

DISCUSSION

Reply to the Critics of *Russian Radical 2.0*

The Dialectical Rand

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ABSTRACT: Sciabarra responds to critics of the second edition of his book, *Ayn Rand: The Russian Radical*: Wendy McElroy, who reviewed the book for *The Journal of Ayn Rand Studies* (July 2015), and Shoshana Milgram and Gregory Salmieri, whose most recent criticisms appear in *A Companion to Ayn Rand* (2016). Sciabarra defends both his historical and methodological theses, situating the book within a trilogy of works that define and defend “dialectical libertarianism,” which eschews utopian thinking and embraces a fully radical mode of inquiry. Sciabarra argues that dialectics—the art of context-keeping—figures prominently throughout Rand’s literary and philosophical corpus.

KEYWORDS: dialectics, libertarianism, radicalism, utopianism, Russian cultural history, social science methodology, Austrian economics, Marx, Aristotle, Branden

It is always very difficult to respond critically to a review of one’s work when the reviewer insists that the book is “brilliant and pathbreaking” (McElroy 2015, 114) and that it “inspire[s] thought on a fundamental level” (115). So says Wendy McElroy in her review of the second edition of *Ayn Rand: The Russian Radical* (Sciabarra [1995] 2013) on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the first edition’s publication. My response will be all the more poignant because my friend and colleague declares her “preference to discussing the

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profound implications of [my] work over a good New York pizza” (McElroy 2015, 115). This is obviously a scholar who gets her priorities straight. Nonetheless, friendly differences there will be, and discussing some of them in the following pages will allow me the opportunity to examine other recent discussions of my work by Shoshana Milgram and Gregory Salmieri, which are included in the Blackwell *Companion to Ayn Rand* (Gothelf and Salmieri 2016).

The Dialectics and Liberty Trilogy

When *Ayn Rand: The Russian Radical* was first published in 1995, it generated much controversy (see Sciabarra 1997) for its two novel claims: (1) that our appreciation of Ayn Rand and the emergence of her system of thought could be enhanced by grasping the context in which she grew to intellectual maturity in Silver Age Russia and (2) that one of the positive contributions that Rand inherited from her Russian forebears was the use of dialectics, a mode of inquiry that I have identified as “the art of context-keeping.”

McElroy (2015) finds that the second edition of the book still “rattles the cage doors of several traditions, including Objectivism and libertarianism” (107). She is absolutely correct that the book, as does the trilogy of which it is a part, “aims at nothing less than radically redefining the methodology of established traditions by analyzing the thought of key figures in terms of the dialectical method.” That “Dialectics and Liberty Trilogy” began with the publication of *Marx, Hayek, and Utopia* (Sciabarra 1995), which focused on the similarly constituted critiques of utopianism by two traditionally opposed intellectuals: Karl Marx and F. A. Hayek. For the latter especially, a constructivist utopian vision of libertarianism was doomed, and “the road to serfdom” was inevitable, in the absence of those personal and cultural factors necessary to sustain a free society.

The trilogy continued with *Russian Radical* and culminated in *Total Freedom: Toward a Dialectical Libertarianism* (Sciabarra 2000), which sought to rewrite the history of the dialectical tradition, showing that it was neither the birthright of Marxists nor the deadly bane of libertarians. In fact, I argued that “The Fountainhead” of this methodological orientation was Aristotle, the philosopher whom even Hegel, Marx, and Lenin declared to be the father of a mode of analysis that sought to understand the world systemically, in all its intricate relations, from different vantage points, on different levels of generality, and across time. Further, I argued, dialectics has been a tool used over the centuries by many defenders of liberty, even if they have not properly identified or understood it in those terms. I found it particularly ironic that, in light of Aristotle’s being the first theoretician of the dialectical orientation, Rand’s own

philosophical methodology revealed her to be even *more* of an Aristotelian than she herself may have recognized.

Toward that revisionist goal, I was convinced that it was extremely important to define the dialectical method and to carefully trace and identify its various manifestations and applications throughout intellectual history. That it took more than twenty years of research and three books published over a five-year period might be an indication of “amazingly ambitious and original work,” as McElroy (2015, 107) maintains, or pure folly, as some of my critics have suggested. What was important to me, however, was to start at the beginning, not just from a historical perspective, but from a definitional one as well. First, I traced the origins of dialectical method to the ancients, finding that its fullest theoretical formulation is apparent in the works of Aristotle (particularly, *The Topics*, but throughout the Aristotelian canon as well). By resituating the method in intellectual history, I aimed to provide it with an analytical integrity that allowed it to stand on its own, apart from those on the socialist left who have jealously claimed ownership rights over “their” methodology, and those on the conservative and libertarian right who summarily rejected dialectics precisely because of its association with socialism. I have always regarded this trilogy as a first step—a work in progress—for there is still so much more work to be done in developing this research project.

Defining Dialectics

Moving toward a formal definition of dialectical method, which I had characterized as the “art of context-keeping,” I turned to the work of Carl Menger, father of the Austrian school of economics who, like Rand, was profoundly influenced by Aristotle. It was Menger who grasped the larger genus of which dialectics was but one species. That genus, which I call “methodological orientation,” was characterized by Menger as an “orientation of research” (Menger [1883] 1985, 29). As I argue in *Total Freedom*, Menger provides us with a taxonomy for classifying different orientations of research, that is, “the different approaches that have been manifested throughout intellectual history, their ‘object [being] the determination of the types and the typical relationships of the phenomena’ we study (29). It is a *formal* designation; Menger suggests that the different orientations provide a ‘formal point of view from which the object is examined’” (Sciabarra 2000, 143).

Thus, I define the genus, methodological (or research) orientation, as “*an intellectual disposition to apply a specific set of broad ontological and epistemological presuppositions about objects of study and their typical relationships to particular fields of investigation*” (143), and I identify five species of orientations: strict atomism, dualism, dialectics, monism, and strict organicism. I place dialectics

at the center of a continuum in which strict atomism and strict organicism are at the extreme poles, with dualism and monism their derivatives, respectively (151). As such, I formally define dialectics as “an orientation toward contextual analysis of the systemic and dynamic relations of components within a totality” (173), but I devote considerable space in *Total Freedom* to an examination of each of the orientations, and the ways in which dialectics differs *essentially* from them. I also “unpack” the formal definition of dialectics in a section of chapter 4 of that book in order to more fully explore its implications (178–87). I think I can take editor’s privilege at this stage in referring to Roger E. Bissell’s reply to the critics of *Russian Radical 2.0* in the current issue of *The Journal of Ayn Rand Studies*, wherein he teases out many of those very implications. I should state for the record that Bissell’s reply was written and finalized long before I drafted my own essay, but I agree fully with the substance of his exegesis. (I am tempted to say that for those seeking clarification on any subjects not touched upon in my reply, please refer to Bissell 2017 herein above.)

It is understandable, however, that some readers, in their initial encounter with *Russian Radical*, walk away feeling as if they have entered a dialogue midstream. Indeed, this work was conceived as part of a trilogy that forms an “organic unity,” wherein each book is both a presupposition and an extension of the others.¹ But nothing helps us to more fully understand this highly abstract discussion of dialectics than an examination of how Ayn Rand used it and applied it.

The Historical Theses of *Russian Radical*

The central thrust of my historical exploration of Rand’s “Russian soul,” as McElroy (2015, 110) puts it, was to show that the particular place and time in which Rand was born was a significant factor in shaping her intellectual journey. Whether or not one accepts Rand’s recollections of having studied the history of ancient worldviews with the philosopher N. O. Lossky—and as Jennifer Burns (2009, 300 n. 15) emphasizes, it was *my book* that uncovered the “fragmentary, inconclusive, and contradictory” evidence that would connect Rand and Lossky—Rand’s education at the University of Petrograd exposed her to profoundly dialectical approaches in philosophy and social theory. Like every individual on earth, Rand was embedded in an intellectual and cultural context from which she could not fully extricate herself. No thinkers can so thoroughly yank themselves out of their historical context, not even those who question that context in fundamental terms as Rand surely did.

The virtue of including three appendices in the expanded second edition of *Russian Radical* is that they provide, in my view, incontrovertible proof that wherever Rand turned, she would have been exposed to teachers, courses, and textbooks that fully exploited and applied the dialectical method in virtually

every discipline of study. I was the first and am still the only person to have presented *evidence* of the actual courses that Rand took, along with *an analysis of the substance* that was brought to these courses by the professors who were among their most likely teachers.

In the first edition of *Russian Radical*, since I was unable to locate Rand's actual college transcript at the time, I had to limit myself to presenting an overview of the kinds of courses that she might have taken while in attendance at Petrograd University. It was only subsequent to the publication of the first edition of *Russian Radical* that I was able to secure two versions of the transcript detailing Rand's course of study,² and I presented my findings in two essays that first appeared in this journal: "The Rand Transcript" (Sciabarra 1999a) and "The Rand Transcript, Revisited" (Sciabarra 2005), which now constitute Appendix I and Appendix II, respectively, of the second edition.

Appendix III, an examination of which is absent from McElroy's review, provides a newly written response to a recent critic of my historical work: Shoshana Milgram, once identified by the Ayn Rand Institute as Rand's "authorized" biographer.³ In a chapter she wrote for the second edition of Robert Mayhew's edited collection, *Essays on Ayn Rand's "We the Living,"* Milgram (2012) attains the distinction of being the first scholar affiliated with the Ayn Rand Institute to actually examine my work seriously and to largely confirm my historical findings, despite some criticisms. Looking at the evidence, she mentions potential professors who may have taught some of the courses listed in the transcript, among them, several teachers that I too have identified in my examination of the historical record: N. A. Gredeskul, E. V. Tarle, N. I. Kareev, and L. P. Karsavin (86).

