Ronald E. Merrill and the Discovery of Ayn Rand's Nietzschean Period

Adam Reed[1]

1. A Memoir of a Discovery

In scientific and technological journals, it is customary to begin the first special issue on a mature invention or discovery with a traditionally informal, first-person memoir of how the invention or discovery came about. For example, in my article in this journal on "Object-Oriented Programming and Objectivist Epistemology" (Reed 2003), I relied on Alan Kay's (1993) memoir about the early history of *Smalltalk*, published in SIGPLan's first special issue on object-oriented programming. The inclusion of such a memoir reflects the scientists' awareness of the dynamic and interactive nature of the process by which scientists acquire knowledge. The primacy of existence over consciousness dictates attention to growth, in what and how well one knows, by a process of constantly testing one's current knowledge against the accumulated and tested evidence of the senses.

Ronald E. Merrill died of myeloma in 1998, and so this memoir of his discovery of Nietzsche's influence on Ayn Rand is unavoidably second-hand. Ron and I lived in the same dormitory at MIT, then in the same off-campus house, and then shared an apartment while attending graduate school at the University of Oregon—roughly from 1964 to 1973. Outside of the more abstruse aspects of our respective scientific specialties, there was hardly an idea that either one of us engaged in those years without discussing it with the other. I have in my hand Ron's original yellowed xerographic copy of the 1936 edition of Ayn Rand's *We the Living* (Rand 1936).

I first met Ron Merrill in the East Campus lounge, about three weeks into his freshman and my sophomore year, in the Fall of 1964. Going by the lounge, I noticed Durk Pearson in conversation with a freshman, something that I had never seen before. Durk, by then a

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senior, was known for his unusual and efficient method of study. Rather than start with reading things by himself, Durk would engage in conversation some upperclassman known for brilliance in the relevant field, and draw out the latter's already organized perspective and insights, thus saving his own reading time for only the most salient parts of his assignments. Durk was seldom seen in the company of juniors, and nearly never with sophomores. Yet here was Durk Pearson with a freshman—who later introduced himself as Ron Merrill—and Durk was mostly listening. I sat by to listen too.

Durk, following his interest in biology and psychology, was sitting in on Jerome Lettvin's seminar in neurophysiology. Lettvin was one of a tiny minority of scientists who gave serious attention to philosophy, and assigned readings not only from recent scientific journals but also from Aristotle and Leibniz. Durk had noticed a peculiar contrast between scientists and philosophers. Scientists were open about changing their minds. A scientist was often most proud of having devised an observation that led to refinement, or change, or even a total reversal of his ideas. A philosopher's ideas, on the other hand, were presented as a fixed, unchanging system, as though his whole constellation of ideas had taken residence in the philosopher's mind before he first set pen to paper, and remained there to his last breath, unchanged over the whole time like a leaf in amber. Of course as scientists, Lettvin and Pearson and Merrill took for granted that minds grew and changed; it was Durk Pearson whom the pretense of an unchanging, fixed system of ideas struck as weird enough to start asking about.

Ron was discussing the question with assurance worthy of a graduate student in the history of ideas. His conjecture—the reason why Durk was listening to a freshman—was that much was explained by the fact that modern Europeans had learned the Greeks from Moslem Arabs. Mohammed's ideas had changed over time like any man's, but because of Muslim belief that God had dictated the Koran to Mohammed literally and exactly, Muslim scholars went to extreme lengths in interpreting the Koran as unchanging and fixed. In time, the Arabs read Aristotle too as a fixed system; Thomas Aquinas read it from them and wrote the same way. By the time of Kant and Hegel, writing as if one were possessed of an unchanging system of ideas, from day one to one's death, was taken to be part of the

philosopher's job description. It was also part of the reason why philosophers took ideas to be primary, and observation of facts as dispensable. In traditional, pre-Randian philosophy, facts needed to be accounted for only to the extent that one's unchanging philosophical system permitted it.

