

# AYN RAND'S PHILOSOPHIC ACHIEVEMENT

By Harry Binswanger

Ayn Rand's achievement in philosophy is so immense that to do it justice in an article would take an Ayn Rand.

From "existence exists" to a new definition of Romanticism in art; from the theory of universals to the nature of self-esteem; from the role of the mind in production to the esthetics of music; from the metaphysical status of sensory qualities to the need for objective law—like a philosophical Midas, any area she touched turned to knowledge. And all this from a novelist, a novelist who found that to define her concept of an ideal man she had to answer basic philosophical questions, and that each answer she reached confirmed, strengthened, and added to her previous answers, until she had formulated an invincible philosophic system.

That system, Objectivism, has many distinctions: its originality, its independence of philosophic tradition, its integration—but these aspects become irrelevant in light of what is most distinctive about Ayn Rand's philosophy: it is true.

One of the greatest and rarest of philosophic achievements is to add a valid concept to the language. Ayn Rand left us a whole vocabulary. She formed new concepts—e.g., "psycho-epistemology," "sense of life," "concept-stealing." She took traditional terms, gave them rational definitions, and transformed them into the solid girders of her intellectual structure—e.g., "reason," "essence," "selfishness," "rights," "art." Then there were the floating abstractions, the package-deals, and the anti-concepts (three more of her terms) that she demolished—e.g., "duty," "extremism," "the public interest."

Blasting away false alternatives, she drew her own distinctions in terms of essentials: "the primacy of existence vs. the primacy of consciousness," "the intrinsic and the subjective vs. the objective," "the metaphysical vs. the man-made," "selfishness vs. sacrifice," "errors of knowledge vs. breaches of morality," "economic power vs. political power."

In an age that scorns consistency and integration, Ayn Rand created a unified, hierarchically ordered system. Consider, for example, her definition of capitalism: "Capitalism is a social system based on the recognition of individual rights, including property rights, in which all property is privately owned."<sup>1</sup> Supporting that definition is a theory of individual rights: "A 'right' is a moral principle defining and sanctioning a man's freedom of action in a social context."<sup>2</sup>

Supporting that, in turn, is a theory of morality, of the nature of principles and their role in human life, of man's nature, of freedom, and of society. And supporting each of these elements there are further principles—e.g., supporting her concept of freedom is the distinction between initiated and retaliatory physical force, the connection between voluntary action and free will, the relationship of free will to the law of causality, the basis of causality in the law of identity, and the relationship of the axiom of identity to the axiom of existence. Such is the power, and the glory, of Ayn Rand's thought.

Words are the tools of thought. Today, when philosophers are staring blankly at these tools, while the best among them are trying to use saws as hammers and the average ones are "proving" that saws do not exist, Ayn Rand created the intellectual equivalents of the electron microscope and the computerized laser drill.

In the explosion of philosophical knowledge Ayn Rand produced, I would single out six landmarks—six breakthroughs representing the major turning points in philosophy:

1. The primacy of existence
2. The theory of concepts
3. The theory of free will
4. Man's Life as the standard of morality
5. The moral basis of individual rights
6. The psycho-epistemology of art.

Unlike most philosophers, Ayn Rand was explicit about the starting point of her philosophy: the fact that "existence exists."

"Existence exists—and the act of grasping that statement implies two corollary axioms: that something exists which one perceives and that one exists possessing consciousness, consciousness being the faculty of perceiving that which exists."<sup>3</sup>

Ayn Rand was not the first philosopher to identify or uphold the fact of existence (that honor goes to the pre-Socratic philosopher Parmenides). But she was the first to recognize the relationship of consciousness to existence—i.e., that existence is the primary axiom of all knowledge and that consciousness can neither exist nor be identified except in relation to existence. As important as her immortal phrase "existence exists" is the simple clause at the end of the sentence, "consciousness being the faculty of perceiving that which exists." Together they form the basis of the principle Ayn Rand named "the primacy of existence," and which she contrasted to the fundamental error in every major system of the last three hundred years: "the primacy of consciousness."

Descartes' famous phrase "I think, therefore I am" marked the

reversal which ripped all subsequent philosophy away from reality and from the actual problems of man's life. Descartes was proposing, in effect, that one could know that one exists possessing consciousness prior to and independent of knowing that existence exists. But, to continue the passage from Galt's Speech: "If nothing exists, there can be no consciousness: a consciousness with nothing to be conscious of is a contradiction in terms." This contradiction cannot be eluded by maintaining that what one is conscious of might always be the states or contents of one's own consciousness. For, as Ayn Rand's next sentence demonstrates, this merely pushes the same contradiction back one level: one's own consciousness—of what? "A consciousness conscious of nothing but itself is a contradiction in terms: before it could identify itself as consciousness, it had to be conscious of something."

Consciousness must precede self-consciousness. Ultimately, then, either man is conscious of reality, or he is not conscious. "If that which you claim to perceive does not exist, what you possess is not consciousness."

And there you have the genius of Ayn Rand: a new foundation for philosophy, wiping out three centuries of error, contained in four sentences delivered by her fictional hero at the climax of the greatest novel in literature.

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The primacy of existence provides the basis for Ayn Rand's discoveries concerning the specifically human level of consciousness, the conceptual level, the level of *reason*.

"I am not *primarily* an advocate of capitalism," she wrote, "but of egoism; and I am not *primarily* an advocate of egoism, but of reason. If one recognizes the supremacy of reason and applies it consistently, all the rest follows."<sup>4</sup> To summarize Ayn Rand's view of reason is to summarize Objectivism.

Reason involves three factors: the senses, logic, and concepts. The metaphysical basis of logic (and the rules of deduction) was identified by Aristotle. The validity of the senses was established by Aristotle, elaborated by Thomas Aquinas, and fully clarified by Ayn Rand. But in the absence of an objective theory of concepts, the relation of reason to reality remained problematic. Until the "problem of universals" could be solved, reason lay vulnerable to the tricks and sophistries that centuries of mind-hating philosophers used against it. To defend reason and to understand it properly, this was the problem that had to be solved.

The challenge was perhaps best formulated by Antisthenes, a philosopher of Ancient Greece. In objection to someone who was discussing the nature of man, Antisthenes was reported to have said: "I

have seen many men, but never have I seen man.” Neither Plato, nor Aristotle, nor any philosopher in the twenty-four centuries since Antisthenes, was able to answer him. The Aristotelians, for instance, held that the concept of “man” refers to the “manness” in men. But Antisthenes’ objection can then be re-stated: “I have seen many attributes of men, but never have I seen manness.” Other philosophers, such as Locke, suggested that “manness” refers to the characteristics that we do perceive in men: their shape, their color, their height, etc. But, again, these characteristics are always particular, never universal.

