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THE ROMANTIC ART THEORIES OF AYN RAND AND VICTOR HUGO

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THE ROMANTIC ART THEORIES

OF

RAYN RAND AND VICTOR HUGO

Ellen H. Thomasson
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HUGO'S AND RAND'S DECLARATION
OF INDEPENDENCE

Interviewer Alvin Toffler of "Playboy" asked Ayn Rand in March, 1964: What is your appraisal of contemporary literature in general?

Rand: Philosophically, immoral. Aesthetically, it bores me to death. It is degenerating into a sewer, devoted exclusively to studies of depravity. And there's nothing as boring as depravity.

Playboy: Are there any novelists whom you admire?

Rand: Yes. Victor Hugo.

Playboy: What about modern novelists?

Rand: No, there is no one that I could say I admire¹ among so-called serious writers.

Toffler did not ask "But how can you possibly like Victor Hugo?", the one question which constantly arises when one compares their writings. How can a professed atheist, an ardent capitalist, an advocate of reason over emotion, an upholder of the virtue of selfishness bear to read a word penned by a professed mystic, a declared socialist, an advocate of emotion over reason, an ardent altruist---much less call him "the greatest novelist in world literature"?²

It is absolutely erroneous to pose such hypotheses as an attempt to show "the influence of Hugo's works on Rand's", or to trace "Hugo's ideas in Rand's thinking", or to demonstrate "how Rand copies Hugo's style". For it is precisely in their being different that they are alike.

¹"Playboy's" Interview with Ayn Rand, March, 1964, reprinted with the courtesy of "Playboy", Nathaniel Branden Institute, (New York, 1964), 11. Toffler also informs us that "Ayn" rhymes with "mine".

²Ayn Rand, "Introduction" to Hugo's Ninety-three, translated by Lowell Bair, (New York: Bantam Books, 1962), vii.

Although at the age of fourteen Hugo paid tribute to his idol with the words: "Je veux être Chateaubriand ou rien"¹ (I want to be Chateaubriand or nothing), in later years after developing his personal idiom he rejects all outside influences and declares his independence. "Imiter? Le reflet vaut-il la lumière?"² Copy? Does the reflection equal the light? The names of the dead are always thrown at the heads of the living, he continues. "Corneille stoned with Tasso and Guarini (Guarini!), just as later Racine is stoned with Corneille, Voltaire with Racine." "One cannot help admiring", exclaims Hugo scornfully, "the way Scuderi shows Corneille, the author of "Le Cid", 'what the episodes should be, according to Aristotle, who tells us in the tenth and sixteenth chapters of his Poetics'; how he crushes Corneille, in the name of the same Aristotle 'in the eleventh chapter of his Art of Poetry, wherein we find the condemnation of "Le Cid"; in the name of Plato, 'in the tenth book of his Republic'; in the name of Marcellinus, 'as may be seen in the twenty-seventh book'; in the name of 'the tragedies of Niobe and Jephthah'; in the name of "'Ajax" of Sophocles'; in the name of 'the example of Euripides'; in the name of 'Heinsius, chapter six of the Constitution

¹In his diary, cited by André Maurois, Olympio ou La Vie de Victor Hugo (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1964), 60.

²Victor Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell (Paris: Nelson, 1949), 43.

of Tragedy¹; and in the name of Scaliger, Junior, in his poems....,"¹ ad infinitum. Our contemporary (nineteenth century) theatre belongs to no "system", he affirms. It has its own life to live. Another age, another art. "Sum non sequor."²

Ayn Rand, through Howard Roark in The Fountainhead, shows the same spirit of independence. Roark, future architect, stands looking at his drawings of buildings he wants someday to be erected. "They were sketches of buildings such as had never stood on the face of the earth. They were as the first houses built by the first man born, who had never heard of others building before him. There was nothing to be said of them, except that each structure was inevitably what it had to be. ...The structures were austere and simple, until one looked at them and realized what tension of thought had achieved the simplicity. No laws had dictated a single detail. The buildings were not Classical, they were not Gothic, they were not Renaissance. They were only Howard Roark."³

Let the poet especially take care not to copy anyone at all, counsels Hugo in the same vein, Shakespeare no more than Molière, Schiller no more than Corneille. If genuine

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 41.

²Victor Hugo, William Shakespeare, trans. Melville B. Anderson, (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1911), Pt. II, Bk. IV, Ch. IV, 283-284.

³Ayn Rand, The Fountainhead (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1943), 10-11.

talent abdicates its own nature to surrender its originality to someone else, it loses everything. Nevertheless, people keep repeating "Suivez les règles! Imitiez les Modèles!"¹ Follow the rules! Copy the models! They say everything has already been done, they forbid God to create any more Molières, other Corneilles. They have placed memory in the place of imagination.²

Hugo's words are echoed by the college Dean in a speech to Roark, who has just been expelled for insolent self-assertion in his work rather than scramble together the best parts of all the ancients. "'I know, I know, I know,... You've seen a modernistic building or two, and it gave you ideas. But do you realize what a passing fancy that whole so-called modern movement is? You must learn to understand ---and it has been proved by all authorities---that everything beautiful in architecture has been done already. We can only choose from the great masters. Who are we to improve upon them? We can only attempt, respectfully, to repeat.' 'Why?' asked Howard Roark."³

Whom are we supposed to imitate, asks Hugo. The ancients? Their art has nothing in common with ours. The moderns? What? Copy copies? God forbid!⁴ It is characteristic of the

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 43.

²Ibid., 45-46.

³Rand, The Fountainhead, 15.

⁴Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 43-44.

revolutionary nature of our century to dispense with ancestors.¹

"'Look', said Roark evenly, and pointed at the window. 'Can you see the campus and the town? Do you see how many men are walking and living down there? Well, I don't give a damn what any or all of them think about architecture, or about anything else for that matter. Why should I consider what their grandfathers thought of it?'"² He then points to a picture of the Parthenon hanging in the dean's office.

"'Look.... Your Greeks took marble and they made copies of their wooden structures out of it, because others had done it that way. Then your masters of the Renaissance came along and made copies in plaster of copies in marble of copies in wood. Now here we are, making copies in steel and concrete of copies in plaster of copies in marble of copies in wood. Why?'"²

Let us therefore speak boldly, says Hugo. The time for it has come; and it would be strange if, in this age, liberty, like the light, should penetrate everywhere except to the one place where freedom is most natural---the domain of thought. Let us take the hammer to theories and poetic systems. Let us throw down the old plastering that conceals the façade of art. There are neither rules nor models; or, rather, there are no other rules than the general laws of nature, which

¹Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt.III, Bk.II, Ch.I, 371.

²Rand, The Fountainhead, 15-16.

soar above the entire field of art, and the special rules which result from the conditions appropriate to the subject of each composition. The former are of the essence, eternal and unchangeable; the latter are the scaffolding which is used in constructing it, and which is made anew for each building. But these rules are not written in treatises on poetry.¹

"'Rules?' said Roark. 'Here are my rules: what can be done with one substance must never be done with another. No two materials are alike. No two sites on earth are alike. No two buildings have the same purpose. The purpose, the site, the material determine the shape. Nothing can be reasonable or beautiful unless it's made by one central idea, and the idea sets every detail. A building is alive, like a man. Its integrity is to follow its own truth, its one single theme, and to serve its own single purpose. A man doesn't borrow pieces of his body. A building doesn't borrow hunks of its soul. Its maker gives it the soul and every wall, window and stairway to express it.'

"'But all the proper forms of expression have been discovered long ago.' [states the Dean]

"'Expression---of what?.....Why is it so important---what others have done? Why does it become sacred by the mere fact of not being your own? Why is anyone and everyone right---so long as it's not yourself?'"²

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 44-45.

²Rand, The Fountainhead, 16.

"What he has pleaded", writes Hugo about himself and this could apply equally to Roark, "is the liberty of art against the despotism of systems, of codes and of rules. Dogmatism in the arts is what he flees above all."¹ There are obstacles belonging to each subject about which one does not rule once and for all. "C'est au génie à les résoudre, non aux poétiques à les éluder."² Only genius can resolve them. The poet should go where he wishes and do as he pleases.³ Let the principle of liberty go about its business, but let it do it well. Liberty, however, does not mean license. In literature, as in society, no anarchy: laws.⁴ The true law is this: every work of the mind ought be born with the special divisions and particular strokes logically given it by the idea it contains.⁵ Geniuses are not to be surpassed but may be equaled. How? By being different.⁶

From the obvious parallel between Hugo's affirmation of liberty and Rand's declaration of it through her character, Roark, can one draw the conclusion that she "copied" him? By no means. That she is familiar with Hugo's works and his general principles will be demonstrated in the

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 58.

²Ibid., 39.

³Victor Hugo, "Preface" to Orientales, Préface de Cromwell suivie d'extraits d'autres Préfaces Dramatiques (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1949), 65.

⁴Victor Hugo, "Preface" to Hernani, Ibid., 70.

⁵Victor Hugo, "Preface" to Les Burgraves (Paris: Flammarion, 1948), 161.

⁶Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt.I, Bk.I, Ch.V, 121.

following pages. However, if she was "influenced" by Hugo, it would be in the same manner as Roark is "influenced" by his first employer, Cameron.

Henry Cameron decided that the skyscraper must not copy the Greeks. Henry Cameron decided that no building must copy any other. But it was not necessary to design buildings any longer, only to photograph them; the architect with the best library was the best architect. Imitators copied imitations. To sanction it there was culture; there were twenty centuries unrolling in moldering ruins; there was the great Exposition; there was every European post card in every family album. Henry Cameron had nothing to offer against this; nothing but a faith he held merely because it was his own. He had nobody to quote and nothing of importance to say. He said only that the form of a building must follow its function; that the structure of a building is the key to its beauty; that new methods of construction demand new forms; that he wished to build as he wished and for that reason only. But people would not listen to him when they were discussing Vitruvius,¹ Michelangelo and Sir Christopher Wren.

Cameron has this to say after Roark has been with him for three years and is going to leave: "'Well, have I taught you anything? I'll tell you; I've taught you a great deal and nothing. No one can teach you anything, not at the core, at the source of it. What you're doing---it's yours, not mine, I can only teach you to do it better. I can give you the means, but the aim---the aim's your own. You won't be putting up anemic little things in early Jacobean or late Cameron. What you'll be...if only I could live to see it!'"²

While newly employed by Francon, Roark is asked to design an eight-million dollar building like Cameron's Dana

¹Rand, The Fountainhead, 37-38.

²Ibid., 69.

Building. He reveals the type of "influence" Cameron may have had on him. "Mr. Francon, please let me design it the way the Dana Building was designed. Let me do it. Not copy the Dana Building, but design it as Henry Cameron would have wanted it done, as I will."¹

Just what does this mean? That two people have the same principles of construction and accordingly, each concretization of these principles results in a unique work of art.

Is it not perhaps merely a coincidence that Rand and Hugo arrived at *similar* art theories? What evidence exists that Rand was familiar with Hugo's works? In her book review of Hugo's Ninety-three, Rand relates that at age seven she heard her mother reading the climax of a novel to her grandmother. Since Ayn was supposed to be asleep, she never asked what the book was. Six years later, however, she discovered the passage in Ninety-three. "That scene was not as good as I had thought---it was better. It was incomparably better than anything I could have imagined. It was the climax of so enormous a drama, the resolution of such profound moral conflicts, that it left one stunned by the experience of what great literature is really like; after which, one does not settle for any lesser values, neither in books nor in life."²

¹Rand, The Fountainhead, 87.

²Ayn Rand, reviewed in the "Los Angeles Times", Sept. 16, 1962. Reprinted in The Objectivist Newsletter, edited by Ayn Rand and Nathaniel Branden, Oct., 1962.

When one looks back at his youth, she continues in the same article, one's wistfulness comes from the memory of what life had then promised to be. The process of aging is the process of that expectation's gradual extinction; but one does not have to let it happen. The fire dies for lack of fuel. And "if you are struggling to hold your vision of man above the gray ashes of our century, Hugo is the fuel you need. If you feel, as I do, that there's nothing as boring as depravity, if you seek a glimpse of human grandeur---turn to a novel by Victor Hugo."¹

In what way did Hugo keep Ayn's flame alive? Mrs. Branden explains this in her "Biographical Essay" of Rand. It was against the dull gray background of Soviet Russia that Ayn discovered the novels of Victor Hugo. "She first read The Man Who Laughs. Then she read Les Miserables; then all the rest of Hugo's novels. It was the discovery of a world of unprecedented scope and grandeur, of magnificently ingenious plots, of inexhaustible imaginativeness, of an exalted sense of life, of man seen as a hero. It was a world swept free of the commonplace and the trite---a world dedicated to the exciting, the dramatic, the important. There were many of Hugo's specific ideas and values with which she knew, even then, that she could not agree. But what she felt, without the words to name it fully, was that this was literature 'as it might be and ought to be'."²

¹Rand, Review of Ninety-three.

²Barbara Brandan, "A Biographical Essay", Who is Ayn Rand (New York: Random House, 1962), 158.

