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THE OBJECTIVIST

Edited by AYN RAND
and NATHANIEL BRANDEN

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REQUIEM FOR MAN

By Ayn Rand

(Part III of a three-part article dealing with the encyclical "Populorum Progressio")

Now observe that the encyclical is not concerned with man, with the individual; the "unit" of its thinking is *the tribe*: nations, countries, peoples—and it discusses them as if they had a totalitarian power to dispose of their citizens, as if such entities as individuals were of no significance any longer. This is indicative of the encyclical's strategy: the United States is the highest achievement of the millennia of Western civilization's struggle toward individualism, and its last precarious remnant. With the obliteration of the United States—i.e., of capitalism—there will be nothing left to deal with on the face of the globe, but collectivized tribes. To hasten that day, the encyclical treats it as a *fait accompli* and addresses itself to the relationships among tribes.

Observe that the same morality—*altruism*, the morality of self-immolation—which, for centuries, has been preached against the individual, is now preached against the *civilized nations*. The creed of self-sacrifice—the primordial weapon used to penalize man's success on earth, to undercut his self-confidence, to cripple his independence, to poison his enjoyment of life, to emasculate his pride, to stunt his self-esteem and paralyze his mind—is now counted upon to wreak the same destruction on civilized nations and on civilization as such.

I quote John Galt: "You have reached the blind alley of the treason you committed when you agreed that you had no right to exist. Once, you believed it was 'only a compromise': you conceded it was evil to live for yourself, but moral to live for the sake of your children. Then you conceded that it was selfish to live for your children, but moral to live for your community. Then you conceded that it was selfish to live for your community, but moral to live for your country. *Now*, you are letting this greatest of countries be devoured by any scum from any corner of the earth, while you concede that it is selfish to live for your country and that your moral duty is to live for the globe. A man who has no right to life, has no right to values and will not keep them." (*Atlas Shrugged*.)

Rights are conditions of existence required by man's nature for his proper survival qua man—i.e., qua *rational* being. They are not compatible with altruism.

Man's soul or spirit is his consciousness; the motor of his consciousness is reason; deprive him of freedom, i.e., of the right to use his mind—and what is left of him is only a physical body, ready to be manipulated by the strings of any tribe.

Ask yourself whether you have ever read a document as body-oriented

as that encyclical. The inhabitants of the world it proposes to establish are robots tuned to respond to a single stimulus: *need*—the lowest, grossest, physical, *physicalistic* need of any other robots anywhere: the minimum necessities, the barely sufficient to keep all robots in working order, eating, sleeping, eliminating and procreating, to produce more robots to work, eat, sleep, eliminate and procreate. The most dehumanizing level of poverty is the level on which bare animal necessities become one's only concern and goal; this is the level which the encyclical proposes to institutionalize and on which it proposes to immobilize all of mankind forever, with the animal needs of all as the only motivation of all ("all other rights whatsoever . . . are to be subordinated to this principle").

If the encyclical charges that in a capitalist society men fall victim to "a stifling materialism," what is the atmosphere of that proposed world?

The survivor of one such plan described it as follows: "We had no way of knowing their ability [the ability of others], we had no way of controlling their needs—all we knew was that we were beasts of burden struggling blindly in some sort of place that was half-hospital, half-stockyards—a place geared to nothing but disability, disaster, disease—beasts put there for the relief of whatever whoever chose to say was whichever's need. . . . To work—with no chance for an extra ration, till the Cambodians have been fed and the Patagonians have been sent through college. To work—on a blank check held by every creature born, by men whom you'll never see, whose needs you'll never know, whose ability or laziness or sloppiness or fraud you have no way to learn and no right to question—just to work and work and work—and leave it up to the Ivys and the Geraldts of the world to decide whose stomach will consume the effort, the dreams and the days of your life." (*Atlas Shrugged*.)

Do you think that I was exaggerating and that no one preaches ideals of that kind?

But, you say, the encyclical's ideal will not work? It is not intended to work.

It is not intended to relieve suffering or to abolish poverty; it is intended to induce guilt. It is not intended to be accepted and practiced; it is intended to be accepted and broken—broken by man's "selfish" desire to live, which will thus be turned into a shameful weakness. Men who accept as an ideal an irrational goal which they cannot achieve, never lift their heads thereafter—and never discover that their bowed heads were the only goal to be achieved.

The relief of suffering is not altruism's motive, it is only its rationalization. Self-sacrifice is not altruism's means to a happier end, it is its end—self-sacrifice as man's permanent state, as a way of life and joyless toil in the muck of a desolate earth where no "Why?" is ever to flash on in the veiled, extinguished eyes of children.

The encyclical comes close to admitting this prospect, and does not attempt to offer any *earthly* justification for altruistic martyrdom. It declares: "Far from being the ultimate measure of all things, man can only

realize himself by reaching beyond himself." (42.) (Beyond the grave?) And: "This road toward a greater humanity requires effort and sacrifice, but suffering itself, accepted for the love of our brethren, favors the progress of the entire human family." (79.) And: "We are all united in this progress toward God." (80.)

