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LIBERTARIANS IN SPACE: THE DEEP SPACE UTOPIA OF THE SHORT FILM *LIBRA*

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When it comes to positive utopias, fiction film proves to be a veritable wasteland. As I have argued extensively elsewhere, utopias in the tradition of Thomas More's 1516 *Utopia* are not suited for fiction films, since they usually lack a proper plot and fleshed-out characters. This is in stark contrast to dystopias, which typically tell the story of one or several characters rebelling against the cruel order. Dystopias basically come with a built-in dramatic plot, which is the main reason that they have proven to be so popular in mainstream cinema.[1]

One of the few exceptions to this rule is a short film directed by Patty Newman (1978), *Libra*. Depicting a kind of libertarian deep-space utopia, *Libra* is a veritable oddity, or rather a UFO—that is, an unidentified filmic object. The film, which has a run time of just under forty minutes, was produced with a considerable budget (more on this later), but it is largely unknown.[2] It created a minor stir when it hit YouTube in February 2013 and was subsequently picked up by a few blogs and websites (Novak 2012; Manning 2013; "*Libra*" n.d.; "*Libra*" 2014). But there is otherwise no literature that deals with the film. There are, in fact, very few traces that the film has ever been watched by audiences. In spite of this obscurity, *Libra* has proven to be surprisingly topical in the last few years. The society it depicts eerily foreshadows the space fantasies of today's Silicon Valley billionaires. To deal with the film is therefore more than just engaging in retrofuturistic nostalgia; it also means tracing the roots of a very current trend.

In what follows, I will present the results of my research into *Libra*, which, truth be told, was not very fruitful. Although I was able to get in touch with two people involved in the film's production, many aspects of its conception and distribution remain unclear. Still, I think its rather

unique status, and the fact that the ideas it promotes have seen a revival in recent years, make it a fascinating object of research.

LIBRA

But first, about the film itself. *Libra* opens with a shot of planet Earth as seen from space. A voice-over commentary informs us that the world is on the brink of collapse. Mankind is faced with inflation, overpopulation, hunger, unemployment, and soaring prices for energy and health care. In short, "bankrupt cities, bankrupt states, bankrupt nations, and morally bankrupt people." What the commentary is describing, however, is not the present of 1978, but rather, as we learn from a title card, the year 2003, a quarter of a century into the future for contemporary audiences. The world is ruled by a sort of world government called the International Planning Commission. But anyone who naively believes that a global political leadership will result in a better, more peaceful world is proven to be severely mistaken. All the problems mentioned at the beginning are the responsibility of the International Planning Commission. The new global bureaucracy is so inefficient and inept that even highly developed nations have seen a substantial decrease in their standard of living.

The result of this inefficiency becomes immediately visible in the following scene. A group of investors is meeting in an office building in Manhattan. Although everyone wears elegant clothes, surrounded by expensive-looking furnishings, their thick coats are striking. Because energy is rationed, we learn, the heating is not working. Later, there is also a blackout due to the shortage of electricity. Although this is rather annoying, none of the bankers seem surprised. They are used to this kind of nuisance and have candles ready.

Although the overall state of affairs is dire, it is not yet completely hopeless. Some kind of free market, in which enterprising entrepreneurs can invest, still seems to exist, despite the tight grip of the commission. In fact, the group gathered in this scene—five men and one woman—have come together to discuss a business proposal. The project at hand is the financing of an expansion to the space habitat Libra. Solely financed by private capital, Libra is free of any kind of state control. The group gathered in New York is unsure, though, whether the endeavor will survive in the long run and whether it would be politically smart to support it. In the end, they

agree to send a member of their group to Libra as a sort of scout. He will visit the space station, observe what is going on, and then report back.

Meanwhile, the International Planning Commission is holding a similar meeting. They, too, are concerned about Libra, albeit for different reasons. For them, the station represents a threat to the current order. If others followed Libra's example, the various cartels established by the commission would risk losing their power and deprive those in control of their sinecures. At this point, it becomes evident that not everyone suffers to the same degree from the effects of the overall inefficiency. When it comes to heating the offices of the commission, for example, enough energy seems to be available, despite the general state of emergency. Since the commission views Libra as an immediate threat to the established order, they, too, send an envoy, Senator Gordon, to have a look at it.