“To exemplify the issue as it is usually presented: When we refer to three persons as ‘men,’ what do we designate by that term? The three persons are three individuals who differ in every particular respect and may not possess a single *identical* characteristic (not even their fingerprints). If you list all their particular characteristics, you will not find one representing ‘manness.’ Where is the ‘manness’ in men? What, in reality, corresponds to the concept ‘man’ in our mind?”<sup>5</sup>

Ayn Rand’s solution to this problem cannot be presented briefly (her full presentation is given in *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*). But the key idea behind her solution is that concepts are based on observed similarities and differences, and that “similarity, in this context, is the relationship between two or more existents which possess the same characteristic(s), but in different measure or degree.”<sup>6</sup>

The basis of concepts does not lie in any intrinsic “universal”; “manness” is not an element existing in men. But the metaphysical basis of concepts does lie in a fact of reality, the fact that similar concretes differ only quantitatively—only in their measurements. “The process of concept-formation consists of mentally isolating two or more existents by means of their distinguishing characteristic, and retaining this characteristic while omitting their particular measurements—on the principle that these measurements must exist in *some* quantity, but may exist in *any* quantity.”<sup>7</sup>

Thus Antisthenes’ objection is entirely misplaced. It assumes, as did the defenders of reason, that concepts are simply high-class percepts. But, in fact, “The relationship of concepts to their constituent particulars is the same as the relationship of algebraic symbols to numbers. In the equation  $2a = a + a$ , any number may be substituted for the symbol ‘ $a$ ’ without affecting the truth of the equation. For instance:  $2 \times 5 = 5 + 5$ , or:  $2 \times 5,000,000 = 5,000,000 + 5,000,000$ . In the same manner, by the same psycho-epistemological method, a concept is used as an algebraic symbol that stands for *any* of the arithmetical sequence of units it subsumes. Let those who attempt to invalidate concepts by declaring that they cannot find ‘manness’ in men, try to invalidate algebra by declaring that they cannot find ‘ $a$ -ness’ in 5 or in 5,000,000.”<sup>8</sup>

The foregoing is the basis of Ayn Rand's defense of reason in epistemology; equally important is her view concerning the role of reason in human existence. The starting point here is another of Miss Rand's major discoveries, one that stands at the center of her view of man: reason is volitional.

"That which you call 'free will' is your mind's freedom to think or not, the only will you have, your only freedom, the choice that controls all the choices you make and determines your life and your character."

There are two points here: 1) man's choice to exercise his rational faculty is not necessitated by any prior cause, and 2) reason is the prime mover in man's life: the other aspects of his existence—his ideas, values, actions, and emotions—depend upon the extent to which he is rational or irrational.

The latter point involves one of Ayn Rand's most important identifications: "your emotions are the products of the premises held by your mind."<sup>10</sup> The belief that emotions are irreducible primaries at war with one's rational judgment is a major source of the mystics' mind-body dichotomy (see, for example, Plato's *Republic*<sup>11</sup>). By showing that one's emotions result from one's premises, and that these premises are the automatized products of one's use (or misuse) of reason, Ayn Rand knocked a major prop out from under the mind-body dichotomy. "An emotion that clashes with your reason, an emotion that you cannot explain or control, is only the carcass of that stale thinking which you forbade your mind to revise."<sup>12</sup>

Building upon the work of Aristotle, Ayn Rand's concept of reason as the fundamental of man's nature underlies her defense of man as an integrated being of mind and body, whose reason and emotion can be in perfect accord. "There is no necessary clash, no dichotomy between man's reason and his emotions—provided he observes their proper relationship. A rational man knows—or makes it a point to discover—the source of his emotions, the basic premises from which they come; if his premises are wrong, he corrects them. . . . His emotions are not his enemies, they are his means of enjoying life. But they are not his guide; the guide is his mind."<sup>13</sup>

Ayn Rand went on to explain the basic psychological form in which man confronts the choice to think or not: the choice to focus his mind or not. "Thinking requires a state of full, focused awareness. The act of focusing one's consciousness is volitional. Man can focus his mind to a full, active, purposefully directed awareness of reality—or he can unfocus it and let himself drift in a semiconscious daze, merely reacting to any chance stimulus of the immediate moment, at the mercy of his undirected sensory-perceptual mechanism and of any random, associational connections it might happen to make."<sup>14</sup>

Consider the significance of this discovery: it gives man conscious control over that which controls his life. Although every normal adult knows how to focus his mind, no one, until Ayn Rand, had grasped explicitly that that was what he was doing, that it is his basic choice, and that its significance is life or death. As with the fact that existence exists, men were aware of mental focus *implicitly*, but: “That which is merely implicit is not in men’s conscious control; they can lose it . . . without knowing what it is that they are losing or when or why.”<sup>15</sup>

Ayn Rand saw man as a heroic being. Her theory of free will makes that view of man possible. The concept of “heroism” would be inapplicable to a being whose mind was run by forces beyond his control. A robot cannot be heroic. Only a being who can exercise rational control over his character and actions is capable of heroism. Only “a being of self-made soul” is capable of self-esteem.

The link between Ayn Rand’s view of reason and her ethics, politics, and esthetics is the fact that reason is man’s means of survival. The key to all the rest of Objectivism is one connection: in order to survive, man must choose to think.

“Man cannot survive, as animals do, by the guidance of mere percepts. A sensation of hunger will tell him that he needs food (if he has learned to identify it as ‘hunger’), but it will not tell him how to obtain his food and it will not tell him what food is good for him or poisonous. He cannot provide for his simplest physical needs without a process of thought. . . . No percepts and no ‘instincts’ will tell him how to light a fire, how to weave cloth, how to forge tools, how to produce an electric light bulb or an electronic tube or a cyclotron or a box of matches. Yet his life depends on such knowledge—and only a volitional act of his consciousness, a process of thought, can provide it.”<sup>16</sup>

This leads directly to the basis of morality. Morality “is a code of values to guide man’s choices and actions—the choices and actions that determine the purpose and the course of his life.”<sup>17</sup>

*(To be continued in our next issue)*

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* (Signet: 1967), p. 19. <sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 321. <sup>3</sup>*Atlas Shrugged* (Signet: 1957), p. 942. <sup>4</sup>“Brief Summary,” *The Objectivist*, Sept., 1971, p. 1. <sup>5</sup>*Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* (Mentor: 1979), p. 2. <sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 15-16. <sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 111-12. <sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 22-23. <sup>9</sup>*Atlas Shrugged*, pp. 943-44. <sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 946-47. <sup>11</sup>*Republic*, Bk. IV, 434-441. <sup>12</sup>*Atlas Shrugged*, p. 962. <sup>13</sup>“*Playboy’s* Interview with Ayn Rand,” p. 6. <sup>14</sup>*The Virtue of Selfishness* (Signet: 1966), p. 21. <sup>15</sup>*For the New Intellectual* (Random House: 1961), p. 62. <sup>16</sup>*Virtue of Selfishness*, p. 21. <sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13.

