Genuine Ayn Rand

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GENUINE AYN RAND

The recent publication of the biography of Ayn Rand entitled, The Passion Of Ayn Rand, by Barbara Branden has created a new perspective for analysis of Rand’s work. It is now possible to study the effect Rand’s life had on her fiction, specifically her early years in Russia. Rand’s historical, psychological and sociological viewpoints put forth in her fiction will be examined with an emphasis on locating the roots of these views in Rand’s life. The purpose of this paper will be to ascertain whether she is primarily a product of Russian society, or a product of American society, fascinated with the opportunities offered by free enterprise and individual freedom.

Ayn Rand is an American novelist and philosopher well known for her fiction with such works as, We The Living, Anthem, The Fountainhead, and Atlas Shrugged. In addition to this she wrote several plays, published a newsletter and wrote six philosophy books. Her fame however, rests on her fiction. She was born and reared in Russia and immigrated to America in 1926. Her first job was working as an extra in the Cecil B. DeMille studios. She began writing screenplays and eventually was hired as a screenwriter. It was during her days in Hollywood that We The Living (1936) was written and published, followed by The Fountainhead (1943) "establishing Rand as a popular writer." Over ten years later the book amplifying her views, Atlas Shrugged (1957) was published and Rand became an "intellectual cult figure." From that point on she was known as a philosopher advocating the philosophy of Objectivism, the name for Rand’s philosophical theories. Rand became a popular campus lecturer during the 1960’s and began publishing essays in a newsletter put out by The
Nathaniel Branden Institute, a school that had been established by her young followers with the intention of teaching Rand's philosophy.

During this period in the 1960's Rand wrote the bulk of her philosophy books and became a controversial figure discussed widely throughout the United States. The Institute was dissolved in 1968 after a rift between Rand and Nathaniel Branden, the director of the Institute. She continued to lecture and published for a short time "The Ayn Rand Letter", a newsletter in place of the previous one published by the Institute. In her later years she appeared in the public eye less often, but continued to be widely read. She died in 1982 as much a controversial figure as ever, an anomaly to be studied.

RAND'S CHILDHOOD:

Rand was born the second of February 1905 in St. Petersburg, Russia. Her name at birth was Alice Rosenbaum, it did not change until she immigrated as a young adult. She was born into a bourgeois family, the first child of Anna and Fronz Rosenbaum. Fronz Rosenbaum was a self-made man who owned a chemistry shop. Alice's mother, Anna, was responsible for the upbringing of the children, including two younger sisters to Rand. Apparently Rand's parents were quite affluent, living in a spacious apartment overlooking a square in St. Petersburg. The family spent summers on holiday in the Crimea and abroad up until the year 1917.

Rand was a brilliant child, gifted with a superior intellect that was apparent from her very early days in Russia. She had taught herself to read and write before entering school and subsequently entered school a year early. According to Rand, she was not a playful, charming child. Her mother showed her off to guests solely because she was so bright. Branden describes this as follows:
From her parents and from the other adults she encountered, love and admiration were purchased by the qualities of her mind.5

Once enrolled, Rand was soon bored with school, except for her studies in mathematics. Branden described mathematics as the "single great pleasure of her school years." 6 Fortunately for Rand her mother aware that she needed additional intellectual stimulation, ordered a subscription to a French children's magazine that Rand greatly enjoyed. It was a serial in this magazine that contained the theme of good vs. evil, a theme she would adopt as a philosophy of life and continue to use for the rest of her life. 7 The magazine inspired her to write stories which apparently absorbed her energies even while attending school as the quote below illustrates:

She would sit in school, barricaded behind a book, scribbling furiously at her latest adventure, wanting to be left alone, to write, to devise dangerous exploits for her characters.8

Rand herself stated that "the ease with which I wrote has remained to this day as a kind of Atlantis behind me, a lost Garden of Eden." 9

Rand had the children's magazine to thank for yet another one of her fundamental themes: The Individual pitted against society. The story entitled The Mysterious Valley was based on the heroics of a character named Cyrus. Branden explained:

She knew that he represented an ideal against which she would measure all other men. She knew- not in the form of a consciously identified concept but as the implication of her emotional reaction- that the intensity of her feeling was her response to a symbol of a man at his highest potential; man in control-control of reality; supremely confident and efficacious, able to choose great purposes, to struggle against terrible odds and to win.10

Another biographer of Rand's wrote that, "she glorified in portraying man not as he is but as she supposed he should be."11
With these two themes set in young Rand's head and the creative action within her, it is not surprising that she knew her profession at a very young age. Rand recounted her career decision to Branden, recalling that it took place in London in the summer of 1914 while on holiday. Rand was entertaining her little sister's by making up stories for them when she suddenly realized that creating stories was her purpose in life. It was what nine year old Rand desperately wanted to do, and would do for the rest of her life.

RAND AS A YOUNG ADULT:

In these formative years following her decision to be a writer, she witnessed World War One, the overthrow of the Czar, the rise of the Provisional Democratic Government and the takeover by the Bolsheviks. In her thirteenth year "Russia went spinning from monarchy to democracy to communism." 12 The Rosenbaum family, formerly untouched by political unrest, began to feel financial strain. Fronz Rosenbaum's business was nationalized after the Bolshevik Victory, an experience having a deep effect on the adolescent Rand. Rand described the event in fairly vivid detail, commenting on her father, the look was one of helpless, murderous frustration and indignation, but he could do absolutely nothing." 13 Ayn's dislike of communism came from a real experience, unlike so many who base their opinions on theoretical situations. Rand witnessed the fall of traditional society, something that readers of her works ought to be keenly aware of.

