

## Discussion

Reply to The Aesthetics Symposium (Spring 2001)

# Scholarly Engagement: When It Is Pleasurable, and When It Is Not

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This is the second of a two-part reply to our Spring 2001 symposium on Ayn Rand's philosophy of art. In our Spring 2003 issue, we published part one, written by Michelle Marder Kamhi.

— The Editors

If I converse with a man of strong mind and a stiff joust, he will press on my flanks, prick me to right and left; his ideas will give an impetus to mine. — Montaigne<sup>1</sup>

Responding to critics of one's written thought ought to be a pleasurable task. It is difficult work, to be sure. It can be frustrating—maddening even. But in the end it ought to spur one onto further thought and provide some measure of satisfaction. I had long awaited the publication of "The Aesthetics Symposium" in this journal, and eagerly looked forward to reading, and responding to, its critical essays—each said to be "inspired by" the publication of *What Art Is: The Esthetic Theory of Ayn Rand*, co-authored by Michelle Kamhi and me (Torres & Kamhi 2000), or by our essay "Critical Neglect of Ayn Rand's Theory of Art" (Kamhi & Torres 2000). As it turned out, only some of the essays (or parts thereof) afforded any degree of pleasure. What distinguished these from the others, I soon realized, was their sound scholarship and clarity of thought, even when the writer was critical, or presented an opposing view. Other essays lacked these qualities, and dealing with them often proved an onerous task. Their

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writers seemed less interested in engaging ideas or advancing knowledge than in pursuing their own narrow self-interest, or were simply not up to the task.

Departing somewhat from the usual method of responding to one's critics in what follows, I first briefly examine the nature of scholarship, with particular emphasis on the requirements of scholarly writing. With this context in mind, I then turn to the essays themselves, considering selected portions or aspects of each in turn,<sup>2</sup> indicating (often implicitly) how it meets—or, especially, does *not* meet—those requirements.

### **What Scholarship Is**

Any important human activity is—or ought to be—governed by commonly accepted standards, which must be met if that activity is to succeed in fulfilling its mission. The purpose of scholarship, simply put, is the advancement of human knowledge, and the application of that knowledge in human life. In *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate*, Charles E. Glassick, Mary Taylor Huber, and Gene I. Maeroff define scholarship, in part, as “*fair and honest inquiry, wherever it may lead*” (1997, 9; emphasis added). They identify standards by which one can judge such inquiry, each of which may be applied, albeit with occasional qualification, to the essays I am considering. The first of these is that the scholar must have *clear goals*—that is, he<sup>3</sup> must state the basic purposes of his work in no uncertain terms. Indeed, the authors report that this is the first concern of many reviewers who evaluate manuscripts for possible publication in scholarly journals. Next, they emphasize that the scholar must demonstrate familiarity with the important issues in the field, and with divergent views on these issues:

The pursuit of scholarly work depends, fundamentally, on the depth and breadth of the scholar's understanding of subject matter. Every scholar bears a responsibility to keep up with the literature in the field in which he or she works. Scholarship is, in essence, a conversation in which one participates

and contributes by knowing what is being discussed and what others have said on the subject. (27)

The scholar must also employ appropriate methodology in his work, such as adhering to “rules of evidence, and principles of logical reasoning” (28). Finally, Glassick and his colleagues insist, any form of scholarship must be characterized by effective presentation: “The criteria used by scholarly presses and professional journals invariably refer to [such admonitions as] ‘Papers must be written clearly.’” This is no small matter, they emphasize:

Good presentation involves a sense of audience and careful attention to the best ways of reaching each of its members. The presentation of scholarship is a public act. . . . Quite simply, scholars must communicate well. (32)

Unfortunately . . . standards of writing in many . . . circles are low. Jargon and obtuse prose deprive scholars of the benefit of the interplay that could result from more effective presentation. If scholars present their work in language as clear and simple as the subject allows, scholarly communication would be improved not only among colleagues but with the public as well. (33)

Other writers also stress the importance of clarity in scholarly discourse. Beth Luey ([1987] 1995, 10) gives clear warning to authors: “If your writing is obscure, vague, and verbose, readers will translate what you have written into plain English and wonder why you did not write it that way in the first place.” They will conclude that the writer did not “know how,” or “more damning,” that he knew that plain English would expose the paucity of his thought. Jacques Barzun frames the issue in more elevated terms. Warning that “our civilization depends . . . on the written word,” he goes on to say:

Writing is embodied thought, and the thought is clear or muddy, graspable or fugitive, according to the purity of the

medium. Communication means one thought held in common. What could be more practical than to try making that thought unmistakable? ([1971] 1986, 32)

There is another factor to consider in assessing scholarship, drawn from an entirely different perspective—the *personal qualities*, or *character*, of a scholar. Glassick et al. offer a compelling argument that issues of character are crucial in determining the ultimate quality of scholarship, noting that “certain qualities associated with a scholar’s character are recognized . . . as consequential not only for the individual [himself] but for the entire community of scholars” (1997, 61). They put the argument in historical perspective, noting that, in *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare said of Cardinal Woolsey that he “‘was a scholar and a ripe and good one. Exceeding wise, fair-spoken, and persuading’—human qualities we still admire in a scholar,” and that Ralph Waldo Emerson once proposed that “‘character is higher than intellect’ for a scholar” (62). Contemporary academic writers carry on this tradition. Wayne Booth, for example, is said to argue in “The Scholar and Society” that personal qualities of character—“habits of rationality,” as he refers to them—include such virtues as “consideration” and “honesty” (62).

Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff take the matter even further:

The foundation of [scholarly] life is integrity. The scholar’s audience has to trust his or her work, ascribing integrity to it. In saying this, we note that integrity, and more specifically honesty, “‘implies truthfulness, fairness in dealing, and absence of fraud, deceit, and dissembling’”<sup>4</sup> (quotation from the *American Heritage Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> College Edition, s.v. “honesty.”)

In fact, scholarship cannot thrive without an atmosphere of trust. At the most basic level, scholars must be honest in reporting what they have . . . found. If a scholar claims to have read certain documents, then that claim must be true. Likewise, the reported findings must be neither manufactured nor modified if a scholar claims that . . . an informant made

particular statements, or that a document contained certain information.<sup>5</sup> (63)

They include *objectivity* as among the requirements of integrity—quoting from the American Historical Association’s “Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct,” which states that “‘Integrity . . . requires an awareness of one’s own bias and a readiness to follow sound method and analysis wherever they may lead’” (64)—and cite *fairness* as another requirement, by which they mean, in part, “the presentation of one’s own interpretations and conclusions in ways that keep open an examination of alternatives” (64). *Civility* is another virtue they say ought to guide scholars in their relations with one another. Quoting again the American Historical Association, the authors stress that:

The preeminent value of all intellectual communities is *reasoned discourse*—the continuous colloquy among [scholars] of diverse points of view. A commitment to such discourse makes possible the fruitful exchange of views, opinions, and knowledge. (64; emphasis added)

Finally, I would add the related virtue of *disinterestedness*—implying a lack of bias, predilection, or prejudice—which cultural critic Roger Kimball (2001) observes, “allows for curiosity without dogmatism, skepticism without nihilism, conviction without fanaticism.” Some Objectivists may object to my citing “disinterestedness” as an intellectual virtue, perhaps with this quotation from Rand in mind:

Most people . . . think that abstract thinking must be “impersonal”—which means that ideas must hold no personal meaning, value, or importance to the thinker. This notion rests on the premise that personal interest is an agent of distortion. ([1974] 1982, 16)

She goes on to say that “the more passionately personal the thinking, the clearer and truer” it is. This is classic Rand. Allowing passion to

muddy her thinking, she simply invents a definition for “impersonal” that includes the requirement that ideas *as such* cannot be of importance to the thinker.

### **The Aesthetics Symposium: Four “Critical Takes”**

Opinions . . . that are opposed to mine do not offend or estrange me; they only arouse and exercise my mind. — Montaigne

The Symposium begins with the four essays that directly engage work co-authored by Kamhi and me. The first, appropriately, is by philosopher Lester Hunt, the only participant who is an active member of the American Society for Aesthetics, the professional organization of philosophers of art. Hunt concentrates exclusively on *What Art Is*. At the outset, let me say that I enjoyed reading “What Art Does” (Hunt 2001)—very much, in fact. In every respect it meets the standards of scholarship outlined above. Since Kamhi and I have previously published a response to Hunt’s essay (Torres & Kamhi 2001c), I will be selective in my remarks.

The title of Hunt’s essay is both succinct and informative, suggesting that he will offer an alternative to what he perceives to be an implication of the title of our book: that Rand’s definition of art —“a selective re-creation of reality according to an artist’s metaphysical value-judgments” (Rand [1969] 1975, 19)—is formulated in terms of *a process*, seen from the artist’s point of view. It is this only implicitly, as we note in our previous response to Hunt. He suggests that the definition of art ought to be constructed in terms of art’s *function*—which, he says, is “to create a certain sort of meaning, in which values are embodied in concrete form” (Hunt 2001, 262). Hunt stops short of formulating a definition of art himself, however: “I must admit,” he says, “that at present I do not have such a definition to offer” (262). Such candor from a scholar, especially one who is the leading academic specialist on Rand’s aesthetics,<sup>6</sup> is refreshing—especially as the Objectivist literature is replete with ill-considered, often pretentious, alternatives to Rand’s definition of art.

Throughout his essay, Hunt’s remarks meet the standard of “fair and honest inquiry.” His presentation is clear and well organized, and

he demonstrates a solid grasp of his subject matter—of Rand’s theory of art, as well as our explication and application of it. He is familiar with the content of *What Art Is*, and bases his arguments on sound logical analysis (even those that we argue are ultimately misguided).<sup>7</sup> (I should stress in that respect that the standards of scholarship enumerated above do not include *infallibility*.)

I very much enjoyed reading Jeff Riggenschach’s “*What Art Is: What’s Not to Like*” (2001)—roughly the first half of it, that is. I do not like its catchy title,<sup>8</sup> however, which suggests that there is nothing (in his view) “not to like” in the book. As it turns out, there is a great deal.

Several pages into the essay, after justly refuting the “absurd notion” still held by many Objectivists that Rand had proven the superiority of “romantic art” (266), Riggenschach begins his discussion of our book: “The good news about the long-awaited *What Art Is: The Esthetic Theory of Ayn Rand* is that the authors . . . understand” that there were two sides to Ayn Rand—“an analytic philosopher of extraordinary acuity [and] a skilled polemicist [who] tended to confuse her personal tastes and preferences with Philosophical Truth” (267). Among the things he implies we understand are that not all forms of art can be Romantic (by Rand’s own definition of the term *Romanticism*), that Rand did not, as some claim, “prove” that Romanticism in literature is superior to Naturalism and that, in any case, it is *not* superior by her own theory of aesthetic judgment. “There’s more good news,” Riggenschach says. Kamhi and I prove ourselves to be “very nearly first rate expositors of just what Rand’s principles were when it came to art” (269). From Part I of *What Art Is*, he singles out our discussion of “sense of life,”<sup>9</sup> which he rightly considers to be one of Rand’s most important concepts (269–70).