Ron Merrill stood out among MIT students with his interest in and knowledge of history, and of the history of ideas. These interests pre-dated his connection with the ideas of Ayn Rand, but were greatly reinforced by Nathaniel Branden's introductory Nathaniel Branden Institute (NBI) course on Objectivism, especially the principle of "Primacy of Existence." It was Ron who pointed out to me the connection between Rand's college major—history—and her subsequent philosophical work in ethics and politics. History is the accumulation of factual knowledge about human action and social interactions in reality. Thus it bears the same relation to ethical and political theory as paleontology and observational biology bear to evolutionary biology, or astronomy to physical cosmology. To major in philosophy induces a rationalistic and ungrounded attitude toward ethics and politics; her major in *history* provided Rand with inductive grounding for the abstraction of a new, *primacy-of-existence* ethical science.

None of us knew, until years later, that Rand was working on her *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* (Rand 1966–67). Rand's audience in the Boston area, however, was heavy on scientists, and many of us hoped that Objectivism would produce a coherent philosophy of science. What passed, and still passes, for philosophy of science in traditional academia was focused on what goes on in the scientist's mind, and *not* on the relation between knowledge of reality—and reality itself. Indeed, "philosophers of science" were loath to admit that reality exists and is knowable. The schemes of Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn, the fashionable "philosophers of science" of that time, were quite useless for doing actual science. Ron Merrill had definite plans for a scientific career in chemistry, and wanted a primacy-of-existence philosophy of science that he could use effectively in being a scientist. The history of ideas, especially the intellectual history of great ideas, was to supply the inductive grounding for his planned work on a Randian philosophy of science.

Ron's first major new inductive generalization came from noticing

that successive sciences—physics, chemistry, biology, psychology—split from philosophy precisely when they became grounded in observation of, and experimentation with, existents external to the mind, and thus no longer fit into the philosophical tradition of "doing it all in one's head." In other words, a field of study became a science when it switched from primacy of consciousness to primacy of existence, and replaced splendid mental isolation with systematic induction from the evidence of the senses. And by that criterion, the Randian program is truly revolutionary: its goal is to transform metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics and aesthetics into normal, inductive, primacy of existence sciences, leaving old "in the head" traditional philosophy an empty shell. One minor lemma of this view is that Rand's re-conceptualization of the philosophical sciences was itself one of the "great ideas" whose history could throw light on a new philosophy of science. Its import needed to be studied by understanding how Rand's own ideas grew and took form over time.

In 1964 and 1965, Ron Merrill did not expect to come across any evidence as direct as an actual copy of the 1936 edition of Rand's *We the Living*. He did, however, set out to explore the intellectual environment of America in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. Being in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and having access to most of the various college libraries in the greater Boston area, made this an eminently reasonable "unofficial minor" for an MIT student in the 1960s, when the printed intellectual record of the years of interest was only a few decades old and still in the stacks. The deep stacks themselves were an artifact of local geography. Most of the land on which colleges around Boston were built was reclaimed swampland, on which buildings floated like ships, on top of deep basements as hulls. As long as there was room in those deep basements, old books were never de-accessed, just moved down to deeper stacks.

One of Ron's interests was the history of ideas in his own field, chemistry, and its social and economic context, and even there he was surprised by what he found. We started out thinking of the 1930s as "the Red Decade," and we knew of the many American intellectuals —most of them still active in the 1960s—who in the 30s were Communists and "fellow travelers." The surprise was the near parity, in numbers, between intellectuals who had been Communists on the one hand and those who sympathized with Fascism and racism on the

other. The difference was that those who had been Communists in the 1930s still wrote about it in the 1960s, while those who had admired Hitler, like Joseph Kennedy or Philip Johnson, or the many advocates of "eugenics" and "social hygiene," were buried in the stacks. In chemistry, most of America's chemical industry, either out of pro-Nazi sympathies or out of concern for the German market, declared itself *Judenrein*. Many universities, including MIT, went along, barring Jewish students from majoring in chemistry because there were no jobs after graduation for Jewish graduates. The situation in most fields, including architecture, was similar. The reason why Rand, when she was getting ready to write *The Fountainhead*, worked in the office of Eli Kahn, rather than any number of America's more seemingly "Roarkian" architects, was that the offices of those other architects were *Judenrein*—some of them stayed that way well into the 1950s—and closed to her.