Her central difference with me is that she seizes upon what Burns characterizes as the "fragmentary, inconclusive, and contradictory" evidence that I uncovered on the Rand-Lossky relationship to come up with an alternative thesis: Rand's naming of Lossky as the teacher of the ancient philosophy course was a mistake or a "confusion" on Rand's part (Milgram 2016, 38 n. 9). Milgram argues that the most likely teacher of that course was Aleksandr Ivanovich Vvedensky, chair of the philosophy department at the University of Petrograd.

Challenging the Milgram Hypothesis

In her 2012 essay, Milgram quotes from interview #6 (recorded on 2 January 1961) of Rand's biographical interviews, which were conducted by both Nathaniel Branden and Barbara Branden in 1960–61 (Frank O'Connor also being in attendance at this particular interview). She transcribes Rand's recollections:

In the first year, we had a special course on Ancient Greek philosophy, with which philosophy had to start, naturally. And the pre-Socratics I barely

remember. I think they probably spent a couple [of] chapters on them. But the whole course was a very detailed study of Plato and Aristotle. And there . . . the equivalent of a semester was the whole year, from Fall to Spring. So it was a very good and difficult detailed course, because we really had to know them thoroughly. (Rand quoted by Milgram 2012, 89)

The Name of Rand's Course on Ancient Philosophy

There are four main issues raised by Rand's recollections. First, there is the issue of the name of the course. Milgram confirms that the transcript reflects Rand's own recollections, given that Rand states "she took the course in her first year, i.e., 1921–1922, and a course listed seventh would belong to the first of three years, assuming that the courses are listed in approximate order. The title of the course appears to be a new version of the traditional title, 'Istoriai drevnei filosofii' (History of Ancient Philosophy), under which the course appears in earlier years" (106 n. 12).

As I have detailed in my studies, and as Milgram confirms, the new course title was "History of Worldviews (Ancient Period)" (89; see also Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 366). I have emphasized numerous times, however, that the change in the course title is *crucial* to this historical episode. According to all available records, the course in ancient philosophy, as taught by Vvedensky, was never offered under that title. Moreover, soon after this course was offered at Petrograd University, Lossky himself authored a work titled *Types of Worldviews*, in which he "examined metaphysics as the central philosophical discipline, and classified metaphysical systems from the ancients to the moderns" according to their various premises (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 370). Taking these points together, the fact that the term "worldviews" shows up in none of Vvedensky's courses on ancient philosophy, which he taught variously between 1890 and 1918, but that it is contained in both the course title and the title of the Lossky monograph, published about eighteen months after the young Ayn Rand was in attendance, is at least a key piece of circumstantial evidence that weighs heavily against Milgram's thesis. She has never dealt with this issue in either her 2012 essay or her more recent 2016 essay in the Blackwell *Companion to Ayn Rand*.

The Length of the Course on the History of Worldviews (Ancient Period)

Second, there is the issue of the length of the course. Rand states that the course was the "equivalent of a semester . . . the whole year, from Fall to Spring." But this can be interpreted variously as being a full academic year or as the "equivalent" of a full academic year compacted into a single semester. Regardless of the imprecise character of Rand's statement, there are at least two different versions

of Rand's college transcript available, and though some of the later courses are ordered slightly differently in the two, the first seven courses appear in precisely the same order in *both* versions of the transcript. Neither version of the transcript lists *any* course as a yearlong study; in fact, if we can assume that the courses are listed in approximate chronological order, as Milgram (2012, 106 n. 12) herself acknowledges, a course listed seventh would place it squarely in Rand's first year at the university, and, in my view, precisely in the spring 1922 semester of that academic year.

In her 2012 essay, Milgram herself vacillates on this matter: on the one hand, she recognizes that from 1896 through 1918, when the course on the "History of Ancient Philosophy" was offered, it was taught by Vvedensky. But it was offered in both single-semester and yearlong configurations. Even so, we are concerned specifically with the 1921–22 academic year, and *there is no evidence in the transcript or in any existing university records that shows the "History of Worldviews" course to be anything other than a single semester*. Even Rand's "special courses" and "seminars" in history, her major area of study, are listed as single-semester courses.

On the other hand, in her biographical essay, "The Life of Ayn Rand: Writing, Reading, and Related Life Events," which appears in the Blackwell *Companion to Ayn Rand*, Milgram (2016) states flatly that Rand's "favorite class from the first year was a full-year course in ancient philosophy, focused on Plato and Aristotle" (23). Yet, in the endnote corresponding to this sentence, Milgram (2016, 38 n. 9) provides no additional evidence that would remotely confirm the course as a yearlong study. Instead, she merely repeats what she stated in her previous essay (and refers specifically to "Milgram 2012, esp. 92–94"). With referential circularity, Milgram retains this hypothesis in order to disqualify Lossky as the course teacher because she knows—from the evidence that I unearthed in the first edition of *Russian Radical* (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 80–85)—that Lossky was very ill in the fall semester, and therefore, could not have taught a yearlong course. I find it ironic that while Milgram rejects Rand's own recollection of *who* taught the course in question, nevertheless she does rely on a questionable interpretation of Rand's ambiguously stated comments *in the same interview*, which proposes that a likely single-semester course ran the full academic year.

The Course Textbooks

Third, there is the issue of the course textbooks. Milgram (2016) writes: "The textbook, which [Rand] described as 'a very detailed study of Plato and Aristotle,' was most likely *Lektsii po drevnejf [sic] ilosofii* [Lectures on Ancient Philosophy] (St. Petersburg: University of St. Petersburg, 1911–1912) by

Aleksandr Ivanovich Vvedenskij [also transliterated Vvedensky] (1856–1925)” (38 n. 9). It is not entirely clear, however, from Milgram’s own transcription of interview 6 above, that Rand was characterizing the *textbook* as a “very detailed study of Plato and Aristotle.” Rand actually states that the “*whole course* was a very detailed study of Plato and Aristotle” (emphasis mine). Milgram adds that Wilhelm Windelband’s *History of Ancient Philosophy* was also “recommended . . . as a supplement to the [Vvedensky] textbook,” but this comment does not address my contention that Lossky himself used Windelband’s works in his own courses on the history of philosophy; Windelband was Lossky’s mentor, and Lossky held his work in high esteem (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 40, 396).

Coming to Grips with Rand’s Recollections

Fourth, and most important, Milgram must deal directly with Rand’s recollection of Lossky, specifically, as her teacher. She writes: “Vvedenskij, who was the chair of the department, probably . . . taught the course (as he often did). Rand later remembered the teacher as having been Nikolaj Onufrevich Losskij (also transliterated Lossky) [1870–1965],⁴ but this is likely a confusion, since the description Rand gave of the teacher’s career, age, appearance, demeanor, and scholarly expertise is more consistent with its having been Vvedenskij.” On these points, she again simply refers readers back to her essay in the Mayhew (2012) collection (Milgram 2016, 38 n. 9).

Let’s address these claims systematically. Milgram states that Rand’s description of the professor in question is inconsistent with Lossky’s appearance and demeanor. Her description seems to differ from a 1922 photograph of Lossky that I provide in *Russian Radical* (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 390). Rand tells us that the professor was an elderly man with “white hair” (Milgram 2012, 93), even though he was only fifty-two years old in the spring of 1922. While Milgram provides no contrasting photograph of Vvedensky, it should be noted that in the Lossky photograph, it is true that he doesn’t have white hair—in fact, he doesn’t have much hair at all. He is described by relatives as having auburn hair and “piercing blue eyes”—like those of the character Professor Leskov, omitted from Rand’s published version of *We the Living* (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 389), but possibly inspired by Rand’s recollections of Lossky. In the 1922 photograph, it is clear that Lossky has a graying beard and looks quite haggard, certainly much older than a man in his early fifties. He had been deathly sick in the fall 1921 semester, which left him looking frail and much older. If that illness had not aged him, then being routinely targeted by Soviet authorities, and interrogated by the GPU, certainly would have had an effect on both his appearance and temperament.

Additionally, let us not forget that Lossky had been barred by these same authorities from teaching at the university proper, and he gave his last Petrograd

courses at the university annex, the Institute of Scientific Research (81). He was extremely bitter about having been barred from the university proper because of his outspoken anti-Bolshevik views. He did not have a reputation for being a “holy terror,” as Rand described the professor, but his bitterness surely must have affected his mood and perhaps even his attitudes toward students in general. He had deep contempt for the “dogmatic, simplistic Marxist-Leninists” and Bolshevik students who attended his classes, according to the testimony of his historian sons Andrew and Boris, his grandson Nicolas Lossky, and the philosopher George L. Kline, a specialist in Russian and Soviet intellectual history (80; 415 n. 49). Historian Peter Konecny reminds us, as I explain in Appendix I of *Russian Radical*, “that Lossky had been quite angry at those boisterous radical students, who, he claimed, ‘were from another planet.’ Still, says Konecny, Lossky ‘argued that despite the “revolutionary fanatics” who constantly corrected him during lectures, he was able to enrich the minds of many young students with the same material he had used for many years’” (368–69).

My research on Lossky led me to discover and substantiate the attendance of Rand in the Stoiunin gymnasium (65–67; 367–69), founded and run by Lossky’s in-laws, and, as Milgram (2012) herself mentions, “located on the lower floors of the building where Loskii and his family lived” (109 n. 23). *Russian Radical* was the first work to record the recollections of Lossky’s son Boris, who believed that, given the evidence I had unearthed, it was “perfectly possible” (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 369) that Rand had studied with his father in this specific course on the history of worldviews in the ancient period. Boris remembered students visiting their home during this time of troubles—which would lend credence to Rand’s testimony that she took her final examination not at the university proper, from which Lossky was barred, but in the professor’s home study.