As to the attitude toward man's mind, the clearest admission is to be found outside the encyclical. In a speech to a national conference of Italian bishops, on April 7, 1967, Pope Paul VI denounced the questioning of "any dogma that does not please and that demands the humble homage of the mind to be received." And he urged the bishops to combat the "cult of one's own person." (*The New York Times*, April 8, 1967.)

On the question of what political system it advocates, the encyclical is scornfully indifferent: it would, apparently, find any political system acceptable provided it is a version of statism. The vague allusions to some nominal form of private property make it probable that the encyclical favors fascism. On the other hand, the tone, style and vulgarity of argumentation suggest a shopworn Marxism. But this very vulgarity seems to indicate a profound indifference to intellectual discourse—as if, contemptuous of its audience, the encyclical picked whatever clichés were deemed to be safely fashionable today.

The encyclical insists emphatically on only two political demands: that the nations of the future embrace statism, with a totalitarian control of their citizens' economic activities—and that these nations unite into a global state, with a totalitarian power over global planning. "This international collaboration on a worldwide scale requires institutions that will prepare, coordinate and direct it . . . Who does not see the necessity of thus establishing progressively a world authority, capable of acting effectively in the juridical and political sectors?" (78.)

Is there any difference between the encyclical's philosophy and communism? I am perfectly willing, on this matter, to take the word of an eminent Catholic authority. Under the headline: "Encyclical Termed Rebuff to Marxism," *The New York Times* of March 31, 1967, reports: "The Rev. John Courtney Murray, the prominent Jesuit theologian, described Pope Paul's newest encyclical yesterday as 'the church's definitive answer to Marxism.' . . . 'The Marxists have proposed one way, and in pursuing their program they rely on man alone,' Father Murray said. 'Now Pope Paul VI has issued a detailed plan to accomplish the same goal on the basis of true humanism—humanism that recognizes man's religious nature.'"

Amen.

So much for those American "conservatives" who claim that religion is the base of capitalism—and who believe that they can have capitalism and eat it, too, as the moral cannibalism of the altruist ethics demands.

And so much for those modern "liberals" who pride themselves on being the champions of reason, science and progress—and who smear the advocates of capitalism as superstitious, reactionary representatives of a

dark past. Move over, comrades, and make room for your latest fellow-travelers, who had always belonged on *your* side—then take a look, if you dare, at the kind of past *they* represent.

This is the spectacle of religion climbing on the band-wagon of statism, in a desperate attempt to recapture the power it lost at the time of the Renaissance.

The Catholic Church has never given up the hope to re-establish the medieval union of church and state, with a global state and a global *theocracy* as its ultimate goal. Since the Renaissance, it has always been cautiously last to join that political movement which could serve its purpose at the time. This time, it is too late: collectivism is dead intellectually; the band-wagon on which the Church has climbed is a hearse. But, counting on that vehicle, the Catholic Church is deserting Western civilization and calling upon the barbarian hordes to devour the achievements of man's mind.

There is an element of sadness in this spectacle. Catholicism had once been the most philosophical of all religions. Its long, illustrious philosophical history was illuminated by a giant: Thomas Aquinas. He brought an Aristotelian view of reason (an Aristotelian *epistemology*) back into European culture, and lighted the way to the Renaissance. For the brief span of the nineteenth century, when his was the dominant influence among Catholic philosophers, the grandeur of his thought almost lifted the Church close to the realm of reason (though at the price of a basic contradiction). Now, we are witnessing the end of the Aquinas line—with the Church turning again to his primordial antagonist, who fits it better, to the mind-hating, life-hating St. Augustine. One could only wish they had given St. Thomas a more dignified requiem.

The encyclical is the voice of the Dark Ages, rising again in today's intellectual vacuum, like a cold wind whistling through the empty streets of an abandoned civilization.

Unable to resolve a lethal contradiction, the conflict between individualism and altruism, the West is giving up. When men give up reason and freedom, the vacuum is filled by faith and force.

No social system can stand for long without a moral base. Project a magnificent skyscraper being built on quicksands: while men are struggling upward to add the hundredth and two-hundredth stories, the tenth and twentieth are vanishing, sucked under by the muck. That is the history of capitalism, of its swaying, tottering attempt to stand erect on the foundation of the altruist morality.

It's either-or. If capitalism's befuddled, guilt-ridden apologists do not know it, two fully consistent representatives of altruism do know it: Catholicism and communism.

Their rapprochement, therefore, is not astonishing. Their differences pertain only to the supernatural, but here, in reality, on earth, they have three cardinal elements in common: the same morality, altruism—the same goal, global rule by force—the same enemy, man's mind.