# AYN RAND'S PHILOSOPHIC ACHIEVEMENT

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## PART II

If there is one point on which all philosophic schools of the last two hundred years agree, it is that no rational foundation for morality is possible. Limiting reason to syllogistic deduction, ignoring the fact that deduction presupposes induction and concept-formation, philosophers have concluded that it is impossible to prove *any* code of values. It is impossible, they say, to derive an “ought” from an “is.” Yet Ayn Rand has done just that—not by deducing values from facts, but by pointing out the facts of reality which give rise to the concept “value,” and therefore to all “oughts.”

Her derivation begins with the identification that “‘value’ is that which one acts to gain and/or keep.”<sup>18</sup> Observing that “the concept ‘value’ is not a primary,”<sup>19</sup> she went on to ask what underlies the whole phenomenon of action to gain values.

She found the answer in the fact that man faces the constant alternative of life or death. As a living entity, man has survival needs—things he must act to obtain in order to remain in existence. This is the fact that makes value-seeking action possible and necessary. I quote one of the most important paragraphs Ayn Rand ever wrote:

“There is only one fundamental alternative in the universe: existence or non-existence—and it pertains to a single class of entities: to living organisms. The existence of inanimate matter is unconditional, the existence of life is not: it depends on a specific course of action. Matter is indestructible, it changes its forms, but it cannot cease to exist. It is only a living organism that faces a constant alternative: the issue of life or death. Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action. If an organism fails in that action, it dies; its chemical elements remain, but its life goes out of existence. It is only the concept of ‘Life’ that makes the concept of ‘Value’ possible. It is only to a living entity that things can be good or evil.”<sup>20</sup>

Apart from the need for self-sustaining action, no values can exist and no value-concepts can be given meaning. To speak of a “value” that is unrelated to one’s survival needs, is to commit the fallacy of the stolen concept. The fact that an organism’s continued existence depends upon its actions is the root of values as such.

“In answer to those philosophers who claim that no relation can be established between ultimate ends or values and the facts of reality, let me stress that the fact that living entities exist and function necessitates the existence of values and of an ultimate value which for any given living entity is its own life.”<sup>21</sup>

Since man has free will, he does not automatically act in the direction of his survival. He is not born with the knowledge of what his survival needs are or how to fulfill them, nor is he genetically programmed to gain this knowledge and act accordingly. As a conceptual being, man needs the guidance of principles; he needs an integrated, hierarchical system of values and virtues; he needs a code of *morality*.

Ayn Rand solved the dilemma that had stymied all previous moral philosophers. It seemed that the basis of morality—an ultimate value—could not itself be justified. For either the ultimate value is held as a value *by choice* or not. If choice is not involved, if factors beyond his control compel man to pursue the ultimate value, then morality is impossible: whatever one does, one had to do. But if, on the other hand, the ultimate value is subject to choice, then morality is, they held, subjective, for there is no higher value obligating one to choose any one ultimate value over any other.

This dilemma vanishes once one grasps that “It is only the concept of ‘Life’ that makes the concept of ‘Value’ possible.” The issue of *justifying* choices arises only within the context of having chosen to live.

Holding one’s life as an ultimate value *is* a matter of choice: man does not automatically value his own life, and there is no such thing as a “duty” or “categorical imperative” obligating one to live. But this does not make morality subjective or arbitrary. For fundamentally, one’s choice is to live, and hence to define and pursue the values one’s life requires, or not to live, and hence to have no values, take no actions, and perish. “Life or death is man’s only fundamental alternative. To live is his basic act of choice. If he chooses to live, a rational ethics will tell him what principles of action are required to implement his choice. If he does not choose to live, nature will take its course.”<sup>22</sup>

*(To be continued in our next issue.)*

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#### NOTES

<sup>18</sup>*The Virtue of Selfishness* (Signet: 1966), p. 15. <sup>19</sup>*Ibid.* <sup>20</sup>*Atlas Shrugged* (Signet: 1957), p. 939. <sup>21</sup>*The Virtue of Selfishness*, p. 17. <sup>22</sup>“Causality Versus Duty,” *The Objectivist*, July, 1970, p. 4.



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## PART III

The content of an ethical code is determined by its standard of value. "The standard of value of the Objectivist ethics—the standard by which one judges what is good or evil—is *man's life*, or: that which is required for man's survival *qua* man. Since reason is man's basic means of survival, that which is proper to the life of a rational being is the good; that which negates, opposes or destroys it is the evil."<sup>24</sup>

The aspect of Objectivism for which Ayn Rand is best known—rational selfishness—is implicit in the preceding. It is one's own survival needs that make values possible and necessary. And it is one's own mind that has to function by one's own choice to initiate and direct one's own action to obtain and utilize those values.

Since the course of action required to sustain one's life is specific, since any action that does not profit oneself is a drain on one's time, energy, motivation, and resources, all forms of self-sacrifice stand damned as anti-life. "'Sacrifice' is the surrender of a greater value for the sake of a lesser one or of a nonvalue. Thus, altruism gauges a man's virtue by the degree to which he surrenders, renounces or betrays his values. . . ."<sup>25</sup> "You are told that moral perfection is impossible to man—and, by this standard, it is. You cannot achieve it so long as you live, but the value of your life and of your person is gauged by how closely you succeed in approaching that ideal zero which is *death*."<sup>26</sup>

"The rational principle of conduct is the exact opposite: always act in accordance with the hierarchy of your values, and never sacrifice a greater value to a lesser one."<sup>27</sup>

Since the rise of Christianity, only a very few philosophers have had the courage to challenge the morality of self-sacrifice and to uphold egoism—notably, Spinoza and Nietzsche. Nietzsche, however, merely replaced self-sacrifice by the sacrifice of others to self. Spinoza's ethics does have some valuable points (if removed from the overall context of his philosophy), but it is laced with mysticism and is premised upon a rigid determinism, each man being driven by a "conatus" or "instinct" of self-preservation.