At this point in Rand's life, she discovered the writing of Victor Hugo, the Man Who Laughs and Les Miserables, enjoying him immensely and continued to enjoy and praise him for the rest of her life. 14 The summer of 1918, after the Revolution the Rosenbaum family fled to the Crimea to avoid political unrest. It was this summer in the Crimea, Rand now age
13, became an atheist, another decisive step in her development. Baker, a critic of Rand's, claims that this decision of hers was born out of conversations she had with her father. The Rosenbaums were Jewish, yet Rand recalled very little religious instruction or influence in her life. To Rand, God was offensive in that He degraded man, a concept that did not mesh well with her new-image of man. Apparently Rand wrote the causes of her disbelief in a dairy entry as explained to Branden:

First that there are no reasons to believe in God, there is no proof of the belief, and second, that the concept is insulting and degrading to man- it implies that the highest possible is not to be reached by man, that he is an inferior being who can only worship an ideal he will never achieve.  

After several years in the Crimea, the Rosenbaum family returned to Petrograd, much like the fictitious family in her novel *We The Living*. Rand entered the University, studying history and here made an outline of what later became *Anthem*.  

In college she discovered Aristotle and also read Nietzsche, with whom she was in agreement temporarily but differed in "his contention that man's primary drive is to gain power over his fellowman." Mans primary drive, she argued, is productivity. The Rosenbaums returned to a life in Petrograd unlike their previous one steeped in luxury. They were living frugally and Rand guarded her words at the University; much had changed while they were in the Crimea. In Rand's second year of college the Government announced that it would no longer educate enemies of the State. A young man Rand had taken interest in, an anti-communist, disappeared, much to her disappointment. Rand finished her education in an atmosphere that prohibited political freedom. The spring of 1924 Rand graduated with the highest honors and she began work as a tour guide. It was not long after her graduation when a letter arrived from relatives living in Chicago. Rand remembers vividly saying, "Write them mother, write and tell them. I have to go to America. Ask them to help. Do it today., Do it now. I have to go to America."
The families corresponded and the American relatives agreed to pay for Rand's voyage to America. After much paper work Rand's passport arrived in the spring of 1925. It was a dream come true for her. At her farewell dinner Rand recalls that one of the guests she hardly knew requested that she tell America, "That Russia is a huge cemetery, and that they are all dying slowly." Rand's only hesitation in leaving Russia came from her reluctance to leave a young man with whom she had fallen in love. She had actually only dated Leo for a limited time while in college but despite his indifference to her she never forgot him nor stopped loving him. She even managed to see him on her last evening in Petrograd. Leo was truly an inspiration to her as evident by her comments below:

Leo was—and to me, life in the present, and the only life I had there...Before Leo, I had regarded everything as something to get over with; life begins in the future, and all that matters is what I'm thinking and what books I will write; concrete reality doesn't matter. Now it mattered. He was my entry into life.

Rand commented that had he asked her to stay she would have. Her memory of him has stayed with her and readers of *We The Living* ever since. Rand sailed to America in early 1926, never to return to Russia.

It is clear that the seeds of Rand's writing career were planted early in her life. This conclusion, however, is based on the sole source available, taped interviews with Rand that Barbara Branden had with her before she died. Apparently Rand did not discuss these years with anyone, Branden commented:

In all my interviews with those who had known her, some intimately, I found not a single person with whom she had spoken at any length about the days of her childhood and young womanhood in Russia.

Fortunately Branden was able to elicit not only the basic events of Rand's childhood but personal reactions as well. It is Rand's more intimate explanations that are the most insightful, making her biography a unique and useful source in understanding this woman, despite its
drawbacks.

As stated above, Rand claims that although it took her ten years to publish her first novel after arrival in this country, her ideas are those that she acquired very early in life. She would say in later life:

I have held the same philosophy I now hold, for as far back as I can remember....I have never had to change any of my fundamentals.27

However, scholars have questioned to what degree this is true. It has been suggested that her opinions are those of an anti-Soviet Propagandist, spouting off pro-American ideals.28 This sort of criticism implies that Rand's ideas are borne out of her American experience. Locating the origins of her thought can only be discovered by careful analysis of her philosophy. Rand's historical perspective is a natural starting place for this task. Her first novel We The Living provides a clear picture of Rand the historian or perhaps, Rand the propagandist.

PART ONE RAND'S HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Rand has been called many things, but rarely is she referred to as an historian, which she is- at least in one sense. Her first novel We The Living, is fictionalized history. Regardless of one's opinion on the validity of this medium for teaching history it cannot be denied that the reader learns something about Soviet Russia. It is even more compelling to believe in the validity of Rand's historical perspective when one reads about her in the recently published biography, The Passion of Ayn Rand, by Barbara Branden. Rand states in the introduction to We the Living, "I have seen the conditions of existence that I describe" a statement that rings true throughout Branden's research on Rand. Rand does not intend to be a historian, "We the Living is not a story about Soviet Russia in 1925. It is a story about
dictatorship, any dictatorship, anywhere, at any time..." Yet she drew upon her experience in Russia for the background and has presented social history, the history of day to day life at least for some sectors of soviet society which in essence is the most absorbing type of history written.