It was in one of those deep stacks (I no longer remember where, it may have been Tufts, or Boston College) that Ronald Merrill, one spring afternoon in 1966, came across a copy of the original 1936 printing of Rand's *We the Living.* He had been browsing 1930s travelers' reports on the optimism and idealism of life in Stalin's Soviet Union and in Hitler's *Reich*, looking through some European intellectual's enthusiastic account of the "New Germany" (it may have been Santoro 1938) when he noticed Rand's name on the spine of a book in the next stack. He told me that evening about the irony of finding *We the Living*, a novel, misfiled among books of "non-fiction," and yet being the least fictional book on that shelf. He had yet to read *We the Living*, and so—thanks to a library consortium that was in effect at the time—he checked it out.

Ron, at MIT, was never without a book at hand. He read through every available opportunity: waiting for a bus, for an elevator, for a reaction to finish in the chemistry lab. One day he told me how much more Nietzschean *We the Living* seemed in comparison with *Anthem*, written not long afterward. I did not recall noticing in *We the Living* any of the Nietzschean elements Ron was telling me about, and so I lent Ron my recently printed paperback copy (Rand 1959). The differences, Ron told me, were plain. They were not readily reconcilable with Rand's introduction to the 1959 edition:

> I want to account for the editorial changes which I have made in the text of this novel for its present re-issue: the chief inadequacy of my literary means was grammatical—a particular kind of uncertainty in the use of the English language, which reflected the transitional state of a mind thinking no longer in Russian, but not yet fully in English. I have changed only the most awkward or confusing lapses of this kind. I have reworded the sentences and clarified their meaning, without changing their content. I have not added or eliminated anything to or from the content of the novel. I have cut out some sentences and a few paragraphs that were repetitious or so confusing in their implications that to clarify them would have necessitated lengthy additions. In brief, all the changes are merely editorial line-changes. . . .

Before returning the book Ron had it copied, two pages per sheet to save money, by a local copy shop. The clerk who copied it must have considered the job bizarre—*We the Living* in paperback cost 75 cents, while the copy cost near twenty times that amount. Ron contacted Harry Binswanger, another MIT student whom we had met the previous year, and the only philosophy major on campus who was sympathetic to Rand. Binswanger, according to Merrill, didn't say much. However, Ron was taking a Nathaniel Branden Institute recorded course at the time, which included the privilege of sending queries to Nathaniel Branden. Ron sent in a query about the apparently Nietzschean passages in the 1936 edition, and got back a note inviting him to call Nathaniel Branden by telephone (a snippet of the resulting conversation appears on page 4 of Merrill 1991). Branden said that he didn't know enough of Nietzsche to comment, but gave Ron the telephone number of Allan Gotthelf, whom Branden recommended as a student of the history of philosophy. In May 1966 Ron called Gotthelf, who said he would have to read the 1936 edition before he could comment.

In Robert Mayhew's otherwise scholarly *Essays on Ayn Rand's* We the Living (Mayhew 2004), Ronald Merrill is not mentioned, but Mayhew writes, in a chapter devoted to refuting the contention that parts of *We The Living* had been influenced by Nietzsche, that "thanks are due to Allan Gotthelf, who, in the mid-1980s, first brought to my

attention the question of a possible Nietzschean influence on the 1936 edition of *We the Living*" (Mayhew 2004, 219 n. 28).