Ayn's favorite Hugolian character was Enjolras in Les Miserables--- an austere, implacable rebel, whom Hugo describes as "the marble lover of liberty", who "had but one passion, the right; but one thought, to remove all obstacles."¹ In him, Ayn saw "the intransigent love of rectitude that was the essence of her concept of human greatness."¹

When Ayn and her family were traveling to the Crimea by train, they learned that the track ahead had been blown up---perhaps by Reds, perhaps by Whites, perhaps by roving bandit gangs, Mrs. Branden relates. In order to continue the trip, the Rands hired peasants with horse-drawn carts to take them to Odessa. As they moved forward in the darkness, a shot cut through the air and a voice ordered them to halt. A band of armed thieves commanded them to hand over their money. An accompanying passenger screamed that they would all be shot. Ayn, thirteen, wondered if she was going to die. "If it is the end---she thought---still, I have had something great in my life. I have had the image of Enjolras. If I'm going to be shot, I'll think of him at the last. I'll think of how he faced death. I want to be worthy of him. I want to die in my kind of world."²

She did not die. She chose to leave Russia at the age of twenty-one, after having graduated from the University of

¹B. Branden, "A Biographical Essay", 159.

²Ibid., 161.

Petrograd (later called Leningrad) with a major in history and a minor in philosophy; and she decided to live in the United States. At the end of her fourth novel, Atlas Shrugged, she states: "I decided to be a writer at the age of nine, and everything I have done was integrated to that purpose. I am an American by choice and conviction. I was born in Europe, but I came to America because this was the country based on my moral premises and the only country where one could be fully free to write."¹

In her "Introduction" to Lowell Bair's new translation of Hugo's Ninety-three, she reaffirms her admiration for Hugo:

"I discovered Victor Hugo when I was thirteen, in the stifling, sordid ugliness of Soviet Russia. One would have to have lived on some pestilent planet in order fully to understand what his novels---and his radiant universe---meant to me then and mean now. And that I am writing an introduction² to one of his novels---in order to present it to the American public---has, for me, the sense of the kind of drama that he would have approved and understood. He helped to make it possible for me to be here and to be a writer. If I can help another young reader to find what I found in his work, if I can bring to the novels of Victor Hugo some part of the kind of audience he deserves, I shall regard it as a payment on an incalculable debt that can never be repaid."³

¹Ayn Rand, "About the Author", Atlas Shrugged, (New York: The New American Library, 1957)

²To appreciate Ayn Rand's writings fully, it should be remembered that English was not her native language (though she is now a citizen of the United States.)

³Rand, "Introduction" to Ninety-three, xi.

THE ARISTOTELIAN GROUNDS
OF THEIR POETICS

"I protest beforehand against any interpretation of my ideas,"¹ exclaims Hugo, in his "Preface" to Cromwell.

"One of the distinguishing characteristics of a work of art (including literature, i.e., fiction), is that it serves no practical, material end, but is an end in itself; it serves no purpose other than contemplation---and the pleasure of that contemplation is so intense, so deeply personal that a man experiences it as a self-sufficient, self-justifying primary and, often, resists or resents any suggestion to analyze it; the suggestion, to him, has the quality of an attack on his identity, on his deepest, essential self,"² states Rand in "The Psycho-Epistemology of Art".

In spite of the resistance to analysis which both authors display, it is necessary to stir around in the leaves of Aristotle to discover the ground of their poetics, and to resurrect some Platonic-Christian beliefs for Hugo's theory of the grotesque.

"No doubt someone will take advantage of my "Preface" to Cromwell, grumbles Hugo, "to repeat the reproach already made by a German critic, that I have written a treatise in defense of my poetry. It was only after I had finished the play that some friends of mine---probably blinded by their friendship---persuaded me to account for myself, to draw,

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 2.

²Rand, "The Psycho-Epistemology of Art", The Objectivist Newsletter, April, 1965.

so to speak, a map of the poetic voyage I had made. In the first place I was much more inclined to demolish treatises on poetry than to write them. But then wouldn't it be better always to write treatises based on a poem than to write poems based on a treatise? But no! I don't have the talent to create nor the presumption to establish any systems. Systems, as Voltaire said spiritually, are like rats that pass through twenty holes then find a couple at the end that won't admit them."¹

Consistent with his protests of systematism, Hugo opens himself to any and all ideas. "I think that every true poet, independent from the thoughts which come to him from his personal organization and those which come from eternal truths, ought to contain all the ideas of his time."²

Rand, to the contrary, decides that one ought to integrate his ideas into some kind of coherent and consistent order to have a solid frame of reference. This is not to say, however, that she draws up a dogma to be blindly followed. Toffler asks her in his interview, "Can't Objectivism [her philosophy] be called a dogma?"³ To which she replies: "No. A dogma is a set of beliefs accepted on faith; that is, without rational justification or against rational evidence. A dogma is a matter of blind faith. Objectivism is the exact opposite. Objectivism tells you that you must not accept

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 58.

²Hugo, "Preface" to Les Rayons et Les Ombres.

³Rand, "Playboy's" Interview with Ayn Rand, 9.

any idea or conviction unless you can demonstrate its truth by means of reason." "If widely accepted, couldn't Objectivism harden into a dogma?" persists Toffler. "No. I have found that Objectivism is its own protection against people who might attempt to use it as a dogma. Since Objectivism requires the use of one's mind, those who attempt to take broad principles and apply them unthinkingly and indiscriminately to the concretes of their own existence find that it cannot be done. They are compelled either to reject Objectivism or to apply it. When I say apply, I mean that they have to use their own mind, their own thinking, in order to know how to apply Objectivist principles to the specific problems of their own lives."¹

And when asked if a writer should reflect his times, she also decides differently from Hugo. "No. A writer should be an active intellectual leader of his time, not a passive follower riding any current. A writer should shape the values of his culture, he should project and concretize the value goals of man's life."² It could be said that since Hugo states elsewhere "art secretes civilization, poetry secretes the ideal"³, he would not basically disagree with Rand on this point. However, as someone has mentioned, "the constantly variable subjectivity of Hugo produces the

¹Rand, "Playboy's" Interview, 9.

²Ibid., 11.

³Hugo, William Shakespeare Pt. II, Bk. V, Ch. I, 295.

multiple and sometimes contradictory explanations which make up his philosophy."¹ When one considers the enormous changes in Hugo's convictions---from Voltairian to Catholic to Pantheist to Pythagorist,---from Royalist to Republican to a type of Socialist---, one is not surprised at the diversity of ideas. Rather, one is amazed to find a somewhat unified, if eclectic, body of beliefs. As for Rand, she can state: "I have held the same philosophy I now hold, as far back as I can remember. I have learned a great deal through the years and expanded my knowledge of details, of specific issues, of definitions, of applications---and I intend to continue expanding it---but I have never had to change any of my fundamentals."²

In spite of Hugo's rejection of systems and authorities, it is obvious that he was familiar with Aristotle at the age of eighteen. His second novel, Han D'Islande, written at that age³, contains many quotations in reference to Aristotle, e.g., that put into the mouth of Spiagudy: "Moi, du mépris pour vous...! Pour vous, qu'Aristote, livre six, chapitre dernier de ses Politiques, classe parmi les magistrats...."⁴ Then, in his "Preface" to Cromwell, he

¹Raouf Simaika, L'Inspiration Épique dans les Romans de Victor Hugo (Paris: Librairie Minard, 1962), 194..

²Rand, "About the Author", Atlas Shrugged.

³cf. Hugo, "Preface" to Bug-Jargal, 1832 ed.

⁴Victor Hugo, Han D'Islande (Paris: Dauphin, 1947), 112.

correctly calls the Three Unities "pseudo-Aristotelian" before he proceeds to tear two of them down.¹ He affirms the true Aristotelian "Unity of Action": "C'est l'existence de la troisième unité, l'unité d'action, la seule admise de tous parce qu'elle résulte d'un fait: l'oeil ni l'esprit humain ne sauraient saisir plus d'un ensemble à la fois."²

¹ It is against such attitudes as that of Crites in John Dryden's "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy", that Hugo is fighting, viz: "But, that you may know how much you are indebted to those your masters,..I must remember you, that all the rules by which we practise the drama at this day...were delivered to us from the observations which Aristotle made of those poets who either lived before him or were his contemporaries: we have added nothing of our own.... Of that book which Aristotle has left us,..Horace his Art of Poetry[sic] is an excellent comment, and I believe, restores to us that second book of his concerning Comedy, which is wanting in him. Out of these two have been extracted the famous rules, which the French call Des Trois Unités, or, The Three Unities, which ought to be observed in every regular play; namely, of Time, Place, and Action." Seventeenth Century Prose and Poetry, edited by Robert P. Tristram Coffin and Alexander M. Wither-
spoon, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1946) 628-629.

What Aristotle actually said is this: "Epic poetry... has been seen to agree with Tragedy to this extent, that of being an imitation of serious subjects in a grand kind of verse. It differs from it, however, (1) in that it is in one kind of verse and in narrative form; and (2) in its length--- which is due to its action having no fixed limit of time, whereas Tragedy endeavours to keep as far as possible within a single circuit of the sun, or something near that. This, I say, is another point of difference between them, though at first the practice in this respect was just the same in tragedies as in epic poems." (Ch. 5) And, "...in poetry, the story, as an imitation of action, must represent one action...." (Ch. 8) The "Poetics" contains nothing of unity of place. "De Poetica", The Basic Works of Aristotle, edited by Richard McKeon, (New York: Random House, 1941)

²Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 35.

Further, in the same preface, Hugo quotes Aristotle while agreeing with him: "'Si le poète établit des choses impossible selon les règles de son art, il commet une faute sans contredit; mais elle cesse d'être faute, lorsque par ce moyen il arrive à la fin qu'il s'est proposée; car il a trouvé ce qu'il cherchait.' ...Qui dit cela? C'est Aristote."¹ Since Hugo admits that Cromwell did happen to turn out according to Aristotle's observations, the astuteness of Aristotle is not to be easily discredited. Hugo is adamant in affirming that while he admittedly had the texts of the "authorities" at hand while writing his preface, he is not one to drop proper names and hide behind other people's reputations. He strongly asserts: "Ce n'est pas avec la permission d'Aristote, mais avec celle de l'histoire, que l'auteur a groupé ainsi son drame...."² It is not with the permission of Aristotle, he says, but with that of the story, that I have written my play this way.

That Ayn Rand is familiar with Aristotle and has also arrived at some of his essential art premises can be learned from Atlas Shrugged. The first part is entitled "Non-Contradiction", of which chapter four is called "The Immovable Movers"; the second part is entitled "Either-Or", and the last, "A is A". One of the heroes in the book writes his thesis "on the influence---upon subsequent metaphysical systems---of Aristotle's theory of the Immovable Mover."³

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 72.

²Ibid., 64.

³Rand, Atlas Shrugged, 109.

Barbara Branden relates that at the University of Petrograd, Ayn took a course in ancient philosophy taught by Professor N.O. Lossky. The content consisted of "a detailed study of Plato and Aristotle. She was profoundly impressed with Aristotle's theory of knowledge and his definition of the laws of logic; she rejected completely the mysticism and collectivism of Plato."¹ At the oral examination, Lossky, a confirmed Platonist, questioned Ayn about Plato's system. "She would have preferred questions about Aristotle's philosophy", continues Mrs. Branden, "but she answered easily, precisely and impersonally. After a while, although she had not stated any estimate, Professor Lossky remarked sardonically: 'You don't seem to agree with Plato, do you?' 'No, I don't,' she answered. 'Tell me why,' he said. She replied: 'My philosophical views are not part of the history of philosophy yet. But they will be.' 'Give me your examination book,' he ordered. He wrote in the book and handed it back to her silently. He had written: Perfect."¹

In the same essay it is related that after Ayn had sold her rights to The Fountainhead to Warner Brothers to be made into a film, she made three purchases: a mink coat---at the insistence of her husband---, three suits by Adrian, and the complete works of Aristotle. It is also significant that

¹Barbara Branden, "Biographical Essay", 165.

this sale, throwing Ayn into unaccustomed luxury after years of struggle, evoked from her this quotation, "No man can pass abruptly from Siberia to Senegal without fainting", from Hugo's novel, The Man Who Laughs.

Later, crystallizing her philosophy in For the New Intellectual, she paid this tribute to Aristotle:

"...Aristotle's philosophy was the intellect's Declaration of Independence. Aristotle, the father of logic, should be given the title of the world's first intellectual, in the purest and noblest sense of that word. No matter what remnants of Platonism did exist in Aristotle's system, his incomparable achievement lay in the fact that he defined the basic principles of a rational view of existence and of man's consciousness: that there is only one reality, the one man perceives--- that it exists as an objective absolute (which means: independently of the consciousness, the wishes or the feelings of any perceiver)--- that the task of man's consciousness is to perceive, not to create, reality---that abstractions are man's method of integrating his sensory material---that man's mind is his only tool of knowledge---that A is A. 1

As to her philosophy, it is "in essence, the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute. The only philosophical debt I can acknowledge", she states, "is to Aristotle."²

Does this mean that she "copied" Aristotle and blindly followed his postulates? Not at all. Just as Hugo, Rand

¹Ayn Rand, For the New Intellectual (New York: Random House, 1961), 20.

²Rand, "About the Author", Atlas Shrugged.

never hesitates to disagree or improve upon him when she thinks he is mistaken. In her book review of Aristotle, by John Herman Randall, Jr., she observes: "Whatever flaws there are in Aristotle's political theory---and there are many---he does not deserve that kind of indignity."¹

Commenting in "An Analysis of 'Extremism' and of Racism", she explains "...to proclaim that any extreme is evil because it is an extreme---to hold the degree of a characteristic, regardless of its nature, as evil---is an absurdity (any garbled aristotelianism to the contrary notwithstanding.)"² Conclusively, she affirms at the end of Atlas Shrugged: "I most emphatically disagree with a great many parts of his [Aristotle's] philosophy---but his definition of the laws of logic and of the means of human knowledge is so great an achievement that his errors are irrelevant by comparison."³

¹Ayn Rand, The Objectivist Newsletter, May, 1963.