A hint of the *what’s-to-dislike* portion of Riggenschach’s essay, as well as of what *he* thinks art is, appears when he reports that Part II of our book consists mostly of “attacks on artists and artworks” that we “regard as frauds” (271). But we do not, as he claims, mount an “attack” on poor Marcel Duchamp, whose “readymades,” as Duchamp himself called them, consisted of ordinary objects he found or purchased, only one of which—the infamous porcelain urinal he titled

*Fountain* (1917)—he ostensibly submitted as art. Here, Riggenbach might have chosen a more apt term than *attack*, with its unfortunate connotation of aggression. We are somewhat gentle with Duchamp, in fact, describing him simply as “the French-born artworld eccentric [who] is credited with legitimizing the notion that anything can be art” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 263), yet who regarded such works “as little more than a private joke” (264). Indeed, Riggenbach himself calls Duchamp “a trickster and practical joker,” as well as “a comedian whose jest was taken seriously.” Yet he also refers to him as “the controversial French artist,” and to his “readymades”<sup>10</sup> as “art” (2001, 271). As for his claim that we regard Duchamp as an “artistic fraud,” we do not even imply that, though I must confess I have always thought of him as somewhat of a charlatan, for while he never claimed his readymades were art, neither did he ever publicly refute those who asserted they were.

A more serious scholarly lapse occurs when Riggenbach links what he characterizes as our “dubious attempt to demonstrate that modernist artists like Duchamp are clinically insane” (271) to a passage we quote from neurologist Oliver Sacks (272)<sup>11</sup>—who never even mentions the French eccentric! In the case of Duchamp, it is Louis Sass, a clinical psychologist, and author of *Madness and Modernism*, whom we cite for his insightful analysis of Duchamp’s psyche as related to schizophrenia. As we observe about Duchamp: “The man who could not tolerate boredom in real life . . . conceived the readymade as ‘a visually indifferent object,’ whose distinction lay precisely in its essential lack of interest, its boredom” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 265). Though our discussion of Duchamp is only two pages long, Riggenbach does not even allude to the content of such crucial passages as this:<sup>12</sup>

“Doubt in myself, doubt in everything, . . . never believing in truth’: this was . . . Duchamp’s characterization of his own fundamental attitude,” as Sass notes ([1992,] 139). Duchamp’s whole career, he observes, was devoted “to a series of mockeries, of ironic comments on art and its purported relationship to life” (36). Like the irony character-

istic of schizophrenia, Duchamp’s irony is “totalizing . . . all-encompassing, not a criticism of one thing in favor of another but a universal mockery” (113). “Further, this spirit of ironic negation—of detachment, subversion, and unremitting criticism—has been turned not just on ‘life’ but on ‘art’ itself (36).” (quoted in Torres & Kamhi 2000, 265)

So much for our “attack” on Marcel Duchamp, and for our “dubious attempt” to establish that he was “clinically insane.”

Riggenbach (2001, 272–73) states that one of the strengths of *What Art Is* is that we “continually point out other thinkers whose views on the arts would interest those who are drawn to Rand’s aesthetic theories.”<sup>13</sup> There are “two large exceptions to this rule—two writers with respect to whom Torres and Kamhi turn out to be not quite such reliable guides as we might like.” In both instances, I found Riggenbach’s discussion informative and thought-provoking, even if ultimately mistaken.

The first writer Riggenbach cites is Stephen C. Pepper, an American philosopher who was Rand’s contemporary, but whom we do not consider. As Riggenbach explains it, Pepper argues that “each of us understands life and the human condition in terms of a world hypothesis—a notion about the way the world is and the way it is to be human—an idea, but not one that has been worked out . . . one that can only be expressed in the mode literary artists choose to express themselves: metaphor.” Riggenbach claims that Pepper is here describing “‘an emotional, subconsciously integrated appraisal of man and of existence’—a ‘sense of life’” (273). He is of course quoting Rand, though he does not so indicate.<sup>14</sup> That cannot be, however, for Pepper’s theory is applicable (if at all) only to literature, whereas Rand’s applies to *all* art. Further, while even small children possess a *sense of life*, Pepper’s conception of *root metaphors* (as Riggenbach explains it) is relevant only to adults. It is difficult to imagine a child selecting, or being guided by, such root metaphors as “the phenomenon of *similarity* among entities and actions” (274), for example, or “the event, the instant of time at which an infinitude of concretes interrelate in a seemingly infinite number of ways” (275).

In any case, “sense of life” is a subconscious mechanism, not something one chooses to express through metaphor. By that measure alone, Riggenbach’s comparison between it and Pepper’s theory is invalid.

Though we examine the work of Susanne Langer in *What Art Is*, our treatment of her, in Riggenbach’s view, “seriously shortchanges her in the department of philosophical credit” (278). He further argues that “Langer anticipated almost every major theme of Rand’s aesthetic theory a decade or more before Rand set any of it down on paper” (278)—a claim that he fails to substantiate—and that it is her theory of music which we most regrettably neglect. “Music has long been a major flaw in the otherwise admirable edifice of Randian aesthetics” (282), Riggenbach says.<sup>15</sup> He calls the alternative hypothesis we offer—that music selectively re-creates<sup>16</sup> “*vocal expression and the sonic effects of emotionally charged movement,*” and that it “*selects and stylizes meaningful aspects of our aural experience*”—“an excellent hypothesis, rigorously and persuasively defended” (282), but suggests it might have been improved by being combined with the theory of music Langer develops in *Feeling and Form*.

Langer “sees music as ‘deriving its vital meaning’ from an ‘aspect of reality’ much more fundamental and universal than the mere “vocal expression and the sonic effects of emotionally charged movement” (283). That aspect is *time*. In Langer’s view, “*Music makes time audible, and its form and continuity sensible*” (283). Riggenbach is confident that most of his readers will find Langer’s hypothesis “intuitively obvious” (283). Will they? I doubt it. I have not tested it directly (though that would not be difficult), but my own listening experience and intuition, as well as the untutored responses of students in music appreciation classes I taught years ago,<sup>17</sup> tell me it makes no sense at all. Time, as such, has no meaning. Thus, music cannot make time audible. It is what *fills* time that has meaning, and can be rendered audible in a manner of speaking. In fiction and drama, time is filled by events—by characters acting and speaking, pursuing values, relating to other people, and so on.

“There is much more to music” (282) than Kamhi and I suggest, Riggenbach says, while citing only the bare bones (quoted above) of

our discussion of its meaning. He does not even allude to our analysis (and extension) of Rand’s crucial principle that “[when] music induces an emotional state without external object, [the listener’s] subconscious suggests an internal one” (Rand [1969] 1975, 51; also, Torres & Kamhi 2000, 81, 366 nn. 19, 20, and 477 nn. 126, 128). As we further observe, while quoting Rand:

On a subconscious level, music evokes, as it were, a random, fragmented sequence of images, scenes, events, or experiences, which seems “to flow haphazardly, without direction, in brief, random snatches, merging, changing and vanishing, like the progression of a dream. But, in fact, this flow is selective and consistent: the emotional meaning of the subconscious material corresponds to the emotions projected by the music.”<sup>18</sup> That subconscious process (which can be confirmed by introspection) is analogous to saying: “I would feel this way if . . . ,” with each listener completing the sentence according to his own response to the musical passage. It is, in effect, a spontaneous, largely subliminal process of deeply personal free association triggered by the work, if one “suspend[s] one’s conscious thoughts and surrender[s] to the guidance of one’s emotions.”<sup>19</sup> (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 81–82; Rand [1971] 1975, 51)

To convince readers who doubt the validity of Langer’s theory (as expressed in the single sentence he quotes), Riggenbach calls upon, not Langer, but Henri Bergson—three paragraphs of Bergson, in fact, from his *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Bergson, who is said to have influenced Langer, writes as if in a trance, first directing his attention “inward to contemplate my own self,” then finding “a continuous flux which is not comparable to any flux” he has ever seen (“a succession of states, each of which announces that which follows and contains that which precedes it”), then comparing “this inner life” to the “unrolling of a coil,” only to decide, in the end, that “actually it is neither an unrolling nor a rolling up, for these two similes evoke the idea of lines and surfaces whose parts are homogeneous and superpos-

able on one another,” and so on, at the end of which Riggerbach (2001, 284) asks: “Could there be a better description than this of music?” The answer must be *yes*—Rand’s and ours, among others.

Kamhi and I “founder somewhat in [our] discussion of other particular arts as well,” Riggerbach says. For example, we dare to pose the question: “Is photography art?” He argues that we, like Rand, err in approaching the question from the point of view of trying “to determine whether a *process* ‘is’ or ‘is not’ an art” (2001, 285). That is not a fair representation of our, or Rand’s, approach, however. In the present context, the concepts “photography” and “painting” both subsume units that are *things*—photographs and paintings, respectively. As with Rand’s definition of art, the notion of process is implicit in each concept, not its central focus.

With regard to a quite different matter—*distinguishing photography from painting*—Rand is justified in focusing on the process by which a photographic image is made. Photography is a “technical, not a creative, skill,” she notes, adding that “art requires a *selective* re-creation” ([1971] 1975, 74; emphasis added). Elsewhere, Rand (1958, lecture 1) argues as follows:

Photography is a mechanical means of reproducing whatever is put in front of the camera. . . . the mere process of photographing, the mechanical part of it, is not art, because no choice is involved: the camera operates the same way regardless of the nature of the material.

We conclude that “Rand’s emphasis on the process of execution as the primary criterion for distinguishing between photography and painting is neither trivial nor arbitrary” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 181), noting that “even theorists who claim that photography is art readily acknowledge” the *mechanical* aspect of its nature.

In arguing that photography is no less an art than painting, Riggerbach cites the following passage in which we quote the art historian Edgar Wind:

What precludes photography, as [philosopher Benedetto]

Croce put it, from becoming “entirely art,” although it may have “something artistic about it,” is the crucial surrender of the pictorial act to an optical or chemical agency which, however carefully set up and controlled by the photographer, must remain automatic in its operation. (Riggenbach 2001, 285–86; quoted in Torres & Kamhi 2000, 414 n. 3)

From this, Riggenbach concludes that “[o]ne could scarcely wish for a clearer description of the mixing of paints to produce a particular color” (286). Not so. Wind’s “pictorial act” can only refer to *the process of making a picture*. The photographer, Wind correctly notes, “surrender[s]” this act to an automatic act that is “optical or chemical,” not human, in nature. Riggenbach ignores that when a photographer does this he is not *making* a picture. The deliberate application of color by hand over an extended period of time is not the same thing as the pressing of a button, which triggers an automatic optical/chemical process.