A few weeks after Ron Merrill's call to Allan Gotthelf, in July 1966, Ayn Rand's *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* (*ITOE*) began to appear in *The Objectivist*. The axiomatic core of Objectivist epistemology had been introduced to students of Objectivism earlier, in Galt's Speech in *Atlas Shrugged* (Rand 1957) and in the Rand-approved *Basic Principles of Objectivism* course that Nathaniel Branden presented under the auspices of NBI (Branden [1964] 2001). The inductive grounding of this axiomatic core required only the universal experience of any man in any age, and had no need of facts from the "special science" of cognitive psychology. To this axiomatic core, *ITOE* added a detailed examination of the rudiments of *applied* epistemology, including a systematic scheme for the representation of knowledge that was isomorphic with Alan Kay's (Kay 1993) later independent development of the representation of knowledge in object-oriented programming (Reed 2003). Objectivist epistemology was inductively grounded in evidence from the growing fields of cognitive and developmental psychology: when Nathaniel Branden, in the course of his undergraduate education in psychology, first came across the work of Jean Piaget, he spent several months discussing it, and the "Cognitive Revolution" then beginning in psychology, with Rand (Branden 2005). *ITOE* satisfied the scientists', including Ron Merrill's, quest for the rudiments of a usable epistemology. Ron became fascinated with the challenges of chiral chemistry, and his intense scientific work left little time for intellectual history or for philosophy of science.

The split between Ayn Rand and Nathaniel Branden came in the spring of 1968, and Ron and I, unwilling to condemn either side in the schism without more knowledge than was being let out, focused our intellectual efforts on our lives and careers. In the coming decades neither of us had much to do with "organized Objectivism." The same was true of many scientists who had participated in the so-called "Collective" centered on Rand or in the Objectivist "movement" led by NBI. The discrepancy between Rand's recall of the changes that separated the two editions of *We The Living,* and Ron's reading of those changes was still an intriguing question, but one whose resolution was hardly urgent.

2. When Did Rand Induce the Fundamentals of Her Politics?

2.1. Rand's Conflict with Nietzsche

Rand's mature philosophy based its politics, which she called "Capitalism," on two social principles beyond the initial principle of individual rights, understood as conditions prerequisite for life "qua Man," which she had already identified in her ethics. Those two principles were the *Trader Principle* and the principle of *Harmony of Interests*. Rand's agent-relative principle of individual rights—that one needs to give moral primacy to obtaining and safeguarding the conditions of existence proper to the kind of being one is—would not have been foreign to Nietzsche: surely one of Overman's first concerns would be to obtain and safeguard the conditions of existence proper to him as Overman. It is with the Trader Principle and the principle of Harmony of Interests, which would make it in even the Overman's self-interest to respect the individual rights of those whom Nietzsche would consider the Overman's inferiors, that Nietzsche would have disagreed. Once Rand arrived at those two fundamental principles of Capitalism, her vision of social relations proper to Man became clearly her own, and it was radically different from what Nietzsche would hold as a proper relation of the Overman to the rest of humanity.

When did Rand arrive at those two principles, and break from whatever ideas in Nietzsche's view of human relations might have attracted her at earlier times? The introduction to Rand 1959 appears to claim that she had always held her mature philosophy, including the politics of Capitalism; any appearances to the contrary in the views of Kira, as stand-in for Alissa Rosenbaum in *We the Living*, were due to Rand's yet imperfect command of English prose when she wrote the book. In 1959, Rand did not know—at the time, nobody knew—that, as will be discussed in section 2.3, a healthy human mind automatically integrates subsequent knowledge into what introspectively appears to be a replay of a contemporaneous recording of one's original awareness of past events. Holding Rand's recollections momentarily in the background, one can ask separately: what must have been there; what was required, according to the epistemology of Rand's own philosophical system, for her to arrive at the two social

principles that form, together with the principle of individual rights, the foundation of Capitalism? What concepts did she require to form those principles, and how would those concepts be grounded in her experience?

The Trader Principle states that one benefits from engaging in mutually agreed-upon cooperation and trade with others. To form the Trader Principle, one must first form the concept of voluntary, uncoerced agreement between or among men, to act in concert for anticipated mutual benefit. Harmony of Interests states that in interactions among men, it is in one's interest to minimize the expenditure of one's effort on conflict (such as conflict due to attempts to obtain value by force or by fraud) so that one can maximize the application of one's effort to the actual production of values for one's benefit. To arrive at the principle of Harmony of Interests, one needs the concept of productive effort that creates, by one's own work and without coercion of others, values that can be used or traded for one's own benefit. How can one arrive, according to the principles of Rand's Objectivist epistemology, at these concepts?