²Ayn Rand, An Analysis of "Extremism" and of Racism (Pamphlet) New York: The Nathaniel Branden Institute, 1964, 7.

³Rand, "About the Author", Atlas Shrugged.

"If there is a philosophical Atlas who carries the whole of Western Civilization on his shoulders, it is Aristotle", says Rand, in her review of Randall's Aristotle. "It took several centuries of misrepresenting Aristotle to turn him into a strawman, to declare the strawman invalidated and to release such a torrent of irrationality that is now sweeping philosophy away and carrying us back past the pre-Socratics, past Western Civilization, into the pre-historical swamps of the Orient, via Existentialism and Zen Buddhism." She then accuses Randall also of misrepresenting Aristotle's politics and ethics. "The blackest patch in this often illuminating book is Chapter XII, which deals with ethics and politics. Its contradictions are apparent even without reference to Aristotle's text." "It is shocking to read the assertion that Aristotle is an 'advocate of the "Welfare state"'. Professor Randall, who stresses that knowledge must rest on empirical evidence, should take cognizance of the empirical fact that throughout history the influence of Aristotle's philosophy (particularly of his epistemology) has led in the direction of individual freedom, of man's liberation from the power of the state---that Aristotle (via John Locke) was the philosophical father of the Constitution of the United States and thus of capitalism---that it is Plato and Hegel, not Aristotle, who have been the philosophical ancestors of all totalitarian and welfare states, whether Bismarck's, Lenin's or Hitler's."¹

¹Rand, The Objectivist Newsletter, May, 1963.

Since she does not criticize Randall's exposition of Aristotle's Theory of Art, and since she does emphasize that "to read a concise, lucid presentation of Aristotle's system, written by a distinguished modern philosopher...is so rare a value that it is sufficient to establish the importance of Professor Randall's book, in spite of its flaws", his book (along with a translation of the original) will be used to point out similarities in the theories of Aristotle, Rand, and Hugo.

Randall emphasizes that Aristotle is free from the muddled notions of modern aesthetic theory, which divorce "art" from "nature", and the "Fine arts" from the "Practical arts". It would never occur to Aristotle to ask, for example, "As a play, a painting or a novel it is effective, but is it really art?" Such a distinction would have been unintelligible to any Greek thinker who regarded art as an illustration of the productive processes of nature. For Aristotle, the "'artist' is a maker, a craftsman, like the shipbuilder or the physician. The different and separate arts are distinguished only by the fact that they make different kinds of thing [sic]: the shipbuilder makes ships, the physician makes health, the poet makes plays."¹

In Aristotle's analysis, art or technē, meant "making" something, realizing some form in some matter. This, and human production or poiēsis, is a demonstration of what

¹John Herman Randall, Jr., Aristotle (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 278 & 293.

nature can do. The artist (*poiētes*) is a "maker", and nature is obviously the great Maker, the great "poet" or artist. The sole distinction between nature and the human artist is that nature herself makes something out of her own materials, while the human artist makes something out of something else, some materials outside himself, to which he is an external archē or natural agent. Processes by nature and processes by art are not two quite different kinds of process: by nature, physei, a tree is made out of a seed; by art, apo technēs, a man makes a house out of wood and bricks.¹

Victor Hugo, in William Shakespeare, continues this theme with variations. "We speak of Art as we speak of Nature. Here are two terms of almost indeterminate meaning. God manifests himself to us in the first degree through the life of the universe, and in the second through the thought of man. The second manifestation is not less holy than the first. The first is named Nature, the second is named Art. Art is the second branch of Nature. Art is as natural as Nature."² "Each great artist...stamps Art anew in his own image."³

While Hugo equates nature with God and therefore the artist with an agent of God, Rand prefers a non-mystical interpretation. Why give the name God to that for which

¹Randall, Aristotle, 274.

²Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt.I, Bk.II, Ch.I, 36.

³Ibid., Pt.I, Bk.III, Ch. V, 119.

rational objective names exist? Just call it nature, she says by way of a lecture on her philosophy.¹ "Just as man's physical survival depends on his own effort, so does his psychological survival. Man faces two corollary, interdependent fields of action in which a constant creative process is demanded of him; the world around him and his own soul (by 'soul', I mean his consciousness). Just as he has to produce the material values he needs to sustain his life, so he has to acquire the values of character that enable him to sustain it and that make his life worth living. He is born without the knowledge of either. He has to discover both---and translate them into reality---and survive by shaping the world and himself in the image of his values."² The "genus of art is a 'man-made world according to man's view of existence'. Man produces art, animals cannot."³ More explicitly, "Art is a selective re-creation of reality according to the artist's metaphysical values. By 'metaphysical' values," she explains, "I mean those values which reflect an artist's fundamental view of the nature of man and the nature of reality, of the universe in which he lives and acts...."⁴

¹The Basic Principles of Objectivism, Lecture 4, delivered by Barbara Branden, Philadelphia, 1962-63. (my notes.)

²Ayn Rand, "The Goal of My Writing", Part II, An address delivered at Lewis and Clark College, October, reprinted in The Objectivist Newsletter, November, 1963.

³The Basic Principles of Objectivism, Lecture 17, delivered by Ayn Rand.

⁴Rand, "The Goal of My Writing", Part II.

The relationship of man to nature is expressed succinctly in a portrait of an unnamed youth in the pages of The Fountainhead. The particular Aristotelian concepts will be underlined for clarity.

The trees met, bending over the road, and the spots of sun on the ground moved with the shifting of the branches, like a conscious caress. The young man hoped he would not have to die.

Not if the earth could look like this, he thought. Not if he could hear the hope and the promise like a voice, with leaves, tree trunks and rocks instead of words. But he knew that the earth looked like this only because he had seen no sign of men for hours; he was alone, riding his bicycle down a forgotten trail through the hills of Pennsylvania where he had never been before, where he could feel the fresh wonder of an untouched world.

He was a very young man. He had just graduated from college...and he wanted to decide whether life was worth living. He did not know that this was the question in his mind. He did not think of dying. He thought only that he wished to find joy and reason and meaning in life---and that none had been offered to him anywhere.

.... He could not name the thing he wanted in life. He felt it here, in the wild loneliness. But he did not face nature with the joy of a healthy animal---as a proper and final setting; he faced it with the joy of a healthy man---as a challenge; as tools, means and material. So he felt anger that he should find exultation only in the wilderness, that this great sense of hope had to be lost when he would return to men and men's work. He thought that this was not right; that man's work should be a higher step, an improvement on nature, not a degradation. He did not want to despise men; he wanted to love and admire them. But he dreaded the sight of the first house, poolroom and movie poster he would encounter on his way. He had always wanted to write music, and he could give no other identity to the thing he sought. ... Let me see the answer to the promise of that music.... Don't work for my happiness, my brothers---show me yours---show me that it is possible---show me your achievement---and the knowledge will give me
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courage for mine.

¹Rand, The Fountainhead, 496-497.

Then the boy sees one of Roark's architectural works, which is built according to Aristotelian principles.

"If a house had been a thing made by nature," states Aristotle, (if the wood and bricks had grown into a house, elaborates Randall), "it would have been made by nature in the same way as it is now made by art; and if the things made by nature were made also by art," (if a man could make a tree), they would come to be in the same way as they now do by nature."¹ Both are following a necessary order of means and ends; both are processes whereby natural materials are made by a natural agent to realize the forms potential in those materials. And while nature cannot make houses except through the agency of man, and man cannot make a tree but must leave that to nature, there is a natural cooperation of two compatible kinds of process. Aristotle would say that God or nature and the poet are just alike; they are both artists. "He would say", elucidates Randall, "When I make a poem, God or nature is making it, just as much as when he---or she---is making a tree, only through different agents: through me, and not through the wind, the sun and the rain."² "In general, then," writes Aristotle, "art in a sense completes what nature is unable to finish, and in a sense imitates nature."³

¹Aristotle, cited by Randall, Aristotle, 274.

²Randall, Ibid., 275.

³Aristotle, cited by Randall, Ibid., 275.

Hugo, in the same vein, continues this flow of thought. "God creates Art by man, having for a tool the human intellect. The great Workman has made this tool for himself; he has no other."¹ It has been a peculiar error of all ages to desire to give the human intellect assistance from without, he says. The poet should have wings for the infinite, provided he has feet for the earth, and that, after having been seen flying, he is seen to walk. "Thus, human and superhuman, he shall be the poet. But to be altogether beyond man, is not to be."² The poet, or man of genius, needs no apparatus but his brain, through which every thought must pass. "Thought ascends and buds from the brain, as the fruit from the root. Thought is the resultant of man; the root plunges into the earth, the brain into God---that is to say, into the Infinite. Poetry is the poet's own. ...Productions of genius are a super-human offspring of man."³ Retaining his metaphor of a natural process, Hugo states that the same nature fertilizes and nourishes the most diverse geniuses. "Le vrai poète est un arbre qui...porte ses ouvrages comme ses fruits, comme le fablier ses fables."⁴ The true poet is a tree that bears his works as his fruit, just as a story-teller his tales.

¹Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt.I, Bk.II, Ch.V, 36.

²Ibid., Pt. II, Bk. VI, Ch. I, 318.

³Ibid., Pt. I, Bk. II, Ch. I, 40.

⁴Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 46.

Why, then, should one attach one's self to a master, or graft one's self upon a model? It would be better to be the self-sustaining thistle, fed by the earth, than the parasitic mistletoe, living off the oak tree.¹

Art does not imitate nature's products, it cannot make an oak tree or beget a man. Aristotle does not mean that art "mimics" nature, explains Randall. "The distinction between 'imitating' and 'mimicking' is important, since Aristotle's formal definition of art or technē is that art is an imitation of nature, a mimēsis."² Rather than imitating nature's products, art imitates nature's productive activities. "It must be remembered that 'nature' for Aristotle is a way of acting, and what art imitates is that way; art does the kind of thing nature does."³

How, then would a man by art build a house as nature would? Rand demonstrates this beautifully by Roark's "Heller House". Heller had said something to the effect "that he wanted a house of his own", but he had "hesitated for a long time about building one because all houses look alike to him and they all look like hell...and he has the idea that he wants a building he could love. 'A building that would mean something' is what he said...." When the construction has begun, Heller asks Roark: "What is it that I

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 46.

²Randall, Aristotle, 275.

³Ibid., 275-276.

like so much about the house you're building for me, Howard?"
 Roark answers: "A house can have integrity, just like a
 person...." "In what way?" asks Heller. "Every piece of it
 is there because the house needs it---and for no other reason",
 Roark answers. "The determining motive of your house is in
 the house."¹

Here is the site and the house as described by Rand.

[The site was]...a cliff rising in broken ledges from
 the ground in a straight, brutal, naked drop over
 the sea, a vertical shaft of rock forming a cross²
 with the long, pale horizontal of the sea.

The house...had been designed not by Roark, but by
 the cliff on which it stood. It was as if the cliff
 had grown and completed itself and proclaimed the
 purpose for which it had been waiting. The house
 was broken into many levels, following the ledges
 of the rock, rising as it rose, in gradual masses,
 in planes flowing together up into one consummate
 harmony. The walls, of the same granite as the
 rock, continued its vertical lines upward; the wide,
 projecting terraces of concrete, silver as the sea,
 followed the line of the waves, of the straight³
 horizon.

In Aristotle's "imitation", Randall proceeds, the artist sep-
 arates some form from the material with which it is joined in
 nature, some sensible form, and realizes it in the materials
 of his art, in his medium, just as the housebuilder realizes
 the form or function and end of his art in another material
 or under other conditions than those that are "naturally"
 encountered. However, the new material or medium imposes its

¹Rand, The Fountainhead, 115-116, 128-129.

²Ibid., 116.

³Ibid., 117.

own conditions on that form: a house of wood made by art must have a structure dictated by wood; to be art, it must have a different structure from a natural shelter, such as a cave. In the same way, a poem will have a different structure from the actions of men that it imitates, a structure imposed by its materials, words.¹

Words, then, as the medium of a poet in the literary sense of the term, play a crucial role in artistic production. And it is the definition of "word", with all the entailed metaphysics, which explains the basic difference between the art of Victor Hugo and the art of Ayn Rand. While Rand never steps outside the Aristotelian context, Hugo commingles the contexts of Aristotle and Plato. It is only when he returns to and agrees with Aristotle's definitions of history and fiction that he and Ayn meet on solid ground. But this meeting is sufficient to unite them in history as "Romanticists".

By art man re-creates reality according to his view of existence, Rand has said, and by literature, as a conceptual art, she continues, "he re-creates reality by means of word-concepts."² What then, is her definition of her medium? "A concept is a mental integration of two or more perceptual concretes which are isolated by a process of abstraction and united by means of a specific definition. Every word of man's language, with the exception of proper names, denotes a concept,

¹Randall, Aristotle, 276.

²Rand, Lecture 17, The Basic Principles of Objectivism.

an abstraction that stands for an unlimited number of concretes of a specific kind. It is by organizing his perceptual material into concepts, and his concepts into wider and still wider concepts that man is able to grasp and retain, to identify and integrate an unlimited amount of knowledge, a knowledge extending beyond the immediate perceptions of any given, immediate moment."¹ A man may perceive a red ruby, a red jasmine and a red fire-engine, for example, and abstract the color "red". His senses give him the material knowledge, but he must identify it by the volitional use of his reason. While one's sense organs can influence the form in which one perceives reality, they cannot change the objective referent ---reality is immutable and exists independent of the perceiver. If the normal human being, a color blind man, and a Martian studied the universe, they would all arrive at the same conceptual view of reality, by way of different sensory perceptions.² "It is the schizophrenic who affirms that words do not need bear any relation to objective reality,"³ she states by way of the Objectivist lectures. Art "brings man's concepts to the perceptual level of his consciousness and allows him to grasp them directly, as if they were percepts."⁴ Language, the medium of the art, literature, is "a code of visual-auditory

¹ Ayn Rand, The Objectivist Ethics, (New York: The Nathaniel Branden Institute, 1961), 8.