As I have already mentioned, classic utopias in the Morean tradition have no plot to speak of. The story told by More and many of his successors is that of a traveler or castaway who discovers the utopian state and is then shown around. Together with the protagonist, the reader learns how the commonwealth is organized and in what ways it exceeds all currently existing societal arrangements. The narrative frame, therefore, is really only a frame, often a mere pretext for long monologues with detailed explanations. *Libra* adheres to the same structure, to a large degree, although probably not consciously. The film almost exclusively consists of scenes in which characters speak, or rather in which one character expounds extensively, about a specific aspect of Libra. At two points, the narrative action is even interrupted by sequences that feel like part of an educational film, when schematics, animations, and voice-over commentary explain how the space station works.

The first of these interludes occurs when the two envoys approach Libra on what appears to be a routine rocket flight (how this is possible despite the acute energy crisis is never explained). The travelers are told that Libra's core is a rotating sphere with plants and streams on the inner surface, offering a habitat for ten thousand people. The fact that the station floats in space has serious advantages: The absence of gravity makes building large structures much easier than on Earth, and harvesting solar power is vastly more efficient without an atmosphere and a day-and-night cycle.

For the remainder of the film, we get a constant back-and-forth between various conversations. On the one hand, the two ambassadors from Earth

and a female fellow traveler about whom we learn very little talk to people living on the station; on the other hand, the investors in New York discuss the pros and cons of investing in it. Interspersed are another educational sequence and several scenes with surprisingly good model work. A televised dispute between the president of Libra, Paul Baker (played by James Avery, best known for his role as Philip Banks in *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*), and Senator Gordon serves as a kind of showdown. Baker clearly emerges as the winner of the discussion. He closes with a monologue in which he juxtaposes Libra's achievements with stagnation on Earth. These are the same words we heard at the opening of the film. A kind of double coda concludes *Libra*. First, the business people in New York decide to invest in the station. Then, Gordon reports to Edgar Brown, the head of the commission. After Gordon's failed TV appearance, spirits are low and the commission feels acutely threatened. Brown suggests resorting to the last means available to a state: taxing Libra out of existence. Gordon is skeptical whether this approach is feasible.

Although *Libra* resembles typical literary utopias in its lack of plot and overall structure, in contrast to More and his successors, we learn very little about how this space society is organized. We are told that there is a democratically elected government, headed by the aforementioned Paul Baker, a "former professor of market philosophy at Stanford University." The government's power is severely restricted; whenever possible, decisions are left to the individual citizen or the market. As a general principle, the people of Libra draw the line between the interests of the general public and those of the individual, although the means used to decide on political questions are never explained.

A striking feature of Libra is its diversity, especially for a film produced in the early 1970s. Baker is African American; Dr. Chin, the station's technical mastermind (played by James Hong, who has more than 450 acting credits on IMDB), is of Asian origin; and the person responsible for the original impetus of the whole endeavor is a female investor, Ann Morris. Beyond that, we learn almost nothing about Libra's society. There is little information about the station's economic system beyond the droll detail that their currency is the Hayek, named after neoliberal thought leader and Nobel laureate Friedrich August von Hayek.

Much more important than puny organizational details is the fact that Libra acts as a haven for "regulation refugees." The absence of unnecessary

restrictions creates an atmosphere of freedom and creativity, which is the very prerequisite for all the technological innovations we see. One example of Librarian ingenuity is the Abacus computer that, like Apple's Siri, is voice controlled and able to provide a plethora of information. As a test, Howard, the bankers' ambassador, asks Abacus about the watch he bought after arriving on Libra, and the computer immediately not only gives a detailed specification but also informs Howard that there have been many complaints about this specific model. Although Abacus can easily answer Howard's first inquiry, in response to his follow-up question—What kind of watch he should buy?—the machine simply repeats the phrase "freecision." Standing for "free decision," "freecision" indicates that Abacus only deals with objective information and is unable to decide what would suit an individual best. This is up to everyone's own "freesponsibility."

One of the most treasured assets on Libra, "freesponsibility" stands in stark contrast to the commission's dealings. As the Wall Street discussions reveal, general stagnation is not an unwanted side effect but rather exactly what the commission is aiming for. Its leaders are simply not interested in the cheap solar energy Libra can provide. An affluence of energy would not only undermine their power but also lead to more automatization and therefore to unemployment.

WORLD RESEARCH INC.

Libra was not produced by an established film company but by World Research Inc. (WRI), a San Diego–based conservative-libertarian think tank founded in 1969. There is only limited information available on WRI. One of the few sources I could track is the 1980 book *The Conservative Decade*, a kind of "who's who" of US right-wing movements (the preface was written by Ronald Reagan, at that time governor of California). It describes WRI as "one of the best of the free-enterprise groups . . . staffed by twenty-one bright free marketeers" (Roberts 1980, 80).