Despite these revelations, Milgram (2012) still dismisses Rand’s own recollections of Lossky. She claims that Rand “had an excellent memory in many respects,” but that she sometimes didn’t retain names. As an example, she claims that Rand didn’t remember the name of the author [Maurice Champagne] of a book she read, *The Mysterious Valley*, when she was nine years old. *But that’s quite a difference from Rand’s memory of an actual person with whom she interacted at age seventeen.* Milgram states further:

Judging from the questions she was asked in [the Branden Biographical] interview, she had previously referred to him only as “the Platonist professor.” The name Losskii, however, was familiar to her from her attendance at the Stoiunin Gymnasium, founded by his in-laws. . . . She had also seen Losskii’s name in print. In the biographical interview, she comments: “I have even seen books by him [the man she believed

was her former professor] advertised here in the *New York Times Book Review*, translated.” Losskii’s *History of Russian Philosophy* (New York: International Universities Press, 1951) was reviewed in *New York Times Book Review* by Sidney Hook (December 9, 1951). I believe that seeing the review may have led her to substitute a name she had seen in print for the name of her actual professor. . . . It is more likely that she substituted a name she had seen recently [Ed.: in an interview she gave nearly a decade after the Hook review appeared!] for a name she had not heard or thought of for nearly four decades. (109–10 n. 23)

Lossky versus Vvedensky

My reply to Milgram in Appendix III of the second edition leaves her unmoved; she remarks in her 2016 essay: “Chris Matthew Sciabarra, who believes that Losskij was a formative influence on Rand, comments on my observations about Losskij and Vvedenskij . . . but he continues to maintain, without resolving the discrepancies between Rand’s descriptions and Losskij, that she was probably correct to name him as the teacher” (Milgram 2016, 38–39 n. 9).

It should be noted that in my analysis of Rand’s college transcripts, I do name Vvedensky as a professor with whom Rand most likely studied, since the course on logic that she took in her first semester at the university (Fall 1921) was almost always taught by the chair of the department. But Vvedensky, whom Milgram herself admits had had a rocky relationship with Lossky, also routinely recommended Lossky to his students in their fulfillment of degree requirements (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 369; information provided by Lossky’s son Boris in phone interview, 9 January 1999).

Milgram’s one-sentence dismissal of my discussion of her thesis does not confront any of the issues that I raise in Appendix III of *Russian Radical 2.0*. She has not dealt with the fact that Vvedensky was *never* considered either a “Platonist professor” or an “international authority on Plato,” but was, in fact, the chief disciple of neo-Kantianism in Russian philosophy. He is the first neo-Kantian mentioned by V. V. Zenkovsky (1953) in his chapter on “Neo-Kantianism in Russian Philosophy” from his two-volume work *A History of Russian Philosophy* (677–84). Nowhere in Zenkovsky’s portrait is there even a mention of any Platonist elements in Vvedensky’s thought or any alleged status as an “international authority on Plato.”

Far more revealing, however, is Lossky’s treatment of Vvedensky in his own *History of Russian Philosophy*:

Apart from this struggle against Kant, there arose in Russia during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, quite a number of champions of

neokantianism. The chief representative of this movement is Alexander Ivanovich Vvedensky (1856–1925), who was professor at the Petersburg University from 1890 to the end of his life. *All of Vvedensky's works and all his courses, devoted to logic, psychology and the history of philosophy, definitely reflect a philosophical thought based on Kant's criticism.*

Vvedensky did not only possess a precise and clear mind, he was also endowed with exceptional gifts as a teacher. Many thousands of students attended his classes at the University, The Higher Women's Courses and at the Military Law Academy, and he inspired them with his ideas with extraordinary strength. Basing himself on *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Vvedensky became a representative of a specific form of neokantism, which he called logicism. He founded epistemology, as the science of the limits of human reason, on logic, by means of a theory concerning inferences and the methods of proving general synthetic judgements. (Lossky 1952, 163; emphasis mine)⁵

Note the sentence I've emphasized here; Vvedensky was such an exemplar of neo-Kantianism that *even his courses on logic, psychology, and the history of philosophy were given through a neo-Kantian lens*. Surely this has to weaken Milgram's characterization of Vvedensky as a "famous Platonist."

By contrast, having reread the relevant sections of Zenkovsky's work on Russian philosophy, I was struck by his own characterization of Lossky's epistemology as having been influenced by "the doctrine of the 'beholding of ideas' [Ed.: or "Forms"]—in Plato's sense" (Zenkovsky 1953, 670). He suggests that in Lossky's "doctrine of 'intellectual intuition,'" there are important Platonist elements. Zenkovsky sees Lossky, the "dean of contemporary Russian philosophers," as "almost the only Russian philosopher who has constructed a system of philosophy in the strictest sense of the word" (658). Zenkovsky's suggestion of Platonist elements in "the dialectic of Lossky's philosophic system" (668) is further substantiated by Nikolai Starchenko. Starchenko (1994) emphasizes that in Lossky's self-characterized "organic understanding of the world," "any object had two inseparable aspects"—"real being" and "ideal being." In this fashion, Starchenko contends, Lossky has concretized a "hierarchical dichotomous picture of being revived from Plato" (659). He quotes from Lossky's 1927 work, *The Freedom of the Will*, where Lossky argues explicitly in favor of a combination of "the Leibnizian doctrine of monads as substances with the doctrine of ideal elements in the spirit of Platonism" (quoted; 660). While I am not persuaded that this would qualify Lossky as a "famous Platonist," and while I stand by my own analysis of the significant Aristotelian elements in Lossky's philosophic thought (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 45–50), this "spirit of Platonism" may very well have been apparent to Rand, influencing her view

of him as a Platonist. For I am reminded of the observations of George Kline (translator of the Zenkovsky volumes) that Lossky always imbued his courses with his own interpretive slant, which contributed to the trouble he had with the Bolshevik authorities. As I remark in *Russian Radical*, Kline observes that even “in his courses in New York in the early 1950s, Lossky would present the systems of Plato or Kant or Hegel, and then, quite habitually, would add, ‘But I affirm that . . .’—a preface to his own perspective on the issues” (370).

Milgram (2012) is correct that Vvedensky too “found himself in some political jeopardy, because of his mockery of the Bolshevik students” (94). But it is also true that, as Lesley Chamberlain (2006) has put it, “[e]very generation has its godless opportunists and the one in Lossky’s midst was a moral philosopher . . . called Professor Alexander Vvedensky” (19–20). Vvedensky made his peace with the Bolsheviks so as to avoid the voyage into exile taken by Lossky and many of their other intellectual colleagues aboard “the philosophy steamer.” Vvedensky retained his chair of the philosophy department and continued teaching until his death in 1925.

Rand on Lossky

Since this fourth issue—Rand’s firsthand recollections of Lossky—is so important, I think it is crucial to hear more from Rand herself. In interview 6 (2 January 1961), Rand’s memories are decisive; for example, she remembers precisely the department in which she enrolled, which is clearly identified in her college transcripts as the Department of Social Pedagogy—or more broadly the Social Pedagogical Division of the Faculty (or College) of the Social Sciences, which had united the existing schools of history, philology, and law (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 70–72)—designed, she recalled correctly, to prepare students for careers as teachers. The social science division integrated “the historical and philosophical disciplines . . . to prepare students for careers as social science educators” (363). She decided to focus more on the study of history than on pedagogical preparation; she remembers clearly that this was a three-year degree.

In my own transcription notes on interview 6, Rand states that she thinks the first name of the professor was “Nikolai.”⁶ She adds: “Nikolai Lossky, I remember the last name *very well*.” She is *emphatic* in her statement, and adds, as Milgram acknowledges, that she has seen translations of his books advertised in the *New York Times Book Review*. After telling the now famous story of her interactions with Lossky, she is asked by Nathaniel Branden: “Do you happen to know the spelling of his name?” Rand replies: “I think in those days, it is spelled L-o-s-k-i, not y. but . . .”—and Branden interrupts her, reminding her that the “y” is “optional, of course, in America,” something with which she agrees. He reiterates with a question: “Nikolai?” To which Rand replies: “I think Nikolai, but you

better look it up in the public library, they probably would have it. I'm pretty sure it's N. Loski, you see." Nathaniel Branden emphasizes that it is "worth using the actual name if it's a Platonist scholar or teacher, you know." When Barbara Branden wrote her authorized biography of Rand—the title essay of *Who Is Ayn Rand?*—the public library visit must have paid off, because she spelled the professor's name correctly transliterated as "Lossky" (Branden 1962, 164–65).

Rand went so far as to say that with the exception of this course with Lossky, she didn't recall any other professors of interest, though she alludes to only one other whose name she does not provide, but who taught French history—perhaps Nikolai Ivanovich Kareev or E. V. Tarle, both of them eminent historians in the department, as I have documented previously (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 75, 374–78).

What is clear, therefore, is that Rand is *unequivocal* in her remembrance of Lossky, and he is the only professor whose name she literally spells out to the Brandens in their biographical interviews. Since Rand's identification of Lossky as her philosophy professor, the story has been repeated by Barbara Branden twice—in the title essay of *Who Is Ayn Rand?* (Branden 1962), and in her biography, *The Passion of Ayn Rand* (1986, 42). It must be emphasized that the former work first appeared in print as the only authorized biography of Rand during the author's lifetime (and during Lossky's lifetime as well, since the Russian philosopher did not die until 1965), part of a book that Rand approved for publication and that she continued to sanction even after her 1968 break with the Brandens. According to Rand, the book remained among "the *only* authentic sources of information on Objectivism" (quoted in Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 395). It is hard to believe that Rand, a thinker who always extolled the virtue of accurately identifying the facts of reality, would have claimed in a 1961 biographical interview to have had such connections to Lossky, and then allowed them to be publicized in a 1962 biographical essay, if she were not firm in her recollection—especially during a period when her former professor was living in the city Rand herself had called home. Indeed, Lossky actually lived and worked at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York City, on 121st Street and Broadway, from 1946 until October 1961, when he entered a Russian nursing home near Paris (42). Furthermore, regardless of the fact that she was no longer identified by her birth name, Alissa Zinovievna Rosenbaum (23), any of Lossky's thousands of students or scores of relatives could have read her recollections and attempted to debunk them, but none did.

Nor was the Rand-Lossky relationship simply an asterisk in Barbara Branden's 1962 authorized biography or in her 1986 independent biography. The story of their relationship was later reiterated by Harry Binswanger in his biographical lecture series, *Ayn Rand's Life: Highlights and Sidelights* (Binswanger [1993] 1994, tape 2, side B, Q&A, and on page 2 of the accompanying pamphlet).