² Rand, Lecture 2., Basic Principles of Objectivism.

³ Ibid., Lecture 3.

⁴ Rand, "The Psycho-Epistemology of Art", The Objectivist Newsletter, April, 1965.

symbols that serves the psycho-epistemological¹ function of converting abstractions into concretes, or more precisely, into the psycho-epistemological equivalent of concretes, into a manageable number of specific units."²

That Rand's definition of the word-concept and of language is rooted in Aristotle is apparent from Randall's exposition of the same. Man thinks, knows, and understands in terms of language---by describing things in words, by making statements about things, by reasoning from one fact to another, by employing discourse. Discourse and reasoning are the same thing, elaborates Randall, designated by the same word, logos. Since the world has a logical, discursive character---a systematic structure, it lends itself to the grasp of language. "'Knowing' is a matter of language, of stating; it is not a 'having of sensations' or 'sense data'."³ One can know a thing only when one can state in precise language what that thing is, and why it is. Man is a "rational animal", an intelligent living being who uses logos, language. He can grasp the structure and relations of things, and express them in logos; "he can say what things are, and things are what they can be said to be."⁴ "The art of using language is an interaction or transaction between an intelligent animal and an intelligible world."⁴

¹"The term 'psycho-epistemology' was first introduced by Ayn Rand in For the New Intellectual. Psycho-epistemology is the study of the mental operations that are possible to and that characterize man's cognitive behavior." Nathaniel Branden, The Objectivist Newsletter, October, 1964.

²Rand, "The Psycho-Epistemology of Art".

³Randall, Aristotle, 6-7.

⁴Ibid., 298.

Hugo crystallizes his idea of language in a sentence from William Shakespeare. "Here prose, there verse; all forms being but receptacles for the idea."¹ While he appears to be saying the same thing as Rand, there is actually a basic conflict here. "Idea" for Hugo and "concept" for Rand are not equivalents; "idea" contains more than "concept" because Hugo's manner of "knowing" is not solely "a mental integration of two or more perceptual concretes which are isolated by a process of abstraction." That is, his "words" do not necessarily have a referent to actual things, sensorily perceived. While Hugo would say, "my words do refer to nature", his definition of nature includes the supernatural---an inclusion which neither Rand nor Aristotle would admit, since it is not empirically perceived. "Humanité, nature, surnaturalisme.... A proprement parler, ces trois ordres de faits sont trois aspects divers du même phénomène. L'humanité dont nous sommes, la nature qui nous enveloppe, le surnaturalisme qui nous enferme en attendant qu'il nous délivre sont trois sphères concentriques ayant la même âme, Dieu.... L'idée de nature résume tout."² Humanity, nature, and the supernatural are three concentric spheres having the same soul, God. The idea of nature includes all of them, Hugo says. By definition, the supernatural is "la partie

¹Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt.II, Bk.I, Ch.V, 216.

²Hugo, "Contemplation suprême", Post-scriptum de ma Vie, cited by Simaika, L'Inspiration Épique dans Les Romans de Victor Hugo, 191.

de la nature qui échappe à nos organes",¹ that part of nature which escapes our sense organs. In another writing, Hugo comments that he "extends the word 'universe' to an order of facts that no astronomer can reach."² Aristotle would say, "Then please don't call them 'facts'".

All three of these spheres have the same soul, God, Hugo has said; then he proceeds to define God as "The Living Infinite. The Latent Ego of the visible Infinite, that is God. God is the invisible made evident. The world concentrated is God. God expanded is the world. We, who are speaking, believe in nothing out of God."³ The world, then, is an image of God, the invisible made evident; to see God, one can only aspire to contemplate his appearance, and since an image is the reality seen from the reflection, nature is the reality of God seized by man. Aristotle would probably ask, "How can the Invisible have a Visible reflection?" "Si Dieu est le nouème inaccessible et incomprehensible", states Simaika about Hugo's idea of God, "la nature paraît à nos esprits comme le phénomène et la manifestation sensible de la divinité".⁴ Nature, in Aristotle's sense of the word, appears to be a manifestation of God by way of our senses for Hugo. In Les Misérables Hugo asks "En même temps qu'il y a un infini hors de nous, n'y a-t-il pas un

¹Hugo, Post-scriptum de ma Vie, cited by Jacques Roos, Les Idées Philosophiques de Victor Hugo, (Paris:Librairie Nizet, 1958), 32.

²Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt.I, Bk.V, Ch.II, 184-185.

³Ibid., Pt.I, Bk.II, Ch.I, 36.

⁴Simaika, L'Inspiration Épique, 191.

infini en nous? Ces deux infinis ne se superposent-ils pas l'un à l'autre? Le second infini, n'est-il pas sous-jacent au premier? N'en est-il pas le miroir?"¹ At the same time that there is an infinity beyond us, isn't there an infinity in us? These two infinities, aren't they superimposed on each other? The second infinity, isn't it subjacent (lying under) the first? Isn't it the mirror? This idea of the Two Infinities haunted all the nineteenth century French writers. It could be said to be the cause of the "mal de siècle", the sickness of the century. The true or "real" universe for many of them, and for Hugo in particular, "is hidden behind the apparent one; it begins at the limits of our senses and extends to God."² It is in this context, then, that Hugo can say through Olympio, "Je ne regard point le monde d'ici bas, mais le monde invisible."³ Rather than regarding "this world here below", he looks at "the invisible world".

According to the philosopher, Schlegel, the most important question one can ask is "Est-ce de Dieu que provient tout ce existe?"⁴ Is it from God that proceeds all that exists? If so, he continues, nature is assigned the second place. "Ou veut-on au contraire accorder la primauté à la nature, et en tire la conséquence nécessaire que tout ce qui existe procède d'elle seule?"⁴ Or, does one prefer to give nature primacy and

¹Hugo, Les Misérables, VII, 293-296. Cited by Roos, 35.

²Maurice Levaillant, La Crise Mystique de Victor Hugo, (Paris: Librairie Jose Corti, 1954), 18.

³Hugo, cited by Levaillant, Ibid., 18-19.

⁴Frederic de Schlegel, Philosophie de L'histoire, cited by Simaika, L'inspiration Epique, 199.

and draw the necessary conclusion that all existence proceeds from her alone? In this last case, he says, one doesn't explicitly deny the existence of God---rather one bypasses it indirectly.

Whereas Hugo answers this question by affirming that nature emanates from God ("Dieu est tout")¹, Rand takes the second point of view (though she doesn't "bypass the issue indirectly"). Since art for her is "a selective recreation of reality according to the artist's metaphysical values...those values which reflect an artist's fundamental view of man and the nature of reality, of the universe in which he lives and acts..."² it is necessary for an understanding of her art, to state the "Objectivist" view concisely. This is best done by Nathaniel Branden, via the "Objectivist Newsletter":

"The universe is the total of what exists. Within the universe, the emergence of new entities can be explained in terms of the actions of entities that already exist: the cause of a tree is the seed of the parent tree; the cause of a machine is the purposeful reshaping of matter by men. All actions presuppose the existence of entities---and all emergences of new entities presuppose the existence of entities that caused their emergence. All causality presupposes the existence of something that acts as a cause. To demand a cause for all of existence is to demand a contradiction: if the cause exists, it is part of existence; if it does not exist, it cannot be

¹Hugo, cited by Simaika, L'Inspiration Épique, 189.

²Rand, "The Goal of my Writing", Part I, The Objectivist Newsletter, October, 1963.

a cause. Nothing cannot be the cause of something. Nothing does not exist. Causality presupposes existence, existence does not presuppose causality: there can be no cause 'outside' of existence or 'anterior' to it. The forms of existence may change and evolve, but the fact of existence is the irreducible primary at the base of all causal chains. Existence---not 'God'---is the First Cause. Existence is all that exists, the non-existent does not exist; there is nothing for existence to have come out of---and nothing means nothing. If you are tempted to ask: "What's outside the universe?"---recognize that you are asking: "What's outside of existence?" and that the idea of 'something outside of existence' is a contradiction in terms; nothing is outside of existence, and 'nothing' is not just another kind of 'something'---it is nothing. Existence exists; you cannot go outside it, you cannot get under it, on top of it or behind it. Existence exists---and only existence exists: there is nowhere else to go."¹

In addition to identifying God with the universe, Hugo also attributes to him a personality. Roos states in The Philosophical Ideas of Victor Hugo "that the particular conception that Victor Hugo has of God consists of one part in seeing God in all things, and is therefore a clear-cut idea of Pantheism."² In effect, he continues, if the world proceeds

¹Nathaniel Branden, The Objectivist Newsletter, May, 1962.

²Roos, Les Idées Philosophiques de Victor Hugo, 28.

from God by emanation, the world is God. "The other part consists of Hugo's affirming, however, that God has an individual personality distinct from the world and exterior to the world. If the personality of God wasn't diminished by the act of creation, God continues to lead, outside the world, his individual existence as it was before creation. He has a personality."¹

What is the personality of God? In a conversation with Stapfer, Hugo clarifies this. "Oh! que l'athéisme est pauvre! Qu'il est absurde! Dieu est. Je suis plus sûr de son existence que de la mienne.... Nous sommes en Dieu. Il est l'auteur de tout. Mais il n'est pas vrai de dire qu'il a créé le monde, car il le crée éternellement. Il est le Moi de l'infini. Il est.... Tu dors, Adèle?"² How absurd atheism is. God exists. Hugo is more certain of God's existence than of his own. We are in God. He is the author of all. But it isn't true to say God created the world, for he creates it eternally. He is the Infinite I, or the Infinite Ego.

Rand, however, when asked if she believes in God, replies "Certainly not."³

The question arises, therefore, if Hugo knows there is a God, how does he know? The answer to this question is directly tied to his "function" of a poet. Maurois says: "Preuve: le rêve." Proof: the dream. He explains: man,

¹Roos, Les Idées Philosophiques de Victor Hugo, 28.

²Hugo, cited by Maurois, Olympio ou La Vie, 468.

³Rand, "Playboy's" Interview with Ayn Rand, 9.

⁴Maurois, Olympio ou La Vie de Victor Hugo, 416.

according to Hugo, makes a dream, then another. When awakening, he still knows about his dream. "Toutes les vies terrestres que nous traversons sont des sommeils," all the terrestrial lives we cross are acts of sleeping. The "I" persists after death, continues Maurois, it is the "I" anterior and exterior to life. The living who die regain consciousness.¹

Roos brings out the fact that the most ordinary means of knowledge is intelligence. It constitutes the primary means. "Completely determined by visible causes, it is incapable of seizing 'the real'",² i.e., the invisible world. Above intelligence, he continues, Hugo places imagination and above imagination, intuition. "L'intuition a sa source dans le sentiment, c'est là une conviction commune à tous les mystiques"³, intuition has its source in feeling, a conviction common to all mystics. One glimpses this emphasis in Hugo in his "Preface" to Le Dernier Jour d'un Condamné, in which he opposes capital punishment "pour les raisons sentimentaux,"⁴ for sentimental reasons. One finds further proof in a letter from Hugo to Turquety, where he states "La foi vient de l'intuition."⁵ Faith comes from intuition. Faith is the anchor of reason. "La raison flotte, vogue, navique, explore, découvre, va, et c'est là le voyage sublime. Elle dresse la carte de l'idée, elle éclaire toute la périphérie de ce problème éternel qui

¹Maurois, Olympio ou La Vie de Victor Hugo, 416.

²Roos, Les Idées Philosophiques de Victor Hugo, 51.

³Roos, Ibid., 52.

⁴Victor Hugo, "Preface" to Le Dernier Jour d'un Condamné (Paris: Dauphin, 1947), 211.

⁵Hugo, cited by Levailant, La Crise Mystique de Victor Hugo, 18.

est pour notre pensée la mer; mais c'est avec l'ancre seulement, avec la foi, avec l'intuition qu'elle peut entreuver le fond et s'y rattacher. Jamais de repos, jamais de mouillage, jamais de port pour ce navire, s'il n'a cette ancre."¹ Reason helps clarify, but it floats and sails on the sea of this eternal problem. It is only by faith, by intuition, that reason can find the bottom of this mystery and firmly anchor itself. There is no port for this ship, reason, if it doesn't secure itself by the anchor, faith. "La foi, c'est l'ancre de la raison humaine."¹

When Ayn Rand was accused of lacking faith, Barbara Branden relates in her "Biographical Essay", she would proudly affirm "I haven't any faith at all." Before she was fourteen, she entered this sentence in her diary: "Today, I decided that I am an atheist." She had considered the question scrupulously, continues Barbara, and came to this conclusion: "that there are no reasons to believe in God, no proof of the belief; and that the concept of God is insulting and degrading to man---it implies that the highest possible is not to be reached by man, that he is an inferior being who can only worship an ideal he will never achieve. By her view, there could be no breach between conceiving of the best possible and deciding to attain it. She rejected the concept of God as morally evil."²

¹Hugo, cited by Levaillant, La Crise Mystique, 18.

²Barbara Branden, "A Biographical Essay", Who is Ayn Rand, 162.