From the very beginning of the novel when the Argounova family arrives in Petrograd, the setting holds historical significance, for example the railroads:

In 1922 the railroads, as well as everything else, had not as yet been organized .. . There were no schedules, no time tables."29

The description continues basically entailing crowds of people anxious to travel on the few trains available. A history of Soviet Russia states that one of the failures of War Communism, the economic policy of the very early 1920's was the state of the railways:"... Difficulties facing the government included the state of the railways, which were largely in ruin",30 Branden states in the biography of Rand that the Rosenbaum family returned to Petrograd "after a train journey that should have taken three days but had required rocking across Russia's devastated plains for three weeks." Clearly Rand was not exaggerating in her fictional account of the railways.31

The non-fictional time period that Rand uses as the background in the novel We The Living is known as the time of the New Economic Policy, the NEP. This policy was introduced as a measure to improve living conditions of the state. The previous policy known as War Communism had attempted too radical a change in the economy; the transition from capitalism to socialism had not run smoothly. The NEP would restore some of those aspects of a capitalist society and improve the failing economy. Industry, foreign trade, banking and transportation were all controlled by the government while producers of food were taxed rather than directly controlled and freedom of trade was re-established. 32
Rand's characters attempt to take part in this opening of trade, but found themselves destined for inevitable failure. Those who did participate in private trading were known as "Nepmen" who were criticized and vilified for their commercial success. This is illustrated by the following comment by a Russian historian:

Nepmen suffered from social pressures from which the peasants were exempt. It was difficult for them to obtain credit at banks, the rental for their apartments were often higher than their neighbors! . . . 33

This very fact is reflected in Rand's novel. The Argounov family is billed a great deal more for rent and repairs of their apartment than the other tenants because of their profession. A passage of the novel illustrates this fact. The Argounov Family is billed 50,000,000 Rubles for rent while a Soviet Employee is billed 5,000,000. 34 This may be an exaggeration on Rand's part but clearly it is not an entirely fictional account of post revolutionary Russia.

Included in the story of We the Living is a vivid description of education in proletarian Russia. The most insightful passage comes from Galina Petrovna, the heroine's mother, who has begun teaching school:

Oh don't you know? I'm teaching in a labor school- they used to be called High Schools, you know. Sewing and fancy needlework. We all realize that a practical subject like sewing is much more important to our little future citizens that the dead, useless things, such as Latin, which were taught in the old bourgeois days. 35

The above account rings true of education in that time period in Russia. The old high schools called Gymnasia were revamped according to Communist ideology. 36 Lenin himself wanted the secondary schools to be a composite of "basic scientific knowledge of both nature and society, the world outlook of scientific materialism, Communist morality and physical exercise for good health." 37 The result was an educational system that linked study to productive labor. The movement swung toward the natural sciences, useful for vocational training and away from the humanities, considered a useless subject in Soviet Russia. 38 Higher education
also went through drastic changes in Russia after the Revolution. The professors of bourgeois
descent were dismissed. An effort was made to populate higher education institutions with
working class students of which Rand gives some hint in the We the Living. The Russian
philosophy of education probably underwent the most drastic change as utilitarian goals
replaced purist ones. This is evidenced in Rand’s book from the various reasons University
students gave for choosing particular fields of study. Kira, the heroine, has chosen to became
an engineer, not for the sake of Soviet society but simply because she wants to build. This is
clear form Kira’s comment to a young woman who asked about her educational goals:

Did it ever occur to you” asked Kira, that I may be here for the very unusual, un­
natural reason of wanting to learn a work I like only because I like it?

The hero Leo responds in a similar way:

I’m studying philosophy” said Leo, “Because it’s a science that the proletariat of the
R. S.F. S. R. does not need at all.

Clearly the purpose of education is an issue of debate in post revolutionary Russia.
Rand herself chose history as a major field of study because it would be useful to her as a
writer, not necessarily a good choice as far as financial security was concerned and certainly
not a good choice for someone seeking to contribute to Soviet society. Rand studied it for
her own satisfaction just as Leo and Kira did in We The Living.

Along with a changing educational system post-revolutionary Russia saw other cultural
changes such as the nationalization of publishing houses, introduction of arts and literature
geared toward Communist ideals and the use of cinema as a tool of propaganda. The idea
of propaganda through film is demonstrated in We The Living when Leo and Kira decide to
go to the movies:
The end of the picture was not shown. It finished abruptly as if torn off. A subtitle concluded; 'Six months later the blood thirsty capitalist met his death at the hands of striking workers. Our hero renounced the joys of a selfish love into which the bourgeois siren had tried to lure him, and he dedicated his life to the cause of the World Revolution.\textsuperscript{45}

Just how factual this particular passage may have been cannot be determined, but Lenin himself saw movies as "the most important of all arts", because of its ability to 'educate' such a wide audience. \textsuperscript{46} The above examples are just a few of those demonstrating Rand's historical knowledge of this time period in Soviet Russia. These are just the obvious. Careful analysis further proves the point that Rand is truly a product of Soviet society. The character Andre, one of the heroes of the novel is symbolic of Rand's sympathy for the communist. Not to suggest that Rand shows much sympathy for the communists but she does express the idea that there were heroes in that movement just as in other movements. It is unlikely that someone who came to America to "exploit" the myth of "Rugged Individualism" as critics have contended would have a hero, as much loved as Andrei, in the position he was in. \textsuperscript{47} Namely that of a communist member of the G.P.U.