In the 1970s, WRI's main focus was US universities. The think tank set to convince students of the advantages of a free market and warn them against the dangers of "big government." This was urgently needed, as a poll conducted by WRI in 1973 showed. As part of their survey, WRI sent out more than forty thousand questionnaires, of which 14,098 were ultimately returned (Keating 1973). People filling out the questionnaire had

to comment on a number of statements, such as, "The government should pass better legislation and provide adequate funds to correct economic inequities" (Keating 1973, 17). To the WRI people who authored the survey, it was evident that a true believer in the free market could never be in favor of such a statement. However, judging from the survey's summary, this sentiment was not widely shared: "About 76% of the college students in the United States hold either consistently anti-free market beliefs or philosophically contradictory beliefs about government and freedom" (6). Obviously, much work was needed to convince the young generation of the benefits of the free market. As a consequence, WRI was very active in the following years. Not only did it publish the journal *World Research Inc.*, which had a circulation of fifty thousand copies, and several books, but it also produced four films.

Among these films, the 1975 *The Incredible Bread Machine* stands out (Kamecke 1975). Like the book of the same title by R. W. Grant on which it is based, which was reissued in a heavily revised version by WRI in 1974, it was widely received. "A libertarian manifesto of sorts" (Hettena 2010), the book had sold more than two hundred thousand copies by 1980, and the film was in heavy circulation. One source mentions 1,100 copies. A 1981 article in *The Washington Post* states that the film, in which Nobel laureate Milton Friedman makes an appearance, was seen by twenty-five million people (Morgan 1981). Although I am unable to confirm this number, both the book and the film have left many traces. One representative example is that of Tyler Cowen (2010), professor of economics at George Mason University and regular contributor to *The Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, and *Newsweek*, who cites the book as an important source of inspiration.

The great response *The Incredible Bread Machine* provoked seems in no way to have been matched by *Libra*'s reception. Not only is there no research on the film, but I could also find only a few sources to prove that anyone has ever actually seen it.[3] This is quite noteworthy, since its production was obviously not cheap. Although the trick shots and special effects are, not surprisingly, unable to compete with big-budget productions, *Libra* never feels like a cheaply cobbled-together flick but rather like a work made with a lot of care and money. One of the few sources available has the film's budget at 280,000 dollars, a remarkable sum for a short film made in the mid-1970s.

The only contemporary source I could find that talks about *Libra* in a bit more detail is an article published in the journal *Libertarian Review* in November 1978. Writer Milton Mueller (1978, 14–16) was very pleased that there was now a third truly libertarian film besides *The Incredible Bread Machine* and another I could not identify. Mueller praises some aspects of the film—especially the fact that Baker is African American—but, all in all, is not really convinced by its blending of education and fiction. His article contains an interesting paragraph in which he mentions material that accompanied the film's distribution: "But Patty Newman and World Research did not stop there. They developed an elaborate program of backup materials for classroom use of the film, including a newspaper that is supposed to be published by the space station. The paper includes articles on Libra's form of government, accounts of various property rights conflicts that might arise in such a colony, and a letter to the editor from a space pietist complaining about the popularity of free-fall sex in zero-gravity chambers" (14). I could not find any contemporary sources mentioning *Libra* except for this article and a brief note that the film was shown at the yearly gathering of the Libertarian Party of 1978 (Riggenbach 1978).

Although I was able to get in touch with two former members of WRI, I did not learn too much from them either. Susan Love Brown, professor emerita of anthropology at Florida Atlantic University, joined the think tank in 1974 and was, among other things, involved in both the reissuing of *The Incredible Bread Machine* and the production of the film. As she confirmed in an email to me in September 2019, she had never seen *Libra* or even heard about it. In fact, it was only after I got in touch with her that she watched it.