Riggenbach also faults our contention that film is essentially a subcategory of *literature*, notwithstanding the obvious visual aspect of its nature. He claims, instead, that film is “a subcategory of storytelling, as long as it is understood that storytelling can be undertaken either with or without the aid of words” (286–87). Never mind that the term “story” implies an *oral* or *written* narrative of incidents or events. Riggenbach ignores the obvious fact that it is only through the words spoken by characters that one can know what really matters in film—what motivates the characters, what the film is *about*. He also ignores the crucial information about character one gains from the sound of the human voice.

Our argument that the screenwriter, not the director, is the “true *auteur*” of a film is not convincing, Riggenbach claims, but he does not even indicate what the essence of our view is, and ignores our discussion of the considerable literary attributes of the screenplay *Harrow Alley*, which we cite in support of Rand’s theory. He merely asserts that “as long as a film is not a collection of words on paper but a *moving picture*, the guiding artistic intelligence behind that film must lie in the director, not the screenwriter” (287). He offers no further

explanation, except to observe that “someone has to make the decisions a director makes,” which is no explanation at all. He also ignores that in film the idea-bearing *words* come first (as they do in drama), that drama, too, is not merely “a collection of words on paper,” and that someone has to make the decisions a theater director makes, as well—yet he surely would not deny that the playwright is the primary creative force behind the play.

At the end of his discussion of photography and film, Riggenbach levels this charge:

Much of the latter half of *What Art Is* consists, unfortunately, of lamentations over the state of the arts in the twentieth century. And, alas, much of it is of such a caliber as not to inspire confidence in the knowledge or understanding of its authors. . . . For all their admirable ability to distinguish between Rand the aesthetician and Rand the frequently ignorant polemicist against all Modernist art, Torres and Kamhi lapse into a good deal of ignorant, anti-twentieth century polemicism of their own. (287–88)

Though he means it pejoratively, Riggenbach is not far off base in using the term *lamentation* to characterize the second half of *What Art Is*—for we do, indeed, feel a certain sorrow over the destruction wrought by modernist and postmodernist forces in the name of art since the dawn of the twentieth century.

But the rules of sound scholarship require Riggenbach to support his claim that we engage in “a good deal of ignorant, anti-twentieth century polemicism.” Instead, he pauses “to focus *just for a moment*” (288; emphasis added), and devotes but a single paragraph to three relatively insignificant points in one of the briefest sections of the book, on the literary arts. Riggenbach insists that James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake* (1939) is “*not* a ‘sequel’ to the same author’s *Ulysses* (1926)” (288), as we claim. But in one sense it is. The point we make about the relationship between Joyce’s two works is that the “perverse attitude toward language [in *Ulysses*] found its *ultimate expression* in Joyce’s sequel, *Finnegans Wake* (1939)—a book that [in one scholar’s

judgment] ‘cannot in any common sense be read’” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 244; emphasis added). Riggenbach correctly notes that the first line of *Finnegans Wake* “is not ‘also repeated as its last’” (Riggenbach 2001, 288; Torres & Kamhi 2000, 244). “And, really,” he asks, “how much effort would it have taken to check that” (Riggenbach 2001, 288)? Not much, actually.<sup>20</sup> He has caught us, not in failing to check a simple fact but in misreading a statement in the Editor’s Preface to *The Portable James Joyce*: “[*Finnegans Wake*] begins with the latter part of a sentence, the beginning of which is found on the last page” (Levin [1947] 1976, 709).

In his effort to prove we are ignorant of modernism, Riggenbach (2001, 288) also charges that we call Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* “meaningless,” and then “provide a perfectly comprehensible description of its meaning later in the same paragraph.” Not quite. What we write is this: “Turning to Beckett’s work [his life’s work, that is], one enters a world so bleak, so unremittingly hopeless and meaningless, that his critical acclaim may well seem inconceivable” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 246). Then we describe what transpires on stage in the infamous “play” to show that in it, as the title suggests, there is virtually no action to speak of, and thus *no meaning*. Instead of citing further instances of our alleged lack of knowledge and understanding, Riggenbach (2001, 288) merely quips, “And so on, and so on.”

I had hoped that Riggenbach would regain his scholarly touch at the very end of his essay, perhaps summarizing key arguments, or offering the reader a final pithy thought to ponder. Instead, he chooses to comment on . . . *copyediting lapses*. After cataloging a number of admittedly “egregious errors of editing and proofreading” (289) in *What Art Is*—he takes leave of his reader with this:

. . . in an effort to save a trivial amount of money (what ten years of experience as a professional freelance copyeditor and proofreader of book manuscripts tells me is less than a thousand dollars), Open Court [the book’s publisher] seems willing to bring an important, if less than perfect, work of aesthetic philosophy into the world in a dirty, unpressed,

stained, disheveled, and altogether unkempt suit of clothes.<sup>21</sup>  
(289)

Gene Bell-Villada (2001) begins his critique of *What Art Is*—entitled “Nordau’s *Degeneration* and Tolstoy’s *What Is Art? Still Live*”—by observing, as many of its reviewers have, that it is “in many respects a substantial work of scholarship” (291). Indeed it is. But does he really mean it? He finds our effort to expand upon Rand’s admittedly meager writing on aesthetics “problematical,” though he finds it “not unprecedented,” compared to the literature on Marxist aesthetics—which he terms “an entire intellectual sub-field, despite the fact that Marx and Engels’s original musings on art and literature were of a scattered and casual sort,” a description which no doubt also applies to the “fascinating insights into art” of such political figures as Trotsky, but does not at all apply to Rand. To make matters worse, Bell-Villada does not cite a single idea on art held by any of the writers he names, or by the unnamed “major Marxist critics” whose insights he also finds “fascinating.” In light of such a comparison, how “substantial” could our work be?

Bell-Villada makes a great many factual misstatements. Rand’s (or ours) is not a “libertarian aesthetics” (292), as he says it is. Libertarianism is a *political* ideology, and since Rand called her philosophy “Objectivism,” one properly refers to her *Objectivist* aesthetics. Nor do we “harsh[ly]” attack “recent trends in museology” (the study of museum organization and management)—in fact, we never even mention the field, much less analyze its current practice. Nor do we attack recent trends in *feminism*, though we do devote two rather mild paragraphs to rebutting the contention of some feminist art historians that quilt-making is a “high art” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 207–8).

On a more substantive issue, Louis Sass’s *Madness and Modernism* is not the “only source” (Bell-Villada 2001, 292) we cite in explaining why such figures as Mondrian and Kandinsky (in painting), Schoenberg (in music), and Joyce and Beckett (in literature) created the sort of work they did. In fact, Sass (1992, 28) devotes but two words to Mondrian, “austere rationalism,” and does not mention Kandinsky or Schoenberg at all! With regard to the abstract painters we discuss—

both the two “pioneers” and the later Abstract Expressionists—we also cite such writers as Wilhelm Worringer (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 140), Hilton Kramer (141), Carel Blotcamp (392 nn. 5, 7), and Mark Rosenthal (392 n. 3). Moreover, our explanation is not merely that “these artists are somehow sick” (Bell-Villada 2001, 293). Bell-Villada’s agenda here becomes more transparent when he switches from complaining that we rely on a single source for explaining “the reasons why” modernists “came up with the work they did” (292) to criticizing our failure to consider “the question of *why* [his emphasis] some styles of art [e. g., abstraction in painting] became dominant” in America during the 1930s and 40s:

Surely Torres and Kamhi must be aware of the crucial role played by the New York corporate elite in weaning American artists away from 1930s Socialist Realism and leading them toward pure abstraction. Surely they must have heard tell at some point that the triumph of abstractionism in America had not a little to do with high-level anti-Marxist politics. (293)

Just as surely, Bell-Villada must know that *What Art Is* is not a book of political philosophy, or one of cultural history, and that our interest in the abstract painters has only to do with what caused each of them to veer from representation in the creation of art—whether mental illness, religious fanaticism, or charlatanism—to embrace a style that negates the conceptual nature of human cognition, and thus is not art.

The “weakest” part of *What Art Is*, in Bell-Villada’s view, is the last section of the last chapter, entitled “Teaching the Arts to Children.” He objects here to our argument that classroom teachers ought to first ask students to introspect while looking at visual art or listening to music—asking themselves “*Do I like it? How much? and Why or why not?*”—deferring, for the moment, “all ‘tangential issues, whether historic, biographical, technical, or esthetic’” (295; emphasis in original). Our approach, he implies, is based solely on a sort of “flimsy” parlor “‘experiment’” Rand devised for guests, in which she had them listen to recorded music and “more or less free-associate in

response” (295–96). Actually, it is only our approach to teaching the appreciation of *music*, not the visual arts (as I mistakenly implied in a signed endnote related to my arts education teaching experience), that was influenced by Rand’s music-listening experiment (see Torres & Kamhi 2000, 314, 477 n. 126). Even so, Bell-Villada’s selective account unfairly makes Rand’s practice seem utterly superficial, and creates the impression that our proposal for teaching music appreciation in the classroom is indeed rather thin. Not surprisingly, he does not cite the theoretical underpinnings on which both Rand’s “experiment” and our classroom methodology are based (81–82).

What seems to irritate Bell-Villada most about our pedagogic theory is what would most irritate anyone with a primarily extra-aesthetic agenda in teaching the arts: our deferral of what we consider “tangential” issues—especially *history*, *ideology*, and *biography*—in favor of the personal responses of individual listeners and viewers. As Rand ([1969] 1975, 16) eloquently put it:

One of the distinguishing characteristics of a work of art (including literature) is that it serves no practical, material end, but is an end in itself; it serves no practical purpose other than contemplation—and the pleasure of that contemplation is so intense, so deeply personal that a man experiences it as a self-sufficient, self-justifying primary.

In a “concluding note,” Bell-Villada slips precipitously from mere further distortion of our ideas to pure personal speculation to the crudest sort of *ad hominem*, while exposing more starkly than ever his fundamental lack of interest in aesthetics qua aesthetics. The true character of his scholarship is unmistakable here. He begins by saying that he finds “depressingly familiar” our criticism of Joyce and Beckett “for not offering more physical action in their novels, and in particular for portraying the world as bleak and hopeless”<sup>22</sup> (Bell-Villada 2001, 296). In truth, we could not care less what their view of life is, or about their personal pathologies. What we *do* criticize is the lack of intelligibility in their work. The problem as Bell-Villada sees it, however, is that

the authors of *What Art Is* want art works that will give us uplift, not dark truths, that will depict handsome and courageous heroes who triumph over all odds, not stories of the less-than-fortunate folks who simply get by day by day. In this, they share much in common with your typical bourgeois moralists, Stalinist commissars, fascist theoreticians, religious imams, proper schoolmarm, and Hollywood executives, all of whom want their narratives to come thoroughly equipped with positive heroes, or happy endings, or racial glories, or good guys trouncing evil, or the projection of an ideal man. Not for them the very real angst and/or deprivation that are the lot of most human beings. (296)

There you have it—Bell-Villada himself, sans pretensions, stripped clean of scholarly trappings. He ends with this paragraph, which I quote in full: “But truth, alas, is not a major concern for professional ideologues, whichever be the little stripe they occupy on the political spectrum” (297).