Rand, having actually lived among members of the communist party, has been able to see some worth in some of their members, or she would never have been able to create Andrei. She has no sympathy for the ideals nor methods of communism but believes men can be misguided into supporting it. Rand was as much in favor of the overthrow of the Czar as the Bolsheviks were. Rand spoke of her own feelings about the revolution below:

\textit{In the beginning.....everybody of any political denomination was in favor of the February revolution. And everybody was against the Czar. What fascinated me was that it fit with my own stage of development- it was the only time I was synchronized with history. It was almost like fiction taking place in reality. That was why I became so interested.}\textsuperscript{48}

Rand was in favor of the Provisional Government set up following the "February Revolution", even to the point of announcing her love for leader, Kerensky. "Kerensky became important
to her as the first man outside of books and her own imagination whom she could admire'.49
She read about Kerensky against the wishes of her mother and plastered photos of him up on
her wall in her bedroom.50

Rand writes as a person deeply disappointed with the outcome of the Revolution. Rand
was neither a Bourgeois infuriated with her loss nor a disillusioned communist. She repre-
sented a very small segment of the Russian population, yet a very interesting one. Further-
more at least as far as history is concerned, it is clear that she is honest in her presenta-
tion of Soviet life and that her ideas formed while the history took place around her not
after she arrived in America and not for propaganda purposes.

PART II RAND'S PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE:

As shown above, Rand's historical perspective which is linked to her own experiences in
Russia, is a valuable aspect of her philosophy. However, Rand has a great deal more to offer
beyond historical knowledge. Her ideas on human psychology are yet another element of her
philosophy that deserves attention. Rand is not a Psychologist but her fiction clearly
demonstrates a theory on the nature of man. This study will primarily explicate the psychol-
ogy of Rand through her novels. Secondly Rand's personal life will be examined to determine
the extent her Russian experience shaped this part of her philosophy.

Rand's literature is known for the nature of her characters, probably more so than for
any other aspect of her work. Her ideas on man are rather unusual and have been called
extreme. In Rand's thought there are two basic personality types; the 'egoists' and the
secondhanders.51 Rand, being a great proponent of individualism casts the egoist as the
hero. "For Ayn Rand the man of rational self-interest, who refused to live for the sake of
another man, was a hero. The 'secondhanders' are her villains who are evil because they are weak. Rand refers to them throughout her fiction as parasites, dependent upon other people for motivation as well as for measurement of success. Rand purposely creates unnatural characters that fall wholly into one of the two extremes. This is done in an effort to celebrate the best and ridicule the worst of humanity. From her very early work to her last novel her intent as a writer was “the projection of an ideal man” it is for this reason that Rand is valuable in the field of Psychology.

Of Rand’s work, the novel The Fountainhead most directly discusses human nature and personality theory and most importantly contains Rand’s best hero. It is in this novel that Rand names her heroes egoists and her villains secondhanders. The egoist in the novel, Howard Roark, is a young aspiring architect, he is modernistic creative and innovative. Opposite of Roark is another architect, Peter Keating who creates designs based on the past, satisfied with his work as long as everyone else is. Rand describes the theme of the novel as “individualism versus collectivism not in politics but in a man’s soul.” It examines the psychological motivations that produce an individualist such as Roark or a collectivist; Peter Keating. Analysis of these two characters is perhaps the best way to demonstrate the details of her ideas on the two personality types.

In the opening of the Fountainhead Howard Roark is introduced as the architecture student just expelled from a prestigious school. Rather than reacting in an angry or crushed manner, Roark is pleased. The reason for his expulsion is due to his refusal to design things in the traditional way. Roark’s rebellious individualism is simply unacceptable to the institute despite his obvious brilliance as a student. It is immediately clear however, that Roark does not care what his instructors think of him, he only cares about the integrity of his designs. This is demonstrated by the fact that he nearly misses an appointment with the Dean as a
result of discovering an error in one of his designs and becomes engaged in correcting it.

Roark's later meeting with the Dean is even more illustrative of his unbending Individualism.

This first meeting with "a superior" sets the tone for all Howard Roark's meetings with what Rand calls the mediocre of the world. As the Dean raves on about his reluctance to expel Roark, Roark simply smiles completely aware of his own talents unaffected by the expulsion. As the Dean tries to convince Roark that an architect must design as others ask him to in order to make a living, Roark's reply is calm opposition. He states, "I do not intent to build in order to have clients but rather to have clients in order to build." 56

Roark believes clients will seek him out, not the other way around. Roark leaves the meeting a bit mystified by the Dean's ideas, while the Dean is left incredibly nervous and even fearful. It is clear that a student such as Roark is a rare one and frightening to a man whose character is inferior to Roark's. Rand has introduced in the first few pages, the ideal man in the twentieth century, guided by his own opinions and un-compromised ideals.

Almost simultaneously Peter Keating is introduced, the other architect studying at the same school as Roark. Keating is the shining star of the senior class, belonging to all the popular clubs and successful organizations. However, it is clear that Keating is fundamentally flawed. Quite simply he is weak in that his feelings of success depend on how he compares to others in his class. As Keating awaits the graduation ceremony, his fundamental flaw is illustrated. Just prior to the ceremony Keating becomes panicked when he cannot locate the one tough competitor he beat out recently in class standing. Without the presence of this competitor Keating does not feel successful. He needs others to make him feel important, comparison is his only gauge of success.