Binswanger repeats the story, with additional details provided by Leonard Peikoff, in Michael Paxton's Oscar-nominated documentary, *Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life*, and in its companion book (Paxton 1998). In fact, Paxton's film shows us a photo of Lossky provided by Lossky's son Boris (something that I facilitated through my contacts with Boris; I am credited in the documentary as a "Research Assistant"). As Binswanger tells us: "When she was a college student at the University of Leningrad at age nineteen or twenty, she took a course in ancient philosophy from Professor Lossky, who was a distinguished expert in the field of ancient philosophy. When it came time for her to take her final exam, he asked her questions almost exclusively about Plato and none about Aristotle. Of course, she despised Plato, even then . . ." (in Paxton 1998, 42). Leonard Peikoff then appears on screen and continues to relate the story: "And he said to her, 'You don't seem to agree with Plato,' implying, ' . . . well, what are your views?' And her answer was, 'My views are not yet part of the history of philosophy, but they will be'" (42). Binswanger then interjects: "So, that was another example. Both of her objectivity—that she didn't want to argue with a Platonist about the merits of Plato and Aristotle, being just a student—her independence—that it didn't bother her that he disagreed and she wasn't out to sell him on her views—and of her ability to counter the male prejudice that existed in that Victorian society against women intellectuals" (43). The Lossky story is also reported by Anne Heller in her 2009 biography, *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* (Heller 2009, 17–18; 432 n. 41; 434 n. 47), along with much more detailed information about Rand's education at the Stoiunin gymnasium (run by Lossky's in-laws) from 1914 to 1917. So it would appear that Milgram is up against not only Rand and Sciabarra, but the historical record as interpreted by Binswanger, Peikoff, Paxton, and Heller as well.

In the end, I believe that the preponderance of the evidence comes down on the side of Rand's recollections. Milgram cherry-picks the recollections she interprets as consistent with her hypothesis (that, for example, Rand's characterization of the length of the course might suggest that it lasted the full academic year) and rejects those recollections that she considers as inconsistent with her thesis (such as Rand's unequivocal identification of the actual name of the professor who taught the course on the history of ancient worldviews). As I have said, Milgram has introduced "a significant element of uncertainty into the way future scholars might begin to assess the accuracy of Rand's recollections expressed in her own biographical interviews" (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 398–99).

Nevertheless, as I have emphasized numerous times, my own view of Rand as having been educated in the methods of dialectical inquiry does not depend upon her presumed relationship with Lossky or with any other single professor, for her transcript shows that in virtually every course, she would have encountered teachers and textbooks steeped in dialectical methodology.

The Salmieri Critique

While I have always maintained that Rand was a dialectical thinker, I have suggested that she would not have characterized herself as such, given her own personal history. My view of “the integrative nature of Rand’s thought and its relation to her political radicalism” as an outgrowth of the “tradition of radical, Russian ‘dialectical’ thinkers” is criticized by Gregory Salmieri (2016, 313 n. 104) in his essay on “The Objectivist Epistemology,” in the Blackwell *Companion to Ayn Rand*. He is worth quoting at length:

Sciabarra is knowledgeable about Rand’s corpus, occasionally perceptive about aspects of her thought, and obviously correct that system-building and political radicalism are more characteristic of the Russian thinkers he cites than of mainstream twentieth-century Anglo-American thought.⁷ But twentieth-century Anglo-American thought is idiosyncratic in this respect. Historically, almost all philosophers of stature were system-builders, and many took radical political stances that they saw as based on their systems. Certainly this is true of the thinkers of the Enlightenment. (Spinoza is a particularly obvious case, but this is true too of Locke, and of many eighteenth-century French and American thinkers.) Moreover, these facts about historical philosophers are stressed in the histories of philosophy that Rand read by Windelband and Fuller. . . . The features Rand has in common with Sciabarra’s Russian dialecticians could have been absorbed from any number of sources, or (more likely) from the general cultural heritage that all educated people share. It goes without saying that growing up in Russia in the time and place Rand did had an effect on which works and ideas she was exposed to at which times and that this must have had some influence on her thought. So a detailed study of how she processed these inputs at different stages in her development would be of great interest. But this is not what Sciabarra provides. His book is long on comparisons between Rand and obscure authors of whom she probably never heard, but breezes quickly over many thinkers whom she is known to have read or conversed with (e.g., Hugo, Dostoevsky, von Mises, Blanshard, Isabel Paterson, H. L. Mencken, Ortega y Gasset, etc.) and who share at least some of the features that Sciabarra finds in both Rand and the dialecticians. Moreover, Rand lacks the central “dialectical” feature he claims to find in her thought: “a revolt against formal dualism.” For as Lennox (1996) observes, though Rand rejects some dichotomies (as do most thinkers of stature), she defends or introduces others. (Salmieri 2016, 313–14 n. 104)⁸

Salmieri raises a number of significant objections, and I'd like to provide as detailed a reply as one can within the context of an essay, though a part of me would like to simply offer my "Dialectics and Liberty" trilogy as a response, because I address virtually every point he raises in the above passage in the totality of this project.⁹

I think that the claim that any thinker might have been influenced in a significant way by the particular time and place in which she grew to intellectual maturity is a fairly innocuous one. Even Salmieri acknowledges here that "[i]t goes without saying that growing up in Russia in the time and place Rand did had an effect on which works and ideas she was exposed to at which times and that this must have had some influence on her thought," but he claims that I do not provide "a detailed study of how she processed these inputs at different stages in her development." I submit that it would be *impossible* for anyone to have published a study as detailed as that. Essential to such a study, at the very least, would have been evidence supplied in journals that Rand would have kept during her college years, but by Rand's own admission, she destroyed all of her Russian philosophic journals before emigrating to America for "she knew that it could mean imprisonment at best" if her "heretical views were discovered in Communist Petrograd" (Branden 1986, 38). Such journals might have included not only information about her budding interest in fiction writing, but detailed discussions of her college studies and the tumultuous events of the time. Unfortunately, the only extant journal from the period remains her movie diary, which she left behind, unburned, in Russia. "However," as editor Michael S. Berliner explains, "upon her request, her younger sister, Nora, meticulously copied every entry and enclosed the information in a letter sent to Miss Rand one month after she left Leningrad. Ayn Rand then recopied it into a booklet and continued her diary into 1929" (Berliner 1999, 111). Her movie diary shows only a single entry from 1922, the year she would have taken the course on the history of ancient worldviews, and only two additional entries from her second year at the university. I think she was too steeped in her college studies in her first two years—and perhaps writing rather extensively in those intellectual journals she ultimately destroyed—to have visited the cinema much. In fact, it is only in the last four months of her college education that one sees a sizeable uptick in her film entries.

Absent such intellectual journals from her Russian years, I did the next best thing. I provided a broad picture of the intellectual landscape of the Silver Age Russian culture in which Rand came to intellectual maturity: the dialectical themes of systemic and dynamic radical analysis prevalent in the revolutionary tracts of the day, the distinctively Russian use of literary means for delivering powerful philosophic ideas, and even the profound impact of Nietzsche on Marxist and non-Marxist Russian thought. I paid

special attention to the relationship of Nietzsche and Dostoevsky—both of whom deeply influenced the young Rand (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 33, 76–78, 174, 460 n. 7)—and to the Nietzschean motif found in the work of a wide variety of writers, from Rand’s favorite poet, Aleksandr Blok (31–32; 77; 460 n. 7), to early Russian Marxists, including Maxim Gorky (32; 418 n. 34), and one of Rand’s likely teachers, Nikolai Gredeskul, who taught course 2 on the Rand transcript, “History of the Development of Social Forms” (388; 465 n. 9). Even her discovery of Windelband came about during the Lossky course on the history of ancient worldviews. Furthermore, through my very detailed analysis of the content of every college course she attended, from her required Soviet courses to those on the history of ancient worldviews, the methodology of the social sciences, political economy, and medieval and modern history, I make it abundantly clear that Rand would have been continuously bombarded with a dialectical approach to analyzing things, events, and social problems.

And in the context of my larger trilogy, I show that this dialectical sensibility informed the thought of others outside of Russia who impacted Rand, including Ludwig von Mises (analyzed to a much greater extent in my book, *Total Freedom*) and Brand Blanshard (whose understanding of relations is key to my discussion of dialectics in *Marx, Hayek, and Utopia*).

Why Didn’t Rand Identify Her Approach as Dialectical?

One important fact must be emphasized, however, in understanding why Rand herself would have been less likely to publicly identify her approach as explicitly “dialectical.” As Nathaniel Branden (2016) has put it: “Objectivism is forever dominated by the fact that Ayn grew up in the Soviet Union, and she grew up at the time in history where the great political issue was: Does an individual have a right to exist for himself, or is he the servant of the state? And that conflict, so central, so basic to Russia and later to the globe gave Objectivism a particular ‘spin,’ which is not intrinsic to the ideas” (59–60). So it would be entirely understandable if the very word “dialectics” had been anathema to her. Barbara Branden (1986) writes:

Although the Soviet Government had not yet established total ideological control over Russia’s universities, certain “Soviet subjects” were required of all students. One of them was historical materialism. Students were required to learn, from an official textbook presented with the reverence that religion gives its Bible, the history of the Communist philosophy. The study began with Plato, whom the regime claimed as the forerunner of historical materialism, then went to Hegel, then to Marx. For the rest of her life, Alice knew that she understood the

theory of dialectical materialism—and had on her body and spirit the scars of its practice—as few Americans ever would; she did not bear with equanimity the remarks of anyone who ventured to tell her “what communism really was all about.” (42)¹⁰

And yet, I have rediscovered in my notes on the Branden Biographical Interviews, one nonpejorative reference to dialectical thinking in Rand’s recollections of a discussion with Frank Lloyd Wright, whom many readers saw as the inspiration for the architect Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead*. I was led back to this reference as a result of reading Michael S. Berliner’s transcription of a portion of interview 13 (conducted on 26 February 1961 by Barbara Branden) for his contribution to Robert Mayhew’s edited anthology, *Essays on Ayn Rand’s “The Fountainhead.”* In his essay, “Howard Roark and Frank Lloyd Wright,” Berliner (2007) includes a rather lengthy discussion by Rand—around four paragraphs—concerning the distinctions between Wright’s and her own approach to ideas. Rand tells Barbara Branden that Wright would talk “in very broad generalities,” such that his approach to ideas was “the Truth, with a capital T, . . . mystical romanticism would define it best. As if life, art, truth, beauty, as if those generalities named anything. In other words, not a thinker” (59).