There is a precedent for their strategy. In the German election of 1933, the communists supported the Nazis, on the premise that they could fight each other for power later, but must first destroy their common enemy, capitalism. Today, Catholicism and communism may well cooperate, on the premise that they will fight each other for power later, but must first destroy their common enemy, the individual, by forcing mankind to unite to form one neck ready for one leash.

The encyclical was endorsed with enthusiasm by the communist press the world over. "The French Communist party newspaper, *L'Humanité*, said the encyclical was 'often moving' and constructive for highlighting the evils of capitalism long emphasized by Marxists," reports *The New York Times* (March 30, 1967).

Those who do not understand the role of moral self-confidence in human affairs, will not appreciate the sardonically ludicrous quality of the following item from the same report: "The French Communists, however, deplored the failure of the Pope to make a distinction between rich Communist countries and rich capitalist countries in his general strictures against imbalance between the 'have' and 'have-not' nations."

Thus, wealth acquired by force, is rightful property, but wealth earned by production, is not; looting is moral, but producing is not. And while the looters' spokesmen object to the encyclical's damnation of wealth, the producers' spokesmen crawl, evading the issues, accepting the insults, promising to give their wealth away. If capitalism does not survive, *this* is the spectacle that will have made it unworthy of survival.

The New York Times (March 30, 1967) declared editorially that the encyclical "is remarkably advanced in its economic philosophy. It is sophisticated, comprehensive and penetrating . . ." If, by "advanced," the editorial meant that the encyclical's philosophy has caught up with that of modern "liberals," one would have to agree—except that the *Times* is mistaken about the *direction* of the motion involved: it is not that the encyclical has progressed to the twentieth century, it is that the "liberals" have reverted to the fourth.

The Wall Street Journal (May 10, 1967) went further. It declared, in effect, that the Pope didn't mean it. The encyclical, it alleged, was just a misunderstanding caused by some mysterious conspiracy of the Vatican translators who misinterpreted the Pope's ideas in transferring them from the original Latin into English. "His Holiness may not be showering compliments on the free market system. But he is not at all saying what the Vatican's English version appeared to make him say."

Through minute comparisons of Latin paragraphs with their official and unofficial translations, and columns of casuistic hair-splitting, *The Wall Street Journal* reached the conclusion that it was not capitalism that the Pope was denouncing, but only "*some opinions*" of capitalism. Which opinions? According to the unofficial translation, the encyclical's paragraph 26 reads as follows: "But out of these new conditions, we know not how, some opinions have crept into human society according to which

profit was regarded (in these opinions) as the foremost incentive to encourage economic progress, free competition as the supreme rule of economics, private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right which would accept neither limits nor a social duty related to it. . . ."

"In the Latin," said the article, "Pope Paul is acknowledging the hardships . . . in the development of 'some kinds of capitalism.' But he puts the blame for that not on 'the whole woeful system'—i.e., the whole capitalistic system—but on some corrupt views of it."

If the views advocating the profit motive, free competition and private property are "corrupt," just *what* is capitalism? Blank out. What is *The Wall Street Journal's* definition of capitalism? Blank out. What are we to designate as "capitalism" once all of its essential characteristics are removed? Blank out.

This last question indicates the unstated meaning of that article: since the Pope does not attack capitalism, but only its fundamental principles, we don't have to worry.

And for what, do you suppose, did that article find courage to reproach the encyclical? "What might have been wished for in the encyclical was an acknowledgement that capitalism can accept, and in the United States as well as other places does accept, a great many social responsibilities."

Sic transit gloria viae Wall.

A similar attitude, with a similar range of vision, is taken by *Time* magazine (April 7, 1967). "Although Pope Paul had probably tried to give a Christian message relevant to the world's contemporary economic situation, his encyclical virtually ignored the fact that old-style laissez-faire capitalism is about as dead as *Das Kapital*. Quite clearly, the Pope's condemnation of capitalism was addressed to the unreconstructed variety that persists, for example, in Latin America."

If this were a competition, the prize would go to *Fortune*, the businessmen's magazine (May 1967). Its attitude is aggressively amoral and a-philosophical; it is proudly determined to maintain the separation of economics and ethics. "Capitalism is only an economic system," it says.

First acknowledging the Pope's "praiseworthy purpose," *Fortune* declares: "But despite its modern and global vision, *Populorum Progressio* may be a self-defeating document. It takes a dated and suspicious view of the workings of economic enterprise. . . . The Pope has set up a straw man that has few defenders—if this passage [paragraph 26] is taken literally. Unalloyed laissez-faire in fact governs no significant part of the world's commerce. . . . 'Ownership,' in advanced countries, has evolved in a way that subsumes 'social obligations.' . . . 'Absolute' private rights are irrelevant in advanced industrial societies."