Further demonstrating the nature of Keating versus Roark is their first conversation together in the novel. Keating and Roark have lived in the same house, so they know each
other well. Although Keating is a year ahead of Roark he looks up to him and admires his brilliance. The compliments Keating receives from Roark are more important to him than what everyone else says, although he only acts on the opinions of 'superiors'. Keating asks Roark about his work and Roark replies that one should never ask others; "Not about your work". Keating is a man guided by others ideas, expectations and advice, rather than by his own. While weighing his options after graduating he thinks in terms of what others will think. Later in the novel Roark names Keating's fallacy:

He didn't want to build, but to be admired as a builder." ...He didn't want to be great but to be thought great.58

It is clear almost immediately that Rand views Keating as a victim, yet she has no pity for him. Sometime in Keating's life he realized that by pleasing others, rather than himself, he could go very far, very fast. The choice however was entirely his own as man is born with free will. Keating's poor choice that compromised his integrity will prevent him from ever fully realizing his potential nor experiencing happiness as it is meant to be felt. Without commitment to integrity, life is under-sold. This vivid description of Keating that continues throughout the novel is necessary in that it contrasts the Randian Hero which is her essential focus. She said herself that the philosophy "in essence is the concept of man as a heroic being". Describing him as a man with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity and reason as his only absolute. 59 It is the Randian Hero that stands out in her fiction and is one of her noblest contributions as a writer.

The Randian hero's rationality is a rather distinctive aspect of her theory. Her heroes are coldly rational, in every movement and thought they make. Man is given a mind with the ability to be rational and only those that choose to use this faculty are the heroes. In John
Galts' famous radio speech of *Atlas Shrugged* the issue is directly addressed:

But you are not free to escape from your nature, from the fact that reason is your means of survival—so that for you, who are a human being the question 'to be or not to be' is the question 'to think or not to think'. 60

Rand is so committed to rationality that she condemns those who claim to be guided by emotions. To Rand "emotions are products of deliberate acts of rational thought". 61 Rand takes the cognitive approach on the emotions topic, thoughts are primary and emotions secondary. Her characters are rarely overwhelmed with emotion, in fact they rarely show any emotion at all. Happiness however is evident in her characters and like her heroes it is larger than life. Happiness is always borne out of productive achievement or finding another in the world who reflects the same values as the hero or heroine. Her heroes are almost never weak or unhappy, they are active and driven in their personal pursuits.

The idea that productivity is central in the life of a hero is not necessarily a new one, but Rand has certainly presented one of the more modern approaches. Not a single one of her heroes is at all lazy. Kira of *We The Living* slaves away in a job to support herself, Roark never ceases to be productive. Even working at hard labor when necessary. Reardon of *Atlas Shrugged* is a steel industrialist rarely leaving his mills, just to name a few. They work alone, getting more done than whole committees of lesser men. Rand believed that in reality two percent of the population supported the other ninety eight percent.62

It is clear from the above analysis that Rand's characters provide the basis for what is needed to form a coherent personality theory. In fact, it has been stated that her characters may be the most significant element in her fiction.63 Critics never fail to notice them and the unique nature of them. Her characters are simple, black or white. They lack the complexity that would make them human. The critics have even gone so far as to describe her
work as gross parodies of human characters and distorted human psyche. However, Rand claims that her simplistic presentation of characters is entirely purposeful. In an interview she stated; "Ethical choices are always clear cut, and the people that make them just as black and white." More interesting is the fact that this simplistic view of people put forth in her fiction she truly believed. This outlook has a child-like quality to it, a refusal to understand the intricacies of human behavior. Perhaps it was the view of the young Rand whose perspective and opinion once decided, did not alter even as Rand's experience with people did. This distorted, undeveloped view she held is most obviously evident in her relationship with others.

Rand's relationships with friends illustrate the unbending psychology she lived by. She chose her friends only by their intellectual capacities and moral views. Branden describes her as a woman, "painfully hungry for intellectual companionship." Rand was a woman who, once aware of philosophical agreement, plunged into a relationship, only to later find differences that she could not reconcile. Very few people could live up to Rand's standards, this was apparent even from a very early stage in Rand's development. Rand recalled a story of her youth to Barbara Branden explicating her intolerance for those who did not think as she did. Apparently Rand had admired a bright classmate of hers, noticed her individualistic tendencies and thought that perhaps she would be a good friend. She asked the girl one day to name the one thing in life that was most important to her. The girl answered, "my mother". Rand was completely disgusted. She described the feeling as one of enormous disappointment. This early pattern in her relationships established the course of relationships that Rand continued to have throughout her life. Rand took her simplistic, ruthless ideas on people so seriously that even her husband was not construed as one with intricacies unexplainable, he was placed in one category of people, perhaps one he did not
The man that Rand married, Frank O'Conner was to her a hero like the ones she wrote of. However those who knew him believed Rand fooled herself about his character. Rand could never admit that the man she loved might not be as heroic as she believed. Branden commented:

Friends who knew them most intimately were to agree that the man Ayn spoke of in such extravagant terms had little to do with the real human being who was Frank.

Obviously Rand loved Frank deeply but not for the values that he truly possessed. She denied the idea of an emotional response that was not linked to high intelligence and ambition. Frank’s life was not the epitome of a hero’s life, he willingly followed her career as a loyal husband. It is clear that Rand was an emotionally cold person. She would never have recognized qualities such as generosity, kindness or thoughtfulness as highly valued attributes, those that Frank truly possessed. It is likely that this is linked to Rand’s childhood values. Because Rand’s only recognizable attributes, to her parents that is, dealt directly with her high intelligence, that became her sole value in evaluating others. Branden commented:

As a child and as an adult, the first question she asked about anyone she met was ‘Is he intelligent?’ It was the first question— and in a deeply personal way, the last.