There is something of key importance absent from Berliner’s transcription, signified by the ellipsis points after “capital T.” In referring to my transcription notes, I found what Berliner had omitted:

[H]is approach to ideas was: the Truth with a capital T, *and you know what that means. It’s not quite my approach. In other words, he would not be what we call “dialectical”* [Ed.: Barbara Branden says “Yes” in the background, in apparent agreement with Rand’s characterization]. *In other words, he would not be a precise definer or intellectual philosophical conversationalist; he would be the emotional philosophical genius who would talk about the meaning of Life, with a capital L. . . .* (Branden Biographical Interview 13, 26 February 1961; transcription and emphasis mine)

To be clear, the italicized material in my transcription is omitted from Berliner’s transcription. What follows thereafter is what Berliner accurately transcribes above: Rand’s characterization of Wright’s approach as “mystical romanticism.” But while Berliner’s accuracy is laudable, his selective omission of crucial text is distressing: in an essay contrasting the thinking of Rand and Wright, Berliner has omitted the *only* reference of which I am aware in any published or unpublished source where Rand mentions specifically, and with a clearly favorable connotation, the “dialectical” method of thinking that she sees as part of her own approach.¹¹

I do concede that Rand's use of the word in this instance is probably meant in a much more limited sense than my own more generalized conception of dialectics as the "art of context-keeping." The comment seems to emphasize the dialogical elements of the Aristotelian conception that I examine in detail in chapter 1 of *Total Freedom: Toward a Dialectical Libertarianism* (Sciabarra 2000, especially 19; 28–33). In that chapter, I state that "dialectic traces its linguistic roots to ancient Greece. Homer used the verb *dialegesthai*, which meant, variously, 'to discuss' and 'to pick out' (*dialegein*), suggesting a high-level mental activity of deliberation. . . . Dialectic, or *dialektikē*, is cognate with both *dialegesthai* and *dialogos*, 'dialogue.' . . . So it is not surprising that one can locate the first manifestations of dialectic in the classical Greek dialogues, wherein the give-and-take of discussion was viewed as the means to wisdom" (20; references omitted). Though one can find evidence of dialectic in pre-Aristotelian philosophers (especially Socrates and Plato), Aristotle was actually the first theoretician of the method, the first person to have ever presented a formal treatise on dialectic (*The Topics*), moreover with elements of it found throughout his corpus. He embraces the importance of defining terms precisely, noting that the very art of dialogue, of conversation, encompasses not merely the art of questioning and discussion, but "a mode of examination as well." Though, ultimately, the truth of our conclusions must correspond to reality, there is much to be learned in adjudicating among various theories, "for 'the one-sided theories which some people express about all things cannot be valid'" (1598; 5.8.1011b29–31; cited in Sciabarra 2000, 32), as Aristotle puts it in the *Metaphysics*. He states further:

[N]o one is able to attain the truth adequately, while, on the other hand, no one fails entirely, but every one says something true about the nature of things, and while individually they contribute little or nothing to the truth, by the union of all, a considerable amount is amassed. Therefore, since the truth seems to be like the proverbial door, which no one can fail to hit, in this way it is easy, but the fact that we can have a whole truth and not the particular part we aim at shows the difficulty of it. (1560–70; 2.1.993b1–7; cited in Sciabarra 2000, 32)

So again, Rand's use of the word "dialectical" seems to echo this narrower usage, rather than my broader view of it as "the art of context-keeping." But evidence of this simple fact—that Rand ever uttered the word in any way other than to scorn it for its association with the theories of historical materialism—can be found only in the *unedited* Branden Biographical Interviews, and regrettably not in Berliner's abridged transcription.

Fortunately, some of the flavor of my emphasis on “the art of context-keeping” as crucial to Rand’s approach can be found in one of the original courses given under the auspices of the Nathaniel Branden Institute, and long considered a part of canonical Objectivism, though it has not been published in print form until just this year. It is Barbara Branden’s series of lectures on “The Principles of Efficient Thinking,” which I have dubbed an “Introduction to Objectivist Psycho-Epistemology” (see especially my foreword to Branden 2017, ix–xxi). I think the significance of the relationship between philosophy and psycho-epistemology (one’s methods of awareness) cannot be understated, for as Nathaniel Branden remarks, “there is an inescapable, reciprocal relationship between the two, and you can’t talk intelligibly about which came first” (Branden 2016, 89). In other words, the efficiency of one’s thinking processes affects the veracity of one’s conclusions, just as established philosophic truths guide one’s thinking processes.

In the following passage from “Principles of Efficient Thinking,” I ask the reader to substitute the word “dialectics” for “context-holding” (which is synonymous with “context-keeping”) in order to gain a better grasp of how dialectical inquiry figures into Rand’s overall approach. Barbara Branden states:

Context-holding requires integration. With regard to ideas, it requires the integration of one’s concepts into a consistent, unified system of concepts. With regard to action, it requires the integration of the meaning, implications, and consequences of one’s actions. With regard to values, desires, and goals, it requires the integration of the long-range and the short-range, of means and ends; it requires the integration of any particular value or desire or goal with one’s total system of values, desires, and goals.

Context-holding requires that one respect the Law of Non-Contradiction—that one not form political convictions which contradict one’s moral philosophy—that one not form moral convictions which contradict one’s view of the nature of man—that one not pass aesthetic judgments which contradict one’s philosophy of art—that one not reach economic conclusions which contradict one’s knowledge of economic theory, of politics, of the nature of man and the nature of reality—that one not choose values which contradict one’s other values—that one not choose goals which contradict one’s long-range goals—that one not set purposes which contradict the nature of reality.

Context-dropping means holding a contradiction. (Branden 2017, 152)

The Necessity of Dialectical Thinking: It's Not So Trivial

Returning to one of the central points of the Salmieri critique, I think that my book does exhibit the way in which Rand “processed” her early dialectical “inputs” throughout the evolution of her thought (see especially chapter 4 of *Russian Radical*), as well as in the structure of her philosophic system (the focus of Part II of *Russian Radical*), and as a key characteristic of her radical critique of social relations of power (the focus of Part III of *Russian Radical*). For Salmieri to say that Rand could have absorbed this dialectical sensibility “from the general cultural heritage that all educated people share” only underscores the fact that Rand got a good education. If only that good an education were available to all of us, if only more individuals were taught the principles of efficient thinking, anchored in the reciprocally reinforcing principles of logic and of dialectics, and all those scientific tools necessary to the proper identification of the facts of reality, we would have a lot more well-educated people among us. But as Rand so trenchantly observed in such essays as “The Comprachicos” (Rand 1975, 187–239), our culture has been poisoned by an educational system whose pedagogical practices tend to teach individuals how *not* to think, undermining their capacity to logically integrate and understand the real relations among things, events, and social problems, crippling their ability to act in a way that might radically transform for the better the society in which they live.¹²

It is true that among grand-scale thinkers, such as Aristotle, Hegel, Marx, or Rand, or virtually any other thinker of stature, it is almost impossible not to find some form of dialectical analysis at work. No philosopher can be so totally nondialectical, for, as Aristotle himself noted, we are bound to find some dialectical sensibility in virtually any person who *thinks*, “since the truth seems to be like the proverbial door, which no one can fail to hit”—or in colloquial parlance: even a broken clock is correct twice a day! But for Salmieri, the question remains: Why would the identification of Rand as a dialectical thinker convey anything *essential* to her thought, if she shares that seemingly trivial feature with such a broad range of thinkers who are so obviously opposed to the philosophic conclusions she reaches?

I think the important issue is this: If the content of such thinkers’ ideas differs fundamentally from one another, whom can we identify as more faithful to a dialectical approach, and hence more radical in their social analysis? This is not a trivial question, because, as I outline in the first book of my “Dialectics and Liberty” trilogy, *Marx, Hayek, and Utopia* (Sciabarra 1995), dialectical thinking is *identifiable* with radical social theory, whereas nondialectical thinking leads to its opposite: utopian social theory. There is a fundamental distinction

between dialectical, radical thinking and nondialectical, utopian thinking. As I write:

[T]he radical is that which seeks to get to the root of social problems, building the realm of the possible out of the conditions that exist. By contrast, the utopian is, by definition, the impossible (the word, strictly translated, means, “no place”). . . . [U]topians internalize an abstract, exaggerated sense of human possibility, aiming to create new social formations based upon a pretense of knowledge. In their blueprints for the ideal society, utopians presuppose that people can master all the sophisticated complexities of social life. Even when their social and ethical ends are decidedly progressive, utopians often rely on reactionary means. They manifest an inherent bias toward the statist construction of alternative institutions in their attempts to practically implement their rationalist abstractions. (Sciabarra 1995, 1–2)¹³

In the most dialectical aspects of his critique, Karl Marx himself recognized the pitfalls of utopian thinking, but because of fundamental flaws in his epistemology and in the premises of his social theory, he ultimately succumbs to those very pitfalls in his projection of a future communist society, whose utopian premises can result in nothing but *dystopian* consequences. I discuss those flaws at length in both *Marx, Hayek, and Utopia* and *Total Freedom: Toward a Dialectical Libertarianism*.