Rand's view is crystallized by Mr. Branden's article in The Objectivist Newsletter: One can believe in God only by faith, i.e., by the acceptance of ideas without sensory evidence or rational proof. "A man of reason does not accept ideas on faith. He knows that all of one's conclusions must be based on and derived from the facts of reality. He is, therefore, an atheist. His position is this: 'I accept or consider only that for which there is rational evidence. If a theist wishes to assert the existence of God, the burden of proof is on him. But I do not regard his feeling that God exists as relevant or admissible to a rational discussion.'"¹

Not only does Hugo believe in a personal God, and in Pantheism, but also in transmigration of souls. "Hugo cherche... à recomposer le monde selon un système où toutes choses tendraient progressivement vers un but unique. ...Les creatures se meuvent en une course ascendante ou descendante dans tout un système de sphères concentriques de lumière et d'ombre. La mort perd alors son sens chrétien pour devenir le simple passage de l'être d'une forme à une autre. Les croyances du poète, dès le début de son exil, s'orientent vers des conceptions voisines du pythagorisme et du panthéisme."² Hugo, in attempting to recompose the world according to a system in which all things progressively tend toward one end, postulates that death is but the simple passing of soul or being

¹Nathaniel Branden, The Objectivist Newsletter, April, 1963.

²Simaika, L'inspiration Épique, 187.

from one form to another. Thus he not only believes in Pantheism but also in Pythagorism, i.e., transmigration of souls.

What proof exists that this is so? Hugo says so himself. "Chaque chose de la nature se transforme.... La vie minérale passe à la vie organique végétale, la vie végétale devient la vie animale dont le spécimen le plus élevé est le singe. Au-dessus du singe commence la vie intellectuelle. L'homme occupe le plus bas degré de l'échelle intellectuelle, échelle invisible et infini par laquelle chaque esprit monte dans l'éternité et dont Dieu est le sommet."¹ Each thing in nature transforms. Mineral life ("le caillou...sent"---the pebble feels²) passes to vegetable life, which passes to animal life of which the highest is the monkey. Above the monkey begins the intellectual life, of which man occupies the lowest rung on the ladder. "L'ange commence à l'homme et l'homme au chimpanzé"³---man begins at the chimpanzee and the angel begins at man. The angel occupies a higher rung on the ladder of intellectual life. It is by this invisible and infinite ladder that each spirit climbs into eternity, of which God is the summit.

Roos states that Hugo seemed very proud of the power to affirm that he was the first of his century to speak not only of the "âme des animaux"---soul of the animals, "mais encore de l'âme des choses"---but also of the soul of things.⁴

¹Hugo, Journal de l'Exil, cited by Roos, Les Idées Philosophiques de Victor Hugo, 71.

²Hugo, Dernière Gerbe, cited by Roos, Ibid., 70.

³Hugo, "L'Ange", Dieu, cited by Roos, Ibid., 73.

⁴Roos, Ibid., 71.

"Tous les êtres sont, et furent, et seront...." "Tout être est immortel comme essence."¹ All beings are, were and shall be; all being is immortal as Essence. "Et moi aussi, je crois à l'élévation graduelle des âmes et à leurs migrations successives",² Hugo tells Savatier-Laroche. And I, too, believe in the gradual elevation of souls and of their successive migrations, says Hugo. Conclusively, Hugo states in his poem, Dieu --- "Creation couvre metempsychose"³, creation contains transmigration of souls.

Thus, says Simaika, Hugo's idea of God contains that God is the universe and the soul of the universe, plus a God who is distinct from the universe and is conscious of the ascension of being, an ascension in which His will can at any moment intervene.⁴

Therefore, the "idea" for Hugo is a composite of concepts based on "the world here below" and of intuitions based on another "superior reality" which his senses cannot perceive. Both "natures" are contained in his definition of "word". "Here prose, there verse; all forms being but receptacles for the idea."⁵ Rather than saying that a poet re-creates reality, Hugo would say a poet also creates reality. God is the infinite Ego, and as his reflection, "in his image",

¹Hugo, "L'Ange", Dieu, cited by Roos, Les Idées, 75.

²Hugo, cited by Roos, Ibid., 77.

³Hugo, "L'Ange", Dieu, cited by Roos, Ibid., 77.

⁴Simaika, L'inspiration Épique, 187.

⁵Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt. II, Bk. I, Ch. V, 216.

I am likewise a creator. It is in this sense that he says "Each great Artist...stamps Art anew in his own image."¹ The poet is able to do this by direct revelation from God. "God manifests himself to us in the first degree through the life of the universe, and in the second through the thought of man. The first is named Nature, the second is named Art. Hence this reality: the poet is a priest. There is here below a pontiff,---it is genius. Sacerdos Magnus."² In the poem, "Insomnie", Hugo wrote: "Dieu dictait, j'écrivais",³ God dictated, I wrote. Christ and the Poet have similar missions; each genius continues the Messianic task.

"Fonction du Poète"

Le poète en des jours impies
Vient préparer des jours meilleurs.
Il est l'homme des utopies,
Les pieds ici, les yeux ailleurs.
C'est lui qui sur toutes les têtes,
En tout temps, pareil aux prophètes,
Dans sa main, ou tout peut tenir,
Doit, qu'on l'insulte ou qu'on le loue,
Comme une torche qu'il secoue,
Faire flamboyer l'avenir!

Peuples! écoutez le poète!
Écoutez le rêveur sacré!

Dieu parle à voix basse à son âme....⁴

¹Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt.I, Bk.III, Ch.V, 119.

²Hugo, Ibid., Pt.I, Bk.II, Ch.I, 36.

³Hugo, "Insomnie", Les Contemplations, cited by Roos, Les Idées Philosophiques de Victor Hugo, 109.

⁴Hugo, "Fonction du Poète", Les Rayons et Les Ombres. Victor Hugo, Poésies, edited by Marcel Arland (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1950), Tome I, 171.

"The Function of the Poet", Hugo tells us, is to prepare better days. As a utopian, with his feet on earth and his eyes elsewhere, the poet---equal to the prophets---ought to enlighten minds for future progress. "People! hear the poet, hear the sacred dreamer. God speaks in a low voice to his soul."

In "Les Mages", Hugo asks; Why do you make priests when you have some among you? They are the poets, they are the artists, they are the messiahs---all fighting the battle of ideas as the gladiators of God.¹

¹Hugo, "Les Mages", Poésies, T. I, 262-271.

"Art is a re-creation of reality according to the artist's values," Rand has said. "It is not a creation out of a void, but a re-creation, a selective rearrangement of the elements of reality, guided by the artist's view of existence"¹, "of the nature of man and the nature of reality."² Hugo's and Rand's views of the universe have been considered; it is now necessary to expose their views of man, if one is to understand the concretization of these in art.

For Hugo, man is radiant, beautiful, candid, and adorable, but imperfect, ("Dieu n'a créé que l'être imponderable./ Il le fit radieux, beau, candide, adorable,/ Mais imparfait...."³) He admits a "fall of man" as a given reality, says Roos, "donc il ne recherche pas les causes et qu'il ne soucie point d'expliquer"⁴---the cause of which he doesn't investigate nor bother to explain. In his writings, however, Hugo does pose a few hypotheses, none of which is consistent or conclusive.

The first is that Lucifer, before the world's creation, revolted against God and fell from heaven. During the fall, his celestial wings were transformed into cold membranes resembling those of a bat. Having thus changed from arch-angel to Satan, and being a damned creature, Satan contained the principle of evil within himself. "Later", he creates a

¹Ayn Rand, A lecture on esthetics at the 1961 Creative Arts Festival, University of Michigan, cited by Nathaniel Branden, "The Literary Method of Ayn Rand", Who is Ayn Rand, 90.

²Rand, "The Goal of My Writing", Part II.

³Hugo, "Ce que dit la Bouche d'Ombre", Poesies, T.I, 273.

⁴Roos, Les Idées Philosophiques de Victor Hugo, 60.

daughter, Isis-Lilith, out of a shadow. After God has created the world and Adam, Isis-Lilith visits the earth, unites with Adam before Eve is created, and inoculates all mankind with original corruption.¹

Not very satisfied with this, Hugo decided that God made the universe, but since God was perfect and evil could not be imputed to Him, the universe caused the evil. ("Dieu fit l'univers, l'univers fit le mal."²) If the good is spirit, then evil must be matter. However, this hypothesis conflicted with Hugo's idea of Pantheism, that the universe emanated from ---and was therefore part of---God. To equate the universe with God, the Visible with the Invisible, would imply that evil was good. ("Un dans Tout, Tout dans Un."³)

Obviously God did not want to be an absolute despot, he concluded next, so He voluntarily permitted the human to be autonomous. To postulate this, Hugo offered a deistic concept of the universe. God created the world, and his work done, He sleeps. ("...Son oeuvre, c'est le monde, il l'a fait, l'oeuvre faite, il s'endort."⁴) If God does not intervene in the universe, man is free to do good or evil, i.e., he has free will. This would be a very happy conclusion were it not for Hugo's Poet-Prophet who communicates with God by direct revelation and is an instrument of God. Consequently,

¹Hugo, Le Fin de Satan, cited by Levailant, La Crise Mystique de Victor Hugo, 116.

²Hugo, "Ce que dit la Bouche d'Ombre", Poesies, TI, 273.

³Victor Hugo, "Le sacre de la Femme", La Légende des Siècles (Paris: Garnier, 1962), 20.

⁴Hugo, "L'Ange", Dieu, cited by Roos, Les Idées, 58.

Hugo separates the Poet-Prophet from the man in the street. Adam, being a plain man, and having liberty, wanted knowledge and ate the forbidden fruit; his disobedience threw all mankind into sin. ("Adam fut ivre; il voulut la science et déroba le fruit. C'est pourquoi Dieu jeta les hommes dans la nuit."¹)

But Hugo refused to believe that one man is punished for the faults of another. ("Personne n'est puni pour la faute d'autrui."²) Hence this conclusion: each man suffers in this world because he committed a fault in an anterior life,--- which coincides neatly with Hugo's view of transmigration of souls. ("La bête est une chausse-trappe où l'homme peut tomber."³) In this life, says Hugo, man is unaware of this anterior sin, but he feels that he has committed one. This feeling, he continues, is found in all religions. ("Il expie ce monde une faute qu'il a commise dans un monde antérieur. Il ignore quelle est cette faute, ce péché originel, mais il en a le sentiment. Ce sentiment du péché antérieur se trouve dans toutes les religions."⁴)

This feeling of original sin is, for Hugo, sufficient proof of its existence. Since man has sinned, he must have been given liberty to choose between good and evil. ("L'être créé...libre, il sait où le bien cesse, où le mal commence;

¹Hugo, "Le Griffon", Dieu, Poesies, T. II, 265.

²Hugo, "L'Ange", Dieu, cited by Roos, Les Idées, 64.

³Ibid., 76.

⁴Hugo, Journal de l'Exil, cited by Roos, Ibid., 61.

il a ses actions pour juges."¹) God has freely limited His omnipotence in giving man choice, and therefore cannot prevent evil. God doesn't judge man's actions; each man is responsible and each condemns himself or absolves himself. ("Tout être est responsable...;/ Condamné par lui-même, ou par lui-même absous."²) Accordingly, each descends or ascends in proportion to the weight of evil or good he has done. ("Dieu ne nous juge point.... Nous pesons, et chacun descend selon son poids."³) Man builds his own prison, *i.e.*, his corporeal form. Criminals descend in the order of nature to worms or rocks, depending on their crimes; righteous men can be reborn angels. ("Les êtres de fureur, de sang, de trahison,/ Avec leurs actions bâtissent leur prison."⁴) Man, in so far as his earthly existence is concerned, is the master of his destiny. He can begin as a larva and eventually transform himself into a butterfly, *i.e.*, from criminal to angel. ("Homme...larve d'un dieu...."⁵)

Suffering is a favor and logically leads to God. ("Les souffrances sont des faveurs."⁶ "La douleur, logique, mène à Dieu."⁷) Love and pity aid in the transformation, and as

¹Hugo, "Ce que dit la Bouche d'Ombre", Les Contemplations, ed. Jacques Seebacher (Paris:Librairie Armand Colin, 1964), Tome II, 254.

²Hugo, "L'Ange", Dieu, cited by Roos, Les Idées, 65.

³Hugo, "Ce que dit la Bouche d'Ombre", Les Contemplations, T. II, 255.

⁴Hugo, Ibid., 256.

⁵Hugo, "Le Satyre", La Légende des Siècles, 462.

⁶Hugo, "Dolor", Les Contemplations, T. II, 208.

⁷Hugo, William Shakespeare, Bk.II, Ch.I, cited by Roos, Les Idées Philosophiques de Victor Hugo, 86.

attributes of God, ought to be characteristics of man on earth. ("Cette loi sainte, il faut s'y conformer,/ Et la voici, toute âme y peut atteindre:/ Ne rien haïr, mon enfant, tout aimer,/ Ou tout plaindre!"¹)

The Poet-Prophets can assist in the ascension to God by bringing light to the world, ("Ils sont là, hauts de cent coudées,/ Christ en tête, Homère au milieu."²) Man, by the same liberty that he chose the evil, can also choose the good; hell is not eternal, ("Pas d'enfer éternel!"³) Universal progress on earth and universal salvation are possible. ("Tout se meut, se soulève et s'efforce et gravit,/ Et se hausse et s'envole et ressuscite et vit!"⁴) However, Hugo decides, man is only partially responsible; he has only relative free will; ("L'homme lui-même, n'est qu'à demi responsable. Il n'a qu'une volonté relative."⁵); because God's will shall prevail in the end, and His will is that all without exception arrive at the final rung of the ladder of which He is the summit. ("Point de déshérités!"⁶)

¹Hugo, "A Ma Fille", Les Contemplations, T.I, 9.