After conceding all that, *Fortune* seems to be astonished and hurt that the Pope did not find it necessary to include businessmen among the "men of good will" whom he calls upon to combat global poverty. "In omitting any specific reference to the businessman, he slights a natural and necessary ally, who, indeed is already deeply committed in many parts of the

world to the kind of effort that Paul urges. Perhaps the businessman is taken for granted, as a kind of primordial force that can be counted upon to provide motive power, and that needs only to be tamed and harnessed and carefully watched. [And isn't that *Fortune's* own view of businessmen in their "unalloyed" state?]

"The Vatican has seldom seemed able to look at capitalism as other than a necessary evil, at best, and *Populorum Progressio* suggests that a better understanding still comes hard. This is not to suggest that capitalism is a complete formula for social enlightenment and progress; it is only an economic system that men of good will can use—more successfully than any other system yet conceived—to attain the social goals that politics and religion help to define."

Observe the indecency of trying to justify capitalism on the grounds of altruistic service. Observe also the naiveté of the cynical: it is not their wealth nor the relief of poverty that the encyclical is after.

Militantly concrete-bound, equating cynicism with "practicality," modern pragmatists are unable to see beyond the range of the moment or to grasp what moves the world and determines its direction. Men who are willing to swim with any current, to compromise on anything, to serve as means to anyone's ends, lose the ability to understand the power of ideas. And while two hordes of man-haters, who do understand it, are converging on civilization, they sit in the middle, declaring that principles are straw men.

I have heard the same accusation directed at Objectivism: we are fighting a straw man, they say, nobody preaches the kind of ideas we are opposing.

Well, as a friend of mine observed, only the Vatican, the Kremlin and the Empire State Building* know the real issues of the modern world.

*This publication moved its offices to the Empire State Building in September.

On Saturday, December 23, NBI will present Allan Blumenthal, soloist, and George Broderick, accompanist, in "An Evening of Romantic Piano Concertos." The concertos to be performed are: Chopin Concerto #2 in F Minor, Chopin Andante spianato and Grande Polonaise Brillante, and Rachmaninoff Concerto #2 in C Minor.

Paintings and drawings by Joan Mitchell Blumenthal will be on exhibit during the evening.

Place: NBI Auditorium, Empire State Building. Time: 8:30 P.M. Admission: \$3.50. Tickets may be purchased by writing to NATHANIEL BRANDEN INSTITUTE, Empire State Building, New York, N.Y. 10001. Please enclose a check or money order and a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your order.

(Note: There will be no separate mailing announcing this event.)

SELF-ESTEEM

By Nathaniel Branden

(Part V of a five-part article)

The possession of self-esteem does not provide a man with automatic immunity to errors—errors about life, about other men, about the appropriate course of action to pursue—that may have painful emotional consequences. Rationality does not guarantee infallibility.

But a healthy self-esteem gives man an inestimable weapon in dealing with errors: since his own value and the efficacy of his mind are not in doubt, since he does not feel that reality is his enemy, he is free to bring the full of his intellectual powers and knowledge to the task of identifying facts and of dealing with problems. The *foundation* of his consciousness is secure.

Conversely, one of the most disastrous consequences of an impaired or deficient self-esteem is that it tends to hamper and undercut the efficiency of a man's thinking processes—depriving him of the full strength and benefit of his own intelligence.

To the extent that a man lacks self-esteem, his consciousness is ruled by fear: fear of reality, to which he feels inadequate; fear of the facts about himself which he has evaded or repressed. Fear is the antithesis of thought. If a man believes that crucial aspects of reality, with which he must deal, are hopelessly closed to his understanding, if he faces the key problems of his life with a basic sense of helplessness, if he feels that he dare not pursue certain lines of thought because of the unworthy features of his own character that would be brought to light—if he feels, in any sense whatever, that reality is the enemy of his self-esteem (or his pretense at it)—these fears act as the saboteurs of his psycho-epistemological efficacy.

There are many ways in which a deficiency in self-esteem can adversely affect a man's thinking processes.

A man who faces the basic problems of life with an attitude of "Who am I to know? Who am I to judge? Who am I to decide?"—is undercut intellectually at the outset. A mind does not struggle for that which it regards as impossible: if a man feels that his thinking is doomed to failure, he does not think—or does not think very persistently.

If a man sees himself as helpless and ineffectual, his actions tend to confirm and reinforce his negative self-image—thus setting up a vicious circle. By the same principle, a man who is confident of his efficacy tends to function efficaciously. A man's self-appraisal has profound motivational consequences, for good or for bad. Its most immediate impact is felt in the quality and ambitiousness of his thinking.

The nature of a man's self-esteem and self-image does not *determine* his thinking, but it affects his emotional incentives, so that his feelings *tend* to encourage or discourage thinking, to draw him toward reality or away from it, toward efficacy or away from it.

Many men become, in effect, the psychological prisoners of their own negative self-image. They define themselves as weak or mediocre or unmasculine or cowardly or ineffectual, and their subsequent performance is affected accordingly. The process by which this occurs is subconscious; most men do not hold their self-image in conceptual form, nor do they identify its consequences conceptually.