Michael Newbrough, professor emeritus for political science at Palomar College San Diego, joined WRI shortly after Brown and is credited as one of *Libra*'s scriptwriters. Nonetheless, there was little that was substantial that he could remember about the film. One point he emphasized was the sheer complexity and cost of the production. WRI used professional actors, and the models for the space scenes were particularly costly. As he explained to me in an email in August 2021, the original budget, which he estimates to be between two hundred thousand and three hundred thousand dollars, was probably exceeded, which led to disagreements among various factions inside WRI. He also considered Patty Newman, the film's director, who never made another movie, the driving force behind the project. Newman

mainly worked as a writer and publicist for various conservative and right-wing media and organizations. Several sources describe her as WRI's *spiritus rector* and public face, whereas Ted Loeffler, who nominally led the think tank, mostly stayed in the background.[4]

In classic utopias, the description of the better society is never an end in itself. Very few utopian writers think of their designs as blueprints that must be built in reality as described on paper. What they rather aim at is to provide a counterimage to the current situation, which they regard as deficient. By contrasting the miserable present with a radically different concept, they want to show that nothing has to be the way it is, that we can always think of alternatives. Another remark Newbrough made in an email to me indicates that *Libra* should achieve something similar. The space setting is certainly the film's most striking aspect, although its main goal was not the colonization of space but rather to "educate as many as possible about the benefits of free-market solutions to social/economic problems. . . . The goal was to stimulate economic thought in higher education toward the benefits of free-markets and individualism."

Nevertheless, the space station shown is, as Newbrough insists, not "just a fantasy." This is certainly evident in the film itself. In line with the utopian tradition, *Libra* spends considerable time presenting the space habitat as a plausible undertaking. Although most classic utopias are not meant to be realized as described, they often try to convince their reader through coherence and sheer completeness. The counterimage needs to be taken seriously in order to question the ruling order properly.

Although WRI's main focus was—at least according to Newbrough—propagating the free market and campaigning against state regulations, *Libra* is, in a way, also very serious about the colonization of space. The film may seem naively optimistic in hindsight, but the concepts it presents are not mere flights of fancy. Rather, they are in tune with ideas that were very popular in the mid-1970s.

Libra deliberately and explicitly refers to the concepts physicist Gerard K. O'Neill (1976) presented in his book, *The High Frontier*. O'Neill—who, under the title of "Special Consultant on Space Technology," has the very first of the film's end credits—was, of course, not the first to argue for populating space. The idea circulated for quite some time among science fiction fans. Wernher von Braun, chief designer of the V-2 rocket and leading figure of the Apollo program, had talked about space settlements as far back as the

1950s. What distinguished O'Neill's plans from earlier efforts was that he was not interested in settling on other planets. Instead, he argued that huge space stations, which would become known as "O'Neill cylinders," were much more feasible. *The High Frontier* includes detailed calculations and intricate drawings to support his argument. The drawings proved to be crucial for O'Neill's temporary success. They became a very effective means of popularizing what in another context would certainly have been regarded as completely outlandish.

In his study *The Visioneers*, Patrick McCray argues that O'Neill's book hit a sweet spot, reacting to and bringing together different strands of thinking that became increasingly important during the 1970s (McCray 2012). On the one hand, the idea of going into outer space was a consequence of the rising awareness that Earth does not provide unlimited resources, a problem to which humankind has to find a solution. A prominent example of this new awareness is *The Limits to Growth*, the famous study by the Club of Rome first published in 1972, in which the authors argue that, according to their computer simulations, mankind will run out of resources in the coming decade (Meadows et al. 1972).

For McCray, the Club of Rome's pessimistic outlook and O'Neill's space dreams were the result of different understandings of the concept of the future that became prevalent after World War II. Increasingly, the future was no longer understood as something that inevitably comes upon us but rather as an event that can be anticipated, planned for, and, ultimately, molded. This new understanding of things to come was also at the root of the scientific discipline of futurology that emerged in the 1950s. The studies by the Club of Rome also stand in the tradition of futurology and share its core belief that future developments can be adequately modeled and therefore changed.

O'Neill and the Club of Rome might have very different ideas as to how the looming threats should best be avoided, but they are both convinced that we can influence future developments through steps taken in the present. For O'Neill, the answer to the dark predictions by the Club of Rome and other worrying developments—in his email, Newbrough mentions the 1973 oil crisis—lies in his cylinders. To him, it was obvious that the colonization of other planets would never be feasible. The solution was artificial colonies in deep space. Here, overpopulation is no longer a problem, and the sun provides more than enough energy to guarantee the survival of mankind.

One institution that was very open to O'Neill's ideas was NASA. Despite successfully putting men on the Moon in 1969, the space agency had to endure severe budget cuts in the early 1970s and was therefore very much interested in new projects geared toward the future. O'Neill even led a ten-week workshop for NASA in the summer of 1975, the results of which were published in 1977 as "Space Settlements: A Design Study" (Johnson and Holbrow 1977).