Roger Bissell (2001, 299) notes at the outset of his essay—“Critical Misinterpretations and Missed Opportunities: Errors and Omissions by Kamhi and Torres”—that in “Critical Neglect of Ayn Rand’s Theory of Art,” we declare that Rand’s “‘distinctive and substantial’ [Kamhi & Torres 2000, 1] philosophy of art has been misinterpreted, underappreciated, and neglected,” and that we “seek to analyze these shortcomings in the writings of Rand’s critics and supporters.” Bissell aims to turn the table on us by examining “several of the more significant flaws and gaps” in our own writing. As he puts it: “Kamhi and Torres criticize others for not taking account of their arguments, but this is neither completely accurate, nor are they completely innocent of the charge themselves.” The “others” he refers to turn out to be only himself: “*I* considered their arguments . . . ; *I* . . . criticized . . . ; *I* urged . . . ; *my* view holds (Bissell 2001, 299); *my* revisionist views . . . ; *I* exhaustively make *my* case” (300), and so on (emphasis added). Bissell uses his essay partly to recapitulate views he has published elsewhere,<sup>23</sup> and to complain that we either ignore these views or misrepresent them.

In the remarks that follow, I respond to some of Bissell's complaints—while attempting to shed light on some of the often confused writing that mars his essay as well—especially with regard to his theory of music, as it relates to his *microcosm theory of art*.

Bissell's position on the issue of "re-creation"<sup>24</sup> in art, which, he says, is "fundamentally opposed" (299) to ours, is plainly stated:

My view holds that the fundamental re-creation in art is not of things from reality, but of reality itself, which is created anew in the form of a "microcosm" or imaginary world.<sup>25</sup>  
(299–300)

Exceptions to Bissell's proposition come readily to mind. For instance: a nude model poses in a sculptor's studio, and months later a bronze sculpture based on that model is displayed in an art gallery. Bissell would be hard pressed to argue that the model is not a "thing from reality," but "reality itself," and that the bronze sculpture of that model is a microcosm, or an "imaginary world." To do this, he would first have to define the term *microcosm*<sup>26</sup> more fully.

On another point, Bissell takes issue with our contention that he goes "much too far" in 'equating' the progression of events in dramatic music with those in Romantic literature, and that 'the analogy between melodic movement in music and plot in literature should not be pressed too far'" (300–1). "[I]n stressing the analogy between musical events and progressions and those in dramatic and literary art," he protests, "I do not 'equate' anything. To the contrary, *I expressly warn against taking the analogy too far*" (301; emphasis added). Does he? Here is what he offers as proof:

The flip side of the seldom realized deep commonalities between music and the other arts is the more familiar fact that, in the final analysis, music is also, to a large degree, *sui generis*. Despite its significant commonalities with the other dramatic arts, it is also a realm of human expression with a considerable amount of autonomy. (301; quoted from Bissell 1999)

There is no *warning* in this passage, much less an “express” one. Neither is there any indication that it has anything at all to do with the analogy in question, as such terms as “progression of events,” “melodic movement,” and “musical events and progressions” (its very components) are conspicuously missing.

Bissell’s argument is not helped by the confusing welter of high-sounding, seemingly overlapping terms where simpler ones will do. What is gained, for example, by his earlier reference to “dramatic music” (300), especially when, elsewhere, he simply uses the generic term, “music”? And what is the similarity, if indeed there is one, between the terms “dramatic [art]” and “literary art” in the phrase “dramatic and literary art” (301), other than the fact that they both seem to exclude music? In the quote cited above, what is one to make of “other arts” and “other dramatic arts,” both of which have considerable “commonalities” with music, and therefore seem to refer to the same thing? Later, Bissell makes reference to “dramatic, temporal art” and to “temporal art” (303). Both terms seem to refer to music.

Bissell enlists Rand in support of his argument that art re-creates not things but reality itself, and that a work of art is a “microcosm” of reality. He claims that she “clearly indicates that . . . the re-creation of reality as a *microcosm* is all-important in determining what one will enjoy (and . . . value)” (301–2), quoting Rand as saying that “the nature of the music represents the concretized abstraction of existence—i.e., *a world* in which one feels joyous or sad or triumphant or resigned” (302; emphasis added by Bissell). He takes her literally, but Rand employs the term “world” loosely, not in Bissell’s sense of “microcosm.”<sup>27</sup> This is further apparent when she continues: “According to one’s sense of life, one feels: ‘Yes, *this* is *my* world and *this* is how I should feel!’ or: ‘No, this is not the world as I see it’” (Rand [1969] 1975, 61).

“Alexander Baumgarten (the Founding Father of the science of aesthetics) . . . viewed art as a microcosm,” Bissell (2001, 305), claims, but he does not quote the eighteenth-century philosopher directly. Instead, he cites “[Giorgio] Tonelli’s commentary on Baumgarten”: “The artist is not an imitator of nature in the sense that he copies it:

he must add feeling to reality and thereby he imitates nature in the process of creating *a world or a whole*. The whole is unified by the artist through a coherent ‘theme’ which is the focus of the representation” (305; emphasis added). By equating “world” with “whole,” Tonelli does not seem to be using the former term in the sense of “microcosm,” as Bissell would have us believe.

Two of Bissell’s other authorities do indeed use the term *microcosm*:

But consider [Katherine] Gilbert and [Helmut] Kuhn who say: “the idea of the microcosm, *the notion that the structure of the universe [or the world] can be reflected on a smaller scale in some particular phenomenon*, has always been a favorite in the history of esthetics.” In an even more pertinent comment, they explain that Renaissance painters studied anatomy, psychology, etc., in order to be able to present “a total philosophical treatment of nature which will enable the artist to compose a second nature.” (305; emphasis added)

What needs to be clarified, among other things, is what these writers mean by “some particular phenomenon” and “a second nature.” Surely they do not mean that *every* painting is a microcosm of the world,<sup>28</sup> or that “the idea of the microcosm” applies to sculpture, or to music.

Having discovered it during my research, I would be remiss if I did not end with this quaint yet pertinent excerpt from a late-nineteenth-century essay entitled “The Lake as a Microcosm”:

A lake is to the naturalist a chapter out of the history of a primeval time, for the conditions of life there are primitive, the forms of life are, as a whole, relatively low and ancient, and the system of organic interactions by which they influence and control each other has remained substantially unchanged from a remote geological period.

The animals of such a body of water are, as a whole, remarkably isolated—closely related among themselves in all their interests, but . . . independent of the land about them. . . . It

is an islet of older, lower life in the midst of the higher, more recent life of the surrounding region. *It forms a little world within itself—a microcosm within which all the elemental forces are at work and the play of life goes on in full*, but on so small a scale as to bring it easily within the mental grasp<sup>29</sup> (Forbes 1887, 77; emphasis added).

## The Meaning of Art

When a man opposes me he arouses my attention, not my anger; I meet him half-way if he contradicts and corrects me. The cause of truth ought to be the cause common to both of us. — Montaigne

John Hospers (2001) begins his rambling essay, “Rand’s Aesthetics: A Personal View,” in a conventional manner:

In this essay, I make no attempt to provide a general review of Torres and Kamhi’s book. I shall make a few remarks about views expressed in the book, and some of my own views on the same subject, interspersing them occasionally with memories of my discussions with Rand herself. (311)

That is not what his title implies, however, nor what his essay delivers. Hospers does, indeed, make “no attempt” to review “the book.” He also does not “make a few remarks about views expressed” in it. In fact, he makes no remarks about them at all, unless one counts a single comment about not grasping the gist of two sentences by Kamhi and me regarding Rand’s view of the relationship between emotions and music (316–17). He does not, therefore, reveal his own position on any of “the same subject[s]” we write about. Of his eight page references to *What Art Is*, six are to quotes from Rand, as in: “(quoted in Torres & Kamhi 2000, 47)” (312, 318, 320, 321, 324, 324). One reference is to a quote by Nathaniel Branden (321). In none of these instances does he cite the primary source. On only one occasion, does he quote us.<sup>30</sup>

It is not clear if Hospers read any of *What Art Is*, other than the few pages cited above—it appears that he did not—and he makes no

mention at all of our essay “Critical Neglect of Ayn Rand’s Theory of Art” (Kamhi & Torres 2000, 10–12; see, also, Torres & Kamhi 2001c), in which we criticize him for neglecting Rand’s aesthetics during his long and distinguished career as an aesthetician (he was once president of the American Society for Aesthetics). Had he actually made the promised “few remarks” about the views Kamhi and I express our book, it would have marked the first time he dealt with any aspect of Rand’s philosophy of art in a scholarly journal.

Regarding David Kelley’s essay, “Reasoning About Art” (2001), in which he responds to our critique (Kamhi & Torres 2000, 16–20) of the essay he co-authored, “Why Man Needs Art” (Thomas & Kelley 1999), I refer readers to the earlier response by Kamhi and me (Torres & Kamhi 2001c). In the context of my present remarks, I would only add that Kelley does not, in his paragraph-length enumeration of purported scholarly and moral lapses on our part— which begins: “. . . [they] appear to have set themselves the task of finding fault with every point they could lay their hands on, no matter how minute or remotely related to anything essential,” and ends with “I trust that readers can assess such carping and sometimes fallacious claims for what they are worth” (Kelley 2001, 335)—meet the standards of *objectivity* and *adherence to rules of evidence*. Not least among the things Kelley fails to substantiate is that our remarks constitute “carping,” a term that connotes such characteristics as *ill-natured* and *perverse*.

The long introduction to John Enright’s “Art: What a Concept”<sup>31</sup> (Enright 2001) is peppered at the start with distracting locutions, including “the concept of artwork . . . borrowing [things] out of their normal neighborhoods for special attention and honor” (341); “biologists [figuring] out that whales were mammals, yanking them out of the fish file folder and plopping them into the mammal file folder” (341); “concepts sail[ing] under the name of ‘art’” (342); and so on. Near the end of the second page of his essay, Enright states that his goal is to “explore what belongs in our concept of art” (342), and says he will “[focus] for the most part on apparent inconsistencies within Rand’s account of the five main branches of art”—in particular, regarding the art status of *architecture*, which “plays the part of the ungainly beast that has trouble fitting in” (343)—but which ultimately

*does* fit, in his view. In what follows, I limit my response to this claim as well as to the related issue of Enright’s modification of Rand’s definition of art.