The value Rand placed on intelligence is just one example of the elements of her personality theory that can be traced to her early experience in Russia. Rand’s evaluation of her own parents lends tremendous insight to the question of where her theory began. It is clear that Rand rejected her mother and admired her father. Rand’s description of her relationship with her parents is a sad one, it seems neither parent demonstrated much affection towards Rand as a child. Rand was not the child that her mother had hoped for.
Anna Rosenbaum was a typical bourgeois woman who spent her time enjoying social activities and managing her servants who worked in her home. Rand recalled Anna nagging at her to be more social, to try to make friends, to exhibit the charm that came so easily for her. Because of Anna's apparent rejection of Rand it is likely that Rand dealt with it by deciding that the problem did not lie within her, but rather within her mother. Rand's blatant contempt for 'socialites' found in her fiction was probably borne out of her rejection of her mother. In describing her mother she characterized her in the same way as she characterized the villain Lillian Reardon of *Atlas Shrugged*.  

Recall that Lillian Reardon is "characterized as someone whose emptiness of spirit is exemplified by her passion for social interaction".  

Rand stated herself that Galina Petrovna of *We the Living* was modeled after her mother, who exhibits "social snobbery about the Revolution".  

Perhaps Rand's mother provided all that was needed for her to believe that the world did hold the villains she later created in her fiction.  

Likewise Rand's father may very well have been the model for the hero that is so prevalent in Rand's fiction. It is an interesting fact that she did not criticize her father for not being affectionate to her as a child. Only as a teenager when they could discuss politics did he take any interest in her at all. Rand excelled in discussing ideas and began enjoying her relationship with her father. Thus a hero was a man who was interested in ideas rather than in people. The idea of the importance of productivity may have also come out of her father as a model. Fronz Rosenbaum was a self-made man, a successful Jew which was rare in those days. His refusal to work for the Soviet Government was also an admirable quality to Rand. Uncle Vassily of *We The Living* was characterized after her father.  

Uncle Vassily is only a minor version of the heroes she would create later, but it is significant that he refuses to compromise his ideals and work for a system he does not approve of.
value of Rand's relationship with her father can be seen in the good relationship between the character Kira (who is closely paralleled to Rand) and Uncle Vassily.

Perhaps if critics of Rand's work were aware of her background she would be better understood. Her simplistic view of people may very well be due to her rather unusual upbringing. Her own parents represented Rand's two types of people in the world. Rand's first hero was her father, not such an unusual idea even today and her mother was the type of woman she would vow to never become. It seems that Rand never came out of her home environment as far as her ideas are concerned. Again it is conclusive that Rand's philosophy, particularly her theory on personality is grounded in her early Russian experience, just as her historical perspective is.

PART THREE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Closely associated with the personality theory of Ayn Rand is her sociological perspective, specifically in the area of gender-roles. Like her personality theory, her ideas on gender roles are rather unusual. This aspect of Rand's thought extracted from her fiction may prove to be rather startling. As a modern thinker, and writer, in American society Rand has a great deal to offer. It has been argued that she has challenged traditional gender roles in her presentation of fictional characters as well as in the life she led as a professional writer. Rand's characters and biography will be examined in light of this argument to determine its validity. Furthermore an effort will be made to locate the origins of Rand's ideas which is equally important in understanding Rand's perspective.

The roles of men and women found in Rand's fiction are both traditional and nontraditional and vary from her different works. It should be noted that it is assumed that readers
have an implicit understanding of traditional gender roles. However, for the sake of clarity a brief explanation is necessary. The discussion of gender roles throughout the analysis is in reference to basic gender roles present in Western culture. In western culture men are believed to be "naturally" dominant, competitive, rational and non-emotional. Women are assumed to be the nurturing, non-competitive emotionally calculative and generally more passive than men.\(^7\) It is the gender roles of women that are the main focus of this study as it is in this area that critics have suggested Rand deviates from the norm.

Beginning with Rand's very first published work, "The Night of January 16th" (a play), and ending with her enormous philosophical novel Atlas Shrugged her fiction will be surveyed in search of significant elements and consistent patterns in relation to gender roles. Brief character sketches are necessary and only the main characters can be discussed due to the scope of this study. It does need to be kept in mind the rather strange psychology of the characters previously discussed in part two of this paper. Perhaps just as importantly it cannot be forgotten then Rand presented people as she wanted them to be not necessarily as they really are.\(^8\)

"The Night of January 16th" holds two rather significant characters; Karen Andre and her lover Bjorn Faulkner. Bjorn, though not present in the play, as he has supposedly been murdered, is a traditional hero in the sense of American sex-role stereotypes. He is a highly successful businessman, living life in the style of a jet-setter, and in love with Karen his secretary. Financial ruin leads him to marriage with a woman who can solve that problem, yet his lifestyle does not change, nor his relationship with Karen. He is good at being rich and thoroughly rational, easily alienating himself from his emotions for the sake of saving his fortune. Karen, however, is a rather odd character in light of gender-role stereotypes. Although traditional in her position as Faulkner's secretary, she is not an ordinary secretary.
She is Faulkner's partner in the quest for financial gain and is described as his notorious mistress. By Rand’s tone it is obvious that she is the heroine.

In the introduction to the play Rand states that at the time of writing it she was only ready to write about a woman’s feelings for her ideal man. Karen’s feelings are by all means traditional, but Karen is not. Her loyalty to Bjorn is unbending like that of a wife, but Bjorn is married to someone else. Karen is proud of her status as a mistress and does not shed a tear over such a title.

It is typical however, that Karen is beautiful. She is described as "one who knows she can make any rag attractive and does it unconsciously" This is the first description of Randian woman setting precedence for all her later heroines.

Throughout her fiction Rand captures the way women can use physical attractiveness as an advantage. It is rarely a disadvantage to be good looking and is likely to be a great asset. Because traditionally so much emphasis is placed on the way a women looks, good looks build confidence and can be very powerful. Rand was always aware of this fact. Rand’s very first "grandfather draft", as she termed it, of Atlas Shrugged held a female heroine so beautiful no man could resist her power, in place of John Galt the actual hero of the novel.