2.2. The Role of Induction in Rand's Epistemology

Rand's epistemology challenges previous philosophical traditions by positing that all knowledge, including knowledge from which philosophy is built, is originally obtained by induction. To put it another way, Objectivist epistemology is descriptive as well as prescriptive. Hardly anyone, other than Objectivists and users of object-oriented programming and modeling languages, deliberately sets out to form a concept by measurement-omission. Rather, the knowledge-representation scheme that Rand and Kay (independently of each other) arrived at was suggested by the observations and experiments of Piaget and other cognitive psychologists. These observations and experiments suggest that measurement omission is the natural cognitive process by which children, scientists, and other humans (except those who are trying to follow the prescriptions of conflicting epistemologies) naturally form concepts. This natural process of concept induction is the foundation on which all deliberate thought, including any subsequent philosophical thought, is necessarily based. Induction is so central to Objectivism that Leonard Peikoff

devotes a lecture course, *Objectivism through Induction* (1997) to showing the inductive grounding of *all* Objectivist principles. What prior knowledge, then, does one need to be able to induce the concepts one needs to form the principles of Capitalism?

To induce the concept of mutually beneficial, self-interested, voluntary cooperation and trade, one needs to observe enough instances of it to perform measurement-omission and thus form the concept. To induce the concept of wealth-producing intellectual effort, one must observe enough instances of intellectual effort producing values for the benefit of the individual making the effort. In Soviet Russia, where Alissa Rosenbaum (later Ayn Rand) lived from her early teens until she emigrated to America, production and trade for one's own benefit were strictly prohibited. Where they took place at all they were kept from view. According to the principles of Objectivist epistemology, Rand would not have been expected to form the concepts and principles that led her to reject Nietzsche's views, until after she had lived in America and had observed the facts from which to induce the relevant concepts.

2.3. Integrative Recall

What, then, is one to make of Rand's claim, implicit in the introduction to the 1959 edition of *We the Living*, that her philosophy did not change through the course of her intellectual life except for filling in the details, and that the changes between the original and later editions of *We the Living* were exclusively of language, and not of ideas that Kira-Rand had held and expressed?

When Rand wrote this introduction, it was generally believed that what one recalled from memory, was what it introspectively appeared to be: a faithful reproduction of the contents of consciousness as recorded at the original time of the recalled experience. In subsequent years, the experiments and measurements of Elizabeth Loftus and other cognitive psychologists have shown that this introspective appearance of "playback" is illusory. Loftus (1975) demonstrated that asking for recall with a leading question did not only affect the verbal report of the recall, as had been thought, but changed its content. Loftus, Miller, and Burns (1978) identified the integration of subsequently acquired knowledge into the content of recall as the cognitive mechanism responsible for the measured changes. A brief recent

review of research on the "playback illusion" is available in Roediger and McDaniel (2006). The cognitive psychologists' experimental measurements of the playback illusion meet the epistemological criteria that Rand (1990) set for *contextual certainty*. It is likely that if our present knowledge of the playback illusion had been available to her in 1959, Rand would have checked her recollections against her journals, and would have written her introduction to the 1959 edition of *We the Living* differently.

3. *The Ideas of Ayn Rand*

Two years after Rand's death, Den Uyl and Rasmussen (1984) edited *The Philosophic Thought of Ayn Rand*, which practically erased all the inductive, primacy-of-existence radicalism out of Rand's thought, presenting Rand as a philosophical innovator but one comfortably within the post-Thomist Aristotelian tradition. Den Uyl and Rasmussen's conception of Rand's philosophic thought required a specific view of her intellectual history. As Ron Merrill noted, a primacy-of-existence philosophy that goes beyond the axiomatic core of metaphysics and epistemology, and deals with applied epistemology, ethics, politics and so on, has to be induced, step by step, from evidence that is learned gradually over time. It has a dynamic intellectual history. On the other hand, a post-Thomist Aristotelian system, which Rand would have denounced as a body of intrinsicist rationalism, is a fixed Platonic ideal that must have been immanent in the philosopher's mind from before she had set her first words on paper. Den Uyl and Rasmussen thus ascribe departures from their fixed ideal in Rand's early work to imprecision, rather than to the actual inductive evolution of her philosophy over time.