While men are capable of acting contrary to their negative self-image—and many men do so, at least on some occasions—the factor that tends to prevent them from breaking free is their attitude of resignation toward their own state. They succumb to a destructive sense of determinism about themselves, the feeling that to be weak or mediocre or unmasculine, etc., is their "nature," not to be changed. This is a particularly tragic error which can hit men of great, unactualized potential, causing them to function at a fraction of their capacity.

If a man with a self-esteem problem attempts to identify the motives of his behavior in some area or issue, a generalized sense of guilt or unworthiness can significantly distort his introspection. He may be drawn, not to the most logical explanation of his behavior, but to the most *damaging*, to that which puts him in the worst light morally. Or, if he is confronted with the unjust accusations of others, he may feel disarmed and incapable of confuting their claims; he may accept their charges as true, paralyzed and exhausted by a heavy feeling of "How can I know?"

It is illuminating to remember, in this connection, that one of the common strategies employed in "brain-washing" is that of inculcating or provoking some form of guilt in the victim—on the premise that a guilt-ridden mind is less inclined to critical, independent judgment, and is more susceptible to indoctrination and intellectual manipulation. Guilt subdues self-assertiveness.

The principle involved is not a new discovery. Religion has been utilizing it for many, many centuries.

When a man suffers from low self-esteem and institutes various irrational defenses to protect himself from the knowledge of his deficiency, he necessarily introduces distortions into his thinking. His mental processes are regulated, not by the goal of apprehending reality correctly, but (at best) by the goal of gaining only such knowledge as is compatible with the maintenance of his irrational defenses, the defenses erected to support a tolerable form of self-appraisal.

In attempting to counterfeit a self-esteem he does not possess, he makes his perception of reality conditional; he establishes, as a principle of his mind's functioning, that certain considerations supersede reality, facts and truth in their importance to him. Thereafter, his consciousness is pulled, to a significant and dangerous extent, by the strings of his wishes

and fears (above all, his fears); *they* become his masters; it is to *them*, not to reality, that he has to adjust.

Thus he is led to perpetuate and strengthen the same kind of anti-rational, self-defeating policies which occasioned his loss of self-esteem in the first place.

Consider, for example, the case of a man who, lacking authentic self-esteem, attempts to gain a sense of personal value from the near-delusional image of himself as a "big operator" in business, a daring and shrewd "go-getter" who is just one deal away from a fortune. He keeps losing money and suffering defeat in one "get-rich-quick" scheme after another—always blind to the evidence that his plans are impractical, always brushing aside unpleasant facts, always boasting extravagantly, his eyes on nothing but the hypnotically dazzling image of himself as a brilliantly skillful businessman. In order to protect a view of himself that the facts of reality cannot sustain, he severs cognitive contact with reality—and moves from one disaster to another, his sight turned inward, dreading to discover that the vision of himself which feels like a life belt is, in fact, a noose choking him to death.

Or consider the case of a middle-aged woman whose sense of personal value is crucially dependent on the image of herself as a glamorous, youthful beauty—who perceives every wrinkle on her face as a metaphysical threat to her identity—and who, to preserve that identity, plunges into a series of romantic relationships with men more than twenty years her junior. Rationalizing each relationship as a grand passion, evading the characters and motives of the young men involved, repressing the humiliation she feels in the company of her friends, she affects an ever more frantic gaiety—dreading to be alone, constantly needing the reassurance of fresh admiration, running faster and faster from the haunting, relentless pursuer which is her own emptiness.

Pretense, self-deception, "role-playing" are so much an uncontested part of most men's lives that they have virtually lost (if they ever possessed) the knowledge of what it means to have an unreserved respect for the facts of reality—i.e., what it means *to take reality seriously*. They spend most of their lives in a subjective world of their own neurotic creation, then wonder why they feel anxiety and helplessness in the real one.

There is no way to preserve the clarity of one's thinking so long as there are considerations in one's mind that take precedence over the facts of reality. There is no way to preserve the unbreached power of one's intelligence so long as one is implicitly committed to the premise that the maintenance of one's self-esteem requires that certain facts not be faced.

There is no way to achieve or to preserve an authentic, unbreached self-esteem, and thus to retain the efficacy of one's mind—save by accepting reality as an absolute, not to be evaded or escaped.

The misery, the frustration, the terror that characterize the psychological state of most men, testify to two facts: that self-esteem is a basic need without which man cannot live the life proper to him—and that

self-esteem, the conviction that he is competent to deal with reality, can be achieved only by the consistent exercise of the one faculty that permits man to apprehend reality: his reason.

THE ANALYTIC-SYNTHETIC DICHOTOMY (V)

By Leonard Peikoff

Logic and Experience (Continued)

Another restatement of the analytic-synthetic dichotomy is the view that opposes the "logically" possible and the "empirically" possible.