It is shocking to realize that, despite altruism's monopoly in ethics, in the entire history of philosophy, to the best of my knowledge, no

one has ever attempted to offer a rational argument to justify altruistic self-sacrifice. Only faith (Christianity) or feelings (Kant) have been adduced to support altruism.<sup>28</sup>

“Now there is one word—a single word—which can blast the morality of altruism out of existence and which it cannot withstand—the word: ‘*Why?*’ *Why* must man live for the sake of others? *Why* must he be a sacrificial animal? *Why* is that the good? There is no earthly reason for it. . .”<sup>29</sup>

Today’s philosophers have lost entirely the concept of a non-sacrificial morality. They go so far as to argue that an egoist morality is *self-contradictory*. Taking it as self-evident that men are emotion-driven brutes whose interests necessarily clash, these philosophers argue that an egoist would have to advocate altruism, in order to induce others to sacrifice themselves to him.

What is inconceivable to these philosophers is the ennobled view of man expressed by Galt:

“There is no conflict of interests among men, neither in business nor in trade nor in their most personal desires—if they omit the irrational from their view of the possible and destruction from their view of the practical. There is no conflict, and no call for sacrifice, and no man is a threat to the aims of another—if men understand that reality is an absolute not to be faked, that lies do not work, that the unearned cannot be had, that the undeserved cannot be given, that the destruction of a value which *is*, will not bring value to that which isn’t.”<sup>30</sup>

In Galt’s Speech, Ayn Rand demonstrated that, in reality, it is the morality of self-sacrifice that is riddled with self-contradiction. The code of self-sacrifice awards value to the destruction of values, places what it holds as the good (giving) in the service of what it holds as the evil (taking), and enshrines death at the apex of its value-hierarchy.

Ayn Rand’s ethics is egoistic not only in advocating self-interest but also in placing its focus on the essence of that which is one’s self: one’s mind. Where previous moralists were concerned only with such derivative issues as one’s actions, feelings, or motives, Ayn Rand went deeper, making one’s worth a matter of the choice to have a self or not—i.e., to think, judge, and will, or to stumble passively through one’s days with one’s ego suspended.

“This, in every hour and every issue, is your basic moral choice: thinking or non-thinking, existence or non-existence, A or non-A, entity or zero.”<sup>31</sup>

She has given us a morality which speaks to, summons forth, and honors the “I.”

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In political philosophy, Ayn Rand made a radical break with the feeble, apologetic remnants of the pro-capitalist movement. She stood alone in defending capitalism on the basis of *individual rights*. The principle of individual rights had virtually disappeared from political discussion by the late 1950's when *Atlas Shrugged* was published, having been obliterated by the equivocations and misdefinitions of its enemies and alleged friends alike. (Ayn Rand's only, partial, ally in this respect was Isabel Paterson, whom she influenced; and Paterson insisted that rights could be based only upon "a divine source."<sup>32</sup>)

Ayn Rand took the traditional American concept of rights (due principally to John Locke) and did three things: 1) she clarified what a right is, 2) she established the moral foundation of rights, and 3) she identified the objective means of determining when a right has been violated.

Ayn Rand restored the proper concept of rights by an explicit definition: "A 'right' is a moral principle defining and sanctioning a man's freedom of action in a social context."<sup>33</sup>

In answer to such perverted notions as the "right" to a job, to housing, and to an education, she stressed that "The concept of a 'right' pertains only to action—specifically, to freedom of action. It means freedom from physical compulsion, coercion or interference by other men."<sup>34</sup>

The earlier "natural rights" tradition, following Locke, had based individual rights upon religion. Locke was appallingly explicit about this: all men are "the servants of one sovereign master [God], sent into the world by his order, and about his business—they are his property. . ."<sup>35</sup>

Ayn Rand showed that the actual foundation of rights lies in the nature of man and in the ethics of rational selfishness. Since each man exists for his own sake, not as the servant of any other being, he has a *right* to his own life. Others cannot claim one's life—in whole or in the smallest part of it—because no value can logically precede one's choice to live. One's life is an end in itself, an ultimate value standing at the base of all other values and moral claims.

All the other (legitimate) rights derive from the right to life. "Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action; the right to life means the right to engage in self-sustaining and self-generated action—which means: the freedom to take all the actions required by the nature of a rational being for the support, the furtherance, the fulfillment and the enjoyment of his own life."<sup>36</sup>

The question "Why does man have rights?" is the question "Why

should man be free?" The answer to both questions, Ayn Rand showed, is: his survival requires it. The individual has the right to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness because these are the "conditions of existence required by man's nature for his proper survival."<sup>37</sup> Man's tool of survival is his mind, and the mind will not function under compulsion. Thus the fundamental political alternative is: liberty or death.

"Since knowledge, thinking, and rational action are properties of the individual, since the choice to exercise his rational faculty or not depends on the individual, man's survival requires that those who think be free of the interference of those who don't."<sup>38</sup>

If left at this level of abstraction, the theory of rights would have been incomplete. The questions that immediately arise are: "What is freedom? What constitutes the kind of 'interference' that violates man's rights?"

Ayn Rand's answer cut through centuries of confusion surrounding the topic of rights. "To violate man's rights means to compel him to act against his own judgment, or to expropriate his values. Basically, there is only one way to do it: by the use of physical force."<sup>39</sup> "Freedom, in a political context, has only one meaning: *the absence of physical coercion*."<sup>40</sup>

It was 36 years ago that Ayn Rand wrote these words: "A right cannot be violated except by physical force. . . . Whenever a man is made to act without his own free, personal, individual, *voluntary* consent—his right has been violated. Therefore, we can draw a clear-cut division between the rights of one man and those of another. It is an *objective* division—not subject to differences of opinion, nor to majority decision, nor to the arbitrary decree of society. *No man has the right to initiate the use of physical force against another man*."<sup>41</sup>

(To be continued in our next issue.)