Again in Rand’s second work, like the first, the most significant character is the female heroine Kira. Kira is very much an inspirational character. In spite of her death at the end of the novel she is truly the only winner among the group of characters. She has "a determination not to let the collectivist system wear her down." It is significant that she is a student of engineering, a profession usually reserved for men. Kira is also the steadiest of the three main characters presented in the novel. Andrei Taganov, the hero of Melitopol and a young communist is heroic in all that he does but is deceived by the communist system. He has mistakenly adopted collectivist ideals which the novel explicates as the wrong ideals,
eventually leading him to ruin. Leo Kovalensky the man that Kira is passionately in love with, starts out as the heroic man sweeping Kira off her feet, but ends up a broken spirit, a casualty of the horrors of communism. Again, an unbending loyalty on the part of the woman is presented. Kira is so committed that when Leo falls ill with tuberculosis she becomes involved with Andrei to gain financial support in order to send Leo to a sanatorium where he can be treated. In this sense Kira is traditionally manipulative for the sake of loyalty. Kira's strength, however, has to be admired. She is fiercely independent and hard working, never a nagging companion to Leo. She also retains her ties to her friends, both male and female throughout her relationship with Leo. Kira is most heroic at the end of her life as she displays immense courage in attempting to cross the Latvian Border and escape the Soviet Regime. She does so alone, taking off in the dead of winter through deep snow drifts. She is spotted and shot by the border patrol, but in the true sense dies with dignity. Her final thoughts: "Life undefeated, existed, and could exist." She smiled her last smile to so much that had been possible.  

She dies a heroic character that is well-loved and admired and perhaps greatly overlooked in American literature.

Dominique Francon of The Fountainhead (1943) Rand's second novel, is yet another heroine with untraditional ideas. She is not especially well-liked by readers, but she is more often studied due to the success of The Fountainhead. Dominique is powerful, influential and as ruthless as any man in literature. However, she is a strange character in that she has an inner conflict that causes her to seem somewhat perverse.  "Dominique chooses not to care about anything in order not to let anything or anyone have power over her". She goes so far with this that she has been called Masochistic. She marries two men she hates and tries to destroy the one man she loves because she thinks he is too good for this world. Dominique is a complex woman. Rand stated that Dominique was herself in a bad mood.
Most unusual in the character of Dominque is the relationship she has with Roark, her true love, especially her sexual relationship.

To truly understand Dominque, Rand’s theory on sexuality must be reviewed. Essentially in Randian thought sexuality is not a mysterious or taboo subject. Rand theorizes that a person is sexually attracted to those who reflect a vision of him or herself. One of the characters in Atlas Shrugged in speaking of sex states, “Tell me what a man finds sexually attractive and I will tell you his entire philosophy of life”. Rand believes that biological drives are controlled by man’s reason. Sex is a meeting of the minds and great minds recognize each other immediately, without the aid of emotions. Thus Rand’s sex scenes are rather violent, lacking the intimacy usually associated with such scenes.

Some readers have found Dominique and Roark’s first sexual encounter as offensive. Rand has been accused of glorifying rape. To Rand, however, this first scene was far from a “rape scene”. Rand commented to her biographer that “if it is rape, it is rape by engraved invitation”. It is clear that the way Roark treated Dominique sexually was just what she wanted. However, this is not meant to carry over the myth that all women desire rape, Dominique is very unusual. As discussed earlier she is so disenchanted with the world that she is masochistic in all areas of her life.

The idea that Dominque embraces masochism is probably offensive to feminist readers of Rand. The sexuality of Dominique is very Freudian. Freud holds that women are masochistic by nature, most feminists disagree. Although Dominique is the extreme, nearly all Rand’s heroines have a few masochistic tendencies especially in their sexuality. Thus, this aspect of Rand’s thought marks a return to Freudian beliefs of the past.

Also considered an ancient idea, about women present in Rand’s fiction is their feral nature. Throughout history women periodically been paralleled to animals. Rand’s fiction
mentions this feral nature in several places, as several critics have noted. Kira's lips part "in a snarl". Karen Andre of "Night of January 16th is described as one "that to handle her would require the services of an animal trainer". Dominique bites her lover to the point of drawing blood. Dagney Taggart of Atlas Shrugged refers to herself as having animal desires. However, this is only a subtlety in Rand's women. Overall their sexuality is not the focus of them as characters and some even view their sexuality in a positive light. The Randian women are not sexually inhibited, or frigid as women are so often portrayed. Thus Rand simultaneously challenges female gender roles and reinforces very ancient ones.

To further understand the existing paradox in Rand's treatment of female gender roles examination of the relationships between her characters is necessary. Indeed, Rand's women are deeply committed to their men emotionally in a traditional way. However, they make demands on them uncommon in traditional society. Their demands are not ones of security, such as marriage or time commitments. Rather the demands made are demands on their integrity. If one of the men Rand's women are involved with fails in upholding his philosophical beliefs the Randian woman leaves him. It could be argued that the idea of conditional loyalty such as this is a rare one found in female characters. Interestingly enough Rand's women are mistresses, live-ins, will have relations with more than one man at a time, yet it is all projected in a favorable light. These women know who they love and do not care for such institutions as marriage and family. It is interesting to note that the first Randian woman is her lover's ally while the last one, Dagney Taggart, is a fierce competitor.