Libra was released in 1978, only two years after the publication of *The High Frontier*. WRI was certainly influenced by the strong echo of O'Neill's book and, at the same time, probably tried to latch onto its success. But although O'Neill has the prominent first credit for the film, it is not clear how much he was really involved in its production. *Libra* features several images taken from the NASA "Space Settlements" report. Some of the animated footage that depicts how the station is built in outer space also appears in a 1978 episode of the PBS TV show *NOVA*, which focuses on O'Neill's plans.[5] So there certainly was some kind of exchange between O'Neill and WRI, but I have no information on whether O'Neill had any input into the screenplay, for example. Since none of the literature available on O'Neill even mentions *Libra*, it is not likely that it was a project of great importance to him (Stuit 2021).[6]

GEEKS IN SPACE

The title of O'Neill's book deliberately refers to the American myth of the frontier and also echoes President Kennedy's slogan of a "new frontier." This allusion turns deep space into an untouched realm that, like the American continent—which, of course, was far from being uninhabited—must be conquered and populated. It is maybe not that surprising, therefore, that O'Neill's ideas not were only taken up by the space community but galvanized rather diverse parts of society.

In what might seem rather paradoxical from today's point of view, *The High Frontier* spoke both to members of the counterculture movement and to right-leaning proponents of the free market, such as WRI. Today, we tend to see antiestablishment movements such as the hippies as inherently left wing, and a counterculture icon such as Timothy Leary feels anathema to an organization such as WRI. But this opposition is false, since there were always parts of the counterculture with a distinctly libertarian bend.

Breaking with the established order, founding a commune, or dropping out also means rejecting a central government and can ultimately just be seen as another expression of typical US "rugged individualism." Moreover, successfully running a commune does not necessarily imply refusing modern technology in favor of traditional crafts. On the contrary, it can mean making use of the latest technologies in the most efficient way. From this perspective, sustainability is not just about doing as little harm to the environment as possible, but it also guarantees a high degree of independence.

The different strands of the counterculture movement I have just sketched out come together in the person of Stewart Brand. Brand is best known for publishing the *Whole Earth Catalog*, which Steve Jobs famously called "one of the bibles of my generation" in his 2005 Stanford Commencement Address. The purpose of the *Catalog*—as indicated by its slogan, "access to tools"—was to recommend tools that would enable its users to live independently in a way that was environmentally friendly. In the beginning, this meant, first and foremost, rural communes, but, for Brand at least, the step from a typical hippie commune to an O'Neill cylinder was not that far-fetched; in a way, it was almost inevitable. In *From Counterculture to Cyberculture*, Fred Turner deems Brand a paradigmatic figure, instrumental to bringing together the opposing worlds of the military–industrial complex, where computers were invented, and American counterculture, laying the foundation of today's Silicon Valley: "Together, the creators and readers of the *Whole Earth Catalog* helped to synthesize a vision of technology as a countercultural force that would shape public understandings of computing and other machines long after the social movements of the 1960s had faded from view" (2008, 6).

There is, if we follow Turner's argument, an almost natural kinship between Brand's publishing enterprise and O'Neill's plans. For Brand and his ilk, highly advanced technology was something to be embraced, and O'Neill's plans were simply the logical next step—space communes as the most radical form of "dropping out." In 1975, Brand had supported a conference organized by O'Neill, and in 1977, he published the booklet *Space Colonies*, which featured an article by O'Neill. In hindsight, it is probably no coincidence that the cover of the first edition of the *Catalog*, published in 1968, featured the first photo of Earth as seen from space. It was, in fact, only thanks to a campaign started by Brand that NASA had released this

first photograph of our planet.[7] Although space colonies were not yet a hot topic at this point, space was already on Brand's mind.

Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron (1996) coined the term "Californian ideology" for a particular blend of libertarian ideas, countercultural esthetics, and techno-utopian visions, which they saw exemplified in the magazine *Wired*. But although Barbrook and Cameron understand this set of beliefs, which dominates large parts of the information technology industry in the US, as an outgrowth of the New Left, Turner (2008, 208–209) sees it much more directly related to the Whole Earth network initiated by Brand, who, in his study, almost becomes Silicon Valley's half-secret mastermind.