²Hugo, "Les Mages", Poesies, T.I, 268.

³Hugo, "Ce que dit la Bouche d'Ombre", Ibid.T.I, 283.

⁴Hugo, "L'Ange", Dieu, cited by Roos, Les Idées, 83.

⁵Hugo, Journal de l'Exil, cited by Roos, Ibid, 82.

⁶Hugo, "L'Ange", Dieu, cited by Roos, Ibid., 83.

What does Hugo's view of the nature of man have to do with his poetics? It affects it directly. In his "Preface" to Cromwell, he explains the origin of his new theory of the drama, which he also transfers to his novels since the "novel is nothing else but the drama developed outside the proportions of the theatre...",¹ nothing less than a "long drame".²

Christianity, says Hugo, taught man that he has two lives to live, one transient, the other immortal; one of the earth, the other of heaven. It shows him that he is double, like his destiny; that he has in him an animal and an intelligence, a soul and a body; in a word, that he is the point of intersection, the common ring of the two chains of beings who embrace the creation, of the series of material beings and of the series of non-corporeal beings, the first, beginning at the rock and arriving at man, the second, beginning at man to arrive at God.³

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Les Rayons et les Ombres, cited by Simaika, L'Inspiration Epique, 17.

²Hugo, in a critical article on Walter Scott, "La Muse française", cited by Simaika, Ibid., 17.

cf. Aristotle: "Epic poetry must divide into the same species as Tragedy;...its parts...with the exception of Song and Spectacle, must be the same. (Ch. 24) There is, however, a difference in the Epic as compared with Tragedy, in its length, and in its metre. (Ch. 25) The construction of its stories should clearly be like that in a drama. (Ch.23) "De Poetica", The Basic Works of Aristotle.

³Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 15, passim.

Paganism, which sculpted all its creations from the same silver, dwarfed the divinity and enlarged man. The heroes of Homer are almost of the same stature as the gods.¹ We can see how, to the contrary, Christianity profoundly separates the breath (souffle) from the matter. It puts an abyss between the soul and the body, an abyss between man and God. One must note that with Christianity and by it, a new sentiment was introduced to the spirit of the people, one unknown to the ancients and singularly developed among the moderns,--- a sentiment which is more than gravity and less than sadness: melancholy. The heart of man could now see things in a new light, since the gospel had shown him the soul across the sense, eternity behind his life.²

Christianity leads poetry to truth. Influenced by it, the modern Muse will see things in a higher and broader light. It will realize that everything in creation is not humanly beautiful, that the ugly exists beside the beautiful, the unshapely beside the graceful, the grotesque on the reverse

¹cf. Aristotle: "The objects the imitator represents are actions, with agents who are necessarily either good men or bad---the diversities of human character being nearly always derivative from this primary distinction, since the line between virtue and vice is one dividing the whole of mankind. It follows, therefore, that the agents represented must be either above our own level of goodness, or beneath it, or just as we are.... Homer's personages, for instance, are better than we are.... This difference it is that distinguishes Tragedy and Comedy also; the one would make its personages worse, the other better, than the men of the present day. (Ch. 2) "De Poetica", The Basic Works of Aristotle.

²Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 16-17 passim.

of the sublime, evil with good, darkness with light.¹ It will ask if the narrow, relative rights of the artist should prevail over the infinite, absolute rights of the Creator; if it is for man to correct God; if a mutilated nature will be the more beautiful for the mutilation; if art has the right to duplicate, so to speak, man, life, creation; if things will progress better when their muscles and their vigor have been taken from them; if, in short, to be incomplete is the best way to be harmonious. Then it is that, with its eyes fixed upon events that are both laughable and redoubtable, and under the influence of that spirit of Christian melancholy and philosophical criticism which we described, poetry will take a great step, a decisive step, a step which will change the whole face of the intellectual world. It will set about doing as nature does,² mingling in its creations---but without confounding them---darkness and light, the grotesque and the sublime; in other words, the body and the soul, the beast and the intellect; for the starting-point of religion is always the starting-point of poetry.³

It is from the fecund union of the grotesque type with

¹cf. Aristotle: "Poetry, however, soon broke up into two kinds according to the differences of character in the individual poets; for the graver among them would represent noble actions, and those of noble personages; and the meaner sort the actions of the ignoble. As soon...as Tragedy and Comedy appeared in the field, those naturally drawn to the one line of poetry became writers of comedies...and those naturally drawn to the other, writers of tragedies.... (Ch.⁴) "De Poetica", The Basic Works of Aristotle.

²Nature for Hugo is double, including the supernatural.

³Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 19, passim.

the sublime type that the modern genius is born. The grotesque has an immense role. On one side it creates the deformed and the horrible; on the other, the comic and the buffoon. The grotesque is, to us, the richest source which nature can open to art.¹

The day when Christianity said to man: "You are double, you are made up of two beings, one perishable, the other immortal, one carnal, the other ethereal, one enslaved by appetites, cravings and passions, the other borne aloft on the wings of enthusiasm and reverie...on that day the drama was created.² From this split of humanity and creation will come passions, vices, crimes. From it will come the luxurious, the rampant, the gluttonous, the miserly, the treacherous, the muddle-headed, the hypocritical. The beautiful has but one type, the ugly has a thousand.³ Antiquity couldn't have produced the Beauty and the Beast.⁴

The poetry born of Christianity, the poetry of our times, is thus the combination of two types, the sublime and the grotesque, the Comedy and the Tragedy.⁵ The true, complete

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 22-24.

²Hugo, Ibid., 32, passim.

³Hugo, Ibid., 25, passim.

⁴Hugo, Ibid., 27.

⁵cf. Aristotle, "As for Comedy, it is...an imitation of men worse than the average; worse, however, not as regards any and every sort of fault, but only as regards one particular kind, the Ridiculous, which is a species of the Ugly. The Ridiculous may be defined as a mistake or deformity not productive of pain or harm to others; the mask, for instance, that excites laughter, is something ugly and distorted without causing pain. (Ch. 5) "De Poetica".

poetry is the poetry of contraries. Contact with the deformed has given to the sublime something purer, grander, and more sublime than ancient beauty. This modern beauty will soon declare its rights, which are not to exclude the principle of ugliness, but to prevail over it.¹

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* *

"The damnation of this earth as a realm where nothing is possible to man but pain, disaster and defeat, a realm inferior to another, 'higher' reality; the damnation of all values, enjoyment, achievement and success on earth as a proof of depravity; the damnation of reason as a 'limited', deceptive, unreliable, impotent faculty, incapable of perceiving the 'real' reality and the 'true' truth; the split of man in two, setting his consciousness (his soul) against his body, and his moral values against his own interests; the damnation of man's nature, body and self as evil; the commandment of self-sacrifice, renunciation, suffering, obedience, humility and faith, as the good; the damnation of life and the worship of death---these are the necessary tenets of the Witch Doctor's view of existence...,² i.e., of Mysticism.

Ayn Rand thus rejects all mystic doctrines, and insists upon absolute reason as the sole means of knowledge. In The Fountainhead, she has a modern Mephistopheles, Ellsworth Monkton Toohey, (whose name rhymes with phooey and whose

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 25, passim.

²Rand, For the New Intellectual, The Philosophy of Ayn Rand (New York: Random House, 1961), 14.

initials, EMT, equal empty), give advice on how to destroy man's soul, i.e., his conceptual faculty:

Never deny anything outright, you give your hand away. Don't say reason is evil---though some have gone that far and with astonishing success. Just say that reason is limited. That there's something above it. What? You don't have to be too clear about it either. The field's inexhaustible. 'Instinct'---'Feeling'---'Revelation'---'Divine Intuition'---'Dialectical Materialism'. If you get caught at some crucial point and somebody tells you that your doctrine doesn't make sense---you're ready for him. You tell him that there's something above sense. That he must not try to think, he must feel. He must believe. Suspend reason and you play it deuces wild. ¹

Not only does Rand reject mysticism, but also original sin. When asked why the heroine of Atlas Shrugged was incapable of experiencing a feeling of fundamental guilt, Rand replied that by fundamental, she means, by nature. "It is the concept of original sin that my heroine, or I, or any Objectivist, is incapable of accepting or of ever experiencing emotionally. It is the concept of original sin that negates morality. If man is guilty by nature, he has no choice about it. If he has no choice, the issue does not belong in the field of morality. Morality pertains only to the sphere of man's free will---only to those actions which are open to his choice. To consider man guilty by nature is a contradiction in terms."²

This explains why none of Rand's heroes has a "tragic flaw", and all of them "act in a totally moral manner and

¹Rand, The Fountainhead, 630.

²Rand, "Playboy's" Interview with Ayn Rand, 5.

therefore would not accept an unearned guilt."¹ By moral manner, she means according to a chosen code of ethics based on reason. It is also in accordance with her view of man that she can object to the innate weakness or "tragic flaw" of Shakespeare's plays,² while Hugo can write a book in admiration of them. If there is a man who is depraved, it is "the man without a purpose."³ And being without purpose is not inherent in the nature of man; it is open to his choice and therefore a default in using his mind---after birth. Man "is free to make the wrong choice, but not free to succeed with it. He is free to evade reality, he is free to unfocus his mind and stumble blindly down any road he pleases, but not free to avoid the abyss he refuses to see."⁴

¹Rand, "Playboy's" Interview with Ayn Rand, 5.

²Rand, "The Esthetic Vacuum of Our Age", an address delivered at the University of Michigan, printed in The Objectivist Newsletter, November, 1962.

cf. Aristotle, "The perfect Plot...must have a single...issue; the change in the hero's fortune must be [in a Tragedy] from happiness to misery; and the cause of it must lie not in any depravity, but in some great error on his part." (Ch. 13) ...The subject represented is... an action; and the action involves agents, who must necessarily have their distinctive qualities both of character and of thought, since it is from these that we ascribe certain qualities to their actions. There are in the natural order of things, therefore, two causes, Thought and Character, of their actions, and consequently of their success or failure in their lives." (Ch.6) "De Poetica".

³Rand, Atlas Shrugged, 99.

⁴Rand, The Objectivist Ethics, 10.

By nature, then, man is born tabula rasa, with a potential to actualize the material he confronts on earth. "Man is born with an emotional mechanism, just as he is born with a cognitive mechanism; but, at birth, both are 'tabula rasa'. It is man's cognitive faculty, his mind that determines the content of both. Man's emotional mechanism is like an electronic computer, which his mind has to program---and the programming consists of the values his mind chooses. Man chooses his values by a conscious process of thought---or accepts them by default, by subconscious association, on faith, on someone's authority, by some form of social osmosis or blind imitation. Emotions are produced by man's premises, held consciously or subconsciously, explicitly or implicitly."¹

Whereas Hugo prefers the values love and pity, based on the attributes of God, Rand prefers thinking and productive work, based on the nature of man. "Value is that which one acts to gain and/or keep---virtue is the act by which one gains and/or keeps it. The three cardinal values of the Objectivist ethics---the three values which, together, are the means to and the realization of one's ultimate value, one's own life---are: Reason, Purpose, Self-Esteem, with their three corresponding virtues: Rationality, Productiveness, Pride."²

¹Rand, The Objectivist Ethics, 14.

²Ibid., 12.

Whereas Hugo would opt for Adam as a prototype of man, Rand would prefer Prometheus.¹ In Anthem, she has Equality 7-2521 and Liberty 5-3000 escape from a collectivist society to establish a free society of their own. Having come upon some books left from the "Unmentionable Times", they learn about the man who "took the light of the gods", "brought it to men", and "taught men to be gods". His name was Prometheus, which name Equality takes for himself. Liberty takes the name Gaea, the name of a goddess "who was the mother of the earth and of all the gods."²

Whereas Hugo would put God before the universe, consciousness before matter, "I think" before "I am", Rand reverses this to "I am. I think. I will,"³ which is consistent with her view that existence exists, that the universe is the First Cause.

Whereas Hugo arrives at a concept of freedom for man on earth, limited by God's will for universal salvation in the end, Rand rejects any determining force and declares absolute freedom as man's birthright. "But what is freedom? Freedom from what? There is nothing to take a man's freedom away from him save other men. To be free, a man must be free of his brothers. That is freedom. That and nothing else."⁴

¹It should be noted that Hugo also admired Prometheus, and named Aeschylus among the Geniuses of the past. Prometheus is also the "Other Voice" which Hugo inserted in the poem, Dieu, after his metaphysical crisis. However, Hugo subordinated him in favor of theism and the mystic Poet-Prophet. Levallant, La Crise Mystique de Victor Hugo, Ch. 12.

²Ayn Rand, Anthem (New York: The New American Library, 1961), 115.

³Ibid., 108.

⁴Ibid., 118.