In pressing his case that architecture is art, Enright calls upon the testimony of architect Sherri Tracinski.<sup>32</sup> Her thought on the subject is worth examining as it sheds light on Enright’s own views. He quotes her as follows:

[N]early everyone has had an experience when they walk into a building and they are suddenly hit with an emotional response, the same sudden reaction one feels when seeing a great work of art [a painting or sculpture]. Most people know that great architecture is “speaking” to them—that it is sending a *profound message about the nature of man’s life*. (348; emphasis added)

Apart from its awkward, confused (and confusing) syntax, this brief passage is distinguished by a marked lack of knowledge regarding the nature of art, and of the visual arts in particular.

Examples of “great architecture,” as Tracinski surely knows, are rare. But even when a person does “walk into a building”—even a great building—he is unlikely to experience what she suggests. As a practical matter, there are just too many distractions in the lobbies, or large public spaces, of office towers, hotels, concert halls, railroad and airport terminals, court houses, and other public buildings. In each of these, one is confronted by such things as security desks, ticket windows, directories, flashing schedules, elevator banks and escalators, and a host of other features related to the distinctly utilitarian functions of practicality, convenience, and safety. While one may take a moment to marvel at the beauty and grandeur of the interior design and decoration of a great building (as I always do when I enter the concourse of New York City’s Grand Central Station<sup>33</sup>), the case can hardly be made that such an experience is similar in any meaningful way to that of contemplating a painting like *Girl with a Pearl Earring*,<sup>34</sup> by the seventeenth-century Dutch master, Johannes Vermeer (to pick an example known in reproduction to most cultured individuals in the

Western world).

Tracinski's claim that most people *know* that architecture sends them messages "about the nature of man's life"<sup>35</sup> has no empirical or logical basis, and is contradicted by Rand's aesthetic theory. The response to visual art (as to all art) is largely a subconscious phenomenon based both on the viewer's sense of life—which Rand defines as "a pre-conceptual equivalent of metaphysics, an emotional, *subconsciously integrated* appraisal of man and of existence" ([1966a] 1975, 25; emphasis added)—and that projected by the work in question. As Kamhi and I note in *What Art Is*, Rand further explains that "few individuals have an *explicit* metaphysics—a carefully thought-out, systematically integrated view of reality—much less a complete philosophy" (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 35). Thus, even if it were possible (which it is not, as Rand strongly implied), it is unlikely that an architect would incorporate anything like a view of "the nature of man's life" in his work, or that someone else would recognize it if he did.

The testimony of people who actually live (or work) in great architecture offers some insight into its nature and the role it plays in human life. Here is how one individual sums up the experience of having resided in a house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright (the favorite architect of most Objectivists) for more than five decades:

After many years, I came to realize that there'd not been a single day of my life, including days of tragedy, where I didn't see something beautiful, or feel a sense of uplift from that beauty—whether it was the juxtaposition of materials, the way the light shined on something, the natural environment. You don't expect to be able to see that in life. You don't expect to say that in life. (Donadio 2002)

This is how ordinary people (especially those who have not read *The Fountainhead*) respond to great architecture—no "profound messages" heard or divined, just inspiration and pleasure felt over elemental things, like *light shining on something*. Another resident-owner of a house designed by Wright offers a different perspective in a letter to the *New*

*York Times* regarding a claim that Wright's houses "were brilliantly 'designed for living'":

A Wright house provides glorious aesthetic sustenance, but that's about 15 percent of the "living" experience. The rest includes trying to stop the constant leaks<sup>36</sup> . . . and the resultant water damage . . .; dealing with clueless tradesmen; paying heating bills equal to our mortgage payments; and fending off preservationist types eager to tell us how to spend our money as they scurried off to their nice conventional ranchburgers. (quoted in Kamhi 2002a)

The writer's memory of "glorious aesthetic sustenance" prompts, not profound philosophic notions, but the image of light playing on shapes, volumes, textures, and colors, all integrated by Wright's design into an "organic" whole.

Enright (2001, 350) invokes Tracinski again: "Architecture conveys a view of man *indirectly*, not by projecting an image of man himself, but by projecting the proper environment for man to live [and, presumably, work] in" (emphasis in original). The absurdity of this assertion is plain. Consider, as an example, the following "view of man": he has the power of choice, is able to achieve his goals, and can find happiness during his lifetime. Architecture conveys all of this, and more, merely by "projecting" a so-called proper environment, in Enright's view. How it does so he does not say, even while seeming to explain his thesis further: "This [i. e., architecture] is an '*idealized world*,' which people can actually enter, and which can provide for its inhabitants a constant 'underscoring and reaffirmation of *one's highest values*'"<sup>37</sup> Is this not what great fiction and drama do (minus the "constant")? Enright further claims that Tracinski "breaks new ground by arguing that the architect's handling of the building's utilitarian function is itself expressive of the architect's sense of life, by embodying *a view of human needs*, which are key aspects of human nature" (350; emphasis added). Such a statement is not self-explanatory, but Enright leaves it as is.

If "the pursuit of scholarly work depends, fundamentally, on the

depth and breadth of the scholar’s understanding of subject matter” (Glassick et al., 1997, 27), Enright’s argument on behalf of architecture as art must be found wanting. His reliance on Tracinski as his primary authority on architecture does not inspire confidence, considering the wealth of informed literature by other writers he might have consulted. Of the more than thirty references Enright (2001, 358–59) cites, six deal with the topic. Of these, just one—*ABC of Architecture*, by James O’Gorman—is published by a scholarly press, or in a scholarly periodical. Of the other five (all by Objectivists,<sup>38</sup> and all published in small Objectivist periodicals), two are by Tracinski. One of the essays (by another writer),<sup>39</sup> now published on a personal website, is said to be the primary source of another mistaken theory by Enright:

Architecture does in fact re-create<sup>40</sup> reality, in a very literal way, by completely re-creating one’s surroundings on a grand scale. Speaking in evolutionary terms, it re-creates our *landscape*. (344; emphasis in original)

What can this possibly mean? Since Enright is familiar with the genus of Rand’s definition of art—“a selective re-creation of reality” ([1965] 1975, 19)—and since he argues that architecture is art, one assumes at first that in declaring matter-of-factly that it “re-creat[e]s reality,” he uses that term in the same sense Rand does. But he does not. Rand knew that an artist selectively re-creates what he perceives. Enright (2001, 244) contends that an architect “completely [re-creates] one’s surroundings,” however, and that does not make any sense. It is not difficult to grasp the notion of a painter *selectively* re-creating a bowl of cherries, for example, or a novelist, a busy city street, but what Enright suggests is impossible—if by “surroundings” he means (as he must, if he is a careful writer) what the term denotes—the existing objects, conditions, and circumstances of one’s environment. Surely the architect does not re-create all that. It does not help when Enright puts his argument in an “evolutionary” context by telling the already confused reader that what the architect does is re-create his client’s “landscape.” Perhaps there is an explanation for all this rooted in logic or common sense, but Enright has not provided it.

Enright's definition of art (quoted below) is prompted, in part, on the premise that "Rand's definition of art . . . hold[s] . . . as a definition for the layman, who focuses on art as a recipient, and who attends primarily to the effects achieved by art," but *not* for "the producer, who attends more to the means by which the arts achieve their effects" (353). By "layman," he seems to mean *anyone who is not an artist*, presumably including professional critics and philosophers of art. He does not explain how it is possible that Rand's definition held for herself—she was, after all, a novelist, or "producer," as well as a philosopher. Nor does he reveal that *he* is a producer—a poet.<sup>41</sup>

Enright recalls a conversation he had with Fred Stitt,<sup>42</sup> an architect (who happens to be an Objectivist), in which Stitt "indicated . . . that he usually modifies Rand's definition [of art] by substituting 'expression' [for] 're-creation of reality' *in order to make the definition better fit architecture*"<sup>43</sup> (357 n. 6; emphasis added). This is an astonishing revelation for Enright to make, not only because it seems so private a communication, but because he appears to sanction subjectivism, which Rand defined as "the belief that reality is not a firm absolute, but a fluid, plastic, indeterminate realm which can be altered [or *modified*], in whole or in part, by the consciousness of the perceiver—i. e., by his feelings, wishes or whims" (Rand [1965] 1988, 19). Enright couches his own definition of art (formulated, like Stitt's, to make architecture "fit") in curiously tentative terms:

It may be that . . . we [presumably laymen and producers alike] would be better served by something along the lines of: *a manmade work created to provide an experience of the creator's sense of life*. (353–54; emphasis in the original)

As Kamhi and I report in *What Art Is*, both Lionel Ruby ([1950] 1960) and David Kelley (1988) stress that "a proper definition is constructed according to a prescribed set of principles, or rules" (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 103), all of which must be adhered to in order for the definition to have any validity. Enright's definition violates three of the five most important of these rules. Its *genus*—"manmade work"—is much too broad, encompassing as it does everything made

by man. Its *differentia* is also flawed. Rand defined “sense of life” as “a pre-conceptual equivalent of metaphysics, an *emotional, subconsciously integrated* appraisal of man and of existence” (Rand [1969]1975, 25; emphasis added). She also noted that “the emotion involved in art . . . has an intense, profoundly personal (yet *undefined*) value-meaning to the individual experiencing it” (35; emphasis added). Thus, “sense of life” is not something that one can *intend* to give the experience of to another person, as Enright implies.

Finally, the term itself is problematical. A definition must be clear, avoiding vague or obscure language. In Kelley’s words: “An *obscure* definition is unclear because it uses abstract or technical language that is more difficult to understand than the concept itself” (1988, 42). Kamhi and I add this argument: “Though the phrase [‘sense of life’] is often used in everyday discourse, no one unfamiliar with Rand’s thought could be expected to be aware of the complex layers of meaning she ascribes to it” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 106).

Enright answers, in agreement with Kamhi and me (though he does not cite us), then qualifies, the question we pose in the title of Chapter 10 of *What Art Is*: “Architecture: ‘Art’ or ‘Design?’”