This perspective would certainly help explain why space travel has become such an important area for some of today's Silicon Valley billionaires. Elon Musk's SpaceX and Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin projects are both the offspring of O'Neill's—and Brand's—ideas. This is especially true for Blue Origin. Musk has little interest in space stations; his declared goal is the colonization of Mars, something O'Neill did not deem sensible. Bezos, on the other hand, explicitly refers to O'Neill's ideas. In May 2019, at a special Blue Origin event where Bezos explained his long-term goals in detail for the first time, he cited O'Neill as his main inspiration and basically presented an only slightly updated version of *The High Frontier*. Although his presentation, of course, features computer-generated animations, the overall iconography owes much to the style of the illustrations O'Neill used in the 1970s.

I do not know whether Bezos has ever watched *Libra*, but it is illuminating to compare where the film and Bezos's vision overlap and where they diverge. One important area of difference is scale. Although Libra hosts ten thousand people, Bezos speaks of "a million people or more" per cylinder. For Bezos, colonization is clearly a task for private industry and not something in which the state should be very involved. Still, in contrast to *Libra*, his main motivation is not escaping taxes and regulations but rather, completely in tune with O'Neill, dealing with Earth's limited resources, especially energy. He actually starts his presentation with calculations that show that there is no way that we will be able to produce enough energy to meet humankind's ever-growing demand. Despite all the problematic aspects of his undertaking, Bezos's main impetus seems to be serious concern for Earth. In opposition to Musk, who sees Mars as a viable alternative, and

again following O'Neill's lead, Bezos (2019) insists that "there is no planet B," and that we must take care of Earth in order to survive.

Much like the characters in *Libra*, Bezos sees space as a future playground for adventurous investors. He envisions an era where thousands of companies will be active there. At the moment, though, this is not possible; we lack the necessary infrastructure. The declared task of Blue Origin, therefore, is not to build O'Neill cylinders but rather to provide the infrastructure that will enable others to go further. Where Libra is built in a couple of years, making space livable is a multigenerational project for Bezos, which is why, at the end of his talk, he directly addresses the children and teenagers in the audience.

Bezos, who never was much of a public figure and certainly does not have the presenting skills of Steve Jobs or the cockiness of Elon Musk, clearly wants to appear humble and tries to frame his project as an endeavor for the common good. Still, one cannot help but wonder whether all the money and technical expertise that went into building rockets could not be used for much more acute problems, right now, here on Earth.

The obvious answer Bezos would give to this objection is that he is free to do what he wants with his money. It is, in the vocabulary of *Libra*, his very own freesponsibility. This is, of course, true. But it is equally true that you first have to be able to afford this fabulous freesponsibility.

Notes

1. See Spiegel (2021), where I make the case that although fiction films are well suited for dystopias, filmic positive utopias only exist in nonfiction film.

2. Skip Elsheimer (2019) of A/V Geeks, who digitized the original sixteen-millimeter print and put it online, did not have any additional information on the film. There is a rather recent clip on YouTube in which Elsheimer talks about *Libra*, mentioning that he originally bought it on eBay and confirming that he was unable to find any information about it (Elsheimer 2022).

3. In an entry on the films produced by WRI, the *Miss Liberty's Film & Documentary World* blog calls *Libra* "influential" and states that it "won widespread praise" ("*Libra*" n.d.), but this assessment seems to be pure wishful thinking. At least, I could not find any evidence to support this claim. The only source given by the author of the blog entry is a link to the article on the website of the *Smithsonian Magazine* quoted earlier, but this short article was a reaction to the film's release on YouTube and does not, in any way, affirm the sweeping statement.

4. The residues of both Newman and Loeffler are kept by the Institute of Historical Survey Foundation in Mesilla Park, New Mexico. According to the head of the archive, it also contains material on *Libra*. Since the inventory has never been processed in any way and is not available digitally, I was unable to access it.

5. Since the *NOVA* episode (season 5, episode 4) aired on February 1, 1978, the same year *Libra* was released, it is quite likely that WRI took the material originally created for the TV show and not the other way around. However, since neither film credits the other, this cannot be decided conclusively. See https://archive.org/details/NOVAFinalFrontier for the episode.

6. Some of the same material appears again in *The High Frontier: The Untold Story of Gerard K. O'Neill*, a documentary on O'Neill by Ryan Stuit (2021). Although produced several years after it was made available on YouTube, this film again does not mention *Libra*.

7. The picture on the *Catalogue* cover was taken by satellite ATS-3 in 1967. It precedes the more famous *Earthrise*, taken in 1968 by William Anders of Apollo 8, and *The Blue Marble*, taken by the Apollo 17 crew in 1972.

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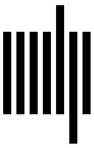

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