Ron, shortly after reading Den Uyl and Rasmussen 1984, decided to write a book whose focus would be on the course of the inductive evolution, over the course of her lifetime, of the *Ideas of Ayn Rand* (Merrill 1991). And of the evidence available to Ron at the time—neither Rand's letters nor her journals were available then—the residue of Nietzschean influence on the very early Rand, excised between the 1936 and 1959 editions of *We the Living*, was the most dramatic evidence of the evolution of Rand's ideas over time.

Academic philosophers reviewed *The Ideas of Ayn Rand* (Merrill 1991) with the refined superciliousness reserved by academic

professionals for the impudent. Stephen Hicks' review in the *Institute for Objectivist Studies Journal* (Hicks 1992) is typical, and its content can be predicted from its title: "Big Game, Small Gun?" Ron Merrill's first major claim—that the young Rand's philosophy changed when Rand first experienced the inductive foundations of the trader principle and of the principle of harmony of interests in practice, by living and observing life in the United States—and the second, that this led her to a radical re-conceptualization of philosophy as a family of inductively grounded sciences—are not mentioned. By presenting Merrill's minor insights outside their context as arguments for his major claims, Hicks creates the impression that Merrill's book is a compendium of trivia.

Ignore the context—that if all knowledge comes from induction, then even Rand's philosophy grew and changed with experience—and the question of Nietzsche's possible early influence on Rand becomes a claim of nearly ritual impurity, of a Nietzschean contamination in Rand's pure Aristotelian system. Thus Hicks devotes the greater part of his review to refuting this suggestion. Hicks' eventual argument is that "If Rand was an ethical Nietzschean in 1933, and therefore *We the Living* contains explicitly Nietzschean passages, but she then had rejected Nietzsche by 1934 (as her journals clearly indicate), would she not have cut the offensive passages before *We the Living* was reprinted in 1936? Being the demon she was about precision, it seems that she would. And if they were not cut, then it is likely that Rand did not intend them to be taken as Nietzschean." This, however, presumes that when Rand wrote the original version of *We the Living*, Kira was already speaking for Rand's mature philosophical system. But Merrill has a more cogent explanation.

Yes, Kira is an idealized Ayn Rand. But she is not Ayn Rand after living several years in the United States. Kira, in *We the Living* as it was written, is Ayn Rand at 17, in Soviet Russia. And her worldview is that of a heroic individual—*growing up in a country that had never known freedom*. The Czars and their ruling class exercised absolute, predatory power. The Soviets replaced that power with their own, claiming that the ordinary man's only defense against oppression by those who considered themselves superior to the masses, was for the masses to make it impossible for anyone to be their superior. Russia, before and after the Bolshevik revolution, was a pre-Enlightenment, pre-

industrial society. As Rand suggests in *For the New Intellectual* (1961) and Peikoff discusses at length in *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand* (1991, 195), it took the Industrial Revolution to make evident the facts from which Rand's conception of Capitalism, and the foundational principles of capitalism in philosophical politics, could be induced. Kira's worldview is inductively grounded in the facts that she experiences in the pre-industrial society around her. And from those facts it appears to Kira that a perspective influenced by Nietzsche, more at the level of his aphorisms than his formal philosophy (with which Kira, an Engineering major, would not have been familiar), provides the only available explanation for her own tragedy, the tragedy of the superior individual in a world ruled for and by the mediocre, the average man, the mob, the crowd.

John Ridpath (2008) notes that Nietzsche is and was known to young people more as a memorable poetic aphorist, a master excoriator of collectivism, altruism and Christianity, than as a systematic philosopher. Kira, the *alter ego* of Alissa Rosenbaum before her journey to America, is presented in the 1936 version of *We the Living* as very much the kind of young person who would have been a "sound-bite Nietzschean."