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#### NOTES

<sup>24</sup>*The Virtue of Selfishness*, p. 23. <sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 44. <sup>26</sup>*Atlas Shrugged*, p. 954. <sup>27</sup>*The Virtue of Selfishness*, p. 44. <sup>28</sup>I exclude J. S. Mill, who held that self-sacrifice is necessary for "the common good," a position which is not, strictly speaking, altruistic. And the argument Mill offers for his utilitarianism so blatantly commits the fallacy of composition that it is used as an example of that fallacy in logic textbooks (e.g., I. M. Copi, *Introduction to Logic* [Macmillan: 1972], p. 100). <sup>29</sup>"Faith and Force: The Destroyers of the Modern World," *Philosophy: Who Needs It* (Bobbs-Merrill: 1982), p. 74. <sup>30</sup>*Atlas Shrugged*, p. 742. <sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 944. <sup>32</sup>Isabel Paterson, *The God of the Machine* (Caxton: 1964), p. 71. <sup>33</sup>*The Virtue of Selfishness*, p. 93. <sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 94. <sup>35</sup>John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Bobbs-Merrill: 1952), pp. 5-6. <sup>36</sup>*The Virtue of Selfishness*, pp. 93-94. <sup>37</sup>*Atlas Shrugged*, pp. 985-86. <sup>38</sup>*Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*, p. 17. <sup>39</sup>*The Virtue of Selfishness*, p. 95. <sup>40</sup>*Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*, p. 46. <sup>41</sup>"Textbook of Americanism," p. 6.

# AYN RAND'S PHILOSOPHIC ACHIEVEMENT

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## PART IV

Ayn Rand's esthetics depends upon her entire philosophical base, from metaphysics through ethics. Yet her basic explanation of art is quite simple: "What an art work expresses, fundamentally, under all of its lesser aspects is: '*This is life as I see it.*'" <sup>42</sup>

To explain how art expresses a view of life and why that expression can be so emotionally powerful, Ayn Rand identified the psycho-epistemological basis of art.

As a conceptual being, man survives by means of gaining and applying *abstract* knowledge. The most profoundly important abstractions, which everyone forms consciously or subconsciously, are one's generalizations concerning man's nature and the nature of the universe—one's implicit metaphysics.

"Metaphysics—the science that deals with the fundamental nature of reality—involves man's widest abstractions. It includes every concrete he has ever perceived, it involves such a vast sum of knowledge and such a long chain of concepts that no man could hold it all in the focus of his immediate conscious awareness. Yet he needs that sum and that awareness to guide him—he needs the power to summon them into full, conscious focus." <sup>43</sup>

That need is the psycho-epistemological basis of art.

"Art is a concretization of metaphysics. *Art brings man's concepts to the perceptual level of his consciousness and allows him to grasp them directly, as if they were percepts.* . . . Art converts man's metaphysical abstractions into the equivalent of concretes, into specific entities open to man's direct perception." <sup>44</sup>

An artist achieves this concretization by creating a stylized representation of a concrete. By omitting the accidental and stressing the essential—essential according to *his* view of life—he produces a concrete that carries a metaphysical meaning. Thus Ayn Rand's definition of art: "Art is a selective re-creation of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments." <sup>45</sup>

The major branches of art are distinguished according to the *means* they use to re-create reality. "*Literature* re-creates reality by means of language—*Painting*, by means of color on a two-dimensional surface—*Sculpture*, by means of a three-dimensional form made of a

solid material. *Music* employs the sounds produced by the *periodic* vibrations of a sonorous body, and evokes man's sense-of-life emotions."<sup>46</sup>

The intense emotional power of art derives from its nature as a concretization of a philosophy of life:

"Since man lives by reshaping his physical background to serve his purpose, since he must first define and then create his values—a rational man needs a concretized projection of these values, an image in whose likeness he will re-shape the world and himself. Art gives him that image; it gives him the experience of seeing the full, immediate, concrete reality of his distant goals. . . . the sense of living in a universe where his values have been successfully achieved. It is like a moment of rest, a moment to gain fuel to move farther. Art gives him that fuel; the pleasure of contemplating the objectified reality of one's own sense of life is the pleasure of feeling what it would be like to live in one's ideal world."<sup>47</sup>

In a brief survey of Ayn Rand's philosophic achievements, it is not possible to do justice to Ayn Rand's wide-ranging contributions to the field of esthetics. I will simply list some of the highlights: her identification and analysis of "sense of life"; her definition of Romanticism vs. Naturalism in terms of free will vs. determinism, and her passionate defense of Romanticism; her hypothesis concerning the psycho-epistemology of music; her distinction between the philosophic judgment and the esthetic judgment of works of art; her analysis of literature (especially of plot); her explanation of the role of art in forming one's personal moral ideals; her analysis of the psychology of artistic creation.

The magnitude of her contribution looms even larger when considered against its historical background. The history of esthetics is perhaps even bleaker than the general history of philosophy. The 2300 years stretching from Aristotle's *Poetics* to *The Romantic Manifesto* is practically a void; philosophers of art have seemed to be discussing some mysterious, inaccessible entity—not *art*. Their sterile disquisitions on "the sublime and the beautiful" and their contrived theories of "art as play" or "art as pure form" bear no discernible relationship to the actual paintings, dramas, symphonies, and sculptures that constitute the history of art.

The reason of this barrenness is that art fills a need of a *conceptual* consciousness. Until one grasps the nature of concepts—their relation to reality and their role in man's life—art has to remain a mystery. (Aristotle, who came the closest to understanding concepts, made virtually the only lasting contributions to esthetics.)

In this sense, one could say that the key to the Objectivist esthetics is Ayn Rand's complete rejection of Plato's theory of concepts. Plato's Forms were supposed to be entities open to one's direct "intuition." To contemplate the ideal man, for example, Plato held that (after suitable training) one need only close one's eyes and commune with the Form of Man. (Quite consistently, Plato held art to be of no value.) The Objectivist esthetics, metaphorically speaking, holds that the objects that Plato called "Forms"—i.e., concretized ideals—exist as the product of the artist's genius. To contemplate the ideal man, the good, justice, etc., one turns not to a supernatural dimension, but to great art. Man at his highest potential, stripped of accidental details and presented pure, is not a mystical Form; it is Howard Roark, Francisco D'Anconia, John Galt.

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Having surveyed Ayn Rand's philosophic achievement, let us consider whether there is some integrating theme that underlies the major breakthroughs I have covered.

A philosophic system cannot of course be condensed into one principle; if it could be, there would be no need for such a discipline as philosophy. But if one considers Objectivism as a whole, it is apparent that all the distinctively Objectivist identifications depend upon, reflect, or embody *a new view of the relationship of consciousness to existence*.

This new understanding of consciousness has been eloquently summarized by Leonard Peikoff: "Consciousness is metaphysically passive but epistemologically active."

Consciousness does not create or alter the object of which one is aware (consciousness is metaphysically passive). But the faculty of consciousness must engage in certain processes in order to achieve and maintain the state of awareness (consciousness is epistemologically active).