Marx provides us with a prime example of how a thinker can exemplify certain strengths of a dialectical analysis of social problems, and still fail to provide valid conclusions. Logical consistency and integrated thinking do not stand if they are built upon false premises. It is no coincidence that Rand named her *Objectivist Newsletter* column “Check Your Premises,” for without valid premises grounded in the facts of reality, whole systems of thought come crashing down regardless of the logical or dialectical dexterity of those who construct them.

Two different thinkers can look at the same (or similar) facts of reality and grasp some of the same issues at work in understanding a particular social problem, and yet, because of differences in their theoretical premises, they may arrive at fundamentally opposed solutions to those problems. For example, Marx’s understanding of the boom-bust cycle shows some remarkable similarities to the valid theories put forth by Ludwig von Mises and F. A. Hayek, fathers of the modern Austrian school of economics (Sciabarra 1995, 76–79). Marx shares with his Austrian rivals an understanding of the *political* character of the business cycle, viewing the state and central banking as the pivot of the credit system, and hence, the source of the inflationary boom and its inexorable bust.

But Marx views this as historically *progressive*, because it hastens the collapse of capitalism and the movement toward socialization of the means of production. By contrast, Mises saw the state-banking sector as a *retrogressive* institution grafted onto market relations, a product not of free-market “capitalism,”¹⁴ but of *political economy* in the fullest sense of the phrase (see especially Sciabarra 2000, 291–95). Mises argued that the dissolution of the state-banking nexus and the establishment of a full gold standard would end the boom-bust cycle along with its chaotic calculational and redistributive effects, freeing the way for the globally liberating processes of market forces.

Mises profoundly influenced Rand’s own understanding of the workings of the free market, and it is largely his theories that inform the canonical essays by Rand, Nathaniel Branden, Alan Greenspan, Robert Hessen, George Reisman, and other authors whose contributions appeared in Objectivist periodicals over the years.

The contrast between Marxian and Austrian perspectives illustrates a point made by Leonard Peikoff, who has argued that, methodologically, Hegel was right to see that the true is the whole (Peikoff 1991, 4). But as Peikoff has stated in his various lectures on the history of philosophy, Hegel was very wrong in what he identified as that whole and its various parts and the interrelationships among those parts. One could be correct about broad fundamental principles of method, but operate with invalid foundational premises, an improper approach to validation, faulty induction, incorrect identifications of historical data, or quasi-mystical conceptions of what the concretes are—Leibnizian monads, Hegelian Ideas, or the stages of economic production outlined in Marxian historical materialism. Peikoff grasps that truth emerges only from our reality-based understanding of the totality, *the full context*, and this insight is the central animating and integrating principle of a dialectical mode of inquiry. It enables us to get to the genuine root of the social problems that plague us. It is the very essence of what Salmieri (2016, 300) characterizes as the “grand-scale integration across time and across fields in Rand’s interpretation of the events of her time”—even if he refuses to call this “dialectical”—since it is a mode of inquiry that helps us to view those events and problems as part of a larger system that both generates them and is generated by them.

When Rand said in her very first *Objectivist Newsletter* lead essay, “Choose Your Issues,” that “Objectivists are *not* conservatives. We are *radicals for capitalism*,” she meant it. She understood that it was the *full context* that required comprehensive understanding and revolutionary change: “A change in a country’s political ideas has to be preceded by a change in its cultural trends; a *cultural* movement is the necessary precondition of a *political* movement” (Rand 1962, 1).

Ayn Rand: Putting Dialectics to Work

In *Russian Radical*, I illustrate how Rand used a dialectical methodological orientation not only throughout the structure of her philosophy (discussed in Part II of the book, “The Revolt Against Dualism”), but also in the structure of her analysis of social problems (discussed in Part III of the book, “The Radical Rand”). We can clearly see that Rand regarded many dualities as “false alternatives.” Contrary to what Salmieri (2016, 314 n. 104), Lennox (1996, 64), and McElroy (2015, 114) suggest, the dialectical revolt against dualism is not a revolt against the existence of logically opposed, true alternatives (such as existence versus nonexistence, life versus death, good versus evil, and so forth). It is not a rejection of the law of noncontradiction. *The revolt against dualism is a revolt against false alternatives.* For Rand, such false alternatives are often variants of the mind-body dichotomy, which she rejects, including all of its manifestations: the spiritual versus the material, logic versus experience, the analytic versus the synthetic, the rational versus the empirical, reason versus emotion, morality versus prudence, theory versus practice, and so forth. Such false dichotomies obscure the essentially *integrated* nature of *human* being. Much the same can be said of Rand’s rejection of all the other false alternatives generated by modern philosophy, such as intrinsicism versus subjectivism in epistemology, classicism versus romanticism in aesthetics, and socialism versus fascism in politics.

But there is a subtlety in Rand’s analysis that some of her defenders and detractors often miss, for even when she identified “true” dichotomies, that is, those things and phenomena that she regarded as mutually exclusive and opposed, she provided a wider context for understanding their relationships. For example, when Rand spoke of the valid opposition of selfishness versus altruism, she repudiated *conventional* definitions of selfishness (which involved the brute, uncaring sacrifice of others to oneself) and *conventional* definitions of altruism (which involved the caring, benevolent sacrifice of oneself to others).

For Rand, the alternative could not be characterized simply as an opposition between “selfishness” and “altruism.” She sought to define the credo for a “new concept of egoism”—the subtitle to her book, *The Virtue of Selfishness* (Rand 1964a)—that led her to reject the *conventional* concept of selfishness, epitomized, perhaps, by the “master” morality of Nietzsche, and the self-sacrifice or “slave” morality advocated by mystical and collectivist thinkers, such as Saint Augustine and Auguste Comte. She thus gave voice to what Robert Heilbroner tells us about the master-slave relationship, something recognized by Aristotle and Hegel alike:

The *logical* contradiction (or “opposite” or “negation”) of a Master is not a Slave, but a “non-Master,” which may or may not be a slave. But the

relational opposite of a Master is indeed a Slave, for it is only by reference to this second “excluded” term that the first is defined. (quoted in Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 281)

Thus, in *The Fountainhead*, Rand reveals how both “master” and “slave” morality require and imply one another. As she puts it: “A leash is only a rope with a noose at both ends,” alluding to the fact that masters and slaves were in a mutually destructive relationship of codependency (Rand [1943] 1993, 661, cited in Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 279). For Rand, the truly independent man is neither master nor slave.

In *Atlas Shrugged*, however, Rand’s focus shifts to the relationships among individuals as manifested within a larger social system, developing over time toward the inexorable rupture of coercive, collectivist statism and to the discovery of a new, humane society that recognizes the sociality of each individual as something that is not in conflict with, but a true by-product of, genuine individualism. In the process, Rand shows vividly that human beings can flourish socially only in a system that recognizes individual reason and individual rights.

As she wrote in her preparatory notes for *Atlas Shrugged* (initially titled “The Strike”), the novel had to focus on this wider cluster of relationships in order to fully illustrate the social implications of her commitment to reason and to the virtue of *rational* self-interest:

Now, it is this *relation* that must be the theme. Therefore, the personal becomes secondary. That is, the personal is necessary only to the extent needed to make the relationships clear. In *The Fountainhead* I showed that Roark moves the world—that the Keatings feed upon him and hate him for it, while the Tooheys are out consciously to destroy him. But the theme was Roark—not Roark’s relation to the world. Now it will be the relation.

In other words, I must show in what concrete, specific way the world is moved by the creators. Exactly *how* do the second-handers live on the creators. Both in *spiritual* matters—and (most particularly) in concrete physical events. (Concentrate on the concrete, physical events—but don’t forget to keep in mind at all times how the physical proceeds from the spiritual.) . . . (Rand, journal entry dated 1 January 1945, quoted by Peikoff in Rand [1957] 1992, x)

Note how, throughout, Rand emphasizes the integration of mind and body, the essential connection between the spiritual and the material, a presupposition shared by so many dialectical thinkers throughout intellectual history. Note too how Rand is consciously aware of the need for shifts in vantage point and

levels of generality—from the “Personal” to the “Social”—in order to elucidate different aspects of the objects under analysis. It is this kind of shift made explicit by Rand that inspired me to construct a model through which to display and interpret the structure, the dynamics, and especially the *power* of her analytical capacities. This became the central guiding purpose of Part III of *Russian Radical*.

The Tri-Level Model of Social Relationships

In her review, McElroy (2015) admits to “stumb[ing] over” Part III of my work, which she found to be “the most original and controversial segment of the book” (112). Assuming that some readers have had the same difficulty, it should be helpful to explore that segment in greater depth here—for it is, in my view, the means by which I concretize and further clarify so much of what remains abstract in the discussion that precedes it.

In Part III, I construct a model that attempts to fully capture the robust *radicalism* of Rand’s dialectical mode of inquiry. For Rand, to be radical was to go to the root; as I have noted, she called herself a “radical for capitalism” and wore the label as a term “of distinction . . . of honor, rather than something to hide or apologize for” (Rand 1964b, 15, quoted in Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 279).

I first proposed the Tri-Level Model of Social Relations in *Russian Radical* as a means of grasping the depth of Rand’s radical analysis of social problems (see Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 324–29, for example, which shows how this model is put to use in Rand’s analysis of the problem of racism). But it was later in *Total Freedom* that I expanded on the model, elucidating the manner in which Rand shifts levels of generality and perspective, so as to grasp the systemic ways in which social problems develop over time. By consequence, only a comprehensive strategy can truly resolve social problems, given that their reciprocal causes and effects are to be found on each of those levels of generality that Rand’s approach makes transparent.

In concluding this article, I borrow liberally from that section in chapter 9 of *Total Freedom*, “Randian Radicalism” (Sciabarra 2000, 379–83), which, I suspect, many readers of *Russian Radical* have never read. It helps us to appreciate the expansiveness of Rand’s dialectical approach (and the importance of seeing my three books as a unified work).

I argue that Rand’s conception focuses on social relations from the vantage point of three distinct levels of generality, what I call “the Personal” (L1), “the Cultural” (L2), and “the Structural” (L3). These levels can only be abstracted and isolated for the purposes of analysis, and can never be reified as wholes unto themselves. The levels are reciprocally related and are thus preconditions and effects of one another.