Of Rand's untraditional women, Dagney Taggart of Atlas Shrugged is her best. It has been commented that Dagney Taggart is "probably the most admirable and successful heroine in American Fiction." In Atlas Shrugged she successfully operates a transcontinental railroad not through careful politics but by sheer determination and ability. Dagney is as
much of an individualist as Rand's characters get. While the country is falling apart she fights single-handedly to save her railroad, not for the sake of the country, but for herself and the pride she takes in Taggart Transcontinental Railroad. Dagney outlasts the other heroes of the novel (all male) in her determination to continue functioning in a failing society. Three of the four heroes are desperately in love with her. One viewer has commented that *Atlas Shrugged* is a "daydream of a girl who enters a man's world with one hand running a railroad and the other reducing strong men to canine adoration." It was not a girls dream, it was Rand's dream.

Dagney is a role model in today's society with perhaps her only weakness being the fact that although equal she worships the men she loves. Rand believed that to be feminine meant to worship a hero and this belief is reflected in all of her writings. Yet Dagney never denies her own greatness so it is difficult to scorn this accomplishment.

Even more positive in evaluating Rand's contribution to changing gender-roles is not just her created characters but rather Rand herself. The significant impact Ayn Rand has had on American society cannot be denied:

> She is by any objective standards, one of the most widely discussed philosopher of our times.  

A woman philosopher is far from common, even today, and Rand had her hey-day in the 1960's. Although her philosophy is highly controversial, one must applaud her efforts and determination as an accomplished writer and philosopher. Rand is a role model. She herself is non-traditional, recognized for her intellect, not her beauty or charm as women so often are. One critic would say:

> She was more committed to her cause and more articulate in defending it than Dominique or Dagney ever dared to be.

Unfortunately the origin of Rand's ideas are not as easily located as the ideas themselves.
Because gender-role attitudes are usually formed in a person by young adulthood, it is necessary to again examine and analyze Rand's past in the quest to understand her as a writer. Her ideas on the roles of men, although extreme, are not as unique as her ideas on women, as this paper has explicated.

The fact that Rand was not a typical girl from her very early days probably had much to do with the non-traditional woman she became. Again, as in her theory on personality, it is likely that Rand's rejection of her mother formed some of her radical ideas on the roles of women. Rand has no desire to be social or domesticated as her mother was but rather thought the traditional male stereotype of the intellect and producer as more appropriate for herself. Rand did, however, adopt some of the roles her mother had, namely that of the stable, capable head of the household. Rand chose to not have children because she believed that responsibility for children was in the hands of women, just as it had been for her mother and Rand never took time to have children. Obviously Rand's husband who was usually only employed part time and could have cared for children while she pursued her career but it is clear that Rand did not consider that.

Rand's ideas on physical beauty expressed in her fiction probably have to do with Rand's desire to be attractive, just as her mother was. Rand recognized what a great advantage it was to be attractive and she created her heroines with that in mind. It is too bad that at least one of Rand's heroines didn't look as she did, just an average women as that would have been a definite breakthrough in gender-role stereotypes.

It can only be questioned to what extent Revolutionary Russia and its plans for women affected Rand. It is likely that some of her ideas, even just seeing institutions of higher education populated with at least some women may have contributed to her rather modern ideas. Not to be forgotten, is that Rand came from on upper-class home that emphasized
traditional values. Values she chose to reject, accepting the modern ideas on women put forth by the Communists.

Rand, self-sufficient and capable, from a very early age, formed modern ideas on what she wanted to be. Speculation on just where these ideas came from might be incorrect, but it is likely, that Rand, like everyone else was more or less affected by her environment. She would claim otherwise but her unusual background helps to explain the unusual ideas she has. At any rate, Rand ought to be applauded for the ideas she put forth in American fiction. Something that may not have been possible without her early Russian experience. This is not the first and will certainly not be the last recognition of the inspiration she is to young women reading her fiction.
CONCLUSION

Clearly, Rand was deeply affected by the years she spent in Russia in spite of her denial of environmental influence. As mentioned earlier, she held that one's environment had little, if any, control over one's fate. Thus, this study has been the anti-thesis to Rand's attitude about her childhood. Had Rand been more public about her early life, it is likely she might have been more deeply understood. This study has demonstrated, that in three distinct areas, history, psychology, and sociology, by defining Rand's perspective and then researching its origins it led to a deeper understanding of the ideas she put forth. It is conclusive that Rand's ideas are the same ideas she held throughout her life. Rand's unusual parental influence and unique experience of living through the Russian Revolution never left her. Because of her experiences during the revolution she gained a strong perspective that emphasized extremes. Rand's mother accepted the Communist Regime while her father violently opposed it. It appears that she believed everyone had to take a specific moral stand on all issues. She seemed to demonstrate a completely black and white attitude towards life because of this early influence. Her immigration to America allowed for expression of ideas not otherwise afforded to her in Russia under the Communist Regime.

My philosophical ideas are not a part of the history of philosophy—but they will be. 105

Ayn Rand, age 19.
WORKS BY AYN RAND

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3. Ibid page 438
5. Branden, page 7: (*This citation always refers to the Passion of Ayn Rand*).
8. Branden, page 11
9. Branden, page 12
23. Branden, page 60.
27. Branden, page 52.
28. *Contemporary Authors* volumes 15-6, page 358.
32. Dziewanowski, page 138 (for whole paragraph).
36. Dziewanowski, page 141.
37. Dziewanowski, page 141.
38. Dziewanowski, page 141.
40. Dziewanowski, page 142.
42. Branden, page 41.
43. Branden, page 41.
44. Dziewanowski, page 142-144.
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