"What is my joy if all hands, even the unclean, can reach into it? What is my wisdom, if even fools can dictate to me? What is my freedom, if all creatures, even the botched and impotent, are my masters? What is my life, if I am but to bow, to agree and to obey?"¹ "I guard my treasures: my thought, my will, my freedom. And the greatest of these is freedom."² "I ask none to live for me, nor do I live for any others. I covet no man's soul, nor is my soul theirs to covet."²

If art, then, is the concretization of the artist's views of the nature of the universe and of man, it is not difficult to understand why so many of Hugo's characters are monsters, criminals, and deformed beings (e.g., Quasimodo, Triboulet, Jean Valjean, Gwynplaine) while so many of Rand's are modeled similar to Greek gods and goddesses (e.g., Equality 7-2521, Liberty 5-3000, Peter Keating, Dominique Francon). Nor is it surprising that a large number of Hugo's works end with suicides and tragic endings (e.g. Hernani, Les Burgraves, Ruy Blas, Notre Dame de Paris, Les Miserables, L'homme Qui Rit, Les Travailleurs de la Mer, Quatre-Vingt-Treize, to mention only a few) while all of Rand's plays and novels have "happy endings", except the novel We the Living, in which she allows the heroine to be shot while trying to escape from Soviet Russia---in order that Russia might not escape the evil of a collectivist dictatorship. If Kira had escaped, Ayn explains

¹Rand, Anthem, 112.

²Ibid., 110.

in one of her lectures, the guilt of the dictatorship would have been erased. Consistent with the theme, the best character is destroyed and the worst survives.¹ One of her plays, "The Night of January 16th", may have a tragic ending or a happy one, depending upon the audience. The subject is that of a woman on trial, and the jury---taken from the audience---decides whether she is guilty or innocent according to the basic premises of the members.²

To illustrate, then, how the artists' metaphysical views of man and nature are concretized in their works, it will be sufficient to consider only two concise examples from the writings of Rand and Hugo. The first is Roark's Stoddard Temple.

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"So you see, Mr. Roark, though it is to be a religious edifice, it is also more than that. You notice that we call it the Temple of the Human Spirit. We want to capture---in stone, as others capture in music---not some narrow creed, but the essence of all religion. And what is the essence of religion? The great aspiration of the human spirit toward the highest, the noblest, the best. The human spirit as the creator and the conqueror of the ideal. The great life-giving force of the universe. The heroic human spirit. That is your assignment, Mr. Roark."

"Mr. Stoddard, I'm afraid you've made a mistake," he [Roark] said. "I don't think I'm the man you want. I don't think it would be right for me to undertake it. I don't believe in God."

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¹Rand, Lecture 17, Basic Principles of Objectivism.

²This play was produced at King College, Bristol, Tennessee, in 1958. Since I was a secretary to a lawyer in the play, I was present for the two productions. The first night, the heroine was found innocent, the second---guilty.

"That doesn't matter. You're a profoundly religious man, Mr. Roark---in your own way. I can see that in your buildings."

"That's true," said Roark. It was almost a whisper.

"I wish to call it God. You may choose any other name. But what I want in that building is your spirit. Your spirit, Mr. Roark. Give me the best of that---and you will have done your job.... Do not worry about the meaning I wish conveyed. Let it be your spirit in the shape of a building---and it will have that meaning, whether you know it or not."

The Temple was to be a small building of gray limestone. Its lines were horizontal, not the lines reaching to heaven, but the lines of the earth. It seemed to spread over the ground like arms outstretched at shoulder-height, palms down, in great, silent acceptance. It did not cling to the soil and it did not crouch under the sky. It seemed to lift the earth, and its few vertical shafts pulled the sky down. It was scaled to human height in such a manner that it did not dwarf man, but stood as a setting that made his figure the only absolute, the gauge of perfection by which all dimensions were to be judged. When a man entered this temple, he would feel space molded around him, for him, as if it had waited for his entrance, to be completed. It was a joyous place, with the joy of exaltation that must be quiet. It was a place where one would come to feel sinless and strong, to find the peace of spirit never granted save by one's own glory.

There was no ornamentation inside, except the graded projections of the walls, and the vast windows. The place was not sealed under vaults, but thrown open to the earth around it, to the trees, the river, the sun---and to the skyline of the city in the distance, the skyscrapers, the shapes of man's achievement on earth. At the end of the room facing the entrance, with the city as background,¹ stood the figure of a naked human body.

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¹Rand, The Fountainhead, 311-312, 326-327.

In his poem Dieu, Hugo realizes his metaphysics in art by demonstrating his view of universal salvation. According to it, even Satan himself will be pardoned. If one can make the equation Satan=Hugo=Man, as Ridge does,¹ this poem could be close to an allegory.

At the bottom of hell, Satan has discovered his true torture: he loves God. And God has responded to him thusly:

Viens.... J'efface la nuit sinistre et rien n'en reste.
Satan est mort; renais, ô Lucifer celeste!²

To understand how Satan is to rejoin God, Hugo must answer the question; who is God? As Satan begins his journey to heaven, various voices attempt to answer this. First, twenty-five voices, representing the "Human Spirit" speak in discordant definitions. Then "Another Voice", which is that of Prometheus, speaks. As Satan ascends the invisible ladder, a bat shrieks "There is no God", (Atheism); then an owl hoots "How can I know?" (Agnosticism). Higher up a crow caws "God is double", (Manicheism); next an eagle states "God is one", (Judaism). As Satan mounts, a vulture cries "God is three", (Christianity). Near the top, an angel says "God is man", (Rationalism, but Hugo's rationalism is mixed with Pantheism and he arrives at "God is all").³ As Satan jumps to the rung next to the top, the light itself responds "God is love", (Emotionalism). At the zenith stands a veiled figure who says:

¹George Ross Ridge, The Hero in French Romantic Literature (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1959), 104.

²"Come, I erase the sinister night and nothing remains, Satan is dead. Be born again, celestial Lucifer!" Le Fin de Satan, cited by Arland in the "Introduction" to Poesies, 17.

³Levaillant, La Crise Mystique de Victor Hugo, 32.

"Veux-tu, flèche tremblante, atteindre enfin la cible?
 Veux-tu toucher le but, regarder l'invisible?
 ...Le veut tu? Réponds."

---"Oui!" criai-je.

Et je sentis
 Que la création tremblait comme une toile;
 Alors, levant un bras et, d'un pan de son voile,
 Couvrant tous les objets terrestres disparus,
 Il me toucha le front du doigt,
 Et je mourus. ¹

¹"Do you want, trembling shaft, to attain the goal?
 Do you want to arrive at the top, to see the invisible?
 ...Is that what you want? Respond."

---"Yes!" I cried.

And I felt

The whole creation tremble as a drape;
 Then, raising an arm, with an edge of his veil,
 Covering all the vanished objects of earth,
 He touched my forehead with a finger,
 And I died.

Hugo, Dieu, cited by Arland, "Introduction" to Poesies, 17.

The impassioned quest is achieved, then, by an
 avowal of impotence, says Arland. Ibid., 17

"Monter, c'est s'immoler", to ascend is to sacrifice
 one's self, says Hugo. "Dolor", Les Contemplations, T.II, 208.

God's identity remains inaccessible to man, and
 Hugo---though he tried several times---was never able
 to find another ending for this poem. The printed edi-
 tion ends here, the last voice representing "God is death".

cf. Maurois, Olympio ou La Vie de V.H., 418.

cf. Roos, Les Idées Philosophiques de V.H., 98.

cf. Levailant, La Crise Mystique de V.H., 234.

ROMANTICISM VERSUS NATURALISM

Now art imitates nature by doing consciously and with full knowledge of why it is done, what nature does without awareness, without conscious intent or "purpose", without any "end-in-view", says Randall on Aristotle. Art imitates nature by doing better what nature is prevented from doing fully and completely. Hence art, in imitating what men's actions do to produce the desired emotion can do it much better and more effectively than can the actual or contingent actions of the men produced by nature and not by the poet. Hence the function of the poet is to describe, not what has actually happened, but rather the kind of thing that might happen, what is probable or necessary. Herodotus in verse would still be merely "history", not poetry; it would remain an account of particular facts, while poetry is of the nature rather of universals, or what such a man would probably or necessarily say or do.¹

Hugo, in agreeing with the Aristotelian views of the difference between history and fiction---in spite of his commingling of subjective ideas---writes in a vein which differentiates Naturalism from Romanticism. And it is this trait in particular which explains why Rand prefers Hugo to all other authors.

"Herodote fait l'histoire, Homère fait la légende",² writes Hugo in his "Preface" to La Légende des Siècles,

¹Randall, Aristotle, 290.

²"Herodotus makes history, Homer makes a legend"
Hugo, "Preface" to La Légende des Siècles (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1962).

a trilogy of which Dieu was intended to be the third work. In fact, Hugo goes so far as to state that history ought to be written in a more epic manner, "not from the miserable viewpoint of fact", but "from the viewpoint of principle."¹ The poet in reality does more than relate; he exhibits. Poets have within them a reflector, observation, and a condenser, emotion.² Nature and truth, far from demolishing art, offer a solid base from which the poet can begin. However, art should never be, as some have held, absolute reality.³

Rand agrees with this: "Art is not the means of literal transcription. This is the difference between a work of art and a news story or a photograph."⁴

If the poet should "come to take a subject from actual history", states Aristotle, "he is none the less a poet for that."⁵ But "one must not aim at a rigid adherence to the traditional stories on which...[the drama or novel] is based. It would be absurd, in fact, to do so...."⁵ "Poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. By a universal statement, I mean one as to what such or such a kind of man will probably or necessarily say or do---which is the aim of poetry...."⁵

¹Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt.III, Bk.III, Ch.III, 396.

²Ibid., Pt.II, Bk.I, Ch.II, 195.

³Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 47.

⁴Rand, "The Psycho-Epistemology of Art"

⁵Aristotle, "De Poetica", Ch. 9.

The liberty of the poet is thus more entire, and the drama gains scope at that point where history leaves off,¹ says Hugo, and he illustrates how absurd it would be to demand that everything be "natural".

Let us imagine, for example, one of those unreflecting promoters of absolute nature, of nature viewed apart from art, at the performance of Le Cid. "What's that?" he will ask at the first word. "The Cid speaks in verse? It isn't natural to speak in verse."---"How would you have him speak, pray?"---"In prose." Very good. A moment later, "How's this!" he will continue, if he is consistent; "The Cid is speaking French!"---"Well?"---"Nature demands that he speak his own language; he can't speak anything but Spanish."

We shall fail entirely to understand, but again, ---very good. You imagine this is all? By no means: before the tenth sentence in Castilian, he is certain to rise and ask if the Cid who is speaking is the real Cid, in flesh and blood. By what right does the actor, whose name is Pierre or Jacques, take the name of the Cid? That is false. There is no reason why he should not go on to demand that the sun should be substituted for the foot-lights....²

A dramatist is not a mirror nor a novelist a newspaper reporter. "Un romancier n'est pas un chroniqueur."³

The poet thus makes the universal pattern of nature clearer than nature unaided by art is able to do, "just as a good portrait-painter", says Aristotle, "reproduces the distinctive features of a man, and at the same time, without losing the likeness, makes him handsomer than he is."⁴

The drama or novel is not like an ordinary mirror, reflecting the dull image of nature, says Hugo. "Il faut

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 47.

²Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, The Harvard Classics, (New York: P.F. Collier & Sons, 1909), Translated by Charles W. Eliot, 385-386.

³Hugo, "La Muse Francaise", cited by Simaika, L'inspiration Épique, 14.

⁴Aristotle, "De Poetica", Ch. 15.

donc que le drame soit un miroir de concentration qui, loin de les affaiblir, ramasse et condense les rayons colorants, qui fasse d'une lueur une lumière, d'une lumière une flamme."¹
 Art must be a concentrating mirror which gathers and condenses the colored rays, turning a gleam into a light and a light into a flame. Art strives to reproduce actual facts, restores what the reporters have cut out, supplies their omissions with imaginary scenes, gives events a thread, dresses up the whole with a poetic and natural form, and imparts a prestige of reality to fiction through brilliancy and vitality of truth.²

Rand says in her lecture on esthetics, that the artist's view of existence reduces reality to essentials as he selects them. It integrates and concretizes man's value judgments. It says, in effect, this is what I found important in life; this is what life looked like to me.³ Consider the figure of Sinclair Lewis' Babbitt, she writes in "The Psycho-Epistemology of Art". "He is the concretization of an abstraction that covers an incalculable sum of observations and evaluations of an incalculable number of characteristics possessed by an incalculable number of men of a certain type. Lewis has isolated their essential traits and has integrated them into the concrete form of a single character---and when you say of someone: "He's a Babbitt", your appraisal includes, in

¹Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 48.

²Ibid., 48.

³Rand, Lecture 17, The Basic Principles of Objectivism.

a single judgment, the enormous total conveyed by that figure."¹

"Si le poète doit choisir dans les choses (et il le doit), ce n'est pas le beau, mais le caractéristique."² If the poet is to choose among things, (and he must), says Hugo, it is not the beautiful but the characteristic. Rand seconds this by way of The Esthetics of the Visual Arts. If a thing is soft or glassy, it should be described or painted so that "softness" or "glassiness", the essential characteristic, is felt or seen intensely. It is anti-art not to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential.³ She writes also that she sees "the novelist as a combination of prospector and jeweler. The novelist must discover the potential, the gold mine, of man's soul, must extract the gold and then fashion as magnificent a crown as his ability and vision permit."⁴

"The poet clarifies nature's pattern. He depicts things as they are, or as they are said to be, or as they ought to be---as they ought to be if nature's aim is to be fully realized"⁵, writes Randall on Aristotle. In Aristotle's own words, "The artist ought to improve on his model."⁶

"Let us contrast what ought to be with what actually is",⁷ says Hugo, in William Shakespeare.

¹Rand, The Objectivist Newsletter, April, 1965.

²Hugo, "Preface" to Cromwell, 49.

³Lecture 8.

⁴Rand, "The Goal of My Writing", Part I.

⁵Randall, Aristotle, 291.