Architecture *is* a design art,<sup>44</sup> but it is selected from among the design arts for elevation<sup>45</sup> into the concept of high art. (351; emphasis in original)

Selected by whom—by Enright himself, and the architects he cites, among others?<sup>46</sup> He does not say, but seems to imply as much. But his theory runs smack into the Law of Identity. As Rand ([1971] 1975, 78) observes, “A is A, a thing is itself. A work of art is a specific entity which possesses a specific nature.” She explains elsewhere that “[t]he concept ‘identity’ . . . underscores the primary fact that [existents] *are what they are* ([1966–67] 1990, 59; emphasis in original). If the “ungainly beast” of architecture is a “design art,” as Enright correctly says it is, does he not contradict the Law of Identity by claiming that he or others can *elevate* architecture “into the concept of high [“fine”] art”? In this respect, he resembles postmodernist aestheticians and critics who have routinely *conferred* (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 95, 96, 99)

art status upon objects or activities; *anointed* or *regarded* (97) artifacts as art; *inducted* (97) objects into the world of art; or *designated* (100) virtually anything as art.<sup>47</sup> In *Definitions of Art*, after surveying some thirty years of discussion on the topic, Stephen Davies (1991, 218) concludes:

Something's being a work of art [and someone's being an artist] is a matter of its having a particular status. This status is *conferred* by a member of the Artworld, usually an artist [but also a "curator, critic, and so on"], who has the authority to confer the status in question. (emphasis added)

The status conferred upon architecture in Enright's theory is that found in his definition of art, as quoted earlier: "*manmade work created to provide an experience of the creator's sense of life.*"

Enright (2001, 355) concludes with this thought: "With the concept of art, we isolate, for study and honor, the highest forms of human self-expression [including architecture, of course], the forms that best allow an individual to communicate<sup>48</sup> a felt sense of what really matters in life." While concepts do indeed serve to isolate things for study, they are *neutral* in this respect—they do not "honor" anything. In any case, with regard to architecture, there is no need to elevate it to the status of art in order to honor it. At its highest, it is honorable enough.<sup>49</sup>

Barry Vacker<sup>50</sup> (2001) recalls precisely when and where he began to outline his critique of *What Art Is*: "[I]t was just past sunrise and I was sitting at the rim of the Grand Canyon. Literally" (361). An idyllic setting in which to begin an essay, one would think, which makes his subsequent remark about gazing "into the deep abyss, brimming with beautiful proportions and sublime contrasts" (361) a bit puzzling. The epistemological disconnect in his conception of the *abyss*, a term ordinarily associated with such qualities as darkness and horror—not beauty and sublimity—only hints at what is to come.

There are few topics so complex that they cannot be discussed in plain English. Aesthetics is not one of them, yet Vacker makes it so. The impenetrable language that conspicuously marks much of his

prose is not justified in an essay aimed at *a general scholarly audience*,<sup>51</sup> and one may legitimately wonder if he himself knows what he is talking about at times—or if he wants to be understood, or even if there is anything to be understood in the first place. Such speculation is warranted only because Vacker does not establish a context for his more obtuse remarks, does not explain what he means in those instances, and does not define his terms. As if this were not enough, one must contend with his pronounced disdain for the rules of logic and evidence and—most disturbingly—with his penchant for inventing items out of whole cloth.<sup>52</sup> In what follows I make no attempt to deal comprehensively with Vacker’s critique of *What Art Is*, nor do I address at all the so-called *chaos theory*<sup>53</sup> that implicitly informs his thought throughout. Instead, I examine representative passages, taking Vacker’s terms to mean what standard dictionaries (not to mention common sense) indicate, and cite relevant facts, when necessary, to rebut his fabrications.

Here is Vacker’s recollection of the sights and sounds from a hike inside the Grand Canyon on the day before he began writing his essay: “the pastel silence, the impressionistic canvas of light without sound transcends the *turbulent forms and functions* deep in the canyon. Such a realm of *steep and strange contrasts* triggers the sublime” (361). The reader might well wonder about the phrase “turbulent forms and functions,” as the term “turbulent” suggests motion, and the forms (the walls of the canyon) he sees are still. And what can he mean by “functions” deep in the canyon? Particularly opaque is the phrase “steep and strange contrasts,” in which “strange” suggests unfamiliarity to the general reader, but can take on different meanings—from “unnatural” to “inexplicable.” Later, Vacker describes the view of New York City from atop the Empire State Building: “the city below is a pattern of *chaotic forms and functions*, alive with color and movement, an aesthetic complexity stimulating *the sublime*. The city expresses numerous *strange attractions*,<sup>54</sup> born of a dazzling display of human thought and ingenuity, created for those people navigating the canyon walls of the skyscrapers” (362). Later, he says that in *The Fountainhead*, “Rand was deeply concerned with the meaning of the beautiful in nature and culture, precisely in her descriptions of the *chaotic forms* of

nature and the *strange attractors* of Roark's buildings" (362). Not by way of explanation of all this, but as a "further" thought, Vacker quotes Gregory Johnson:

Rand's aesthetic signature is captured . . . by the concept of the sublime, an experience in which elements of chaos—mind boggling magnitudes and fearsome powers—are incorporated into an elevating aesthetic phenomenon by the experience of man's cognitive mastery and moral superiority over them. (362)

If Johnson explains how man can have *moral superiority* over "elements of chaos" Vacker does not say. He simply ends the paragraph and moves onto the next, in which he introduces yet further elements of confusion: "Clearly, *The Fountainhead* . . . express[es] the natural and technological sublime, a modern aesthetic born of post-Kantian aesthetics and industrial utopianism" (362–63). What it is that Rand's novel "clearly" does is left for the reader to mull over. Vacker is not about to explain.

Like other postmodern cultural critics,<sup>55</sup> Vacker wears his disdain for clarity as a badge of honor. Physicist and Nobel Laureate, Steven Weinberg, puts the matter in unique perspective. After quoting an impenetrable passage by the philosopher, Jacques Derrida, and confessing "I have no idea what this intended to mean," Weinberg (1996) continues:

I suppose that it might be argued that articles in physics journals are . . . incomprehensible to the uninitiated. But physicists are forced to use a technical language, the language of mathematics. Within this limitation, we try to be clear, and when we fail we do not expect our readers to confuse obscurity with profundity. . . . Derrida and other post-moderns do not seem to be saying anything that requires a special technical language, and they do not seem to be trying very hard to be clear.

Weinberg is too generous in his criticism. Luey,<sup>56</sup> whose advice to scholars I cited earlier, is more direct. She suggests a possible motivation for obtuse writing, which will occur to “intelligent readers,” she says. The writers of such prose may realize that, “reduced to plain English,” their ideas “[do] not make sense” ([1987] 1995, 10).

Vacker’s characterization of the architecture in Rand’s novel *The Fountainhead* will make no sense to most readers. For example, he claims that “[t]he importance of beauty need not be associated with symmetrical and sentimentalist visions of beauty, all of which are exploded by Roark’s chaotic designs in *The Fountainhead*” (2001, 369). Vacker notwithstanding, Roark’s buildings are neither “*hopelessly confused*” or “*disordered*” in their design, nor conceived by chance, as any reader of Rand’s novel familiar with these meanings of “chaotic” well knows. Listen to Roark, speaking of a building he plans to design:

I love this work. I want to see it erected. I want to make it real, living, functioning, built. But every living thing is integrated. Do you know what that means? Whole, pure, complete, unbroken. Do you know what constitutes an integrating principle? A thought. The one thought, the single thought that created the thing and every part of it. (Rand [1943] 1971, 580; emphasis added; also quoted in Cox 1993, 17)

The principle of *integration* is not what one normally associates with the notion of “chaotic designs.”

Seeking further to convince the reader that Roark equals chaos, Vacker (2001) turns to a concrete example: “If there exists one building that might have been designed by Howard Roark, then it is Frank Gehry’s . . . Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain” (379), adding that “fans” of *The Fountainhead* “would embrace the building, seeing the obvious similarities constructed in real life” (380). Would they? I doubt it. But anyone, fan or not, can ascertain the validity of Vacker’s claims for himself merely by viewing images of Gehry’s buildings<sup>57</sup> (including Guggenheim Bilbao) and comparing them to the work of Frank Lloyd Wright,<sup>58</sup> whose work influenced Rand’s

conception of Roark.<sup>59</sup>

Vacker often tosses off statements such as “[s]ince the publication of [*The Romantic Manifesto*], Rand’s artistic [aesthetic] pronouncements have . . . infuriated critics” (363) as if he were reporting fact. He names not a single critic because none exist. As Kamhi and I note, however, beyond the first flurry of reviews of *The Romantic Manifesto*, few (if any) critics have given a thought to Rand’s aesthetic theory (Kamhi & Torres 2000, 1)—if they even knew it existed. Meanwhile, cultural critics have tended to associate Rand with her fiction, her views on capitalism, or her influence on the libertarian movement—not with her ideas in aesthetics.

In brazen fashion, Vacker repeatedly creates out of whole cloth, views Kamhi and I do not hold.

*Item:* He claims that Kamhi and I “embrace” three “*modernist chasms*”—“art versus material function,” “*art versus beauty*,” and “*order versus chaos*” (Vacker 2001, 364; emphasis in original). He later says we “express a *modernist* philosophical trajectory in [our] approach” (365), yet he knows that Kamhi and I do not embrace anything modernist (or postmodernist<sup>60</sup>) at all, that we argue that modernist “art” is, in fact, “*the antithesis of art*, for it subverts both the integrative function and the basis in objective reality that are essential to art” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 130; emphasis in original). Nor do we discuss such concepts as art and “material function,” or art and “beauty,” in competitive terms—as if aesthetics were some sort of boxing match.

*Item:* He claims we embrace “the chasm that sees any beauty or material function as necessarily reducing the object to the *lower realm of design*” (Vacker 2001, 366). What we actually embrace is the fact that “utilitarian objects of decorative art differ fundamentally from works of [fine] art . . . in their *lower level of cognitive integration*” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 202; emphasis added). We distinguish between art, which is essentially *conceptual* in focus, and design, whose focus is primarily *sensory* and *perceptual*. We do not even deal with such areas as graphic, industrial, furniture, or interior design, and cite fashion design only in passing. Even so, to suggest that we consider design of any kind as somehow belonging to a “lower realm,” is to falsely imply that we consider it as somehow unworthy of serious consideration. Quite the

contrary. With respect to architectural design, for example, we argue that “like other things which give us esthetic pleasure . . . architectural structures help to remind us of the kinds and quality of our human aims and pursuits” (199).

*Item:* “Following Rand, Torres and Kamhi *reduce* all the ‘decorative arts’ to ‘crafts’” (Vacker 2001, 367). Vacker just makes this up. Neither we nor Rand do any such thing. Rand used the term “decorative art” to designate what contemporary critics tend to refer to as “craft” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 202), and we merely observe that “[i]n contemporary usage, the term *decorative art* is rapidly being replaced by *craft*” (425 n. 1). That is it.

*Item:* “[In their view] fashion and furniture not only have *degrading* material functions, they also appeal to lower forms of cognition. . . . [T]hey have no problem discounting the aesthetics of the clothing worn by the ordinary public or the furniture that fills the architecture they call home” (Vacker 2001, 367). What? Does Vacker actually expect his readers will believe that Kamhi and I argue in such terms regarding the very clothing we and other ordinary people wear, as well as the furniture that fills our modest homes, in *What Art Is?* Apparently so. Yet a mere two sentences later, he contradicts himself: “Nevertheless, the authors grasp that such functional objects create ‘a sensually stimulating and emotionally gratifying human environment’” (367).