Merrill's conjecture—that Rand arrived in America a kind of "sound-bite Nietzschean," and gradually, over the next decade, came to a radical rejection of Nietzsche, and to her own mature philosophy, inductively grounded in her experience of American life—received a startling confirmation when the *Journals of Ayn Rand* (Rand 1997) were published.

In February 1928, in her second year in America, Rand began to plan her first novel in English, to be titled "The Little Street." She was inspired by the trial of William Edward Hickman, a 19-year-old sociopath who killed and dismembered a 12-year-old girl. What inspired Rand was *not* what Hickman had done, but rather Hickman's open display of defiance toward society, and his utter contempt not only for his victim, but for all the "lesser humanity" whom he considered deserving fodder for his wishes and whims. Hickman considered himself an exceptionally sensitive and superior individual; his murder of the 12-year-old girl would be called by today's post-modernists a work of performance art; and he saw in his own execution a crucifixion in which he, Hickman, the superior man, was

to be killed as a sacrifice to his inferiors. Of the fictional figure inspired by Hickman's defiance and contempt for the crowd, Rand writes: "He is unable to understand how he can act and live as an equal with those he knows to be inferior to him, those he despises and has a right to despise. . . . He has the true, innate psychology of a Superman." It would be another ten years until 1938, when the word "Superman" acquired its current meaning in the American language from a pulp graphic of that name. In 1928, "Superman" could only be a reference to Nietzsche's conception (later translated as "Overman") of the superior man. From this 1928 entry in her journal, Rand's adherence *at that time* to at least some aphoristic aspects of Nietzsche's vision, if not to Nietzsche's philosophy, is evident and plain (Rand 1997, 20–27).

In time, Rand would learn, by induction from the evidence of the facts that surrounded her in America, the principle of harmony of interests. She would learn that it is not in the superior man's interest to be a predator; that when the superior man is free to live for his own sake, in the pursuit of his own self-interest he becomes, by the working of reality, *the ordinary man's benefactor*. It is thanks to superior men, whom Rand later would call "the men of the mind," that Rand saw ordinary men in America live ever more fully human lives.

Rand, in her conception of the rational production of values as the essence of human nature, is a far more radical enemy of the Christian worldview than Nietzsche ever was. Nietzsche, like a Christian believer in Original Sin, believed that to be human was to be born to become a "natural" predator upon other men. Nietzsche's worldview differed from that of the Christian mainly in that Nietzsche admired the "noble soul," the man who embraced (with "reverence") rather than feared as a sin, his own "natural" role as a predator upon others. Rand's philosophical system rejects precisely this view, common to Paul of Tarsus and to Nietzsche, that disharmony and unreason are somehow natural to men and inborn. In reality, men are born to observe and to think—and to realize that harmony and cooperation and trade among men are more conducive to noble, selfish self-realization, than some pre-rational savage's existence, relative to other men, in a state of permanent mutual predation and mutual fear.

Rand's formal *derivation of respect for the rights of others from one's own*

self-interest uses a key inductively grounded fact: the benefit to oneself of cooperation and trade with other men. To traditional philosophical methodology this is an insult, an apparent circularity, because the benefits of cooperation and trade are inductively evident only in a society that already gives some recognition to individual rights. But with Rand, as Merrill was the first to point out to the philosophers, we are not in primacy-of-consciousness philosophy anymore. The essential nature of man is to test his knowledge against reality, and to learn over the entire course of his life, growing in knowledge from experience. One consequence of Rand's core philosophy is that *philosophy*, like all knowledge, must be grounded by *induction* (Peikoff 1997) in the full range of facts available to the human mind, including every fact established by the "special" sciences: that in this broader sense, philosophy *is* "the integration of all of Man's sciences." The *future* of knowledge, as Ron Merrill wrote, belongs to Rand's five new inductively grounded philosophical sciences—to the *Ideas* of Ayn Rand.

Notes

1. Originally submitted 31 May 2005.

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