⁶Aristotle, "De Poetica", Ch. 25.

⁷Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt.II, Bk.VI, Ch. IV, 327.

It is this principle of what "ought to be" that distinguishes the Romanticists from the Realists or the Naturalists¹, fiction from history, photography from painting, Hugo from the writers who followed him, and Rand from the writers of the present day. For Romanticists, fiction is not a "slice of life" but a portrayal of "life as it might be and ought to be". Without the metaphysical view that man can choose, select, and improve---that man has free will ---such a concept of art would be impossible.

For his statue of a nude woman which Roark placed in his Temple of the Human Spirit--- modeled after the heroine of The Fountainhead and later Roark's wife---Howard chose a sculptor who incorporated this Romantic principle in his work: "I think you're the best sculptor we've got. I think it, because your figures are not what men are, but what men could be---and should be. Because you've gone beyond the probable and made us see what is possible, but possible only through you. Because your figures are more devoid of contempt for humanity than any work I've ever seen. Because you have a magnificent respect for the human being. Because your figures are the heroic in man."²

¹Nathaniel Branden, in Who is Ayn Rand, comments on Realism and Naturalism in a footnote, 96: "Naturalism", as used here, includes schools of writing sometimes classified as "Realism" or "Social Realism," because the fundamental literary principles are identical. Zola attempted to distinguish his "Naturalism" from the "Realism" of Flaubert; but observe that all...comments are equally applicable to both writers; no literary historian has ever succeeded in drawing a basic distinction between their respective methods and approaches.

²Rand, The Fountainhead, 321.

In the "Goal of My Writing", Ayn comments on this passage. "Today, more than twenty years later, I would change---or, rather, clarify---only two small points. First, the words 'more devoid of contempt for humanity' are not too exact grammatically; what I wanted to convey was 'untouched' by contempt for humanity, while the work of others was touched by it to some extent. Second, the words 'possible only through you' should not be taken to mean that Mallory's figures were impossible metaphysically, in reality; I meant that they were possible only because he had shown the way to make them possible. 'Your figures are not what men are, but what men could be---and should be.' This line will make it clear whose great philosophical principle I had accepted and was following and had been groping for, long before I heard the name 'Aristotle'. It was Aristotle who said that fiction is of greater philosophical importance than history, because history represents things only as they are, while fiction represents them 'as they might be and ought to be.'"¹

It is true that what "ought to be" for Hugo is not often what "ought to be" for Rand. This, as has been demonstrated, is a result of their views of nature and man. However, Hugo seldom strays from painting his characters "larger than life" nor from attempting to ameliorate the environmental conditions in which he places them. About Les Misérables, he says:

¹Rand, "The Goal of My Writing", Part I.

"I'm not afraid to show the suffering and shame of the wretched. I have taken as characters a convict and a public woman but I have written this book with the constant thought of raising them from their wretchedness."¹

Concerning Les Travailleurs de la Mer, he writes: "I wished to glorify work, will power, devotion, all that makes man great...."² In spite of the fatalism prevailing in some of his later works, most of his early ones (e.g., Han D'Islande) show the wicked punished, the good rewarded, the noble triumphant, and the unjust finally conquered by the right and the truth. He generally attempts to fulfill the aim of a dramatic poet, which is, as he defines it in his "Preface" to Marie Tudor, "to search for the great, as did Corneille, for the true, as did Molière, or better yet, to attain both the great and the true...as did Shakespeare."³ He pays high tribute to Homer for similar reasons: "Homer is one of the men of genius who solve that fine problem of art---the finest of all perhaps---truly to depict humanity by the enlargement of man; that is, to generate the real in the ideal."⁴ "Men of genius, renewers---, that is the name for them."⁵

It is this epic sense of life which also characterizes the poetics of Ayn Rand. In her article "Bootleg Romanticism"

¹Hugo, cited by Simaika, L'Inspiration Épique, 113.

²Hugo, in a letter to Pierre Veron, Ibid., 118.

³Hugo, "Préface" to Marie Tudor, Preface de Cromwell suivie d'extraits d'autres Préfaces Dramatiques (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1949), 74.

⁴Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt.I, Bk.II, Ch.II, 43.

⁵Ibid., Pt.I, Bk.II, Ch.III, 82.

she states: "An abstraction has to be 'larger-than-life'--- to encompass any concretes that individual men may be concerned with, each according to the scale of his own values, goals and ambition."¹ Whereas the scale varies, she explains, the psychological relationships involved remain the same. A heroic projection of man and a triumphant affirmation of his control over existence inspires those who respond to this kind of art to fight for their own values in the conflicts of their own lives. Since the exploits of a hero are "always highly individualistic and un-social"², what people are seeking is not a leader or a protector but a personal confirmation of self-confidence and self-assertion,

The Romanticists of the nineteenth century did not present a hero "as a statistical average", Rand says, "but as an abstraction of man's best and highest potentiality, applicable to and achievable by all men, in various degrees, according to their individual choices."³ Rather than recording the legacies of their predecessors, the Romanticists "projected the events that should happen" and "the choices men ought to make".³ The literary assertion of man as a free being capable of determining his environment was first manifested in the nineteenth century.

Hugo affirms that this was true. "The thinkers of this time---poets, publicists, historians, orators, philosophers ---trace their lineage, every one, to the French Revolution.

¹Rand, The Objectivist Newsletter, January, 1965.

²Rand, Ibid.

³Rand, "The Esthetic Vacuum of our Age".

From it they descend, and from it alone. '89 demolished the Bastille; '93 discrowned the Louvre. Deliverance sprang from '89; victory from '93. '89 and '93---from that source issue the men of the nineteenth century..... They are liberators. They passed over from divine right to human rights."¹ Romanticism, he states in his "Preface" to Hernani, is nothing more than liberalism in literature. ("Le romantisme tant de fois mal défini n'est, à tout prendre, et c'est là sa définition réelle...que le libéralisme en littérature."²)

As the epitome of freedom, then, Romantic art is, in Rand's words, "the fuel and the spark plug of a man's soul; its task is to set a soul on fire and never let it go out."³ "I have read a great many novels of which nothing remains in my mind but the dry rustle of scraps long since swept away", she affirms, "but the novels of Victor Hugo, and a very few others, were an unrepeatable experience to me, a beacon whose every brilliant spark is as alive as ever."⁴

"Would you say that you are the last of the Romantists?", asks Toffler in his interview of Rand. "Or the first of their return...,"⁵ she replies. In her "Foreword" to We the Living, she classifies herself precisely: "I am

¹Hugo, William Shakespeare, Pt.III, Bk.III, Ch.I, 374.

²Hugo, "Preface" to Hernani. (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1951).

³Rand, "Art and Moral Treason", The Objectivist Newsletter, March, 1965.

⁴Rand, "The Goal of My Writing", Part II.

⁵Rand, "Playboy's" Interview with Ayn Rand, 11.

a Romantic Realist---distinguished from the Romantic tradition in that the values I deal with pertain to this earth and to the basic problems of this era."¹

"She is a Romantic Realist", clarifies Mr. Branden in "The Literary Method of Ayn Rand". "'Romantic'---because her work is concerned with values, with the essential, the abstract, the universal² in human life, and with the projection of man as a heroic being. 'Realist'---because the values she selects pertain to this earth and to man's actual nature, and because the issues with which she deals are the crucial and fundamental ones of our age."³ Further in the same chapter, he states: "Her work is an accomplished embodiment of Aristotle's definition of the proper function of literature. 'Things as they might be' is the principle of Realism: it means that fiction must stay within the bounds of reality, and not indulge in fantasies concerning the logically or metaphysically impossible. 'Things as they ought to be' is the principle of Romanticism: it means things objectively possible and proper to man, things which he can and ought to choose. She does not face man with the camera of a photographer as her tool, but with the chisel of a sculptor."⁴

¹Ayn Rand O'Connor, "Foreword", We the Living (New York: The New American Library, 1936).

²By universal she means: applicable to all men, but non-collective. cf. "The Psycho-Epistemology of Art".

³Nathaniel Branden, Who is Ayn Rand, 88.

⁴Ibid., 98.

"What I did", writes Rand, "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."¹

Many accusations that Rand is too Romantic, that her heroes are unlike the folks next door, that her stories are means of escape rather than confrontations with the "grind" of every-day life, caused her to ask: "An escape from what? If the projection of value-goals---the projection of an improvement on the given, the known, the immediately available ---is an 'escape', then medicine is an 'escape' from disease, agriculture is an 'escape' from hunger, knowledge is an 'escape' from ignorance, ambition is an 'escape' from sloth, and life is an 'escape' from death. If so, then a hardcore realist is a vermin-eaten brute who sits motionless in a mud puddle, contemplates a pigsty and whines that 'such is life'. If that is realism, then I am an escapist. So was Aristotle. So was Christopher Columbus."²

If a thing is not worth contemplating in life, it's not worth re-creating in art. Why should anyone care to admire pictures of dead fish or fat peasant women with triple chins? "The 'compassionate' studies of depravity---of dipsomaniacs,

¹Rand, cited by N. Branden, Who Is Ayn Rand, 98.

²Rand, "The Goal of My Writing", Part I.

drug addicts, murderers, psychotics---which pass for literature today are the dead end and the tombstone of Naturalism. If their perpetrators still claim the justification that these things are 'true' (most of them aren't)---the answer is that this sort of truth belongs in psychological case histories, not in literature. The picture of an infected ruptured appendix may be of great value in a medical textbook---but it does not belong in an art gallery. And an infected soul is a much more repulsive spectacle."¹

While the Naturalists regard Romanticists as superficial, the extent of their vision reaches the profundity of a garbage-can bottom, she continues. Rationality, purpose and values are contended to be naive, while sophistication, "they claim, consists of discarding one's mind, rejecting goals, renouncing values, and writing four-letter words on fences.... Scaling a mountain, they claim, is easy---but rolling in the gutter is a noteworthy achievement. Man's soul---they proclaim with self-righteous pride---is a sewer. Well, they ought to know."² "The trouble with the sewer school of art is that fear, guilt and pity are self-defeating dead-ends: after the first few 'daring revelations of human depravity', people cease to be shocked by anything...."³

¹Rand, "The Goal of My Writing", Part I.

²Rand, Ibid., Part II.

³Rand, "Bootleg Romanticism".

In her play, Ideal, she projects an unconventional, better-than-average actress whom some have objected to as being "not human enough". In drunken despair, the actress' press agent gives this release to the press: "'Kay Gonda does not cook her own meals or knit her own underwear. She does not play golf, adopt babies or endow hospitals for homeless horses. She is not kind to her dear old mother---she has no dear old mother. She is not just like you and me. She never was like you and me. She's like nothing you bastards ever dreamed of!"¹

The purpose and motive of Ayn Rand's writing is the projection of an ideal man or woman. If her works should teach or guide others, that is merely a "fringe benefit". Her basic test for a story is "'Would I want to meet these characters and observe these events in real life? Is this story an experience worth living through for its own sake? Is the pleasure of contemplating these characters an end in itself?'"² Romantic literature gives man the experience of living in a world where things are as they ought to be, she explains. "The importance of that experience is not in what he learns from it, but in that he experiences it," that he experiences "a moment of metaphysical joy---a moment of love for existence."³ An art work remains "an entity complete in itself, an achieved, realized, immovable fact

¹Ayn Rand, Ideal (unpublished to date), cited by Barbara Branden, Who is Ayn Rand, 176.

²Rand, "The Goal of My Writing", Part I.

³Rand, Ibid., Part II.

of reality---like a beacon raised over the dark crossroads of the world, saying: 'This is possible.'"¹

In the Romantic literature of Hugo, one finds heroes who are masters of themselves, conquerors of their circumstances, and fighters-to-the-death for their principles. In that of Rand, one finds essentially the same emphasis, with a greater accent on the fight for life. The difference between the death and life motifs lies, as has been shown, in their basic philosophical premises. Where Hugo was "unable to concretize the form in which his heroes could triumph on earth, and could only let them die in battle, with an unbroken integrity of spirit as the only assertion of their loyalty to life"², Rand takes her heroes through all the battles of life she can imagine and has them live victoriously---which is harder, she adds. "...Man has to live for, and when necessary, fight for, his values---because the whole process of living consists of the achievement of values. ...All values have to be gained and kept by man, and, if they are threatened, he has to be willing to fight and die, if necessary, for his right to live like a rational being. You ask me, would I be willing to die for Objectivism? I would. But what is more important, I am willing to live for it---which is much more difficult."³

¹Rand, "The Goal of My Writing", Part II.

²Rand, "Introduction" to Hugo's Ninety-three, xv.

³Rand, "Playboy's" Interview with Ayn Rand, 10-11.

It is primarily Hugo's fight for and loyalty to values that evoke Rand's admiration of him. Even though she may not agree with many of his value judgments, she sanctions his projection of the heroic in man. As she states in her introduction to his Ninety-three, "The emphasis he projects is not: 'What great values men are fighting for!' but: 'What greatness men are capable of, when they fight for their values!'"¹

"The romanticists were far from Aristotelian in their avowed beliefs; but their sense of life was the beneficiary of his liberating power. The nineteenth century saw both the start and the culmination of an illustrious line of great Romantic novelists. And the greatest of these was Victor Hugo."² The twentieth century sees the obituary of Naturalism and the commencement of the American³ Romantic Renaissance in art. And the greatest of these authors is Ayn Rand.

¹ Rand, "Introduction" to Hugo's Ninety-three, xii.

² Ibid., ix.

³ The limitation "American" here is not my view, but the view of the board of thesis approvers.

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