culture that permitted free societies to emerge in the first place. Nevertheless, Wenzel brushes these institutions aside as incompatible with a theory that he somehow finds more real and more valuable than the actual blessings of the existing civilization of which he is fortunate to be a member.

I hasten to add that this line of criticism is not intended to suggest that libertarianism, whether Wenzel's or any other version, has nothing positive to contribute to our think-

ing about political life. On the contrary, the libertarian disposition—its skepticism about government's ability to solve social problems, its warning that invocations of the common good are sometimes cover for selfish, rent-seeking behaviors—is necessary to any realistic approach to politics. But reasonable libertarian warnings about the dangers of government power should not be transformed into dogmatic libertarian claims about the proper functions of government. This is why Schlueter is wise to treat libertarianism as one strand of conservatism and not as its theoretical basis. We would be wise to follow him in this conclusion.

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From Ode to the Raptors

Timothy Murphy

Our Orchard Glen hosted three Great Horned Owls.
 Murders of crows attacked each woodland perch,
 no sanctuaries in our *pagan church*
 Over my head today one of them scowls
 atop a leafless elm,
 and I am at my helm
 cruising the Intracoastal Waterway,
 an osprey on my port
 fishing for food and sport,
 cousins in our profound love for our prey.
 I once wrote an osprey an elegy,
 dead on the forest floor
 when I was twenty-four,
 a good beginner's glimpse at poetry:

*Fellow pilot, hunter and fisherman,
 when you lie mantled in a robe of snow,
 too weak to fly or fight, what famished beast
 will strew the feathers at your funeral feast?*