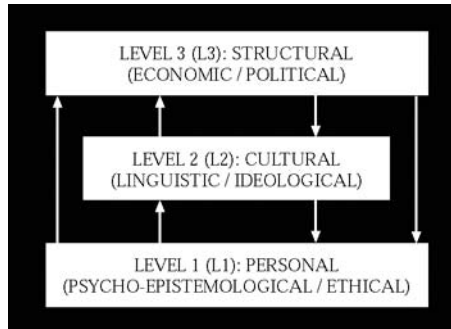


Figure 1. The Tri-Level Model of Social Relationships

On Level 1 (L1), the Personal level of analysis, Rand analyzes social relations of power from the vantage point of the individual's ethical and "psycho-epistemological" practices, or implicit (tacit) methods of awareness.

On Level 2 (L2), the Cultural level of analysis, Rand analyzes social relations of power from the vantage point of language, education, aesthetics, and ideology.

On Level 3 (L3), the Structural level of analysis, Rand analyzes social relations of power from the vantage point of political and economic structures, processes, and institutions.

Each of these levels entails mutual implications; relations of power are both manifested on and perpetuated by personal, cultural, and structural dynamics. Most importantly, this tri-level model displays the broad outline of a dialectical-libertarian strategy for social change. For in opposing the master-slave relationship in each of its manifestations, Rand aims for a nonexploitative society of independent equals who trade value for value, across each of the dimensions of her analysis.

In order to trace some of the effects of Rand's model, we can combine the three modes in various ways. By grouping them into three distinct forms, we can illustrate how each level of generality provides us with a different analytical and strategic focus.

Focusing on the Cultural: L1-L2-L3

In this combination, the Personal (L1) and the Structural (L3) levels are placed in the background of Rand's analysis, and the preconditions and effects of culture (L2) are made the central, primary factor. This has the advantage of bringing into focus the dominant cultural traditions and tacit practices that help to perpetuate the overall system of statism, which Rand fundamentally opposed.

But an exclusive focus on those dominant traditions and practices tends to lessen our regard for people's abilities to alter their psycho-epistemological or ethical habits (L1). Additionally, this focus minimizes the importance of

the political and economic structures (L3) that both perpetuate and require specific cultural practices, what Rand identifies as the “mystic,” “collectivist,” and “altruist” cultural base that statism demands, one founded on irrationalism, the primacy of the group, and the necessity of self-sacrifice.

Rand thought it was crucially important to pay attention to cultural context in the struggle for social change. For example, it’s one of the reasons she would have rejected wars dedicated to so-called “nation-building,” in which the United States had “sacrificed thousands of American lives, and billions of dollars, to protect a primitive people who never had freedom, do not seek it, and, apparently, do not want it” (Rand 1972, 66, quoted in Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 317, in a new section of the second edition called “The Welfare-Warfare State”). Rand had opposed U.S. entry into World War I and World War II, but it was this more specific assertion that Rand made in her opposition to the wars in Korea and Vietnam. One could only imagine how she would have reacted to U.S. attempts to graft “democracy” onto the Middle East, a region dominated by tribalism and theocratic fanaticism, antithetical to those cultural preconditions necessary for the sustenance of a free society.

While Rand thought cultural contextualism was key to understanding how power relations are perpetuated, and how free institutions must be nourished in the struggle for social change, she unequivocally rejected cultural determinism and its conservative implications.

Focusing on the Personal: L2–L1–L3

In this combination, the Cultural (L2) and the Structural (L3) levels of analysis are dropped to the background, and the preconditions and effects of the Personal (L1) are the primary factor. This analytical moment has the advantage of bringing into focus the importance of individual and interpersonal psycho-epistemological and ethical practices, which perpetuate the irrational culture and politics that statism requires. It underscores Rand’s belief that individuals need to change themselves in any corresponding attempt to change society. They need to practice rational virtues in pursuit of rational values—that is, rational actions in pursuit of rational goals. They need to engage in introspection, to articulate their thoughts, emotions, and actions, and to take responsibility for their own lives. Indeed, as she puts it, “anyone who fights for the future, lives in it today” (Rand 1975, viii).

But an exclusive focus on the personal tends to shrink the importance of cultural and structural factors, which provide the context for, and have a powerful effect on, people’s abilities *to be* individuals. Certain cultural attitudes and practices are so deeply embedded in our lives, Rand suggests, that it is extremely difficult to call all of these into question. Moreover, Rand recognized that many

individuals were put at a cognitive disadvantage, from elementary school to the institutions of higher learning, whose pedagogical practices militated against teaching individuals the principles of efficient thinking, including the proper methods of logical analysis, inductive reasoning, and contextual integration.

Likewise, certain political and economic realities often constrain and shape our ability *to act* as individuals. Within statism, Rand argues, our ability to act as individuals is most constrained, since groups become the most important social unit in the shaping of public policy. These groups multiply along economic, ethnic, cultural, sexual, gender, ideological, and other lines, encompassing every aspect of human existence, reflecting a kind of “global balkanization” (Rand [1977] 1988).¹⁵ Ultimately, what results is an internecine battle among warring pressure groups, leading to an “aristocracy of pull.” New Age–like thinkers, who believe that all we need to do is “free ourselves first” and the rest will follow automatically, do not understand the reality of modern tribalism and statism. They often fall victim to Level 1 thinking, divorced from Levels 2 and 3.

Focusing on the Structural: L1–L3–L2

In this combination, the Personal (L1) and the Cultural (L2) levels of analysis are dropped to the background, and the preconditions and effects of political and economic structures, institutions, and processes become the primary factors to consider. For Rand, this perspective has the advantage of bringing into focus the dominant political and economic practices that help to perpetuate statism, or the “New Fascism” as she called it. Rand draws much from her knowledge of Austrian economics in explaining the destructiveness of statist policies. Among these practices, one sees regulations, which often benefit the industries being regulated, blocking entry into whole fields of economic endeavor and giving impetus to the growth of coercive monopolies; financial manipulation through the Federal Reserve and other institutions, which are the driving force of the boom-bust cycle; taxation, which often redistributes wealth to entrenched businesses slurping at the public trough—a chief component of what, today, is conventionally referred to as “crony capitalism”; an expanding welfare state bureaucracy that keeps people in an endless cycle of poverty and dependency; and all the other prohibitions, laws, and guns that constrain us.

These constraints have global significance since a country’s statist domestic policy often extends into the sphere of foreign policy, providing the context for “pull-peddling” interventionism abroad (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 315–23), and ultimately, the pretext for wars (whether they be of the cold or hot variety, or an outgrowth of protectionist or neomercantilist practices).

But an exclusive focus on these dominant political practices tends to shrink the importance of, and need for, individuals to alter their ethical or

psycho-epistemological habits (Level 1). Such a focus also tends to obscure the importance of culture, which has a powerful effect on the kinds of politics and economics that are practiced (Level 2).

One of the most important criticisms that Rand levels against “anarcho-libertarians” is that they reify a Level 3 analysis, as if an attack on the state is all that is needed to liberate humanity.¹⁶ Such an attack is futile, in Rand’s view, in the absence of a supporting edifice of personal and cultural practices that can make the experience of political freedom fully efficacious.

By tracing the implications of the tri-level model, we highlight the relational links that Rand sees among the various factors in society. *Indeed, this is how she put the tools of a dialectical analysis to work.* Each of her commentaries on the social problems of the day reveals an organic unity of personal, cultural, and structural components. She subjects virtually every social problem to the same multidimensional analysis, rejecting all one-sided resolutions as context-dropping—that is, as partial and incomplete. As a “radical for capitalism,” Rand (1961, 25) writes: “*Intellectual freedom cannot exist without political freedom; political freedom cannot exist without economic freedom; a free mind and a free market are corollaries.*”

Just as relations of power operate within psychological, psycho-epistemological, ethical, cultural, political, and economic dimensions, so too the struggle for freedom and individualism necessarily takes place within a certain constellation of psychological, psycho-epistemological, ethical, cultural, and structural factors. By tracing the relations within this radical alignment of factors, “The Dialectical Rand,” as I have called her, exemplifies the kind of thinking required for the elucidation of a genuinely dialectical libertarianism.

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Critical Review, Reason Papers, Liberty, Reason, The New York Daily News, Film Score Monthly, Jazz Times, Just Jazz Guitar, and Billboard.

NOTES

I wish to thank Roger E. Bissell, Robert L. Campbell, Stephen Cox, Anne Heller, and the late Murray Franck for their helpful suggestions on earlier drafts of this article. I would also like to thank Director Patrick Alexander and the Pennsylvania State University Press family for their extraordinary support. And Joseph Dahm for his indefatigable editing. The usual caveats apply. This article is dedicated to Murray Franck, for his longtime guidance on matters both personal and professional, and for his celebration of the standards of scholarly integrity and fairness, to the late Michael Southern, whose love, friendship, and support I will forever cherish, and to my little Dante, for his unconditional love.

1. In the past, when I have taught the “Dialectics and Liberty Trilogy” in cyberseminars, I usually begin the course with Part 1 of *Total Freedom*, which surveys the history of dialectics and formally defines it. This helps to contextualize the entire trilogy. I then move on to *Marx, Hayek, and Utopia* and *Ayn Rand: The Russian Radical*. The final textual material in the course is Part 2 of *Total Freedom*, which examines the thought of Murray Rothbard, a theorist who embraces both dialectical and nondialectical elements in his thought. One of the aims of the course is to emerge with a greater understanding of the distinction between a genuinely radical mode of inquiry (a product of dialectical thinking) and flawed utopianism (a product of nondialectical thinking).

2. See Sciabarra 1999b for an account of how the Ayn Rand Institute had first secured copies of this material prior to my location of them with the help of Russian archivists and, later, through the generous assistance of Rand biographer Anne Heller. ARI wanted me to sign a letter granting me the right to see the transcript, translate it, and present them with my findings, as long as I guaranteed them *never* to write on the subject. I asked them: “Have you ever heard of the trader principle?”