If the proposition that a given phenomenon exists is not self-contradictory, then that phenomenon, it is claimed, is "logically" possible; if the proposition *is* self-contradictory, then the phenomenon is "logically" impossible. Certain phenomena, however, although logically possible, are contrary to the "contingent" laws of nature that men discover by experience; these phenomena are "empirically"—but not "logically"—impossible. Thus, a married bachelor is "logically" impossible; but a bachelor who can fly to the moon by means of flapping his arms, is merely "empirically" impossible (i.e., the proposition that such a bachelor exists is not self-contradictory, but such a bachelor is not in accordance with the laws that happen to govern the universe).

The metaphysical basis of this dichotomy is the premise that a violation of the laws of nature would not involve a contradiction. But, as we have seen, the laws of nature are inherent in the identities of the entities that exist. A violation of the laws of nature would require that an entity act in contradiction to its identity; i.e., it would require the existence of a contradiction. To project such a violation is to endorse the "miraculous" view of the universe, as already discussed.

The epistemological basis of this dichotomy is the view that a concept consists only of its definition. According to the dichotomy, it is logically impermissible to contradict the definition of a concept; what one asserts by this means is "logically" impossible. But to contradict any of the *non-defining* characteristics of a concept's referents, is regarded as logically permissible; what one asserts in such a case is merely "empirically" impossible.

Thus, a "married bachelor" contradicts the definition of "bachelor" and hence is regarded as "logically" impossible. But a "bachelor who can fly to the moon by means of flapping his arms" is regarded as "logically" possible, because the *definition* of "bachelor" ("an unmarried man") does not specify his means of locomotion. What is ignored here is the fact that the concept "bachelor" is a subcategory of the concept "man," that as such it includes all the characteristics of the entity "man," and

that these exclude the ability to fly by flapping his arms. Only by reducing a concept to its definition and by evading all the other characteristics of its referents can one claim that such projections do not involve a self-contradiction.

Those who attempt to distinguish the "logically" possible and the "empirically" possible commonly maintain that the "logically" impossible is unimaginable or inconceivable, whereas the merely "empirically" impossible is at least imaginable or conceivable, and that this difference supports the distinction. For instance, "ice which is not solid" (a "logical" impossibility) is inconceivable; but "ice which sinks in water" (a merely "empirical" impossibility) is at least conceivable, they claim, even though it does not exist; one need merely visualize a block of ice floating on water, and suddenly plummeting straight to the bottom.

This argument confuses Walt Disney with metaphysics. That a man can project an image or draw an animated cartoon at variance with the facts of reality, does not alter the facts; it does not alter the nature or the potentialities of the entities which exist. An image of ice sinking in water does not alter the nature of ice; it does not constitute evidence that it is possible for ice to sink in water. It is evidence only of man's capacity to engage in fantasy. Fantasy is not a form of cognition.

Further: the fact that man possesses the capacity to fantasize does not mean that the opposite of demonstrated truths is "imaginable" or "conceivable." In a serious, epistemological sense of the word, a man *cannot* conceive the opposite of a proposition he knows to be true (as apart from propositions dealing with man-made facts). If a proposition asserting a metaphysical fact has been demonstrated to be true, this means that that fact has been demonstrated to be inherent in the identities of the entities in question, and that any alternative to it would require the existence of a contradiction. Only ignorance or evasion can enable a man to attempt to project such an alternative. If a man does not know that a certain fact has been demonstrated, he will not know that its denial involves a contradiction. If a man does know it, but evades his knowledge and drops his full cognitive context, there is no limit to what he can pretend to conceive. But what one can project by means of ignorance or evasion, is philosophically irrelevant. It does not constitute a basis for instituting two separate categories of possibility.

There is no distinction between the "logically" and the "empirically" possible (or impossible). All truths, as I have said, are the product of a logical identification of the facts of experience. This applies as much to the identification of possibilities as of actualities.

The same considerations invalidate the dichotomy between the a priori and the a posteriori. According to this variant, certain propositions (the analytic ones) are validated *independently of experience*, simply by an analysis of the definitions of their constituent concepts; these propositions are "a priori." Others (the synthetic ones) are dependent upon experience for their validation; they are "a posteriori."

As we have seen, definitions represent condensations of a wealth of observations, i.e., a wealth of "empirical" knowledge; definitions can be arrived at and validated only on the basis of experience. It is senseless, therefore, to contrast propositions which are true "by definition" and propositions which are true "by experience." If an "empirical" truth is one derived from, and validated by reference to, perceptual observations, then all truths are "empirical." Since truth is the identification of a fact of reality, a "non-empirical truth" would be an identification of a fact of reality which is validated independently of observation of reality. This would imply a theory of innate ideas, or some equally mystical construct.