"The attack on man's consciousness and particularly on his conceptual faculty has rested on the unchallenged premise that any knowledge acquired by a *process* of consciousness is necessarily subjective and cannot correspond to the facts of reality, since it is '*processed* knowledge.'"<sup>48</sup> But, in actuality, "All knowledge *is* processed knowledge—whether on the sensory, perceptual or conceptual level. An 'unprocessed' knowledge would be a knowledge acquired without means of cognition. Consciousness (as I said in the first sentence of this work) is not a passive state, but an active process."<sup>49</sup>

Take, for example, sensory perception. The earliest philosophers were not aware of the influence of the means of perception—the ac-

tion of sense organs and nervous system—upon perception. When this influence began to be recognized, it seemed to shake the foundations of knowledge. The Greek Sophists were the first of a horde of skeptics who argued that the actions of man's senses cut him off from reality. From the fact that perception depends upon our sensory apparatus, they concluded that perception is relative to the observer.

Neither the skeptics nor those who sought to defend the validity of the mind realized that the means of perception determines only the form of one's awareness, not its object. *How* we perceive (e.g., visually, in the form of shape and color) is a consequence of the nature of our senses, but *what* we perceive, no matter *how*, is the object in reality.

Thus, "Perception is relative" is ambiguous. It can either mean "The object perceived depends upon us" or "The form in which we perceive the object depends upon us." Only the latter is true, but no skeptical conclusions follow from it. All forms of sensory perception are causally necessitated by the means of perception, *and thus all are equally valid*.

On the sensory-perceptual level of awareness, man's cognition is immediate, automatic, and unchallengeable. On this level, man's link to reality is physical-physiological: his percepts register the direct, physical stimulation by the objects of which he is aware.

This means that the possibility of error or "misinterpretation" does not arise on the purely perceptual level, for no judgment or interpretation is involved. Man's "senses cannot deceive him . . . his organs of perception are physical and have no volition, no power to invent or to distort."<sup>50</sup>

But the situation is fundamentally different on the conceptual level. Abstractions are not physical objects in the external world, and conceptual knowledge does not imprint itself upon man's intellect. Gazing at three pairs of shoes will not force one's brain to grasp that  $3 \times 2 = 6$ . The belief that there is some automatic means of gaining conceptual knowledge is precisely the essence of mysticism.

In order to gain conceptual knowledge, man must choose to initiate and sustain cognitive contact with the object(s) in reality he is seeking to understand. He must identify and strictly follow the reality-based method of thinking—logic—if he is to know that he has correctly identified reality. Doing this, i.e., choosing to adhere to the object in reality, is being *objective*. Forming conclusions on the basis of irrelevant factors, factors not relating to the object (i.e., on the basis of feelings), is being *subjective*.<sup>51</sup>

Thus it is no accident that Objectivism takes its name from the



concept of “objectivity.” The concept of “objectivity” as used by Ayn Rand represents her integration of the *what* and the *how* of cognition—i.e., the recognition that consciousness is conscious of some object by some means and in some form—i.e., the integration of consciousness and identity.

Ayn Rand’s concept of the objective can best be explained by contrasting it to the intrinsic and the subjective approaches. Here is her explanation, in regard to concepts:

“The extreme realist (Platonist) and the moderate realist (Aristotelian) schools of thought regard the referents of concepts as *intrinsic*, i.e., as ‘universals’ inherent in things (either as archetypes or as metaphysical essences), as special existents unrelated to man’s consciousness—to be perceived by man directly, like any other kind of concrete existents, but perceived by some non-sensory or extra-sensory means.

“The nominalist and the conceptualist schools regard concepts as *subjective*, i.e., as products of man’s consciousness, unrelated to the facts of reality, as mere ‘names’ or notions arbitrarily assigned to arbitrary groupings of concretes on the ground of vague, inexplicable resemblances. . . .

“None of these schools regards concepts as *objective*, i.e., as neither revealed nor invented, but as produced by man’s consciousness in accordance with the facts of reality, as mental integrations of factual data computed by man—as the products of a cognitive method of classification whose processes must be performed by man, but whose content is dictated by reality.”<sup>52</sup>

Intrinsicism is associated with mysticism, since some non-sensory, non-rational means of cognition is required to grasp the supposed universals. Subjectivism is associated with skepticism: realizing that no universal archetype or essence is to be found in metaphysical reality, the subjectivist, still regarding this as the only possible means of conceptual knowledge, concludes that concepts, absolutes, principles are fantasy creations, and that “anything goes” is the motto of enlightenment. The essence of the subjectivist attitude is that expressed by one of Dostoevsky’s characters: “Since God does not exist, everything is permitted.”

Ayn Rand’s objective theory of knowledge makes it possible for the first time fully to escape both mysticism and skepticism and to uphold the absolutism of reason. The concept of objectivity is the theme that underlies every aspect of Ayn Rand’s philosophy. Observe how this concept is involved in all the major breakthroughs listed at the start of this series.

### 1. The primacy of existence.

The primacy of existence states that reality is what it is independently of consciousness. By thus integrating and summarizing the axioms of existence, identity, and consciousness, the primacy of existence provides the basis of the concept of “objectivity.”<sup>53</sup>

“It is axiomatic concepts that identify the precondition of knowledge: the distinction between existence and consciousness, between reality and the awareness of reality, between the object and the subject of cognition. Axiomatic concepts are the foundation of *objectivity*.”<sup>54</sup>

### 2. The theory of concepts.

By her theory of measurement-omission, Ayn Rand explained how concepts are neither elements of metaphysical reality nor arbitrary constructs. Concepts are tools of cognition proceeding from the recognition of facts of reality in a form dictated by the identity of man’s consciousness—i.e., concepts are neither intrinsic nor subjective, but objective.

### 3. The theory of free will.

Given the primacy of existence, it is the fact that man is a being of volitional consciousness that makes the concept of objectivity possible and necessary. A deterministic mind would not be capable of error; its conceptual conclusions would be, like perceptual data, automatic and infallible. Conceptual knowledge would then be attained, as in the intrinsic theory, by merely gazing upon The Truth with one’s “intellectual eyes.” Denying the volitional nature of thought, the mystic advances the intrinsic theory of knowledge in “a desperate quest for escape from the responsibility of a volitional consciousness—a quest for automatic knowledge, for instinctive action, for intuitive certainty.”<sup>55</sup>

Equally unable to grasp the actual nature of volition, the skeptic equates the volitional with the causeless. He takes free will to mean “freedom” from reality, and, assuming that only ideas forced upon us by reality could be valid, he concludes that volition makes knowledge of reality impossible. But in fact man’s free will is his choice to think or not to think—i.e., to base his convictions and conduct upon his perception of reality or upon his arbitrary feelings—i.e., to be objective or subjective.