*Item:* “In defending the cognitive foundations of art, Torres and Kamhi actually reduce aesthetic experience to the sterile contemplation of our ‘deepest values’” (368). We do? Where? Certainly not on the page he cites. In truth, since one contemplates works of art (hardly a “sterile” activity), not “values,” we could not possibly do any such thing.

*Item:* “In embracing the duality between art and beauty or function, [they] aim to overcome ‘conceptual confusion.’ To accomplish this task, they conflate ‘philosophy of art’ with aesthetics, and define beauty out of aesthetics” (368). What we do, in fact, is distinguish between two legitimate contemporary meanings of the term *aesthetics*: “the philosophy of art” (Rand’s and our usage) and “the study of beauty and related concepts,” which we acknowledge to be

“the much broader sense in which [the term] has been generally understood.” We further show that Rand’s use of the term is not without historical precedent (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 16).

*Item:* Vacker (2001, 381) asks: “Why is it a violation of function that [a] building *is superior to* the works of art it contains”? We do not even imply this. What we do say is that Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain “subverts its primary function [which is to display art] by *detracting* from the works exhibited” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 380; emphasis added).

*Item:* Vacker’s last paragraph:

Lurking beneath all of their defenses, definitions, classifications, and fundamental values is a neoclassical longing to preserve a past order of hierarchy, stability, equilibrium, and timeless forms. As such, *What Art Is* embraces a fourth chasm—that of a Grand Canyon between the past and any future. When the world’s foremost exponents of Randian aesthetics sound much like the inquisitors at Roark’s Stoddard Temple trial, something is seriously wrong with the aesthetic philosophy they represent. (Vacker 2001, 381)

In fact, there are no “inquisitors” at Roark’s trial in *The Fountainhead* (Rand 1943 [1971], 675–87)—either numerically or metaphorically, and no one who has read the novel could possibly have such an impression of this most memorable event, even years later. There is only a single questioner at the trial, and that is Stoddard’s attorney, and the only testimony he elicits is from friendly witnesses he has coached (with one exception), who testify on his client’s behalf. Roark is not questioned at all and, representing himself, does not cross-examine a single soul. The term *inquisitors*, applied to us by Vacker in the passage quoted above, evokes not Roark’s trial, but the ruthless methods employed by officials of the Spanish Inquisition to extract confessions from heretics. With this inept, senseless distortion, true to form, Vacker rests his case that there is “something seriously wrong” with Rand’s theory of art.

## Notes

1. All epigraphs in this response are from “On the art of conversing” (ca. 1588), in Treachmann 1946, 383–92, 402–3.
2. I comment briefly on two of the essays here, rather than in the text. At just a few pages, Michael Newberry’s essay, “On Metaphysical Value-Judgments,” is more personal than scholarly in nature, combining elements of both art criticism and art history, as it concentrates on the field of painting. Even by that standard it is deeply flawed, as Kamhi and I conclude in our joint remarks, which are incorporated in her response to the Aesthetics Symposium. See Kamhi 2003. Randall Dipert’s scholarly writing is nearly always a pleasure to read. Except for a puzzling digression, occasional carelessness, and other matters noted by Kamhi and me in our online response to his remarks (Torres & Kamhi 2001c), his essay, “The Puzzle of Music and Emotion in Rand’s Aesthetics” (2001), is no exception. Like Hunt, Dipert largely exemplifies the virtues defining the essence of scholarly discourse.
3. In using *be* to stand for both male and female, I follow Jacques Barzun’s example in adhering to “the long use of *man* as a word that means human being— people—men and women alike, whenever there is no need to distinguish them.” See “A Digression on a Word,” in Barzun 2000, 82–85.
4. Similarly, Morris Philipson, Director of the University of Chicago Press, observes that “[Jacques] Barzun’s crucial terms of evaluation [of writing] are *moral*, not aesthetic. What is execrable is what misleads, what traduces, what injects error, what cloaks the absence of thought or feeling, what pretends to be something other than it is, what is false” (foreword to Barzun [1971] 1986, ix; emphasis added).
5. Glassick et al. cite a report of the National Academy of Sciences that discusses “fabrication, falsification . . . and other practices that can compromise the research process and endanger community trust” (1997, 63).
6. The spelling of the term “aesthetics” throughout this essay follows the preference of the editors of this journal. Elsewhere, Kamhi and I follow Rand’s preference for the alternative spelling, *esthetics* (see Kamhi & Torres 2000, 34, n. 3).
7. For my further thoughts on Hunt’s essay, see Torres & Kamhi 2001c.
8. Luey gives this advice to writers: “Avoid cuteness, especially in titles [that] should be brief and should tell the reader what your article is about. Occasionally, a title can be used to attract attention but usually not in a scholarly journal” ([1987] 1995, 11).
9. Riggenbach is the author of “Philosophy and Sense of Life, Revisited” (1974), which borrows, in the first part of its title, the title of the second of Rand’s four essays on aesthetics in *The Romantic Manifesto* (Rand [1969] 1975, 25–33).
10. For images of Duchamp’s “readymades,” see <<http://www.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/phil%20of%20art/duchamp.htm>>.
11. Riggenbach quotes a passage from Sacks, citing pages 110–11 from *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat—and other Clinical Tales* (Riggenbach 2001, 272). He does not include this book in his References (290), however, and no

doubt read the passage in *What Art Is* (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 390 n. 75), which he cites immediately thereafter.

12. In an earlier passage, we reported that Duchamp's titles for his readymades "were mostly childish wordplay, ranging from sheer nonsense to sophomoric sexual allusions—mere exercises in what he thought of as the 'chess game of language.'" We further noted that "in this game, he was inspired by the example of Raymond Roussel, a writer whom Louis Sass characterizes as '*profoundly schizoid or perhaps even schizophrenic*'" (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 264; emphasis added). Neither we nor Sass ever say that Duchamp himself was schizophrenic, or "insane," to use Riggenbach's term.

13. The historical and critical context we provide is of far broader scope than Riggenbach implies. The views we cite other than Rand's are equally of interest, perhaps even more so, to thinkers who have not been previously "drawn to Rand's aesthetic theories."

14. Riggenbach quotes just the second half of Rand's definition of "sense of life," which reads, in full: "a pre-conceptual equivalent of metaphysics, an emotional, subconsciously integrated appraisal of man and of existence" (Rand [1966a] 1975, 25).

15. Riggenbach's estimate of Rand's theory of music differs markedly from that of Randall Dipert, who finds her "account of music rich and subtle" (Dipert 2001, 390).

16. Throughout the present essay, variations on the term "re-create" refer implicitly to Rand's definition of art: "a selective *re-creation* of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments" (Rand [1965] 1975, 19).

17. See Torres & Kamhi 2000, 311–15, especially 314.

18. Kamhi and I argue that "the subconscious perception of the emotive character of the music might act as a direct stimulus, or 'trigger'—perhaps by activating areas of the brain in which analogous emotionally charged memories or associations are stored" (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 366 n. 19).

19. As we further note: "Jacques Barzun similarly suggests that, when we listen to music, a multitude of 'associations' and 'other influences stream through our consciousness along with the stream of sound'" (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 366 n. 20).

20. We did, in fact, consult the first and last pages of an actual copy of *Finnegans Wake*.

21. No other commentator on *What Art Is* has bothered to mention any of its editing and proofreading errors, which are clustered in a few chapters near the end.

22. Bell-Villada adds this remark: "I would submit that the best of Joyce and Beckett stands far closer to the truth of twentieth century human life than do *The Fountainhead* or *Atlas Shrugged*" (2001, 297).

23. For the text of essays by Bissell from 1997, 1998, and 1999, cited in his References (2001, 310), follow "Music, Music, Music!" link at <<http://hometown.aol.com/REBissell>>, then scroll down to "Essays on Music and Art."

24. Bissell's reference to "re-creation" in art is derived from Rand's definition of art in "The Psycho-Epistemology of Art": "*Art is a selective re-creation of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments*" (Rand [1969] 1975, 19).

25. Bissell (2001, 300) defends his microcosm theory, in part, by citing the following writers as authorities: Leonard Peikoff, Katherine E. Gilbert, and Helmut Kuhn, "and many others, including most notably the founder of aesthetics, [A. G.] Baumgarten." Peikoff, Rand's "intellectual heir," is a philosopher, but not an aesthete. Bissell does not quote from, or discuss, the work of any of these writers, asserting merely that they argue as he does: "This view is not just my own personal aberration, since it is also held by . . ." is all he says. He cites no aestheticians from the second half of the twentieth century.

26. *Microcosm*: "A little world. . . . A community, institution, town, district, country, etc., regarded as an epitome of the world or as being a little world. . . . A representation in miniature or on a small scale" (Neilson et al. 1961).

27. In a scene from *The Fountainhead*, Gail Wynand explains to architect Howard Roark that the house he wants Roark to design "must be a separate *world*" (Rand [1943] 1971, 520; emphasis added). Here, too, Rand uses the term "world" in a sense far removed from the meaning of "microcosm," as the context of the scene suggests.

28. Various works by the sixteenth-century painter Pieter Bruegel might be considered microcosms of the world. For images, see the Art Renewal Center: <[http://www.artrenewal.org/museum/b/Bruegel\\_Pieter/page3.html](http://www.artrenewal.org/museum/b/Bruegel_Pieter/page3.html)>.

29. Other examples of the correct use of *microcosm* include the notion that New York City, with its multi-ethnic population and international tourist trade, is a microcosm of the world, and that an ant hill is one as well.

30. "When I read Torres and Kamhi's description of Rand's view—"What music presents, then, are certain *auditory concretes* . . . that have emotive and existential significance. That is why music, in Rand's analysis, possesses an *objective*, albeit generalized, core of meaning"—I do not have, from this description, a clear enough handle on her view to say more about it without further elucidation. What, for example, is meant by 'emotive and existential significance'? Having read these words, I'm afraid I don't know where to go with them—as so often happens, I think I understand the meaning of each individual word, but not the whole collocation" (Hospers 2001, 316–17; emphasis added). It is not clear what Hospers means by this remark.

31. Regarding Enright's title, "Art: What a Concept," see note 8, above.

32. Tracinski, "an architect and architectural historian," is listed as one of the doctrinaire Ayn Rand Institute's "speakers and writers." Two publishing credits are given: *The Intellectual Activist* (cited by Enright) and the *New York Post*. See <<http://www.aynrand.org/medialink/tracinski.html>> for a brief biography.