Those who claim to distinguish a posteriori and a priori propositions commonly maintain that certain truths (the synthetic, factual ones) are "*empirically falsifiable*," whereas others (the analytic, logical ones) are not. In the former case, it is said, one can specify experiences which, if they occurred, would invalidate the proposition; in the latter, one cannot. For instance, the proposition "Cats give birth only to kittens" is "*empirically falsifiable*" because one can invent experiences that would refute it, such as the spectacle of tiny elephants emerging from a cat's womb. But the proposition "Cats are animals" is not "*empirically falsifiable*" because "cat" is *defined* as a species of animal. In the former case, the proposition remains true only as long as experience continues to bear it out; therefore, it depends on experience, i.e., it is a posteriori. In the latter case, the truth of the proposition is immune to any imaginable change in experience and, therefore, is independent of experience, i.e., is a priori.

Observe the inversion propounded by this argument: a proposition can qualify as a *factual, empirical* truth only if man is able to evade the facts of experience and arbitrarily to invent a set of impossible circumstances that contradict these facts; but a truth whose opposite is beyond man's power of invention, is regarded as independent of and irrelevant to the nature of reality, i.e., as an arbitrary product of human "convention."

(It must be added that falsifiability, according to this theory, is a property of false propositions, as well as of true ones. For instance, the proposition "The moon is made of green cheese" is falsifiable, because one can project the possibility that the moon is made of chocolate eclairs. But the proposition "The moon is made of volcanic rock" cannot be accepted as "factually true" unless someone can claim that it would become false if the moon were made of green cheese.)

Such is the unavoidable consequence of the attempt to divorce logic and experience.

As I have said, knowledge cannot be acquired by experience apart from logic, nor by logic apart from experience. Without the use of logic, man has no method of drawing conclusions from his perceptual data; he is confined to range-of-the-moment observations, but any perceptual fantasy that occurs to him qualifies as a future possibility which can invalidate his "empirical" propositions. And without reference to the

facts of experience, man has no basis for his "logical" propositions, which become mere arbitrary products of his own invention. Divorced from logic, the arbitrary exercise of the human imagination systematically undercuts the "empirical"; and divorced from the facts of experience, the same imagination arbitrarily creates the "logical."

I challenge anyone to "project" a more thorough way of invalidating all of human knowledge.

Conclusion

The ultimate result of the theory of the analytic-synthetic dichotomy is the following verdict pronounced on human cognition: if the denial of a proposition is inconceivable, if there is no possibility that any fact of reality can contradict it, i.e., if the proposition represents knowledge which is *certain*, then it does not represent knowledge of reality. In other words: if a proposition cannot be wrong, it cannot be right. A proposition qualifies as factual only when it asserts facts which are still unknown, i.e., only when it represents a hypothesis; should a hypothesis be proved and become a certainty, it ceases to refer to facts and ceases to represent knowledge of reality. If a proposition is conclusively demonstrated—so that to deny it is obviously to endorse a logical contradiction—then, *in virtue of this fact*, the proposition is written off as a product of human convention or arbitrary whim.

This means: *a proposition is regarded as arbitrary precisely because it has been logically proved*. The fact that a proposition cannot be refuted, refutes it (i.e., removes it from reality). A proposition can retain a connection to facts only insofar as it has not been validated by man's method of cognition, i.e., by the use of logic. Thus proof is made the disqualifying element of knowledge, and knowledge is made a function of human ignorance.

This theory represents a total epistemological inversion: it penalizes cognitive success for being success. Just as the altruist mentality penalizes the good for being the good, so the analytic-synthetic mentality penalizes knowledge for being knowledge. Just as, according to altruism, a man is entitled only to what he has not earned, so, according to this theory, a man is entitled to claim as knowledge only what he has not proved. Epistemological humility becomes the prerequisite of cognition: "the meek shall inherit the truth."

The philosopher most responsible for these inversions is Kant. Kant's system secularized the mysticism of the preceding centuries, and thereby gave it a new lease on life in the modern world. In the religious tradition, "necessary" truths were commonly held to be consequences of God's mode of thought. Kant substituted the "innate structure of the human mind" for God, as the source and creator of "necessary" truths (which thus became independent of the facts of reality).

The philosophers of the twentieth century merely drew the final consequences of the Kantian view. If it is man's mode of thought (independent of reality) that creates "necessary" truths, they argued, then these are not fixed or absolute; men have a choice in regard to their modes of thought; what the mind giveth, the mind taketh away. Thus, the contemporary conventionalist viewpoint.

We can know only the "phenomenal," mind-created realm, according to Kant; in regard to reality, knowledge is impossible. We can be certain only within the realm of our own conventions, according to the moderns; in regard to facts, certainty is impossible.

The moderns represent a logical, consistent development from Kant's premises. They represent Kant plus choice—a voluntaristic Kantianism, a whim-worshipping Kantianism. Kant marked the cards and made reason an agent of distortion. The moderns are playing with the same deck; their contribution is to play it deuces wild, besides.

Now observe what is left of philosophy in consequence of this neo-Kantianism.

Metaphysics has been all but obliterated: its most influential opponents have declared that metaphysical statements are neither analytic nor synthetic, and therefore are meaningless.