### 4. Man’s life as the standard of value.

Ethics, Ayn Rand showed, is the province neither of mystic commandments (intrinsicism) nor of whim (subjectivism). Man’s life is the standard of the good, but only if one chooses to live; even life is not an *intrinsic* value (remembering that the alternative is not some

other set of values, but death). “No, you do not have to live; it is your basic act of choice; but if you choose to live, you must live as a man—by the work and the judgment of your mind.”<sup>56</sup>

More explicitly, “The intrinsic theory holds that the good resides in some sort of reality, independent of man’s consciousness; the subjectivist theory holds that the good resides in man’s consciousness, independent of reality. The *objective* theory holds that the good is neither an attribute of ‘things in themselves’ nor of man’s emotional states, but *an evaluation* of the facts of reality by man’s consciousness according to a rational standard of value. (Rational, in this context, means: derived from the facts of reality and validated by a process of reason.)”<sup>57</sup>

#### 5. The moral basis of individual rights.

“The source of man’s rights is not divine law [intrinsicism] or congressional law [social subjectivism], but the law of identity. A is A—and Man is Man.”<sup>58</sup>

Ayn Rand has written in detail on the political implications of her objective theory of the good (see “What is Capitalism?” and “The Nature of Government”). She has demonstrated that “The objective theory of values is the only moral theory incompatible with rule by force.”<sup>59</sup>

As the objective theory rules out the use of force on whim (subjectivism), so it rules out the attempt to force a man to act to achieve any alleged intrinsic value. According to an objective theory, nothing can be a value to a man unless his own mind has grasped the reasons for it in the context of his own hierarchy of values. “An attempt to achieve the good by physical force is a monstrous contradiction which negates morality at its root by destroying man’s capacity to recognize the good, i.e., his capacity to value. Force invalidates and paralyzes a man’s judgment, demanding that he act against it, thus rendering him morally impotent. A value which one is forced to accept at the price of surrendering one’s mind, is not a value to anyone.”<sup>60</sup>

#### 6. The psycho-epistemology of art.

As with ethics, art deals neither with reality apart from man nor with man’s emotional states apart from reality, but with reality as evaluated by man. “An artist does not fake reality—he *stylizes* it. He selects those aspects of existence which he regards as metaphysically significant—and by isolating and stressing them, by omitting the insignificant and accidental, he presents *his* view of existence.”<sup>61</sup>

The credo of the Romantic school of art is Aristotle’s principle that art presents life as it “could be and ought to be.” Romantic art

presents what “could be” as opposed to what is impossible, contradictory, cut off from reality—i.e., as opposed to the subjective. And it presents a universal ideal, that which “ought to be,” as opposed to a Naturalistic copy of “real life”—i.e., as opposed to intrinsicism.

“Readers have asked me whether my characters are ‘copies of real people in public life’ or ‘not human beings at all, but symbols.’ Neither is true. . . . What I did was to observe real life, analyze the reasons which make people such as they are, draw an abstraction and then create my own characters out of that abstraction. My characters are persons in whom certain human attributes are focused more sharply and consistently than in average human beings.”<sup>62</sup>

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In Galt’s Speech, Ayn Rand indicated her place in the history of philosophy: “Centuries ago, the man who was—no matter what his errors—the greatest of your philosophers [Aristotle], has stated the formula defining the concept of existence and the rule of all knowledge: *A is A*. A thing is itself. You have never grasped the meaning of his statement. I am here to complete it: Existence is Identity, Consciousness is Identification.”<sup>64</sup>

Prior to Aristotle, philosophers were divided between those who accepted change while denying identity (Heraclitus and his followers) and those who upheld identity while denying change (Parmenides and his followers). Plato merely offered a compromise, holding that this world is characterized by change without identity and positing another realm characterized by identity without change.

In a parallel manner, prior to Ayn Rand philosophers have been divided between those who upheld the validity of consciousness while denying that consciousness has an identity (the intrinsic school) and those who recognized that consciousness has an identity while denying its ability to grasp reality (the subjective school, institutionalized by Kant).

Aristotle solved the ancient “problem of change” and brought order into metaphysics by recognizing that all change is the change of something, from something to something, effected by something (e.g., the change of a rock from being cold to being hot, effected by the sun). Ayn Rand solved the modern problem of consciousness and brought order into epistemology by recognizing that all consciousness is the consciousness of something, in some form, by some means (e.g., a man perceives a rock, in the form of color and shape, by means of his eyes; or, a man grasps the nature of rocks, in the form of a concept, by means of “a mental integration of two or more units

possessing the same distinguishing characteristic(s), with their particular measurements omitted”<sup>65</sup>).

In his book on Aristotle, J. H. Randall identifies as “the basic position about human knowledge” contained in all pre-Kantian philosophy the view that “knowledge is . . . the passive reception of the structure of things.” He observes that this view “has of course been abandoned in nearly all of our critical philosophies of experience since Hume and Kant,” having been replaced by the view that knowledge “is an active process of interpretation and construction”<sup>63</sup> (i.e., fantasy and whim-worship).

As an historian of philosophy, he merely observes the change—in Ayn Rand’s terminology, from the intrinsic to the subjective—without commenting or offering a solution. The proper comment is: That is the false alternative that is ultimately responsible for all the horrors of the modern world. The proper solution is: Ayn Rand’s *objective* view of knowledge.

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In an autobiographical postscript to *Atlas Shrugged*, Ayn Rand wrote, “I have always lived by the philosophy I present in my books—and it has worked for me, as it works for my characters.”<sup>66</sup> Her philosophic successes were part of the proof that her philosophy worked—for the Objectivist epistemology represented the method she used in her own thinking.

The essence of that method was an unswerving focus on reality. No matter how abstract the level on which she worked, her thought remained firmly anchored to the facts.

Unlike so many purported defenders of reason, Ayn Rand’s thinking was untouched by Rationalism, the attempt to arrive at truth by *a priori* deduction, i.e., by divorcing logic from reality. She arrived at her philosophic principles primarily by an inductive process—by asking in regard to the concretes she confronted: What is their common denominator? What deeper premise gives rise to them? Roark’s quest in *The Fountainhead* for “the principle behind the Dean” was typical of her own approach to ideas.

Never satisfied that she “knew enough,” she would seek the premises of the premises, building a hierarchical system from the ground up—i.e., from the concrete to the abstract.