33. Actually, the proper name for Grand Central Station is "Grand Central Terminal," since it is the starting and stopping point of a railroad line. See <<http://www.thecityreview.com/grandcen.html>> for background information and images.

34. With the exception of art critics, art historians, or philosophers of art, most people do not think complex philosophic thoughts while viewing paintings such as *Girl With a Pearl Earring*. For an enlarged image of this painting, search for the title at the Art Renewal Center: <<http://www.artrenewal.org>>.

35. Concepts such as *the nature of man's life* are the province of *philosophy*, a subject not studied in any formal manner by most people. In the realm of *art*, even paintings or sculptures do not ordinarily project such “messages” as the artist’s *view of the nature of man’s life* (even if he has one he is aware of). As Kamhi and I argue: “it is difficult to understand how [metaphysical value-judgments] . . . pertain to any art form but literature—unless the given work [has] a literary or narrative base (biblical, historical, mythological, or fictional) known to the viewer” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 25–26).

36. On the subject of leaky roofs and other structural problems of buildings by Wright, see the note by Kamhi and me regarding his acclaimed Johnson Wax Building, “preposterously characterized as ‘possibly, the most profound work of art that America has ever produced’” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 422 n. 30).

37. Normative expressions such as “*proper environment*,” “*idealized world*,” and “*highest values*” are common among Objectivists who seek to elevate architecture to the status of art. Enright (2001) even says that *The Fountainhead* “is very much concerned with proper principles of building” (344). Like many Objectivists, he views the novel as if it were a nonfiction treatise on architecture. On this point, see Torres & Kamhi 2000, 189–90.

38. Not counting Rand, slightly more than half of the writers cited in Enright’s references are Objectivist writers (as Enright is), though he does not label them as such.

39. “Architecture: The missing art form,” by Daniel Ust, is posted on <<http://uweb.superlink.net/neptune>>. Under “Navigate,” follow the link “My Works” to “Esthetics.”

40. On the term “re-create,” see note 16, above.

41. Enright’s biographical sketch says he is “a poet and computer consultant [who has] written and lectured on many aspects of the aesthetics of poetry” (“Contributor Biographies,” *The Journal of Ayn Rand Studies* 2, no.2, Spring 2001, 491).

42. Stitt is founder and director of the San Francisco Institute of Architecture. A biography is posted at <<http://www.sfia.net/Roster.asp>>. A “Core Program” course of the Institute (Fall 2000) entitled “Studio: Creative Design Process” taught students “how to create extraordinary buildings—buildings that are totally integrated with the needs of the users, with the site, and within themselves *as works of art*” (emphasis added). See <<http://www.sfia.net/Fall2000.asp>>.

43. Stitt’s remark recalls Enright’s characterization of architecture as “the ungainly beast that has trouble *fitting in* [qualifying as art]” (Enright 2001, 343), on which I commented earlier. His modification of Rand’s definition of art is self-serving—if architecture is art, then he is an artist. Not all architects consider themselves “artists,” I should stress, but Objectivist architects have tended to do

so based on distorted interpretations of *The Fountainhead* ([1943] 1971) and “Art and Cognition” (Rand [1971] 1975).

Most well-known postmodernist architects also consider themselves artists, a view supported by art and architecture critics. Frank Gehry is a prominent example. Michael Kimmelman, chief art critic of the *New York Times*, refers to Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (in Spain) as “architectural sculpture” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 198–99; see also Torres 2001). Noted architecture critic, Ada Louise Huxtable, a vocal advocate of architecture as art (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 423 n. 41), gushes over Gehry’s work in remarks made on the occasion of his being awarded the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize in 1989. Referring to his work as “non-formulaic art,” she adds: “[T]his architect is very much in control. He is a cool romantic, a rational expressionist, a mature adventurer. He will continue to work at the less-than-easy edges, turning the practical into the lyrical, and architecture into art.” A biographical sketch of Gehry on the Pritzker website notes that “the belief that ‘architecture is art’ has been a part of Frank Gehry’s being for as long as he can remember.” In his acceptance speech, Gehry declares matter-of-factly: “architecture is surely an art.” (All quotations but the first are posted on <<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/gehry.htm>>.) Kamhi and I quote Gehry as seeming to hedge during an interview on PBS: “there’s a moment of truth . . . where you’re *like the artist*” (423 n. 45). There is no doubt that Gehry considers himself an artist, however, that remark notwithstanding. (For a source of images of Gehry’s work, see note 57, below.)

44. Enright (2001, 351) specifies only architecture, “automobile design,” and “dress design” as examples of the “design arts,” classifying the latter two as “lesser design arts.” Kamhi and I argue that “the concept of design is basic to discussions of architecture and of the graphic, industrial, and decorative arts, whose primary functions are utilitarian—but not to discourse on the fine arts. One customarily speaks of *designing* a book cover, an automobile, an evening gown, a lamp, or a building, for example, but not a novel, a piano sonata, or a landscape painting” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 199–200).

45. “Elevate” is one of the entries in Appendix B of *What Art Is: Artworld Buzz Words* (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 321; also <<http://www.aristos.org/whatart/append-B.htm>>). Compare “become” in Appendix B-II <<http://www.aristos.org/whatart/app-B-II.htm>>.

46. Three Rand specialists, who have written about Rand’s treatment of architecture in *The Fountainhead* ([1943] 1971), do so only briefly, making only implicit references to architecture as an art form. (All emphasis below is added.) Stephen Cox (1993), a professor of literature, notes that Rand “makes Roark think about his *art* in the same way she thinks about hers” (16). Mimi Reisel Gladstein, also a literature specialist, writes that “[a]rchitecture is an apt backdrop for Rand’s explication [of “selfishness’ or egoism as a moral good”] because it is simultaneously an *art*, a science, and a business and, thus, representative of all professions” ([1984] 1999, 40; see, also, 41–42). Douglas Den Uyl, a philosopher, similarly notes that the work “appears to be a novel about architecture, but architecture is only the subject chosen to express [Rand’s] ideas” (1999, 29–30). He continues:

. . . architecture as a subject had certain advantages for Rand’s purposes. [It] blends nicely the *artistic* on the one hand and the scientific or technological on the other. Architecture is creative and requires an *aesthetic* vision, thus incorporating the *artistic*. But since one is dealing with a physical structure when one creates a building, engineering principles, at least, come into consideration. (30)

(For an excellent—except for misguided references to “beauty”—discussion of the distinction between “artistic” and “aesthetic,” see *Webster’s Dictionary of Synonyms*, 1942, s.v. “artistic.”) Den Uyl concludes that “it is . . . important to understand that *The Fountainhead* is not a defense of modern architecture. . . . [I]t is the ideas that matter to Rand, *not architecture per se*” (31). I should note all three writers are familiar to varying degrees with *What Art Is* (Torres & Kamhi 2000), but made their remarks prior to its publication. Rand herself never refers to architecture as art, or to Roark as an artist, in her novel.

47. Such practices bring to mind the proverbial effort to fit a “square peg in a round hole” by sheer will.

48. Enright errs in suggesting that a function of art is to “communicate.” As Kamhi and I note:

Rand argues that the artist’s primary purpose is not “communication”—as that word is properly understood—but, rather, *objectification*. That is, the artist’s implicit focus during the creative process is “to bring his view of man and of existence into reality,” for *himself*. Yet Rand adds this crucial qualification: “but to be brought into reality, it has to be translated into objective (therefore, communicable) terms.” (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 45; also, Rand [1966b] 1975, 35)

49. Toward end of her life, Rand is reported to have resolved the contradiction in her principal statement on architecture in “Art and Cognition” ([1971] 1975, 46) by deciding that it should not be included in *The Ayn Rand Lexicon* (Bingswanger 1986). In effect, she concluded that because the primary purpose of architecture is utilitarian, it is not art. For an account of Rand’s decision as reported by Kamhi and me, see “Architecture’s Exclusion from The Ayn Rand Lexicon” in *What Art Is Online* <<http://www.aristos.org/whatart/ch10.htm>> (June 2001). See also our earlier remarks in *What Art Is* (Torres & Kamhi 2000, 191).

50. All emphasis within quotations in this discussion of Vacker is mine unless otherwise indicated.

51. Vacker’s “esoteric language” may be derived from “mathematical models of non-linear dynamics,” as some have observed, but that does not make its use “legitimate” in a non-specialized journal.

52. “Made [or some other term] out of whole cloth” means “utterly without foundation in fact, completely fictitious.” For an excellent brief article on the etymology of this phrase, search for “whole cloth” at <<http://www.alt-usage->

english.org>.

53. Physicist Steven Weinberg (1996) refers to “those ‘postmoderns’ in the humanities who like to surf through avant garde fields like . . . *chaos theory* to dress up their own arguments about the fragmentary and random nature of experience” (emphasis added).

54. “To define an attractor is not simple,” writes Judy Petree in “Strange Attractor in Chaos Theory” <<http://www.wfu.edu/~petrej4/Attractor.htm>>.

55. On his website <<http://www.barryvacker.net>>, Vacker describes himself as a “cultural and media theorist” whose “work explores the conceptual vortex of aesthetics, technology, and mass media, all of which combine to reflect and shape visions of the modern and postmodern utopias.” His essays, he says, “explore the emerging postmodern territories, where utopian aesthetics and new technologies meet cultural theory and future reality.” In his vitae, he lists the following areas of specialization under “media theorist”: “utopianism in mass media; technology, new media, & information revolution; aesthetics in media & advertising.”

56. Beth Luey is Director of the Scholarly Publishing Program at Arizona State University. Her book, *Handbook for Academic Authors*, is in its Fourth Edition.

57. For images of Gehry’s buildings, as well as for information about him, see <<http://www.frank-gehry.com>>. See Torres & Kamhi 2000, 198–99 for additional commentary on Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain.

58. For a color rendering of Wright’s 1946 design for Ayn Rand’s country home (which was never built), see Paxton 1998, 113. The Wright Web Guide <<http://www.cypgrp.com/flw/index.html>> is an excellent resource for Frank Lloyd Wright websites despite occasional inactive links. See, especially, “Fallingwater” (1936). See Torres & Kamhi 2000, 196, 200, 422–23 nn. 29–30, 33–35 for commentary on Frank Lloyd Wright and his work. See also Gladstein 1999, 14, 42, 88.

59. Gladstein (1999, 42) explains that “Rand contends that the only similarity [between Frank Lloyd Wright and Howard Roark] is that both were innovators fighting for modernism as opposed to traditionalism in architecture.” In Michael Paxton’s words: “Although [Ayn Rand] did not use Wright as a model for her hero, Howard Roark, it was the originality and daring of Wright’s designs that she wanted to capture” (1998, 112).

60. Oddly, none of the participants in the Aesthetics Symposium even mentioned *postmodernism*, though we devoted considerable space to it in *What Art Is*.

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