Ethics has been virtually banished from the province of philosophy: some groups have claimed that ethical statements are neither analytic nor synthetic, but are mere "emotive ejaculations"—and other groups have consigned ethics to the province of the man in the street, claiming that philosophers may analyze the language of ethical statements, but are not competent to prescribe ethical norms.

Politics has been discarded by virtually all philosophic schools: insofar as politics deals with values, it has been relegated to the same status as ethics.

Epistemology, the theory of knowledge, the science that defines the rules by which man is to acquire knowledge of facts, has been disintegrated by the notion that facts are the subject matter of "synthetic," "empirical" propositions and, therefore, are outside the province of philosophy—with the result that the special sciences are now left adrift in a rising tide of irrationalism.

What we are witnessing is the self-liquidation of philosophy.

To regain philosophy's realm, it is necessary to challenge and reject the fundamental premises which are responsible for today's debacle. A major step in that direction is the elimination of the malignant growth known as the analytic-synthetic dichotomy.

OBJECTIVIST CALENDAR

■ On Thursday, November 16, in New York City, Nathaniel Branden will deliver the opening lecture of a new twenty-lecture course: "The Psychology of Mental Illness." Time: 7:30 P.M. Place: NBI Auditorium, Empire State Bldg., Lower Lobby. Visitor's admission: \$3.75. In this course, Mr. Branden will present and critically analyze the major contemporary concepts of neurosis, and provide a comprehensive statement of the Objectivist view of the causes and treatment of mental illness. Dr. Allan Blumenthal will give several guest lectures. For further details, contact NATHANIEL BRANDEN INSTITUTE.

■ On Sunday, November 19, Ayn Rand will give a talk on "Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal," at The Ford Hall Forum in Boston. Time: 8 P.M. Place: Jordan Hall, 30 Gainsboro St. For further information, write to The Ford Hall Forum, 80 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. 02116.

■ On Thursday, November 23, Allan Gotthelf will address the Free Enterprise Foundation of Canada. His subject: "Living as Man: Ayn Rand and the History of Ethics." Time: 8 P.M. Place: The Lord Simcoe Hotel, Toronto. Open to the public. Admission: \$2.50. For further information, contact Marshall Bruce Evoy at (416) 921-4079.

■ On Sunday, November 26, Allan Gotthelf will speak under the auspices of The Ayn Rand Society of Detroit, in Birmingham, Mich. His subject: "Living as Man: Ayn Rand and the History of Ethics." Time: 8 P.M. Place: Metropolitan Federal Savings Bldg., Southfield at 14 Mile Rd. Open to the public. General admission: \$2.50; Society members: \$2.00. For further information, contact Dr. Donald Bilinski at (313) 884-5084.

■ NBI's Tape Transcription Division has scheduled the following starting dates: "Ancient Philosophy" in San Francisco, Nov. 12—"Three Plays by Ayn Rand" in San Diego, Nov. 12—"Modern Philosophy" in Montreal, Nov. 15—"Objectivism's Theory of Knowledge" in Los Angeles, Nov. 15—"Basic Principles of Objectivism" in Pocatello, Id., Nov. 19—"Basic Principles of Objectivist Psychology" in Columbus, Nov. 19; Vancouver, Dec. 3—"The Principles of Efficient Thinking" in Washington, D.C., Dec. 10.

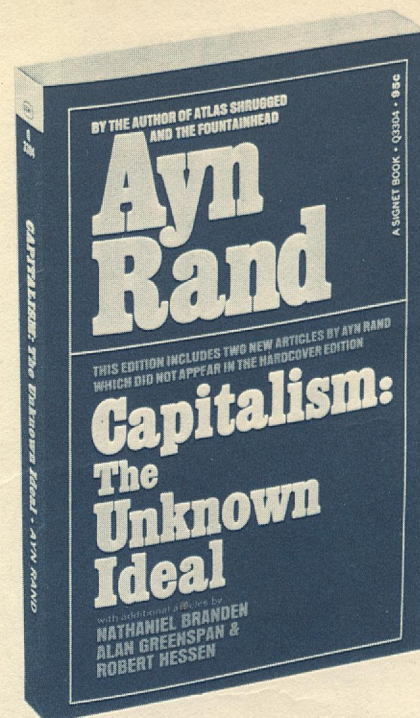
"Basic Principles of Objectivist Psychology" will begin in Philadelphia on Dec. 10. Mr. Branden will give the opening night lecture in person.

"Basic Principles of Objectivist Psychology" began in Knoxville on Oct. 30; "The Economics of a Free Society" began in Winnipeg on Oct. 30.

—B.B.

NBI has two positions open on its New York staff: Administrative Assistant in the Tape Transcription Division, and receptionist-typist. All applicants must be students of the INSTITUTE and must be personally interviewed in New York. Resumes should be sent to NATHANIEL BRANDEN INSTITUTE, Empire State Building, New York, N.Y. 10001.

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