The measure of her genius was the unprecedented depth and scope of the integrations she achieved. Who but Ayn Rand, for instance, could integrate the leading doctrines in economics, politics, and psychology according to their implicit view of causality? “Whenever you rebel against causality, your motive is the fraudulent desire, not

to escape it, but worse: to reverse it. . . . proclaiming that spending, the effect, creates riches, the cause [Keynes], that machinery, the effect, creates intelligence, the cause [Marx], that your sexual desires, the effect, create your philosophical values, the cause [Freud].”<sup>67</sup>

Or, for the union of abstract fundamentals with common-sense realism, consider her analysis of the motor of history in terms of men’s psycho-epistemology:

“The battle of human history is fought and determined by those who are predominantly consistent, those who, for good or evil, are committed to and motivated by their chosen psycho-epistemology and its corollary view of existence. . . . The three contestants are Attila, the Witch Doctor and the Producer—or the man of force, the man of feelings, the man of reason—or the brute, the mystic, the thinker.”<sup>68</sup>

Of the many elements in Ayn Rand’s methodology, one which is fundamental to the realism of her thought is her insistence on knowing exactly what one is talking about, knowing it in fully concretized terms.

“You must attach clear, specific meanings to words, i.e., be able to identify their referents in reality. This is a precondition, without which neither critical judgment nor thinking of any kind is possible.”<sup>69</sup>

Ayn Rand’s incomparable ability to hold clearly in mind the exact meaning of the concepts she used was an important factor in her philosophic achievement.

She described the process by which she achieved that clarity:

“To know the exact meaning of the concepts one is using, one must know their correct definitions, one must be able to retrace the specific (logical, not chronological) steps by which they were formed, and one must be able to demonstrate their connection to their base in perceptual reality.

“When in doubt about the meaning or the definition of a concept, the best method of clarification is to look for its referents—i.e., to ask oneself: What fact or facts of reality gave rise to this concept? What distinguishes it from all other concepts?”<sup>70</sup>

(For a remarkable illustration of her method, see her application of this process in *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* to the concept “justice.”)

Philosophic ideas were deadly serious for Ayn Rand, because she saw their full, final consequences. No matter how complex or technical the topic one would discuss with her, she would never permit the discussion to become an academic exercise detached from its

concrete value-significance.

“To take ideas seriously means that you intend to live by, to *practice*, any idea you accept as true. Philosophy provides man with a comprehensive view of life. In order to evaluate it properly, ask yourself what a given theory, if accepted, would do to a human life, starting with your own.

“Most people would be astonished by this method. They think that abstract thinking must be ‘impersonal’—which means that ideas must hold no personal meaning, value or importance to the thinker . . . . But if you are the kind of person who knows that reality is not your enemy, that truth and knowledge are of crucial, personal, *selfish* importance to you and to your own life—then, the more passionately personal the thinking, the clearer and truer.”<sup>71</sup>

Ayn Rand did not see herself as defending a system, but as calling attention to the facts of reality. She abhorred the approach she termed “re-writing reality”—the attempt to twist the observed facts to fit one’s preconceived notions. Her only loyalty was to the truth, an attitude that left her perfectly free to consider anything, never tempting her to evade facts or arguments that seemed to contradict her previous conclusions.

“If you keep an active mind, you will discover (assuming that you started with common-sense rationality) that every challenge you examine will strengthen your convictions, that the conscious, reasoned rejection of false theories will help you to clarify and amplify the true ones.”<sup>72</sup>

Ayn Rand’s famous slogan, “check your premises,” was the watchword of her own thinking. Not only did she refuse to accept uncritically the *statements* of other thinkers but also she judged first-hand the validity of the *concepts* in terms of which those statements were formulated. She showed that crucial concepts had been improperly defined (e.g., “selfishness”) and that others (e.g., “duty”) were completely invalid. Before she would accept a concept, she had to satisfy herself that it fulfilled a rational, cognitive need; this epistemological purity protected her from the mystical concepts, the arbitrary constructs, the “package-deals,” and the “anti-concepts” which sabotaged the thinking of others. Without this extraordinary, radical independence, she could never have arrived at Objectivism.

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What is the historic significance of Ayn Rand’s philosophy?

One of her own statements in *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* implies the answer: “It is as if, philosophically, mankind is still in the stage of transition which characterizes a child in the

process of learning to speak—a child who is using his conceptual faculty, but has not developed it sufficiently to be able to examine it self-consciously and discover that what he is using is *reason*.”<sup>73</sup> That discovery, with everything it presupposes and implies, is Ayn Rand’s philosophic achievement.

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#### NOTES

- <sup>42</sup>*The Romantic Manifesto*, p. 35. <sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19. <sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 20. <sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19. <sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 46. <sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 38. <sup>48</sup>*Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 108. <sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 109. <sup>50</sup>*Atlas Shrugged*, p. 966. <sup>51</sup>The alternative of subjective vs. objective does not apply on the purely perceptual level: one simply perceives or does not perceive something; there is no such thing as a “subjective sense-perception”—the nearest thing to that would be hallucination, which is not perception at all. <sup>52</sup>*Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, pp. 69-71. <sup>53</sup>It could be said that the primacy of existence states that reality is objective. This statement, however, uses the term “objective” in its *metaphysical* sense, not in the *epistemological* sense discussed herein. “Metaphysically, [objectivity] is the recognition of the fact that reality exists independent of any perceiver’s consciousness. Epistemologically, it is the recognition of the fact that a perceiver’s (man’s) consciousness must acquire knowledge of reality by certain means (reason) in accordance with certain rules (logic).” (Ayn Rand, *The Objectivist Newsletter*, Feb., 1965, p. 7) <sup>54</sup>*Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 76. <sup>55</sup>*Atlas Shrugged*, p. 982. <sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 941. <sup>57</sup>*Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*, p. 22. <sup>58</sup>*Atlas Shrugged*, p. 985. <sup>59</sup>*Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*, p. 23. <sup>60</sup>*Ibid.* <sup>61</sup>*The Romantic Manifesto*, p. 36. <sup>62</sup>*The Objectivist Forum*, June, 1982, p. 6. <sup>63</sup>J. H. Randall, Jr., *Aristotle* (Columbia Univ. Press: 1960), pp. 91-92. <sup>64</sup>*Atlas Shrugged*, p. 942. <sup>65</sup>*Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 15. <sup>66</sup>“About the Author,” *Atlas Shrugged*. <sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 942. <sup>68</sup>For the New Intellectual, p. 18. <sup>69</sup>*Philosophy: Who Needs It*, p. 18. <sup>70</sup>*Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 67. <sup>71</sup>*Philosophy: Who Needs It*, p. 19. <sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26. <sup>73</sup>*Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, pp. 71-72.