3. This question of whether Milgram is or is not Rand’s “authorized” biographer is not incidental to the discussion. As I state in Sciabarra 2014:

[I]n June 2004, it was announced by *Impact* [the newsletter of the Ayn Rand Institute] that Shoshana Milgram was “working on an in-depth biography of Ayn Rand,” for which the author herself projected completion “at the latest by 2008.” . . . ARI currently identifies the “authorized biography of Ayn Rand by Shoshana Milgram” as “in preparation.” See http://www.aynrand.org/site/Page-Server?pagename=about_ayn_rand_archives_projects, accessed 11 February 2013.

Subsequent to the publication of the second edition of *Russian Radical*, that statement was expunged from the Ayn Rand Institute site. As I observe:

For those who doubt that there was an earlier manifestation of this page, in which Milgram’s forthcoming biography was characterized as “authorized,” we have the Internet Archive Wayback Machine: a 6 February 2013 snapshot [see <https://web.archive.org/web/20130206095011/http://www.aynrand.org/site/>

PageServer?pagename=about_ayn_rand_archives_projects], which is closest in proximity to my 11 February 2013 accessing of the page, declares the biography to be “authorized.” The 5 September 2013 snapshot [see https://web.archive.org/web/20130905140855/http://www.aynrand.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about_ayn_rand_archives_projects] is the last time the word “authorized” was used on that ARI page. The change seems to have occurred somewhere between 5 September 2013 and 5 October 2013, since the dropping of “authorized” is apparent in the 5 October snapshot [see https://web.archive.org/web/20131005041205/http://www.aynrand.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about_ayn_rand_archives_projects]. Remarkably, this is coincident with the exact publication date [Ed.: 12 September 2013] of the second expanded edition of *Ayn Rand: The Russian Radical. Cause? Effect? Reciprocal dialectical causation? You be the judge.* (Sciabarra 2014)

I think it is not without significance that ARI airbrushed the word “authorized” from the website, either due to Milgram’s insistence or as their own response to what I had written in Appendix III of the second edition of *Russian Radical*.

4. In her 2012 essay, Milgram transliterates Lossky’s name as “Losskii”; in her 2016 essay, Milgram transliterates Lossky’s name as “Losskij.”

5. In this passage, Lossky uses “kantianism” and “kantism” interchangeably.

6. Thanks to the late Barbara Branden, I have listened to a few of the Branden Biographical Interviews independently and, in such instances, I transcribed material relevant to my studies as scrupulously as I could. See also note 11 below.

7. Lewis and Salmieri (2016) also have some praise for my monograph *Ayn Rand, Homosexuality, and Human Liberation* (Sciabarra 2003), which, they say, “contains some useful documentation of the attitudes within the Objectivist movement toward homosexuals, both in Rand’s time and thereafter” (396 n. 87). Sadly, some of those attitudes still remain—stated in ways that are even more intransigent and morally righteous. See, for example, Pisaturo 2015, which fully embraces Rand’s condemnation of homosexuality as both “immoral” and “disgusting” (Rand 1971). Perhaps with a little more sensitivity than Rand, Pisaturo assures us that “[m]any non-heterosexuals are ethical, share basic values with their partner, are loving and monogamous, and not out to destroy Western civilization” (Pisaturo 2015, 129), but he denies that same-sex unions should be dignified with the label of “marriage,” which applies strictly to man-woman relationships. His view of sexual orientation as “volitional” means that it is open to moral judgment, thus providing him with a philosophical rationalization for being “repulsed by the idea of sex with men” (30).

8. I discuss this issue of the “revolt against formal dualism” below.

9. Some of the exposition in this section grew out of direct correspondence I had with Gregory Salmieri in 2016.

10. The course in question on “Historical Materialism” is listed as course 6 on both versions of Rand’s college transcript (see Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 366; 383). I think Milgram (2012, 95–98) is correct to cite Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin’s book, *Theory of Historical Materialism: Popular Textbook of Marxist Sociology*, as the book that Rand most likely read as the required text of the course.

11. I have no basis for questioning Berliner’s motive for omitting the sentence in which Rand utters the term “dialectical.” Since the Branden Biographical Interviews have never

been published, I have no way of checking the accuracy of every transcribed excerpt that has been used by scholars affiliated with the Ayn Rand Institute. As I indicate in note 6 above, I have listened to a few of these interviews thanks to the late Barbara Branden, carefully transcribing material relevant to my studies. Thus, I can vouch for the accuracy of both Milgram's and Berliner's transcriptions; what I can't account for is why they have redacted material from their published transcriptions that I believe sheds light on—and might be supportive of—my own historical and methodological interpretations regarding Rand.

I have expressed concern over the highly restrictive access policies of the Ayn Rand Archives (see also Campbell 2017), which make it impossible for independent scholars to check the accuracy of transcriptions or recordings of other interviews conducted by Nathaniel Branden and Barbara Branden in 1960–1961. Given the unfortunate record of the editing of posthumously published material written by Ayn Rand (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 395; 466 n. 4), I think wider access to unpublished sources would be highly beneficial for Rand scholarship. See especially the testimony of Jennifer Burns (2012), who, in conducting research for her book, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* (Burns 2009), “confirm[s] my serious reservations [Sciabarra 1998] about how Rand's papers are being edited (or, in some instances, butchered) for publication” (Sciabarra [1995] 2013, 467 n. 7).

Incredibly, however, the Ayn Rand Archives has provided online a revised list of “published works” in the primary and secondary literature, which includes my essay on “The Rand Transcript” (Sciabarra 1999a) as among those “Book Chapters, Journal Articles, and Reviews [. . .] citing primary literature and/or the Ayn Rand Archives” (*Ayn Rand Archives: Published Works* 2017, 13, 5). In fact, as I explain in Sciabarra 1999b, I was denied access to the archival material relevant to Rand's college transcripts, and had to procure that material independently from archivists at the University of St. Petersburg (formerly Petrograd, and then Leningrad, University). Moreover, the 2017 report (accessed 12 May 2017) lists more than seventy other articles published in this journal under the same category. Such a listing is misleading, at best. Many of the articles listed were written by authors who were denied access to the Ayn Rand Archives. To my knowledge, we have published only four articles by authors who have had direct archival access, and only one of those authors (Weinacht 2017) used archival material for his article.

12. Barbara Branden (2017) makes an important point relevant to this discussion:

One of the most widespread of myths is the belief that everyone knows how to think, and that no learning process is required. Certainly no education in efficient thinking is offered, either by parents or by schools. We are taught to walk, to read, to write, to play baseball, but the most important of all human functions is left to blind chance, to trial and error, to each man's unaided efforts; and assuming that the knowledge of how to think is self-evident, people take their own mental processes as necessarily valid, as not to be questioned or examined. (11)

Like Rand, Branden indicts “the very institution supposedly devoted to the pursuit of knowledge—that is . . . today's universities,” which provide “the most blatant examples of the failure to integrate ideas into a consistent system” (132).

13. This view of utopianism is based on what Camplin (2017, 110) has characterized insightfully as “a blank slate view of the world.” He writes that in such a view, “you can completely dismiss everything that came before and create something completely, radically new in the world. . . . If the mind is a blank slate, we can write anything onto it—we can create through education the socialist man, if we so desire. This gives us a blank slate view of society. That is, we can simply shelve everything that’s ever been done, all of human history and experience, and create the world anew.” I’d apply the same insight to the creation of a new “libertarian man” or “libertarian woman.” This completely acontextual, ahistorical view is a hallmark of utopian, rather than genuinely *radical* social thought.

14. Hayek (1954, 15) maintained that the word “capitalism” should be used “with great reluctance, since with its modern connotations it is itself largely a creation of the socialist interpretation of economic history.”

15. Of course, the American founders, especially James Madison, recognized the inevitability of shifting group conflicts and saw the system of checks and balances as a means to frustrate the predominance of any one group (see especially Roelofs 1976). But the American Revolution had overthrown monarchist tyranny and incorporated into its constitution a Bill of Rights, which was intended to limit the power of government. It is only with the expansion of the power of government over social and political life that such group conflicts constitute what Hayek termed the “road to serfdom.” On this point, see Sciabarra 1995, and the section above on “The Necessity of Dialectical Thinking: It’s Not So Trivial.”

16. I should mention in this context that McElroy’s claim (2015, 114) that I characterize Rothbard as fundamentally a dualist is correct, but this is only in that aspect of his thought where he views the state and the market as dualistic adversaries, advocating the monistic dissolution of the state’s functions into market categories (his notion of “anarcho-capitalism”). This doesn’t necessarily mean that a nondualistic anarchism is impossible; it’s simply a nondialectical and utopian construct when this dissolution is advocated in the absence of any supporting “Personal” and “Cultural” factors. Nevertheless, in chapter 7 of *Total Freedom*, I argue that Rothbard’s discussion of “Class Dynamics and Structural Crisis” is highly dialectical, because it analyzes the subject from so many vantage points and on several levels of generality, tracing the mutual implications of state interventionism and class (Sciabarra 2000, 267–307). Indeed, as I suggest in the current essay in my brief discussion above of the Misesian theory of money and credit, the very notion of a “state-banking nexus” is inherently dialectical, because it is both a precondition and effect of the institutions in their fundamental relationship, which defines the nature of both the modern state and the modern banking system. It makes possible the emergence of class conflict, domestic and foreign interventionism, and the boom-bust cycle. For Rothbard, the state cannot be what it is in the absence of its support of and/or from the banking system, and the banking system cannot be what it is in the absence of the state. The deeper point here is that even a “dualist” such as Rothbard can offer profoundly dialectical insights in his analysis, and I celebrate these throughout *Total Freedom*, as pointed out in Bissell 2017 herein. Rothbard was a mentor to me in many ways, and I cherish the richness and candor of our intellectual exchanges (see Sciabarra 2002).

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