Contra Copyright

(This article was originally delivered as part of a debate on the status of copyright under natural law.)

by Wendy McElroy

Copyright — the legal claim of ownership over a particular arrangement of symbols — is a complicated issue because the property being claimed is intangible. It has no mass, no shape, no color. For the property claimed is not the specific instance of an idea, not a specific book or pamphlet, but the idea itself and all present or possible instances of its expression. The title of a recent book, *Who Owns What Is In Your Mind?* concretizes a commonsense objection to all intellectual property. Most people would loudly proclaim that NO ONE owns what is in their minds, that this realm is sacrosanct. And, yet, if the set of ideas in your mind begins "Howard Roark laughed" do you have the right to transfer it onto paper and publish a book entitled *The Fountainhead* under your own name? If not, why not? To say you own what's in your mind means you have the right to use and dispose of it as you see fit. If you cannot use and dispose of it, if Ayn Rand (assuming a still-living Rand) is the only one who can use and dispose of this specific arrangement of the alphabet, then she owns it. And if she owns what is in your mind, you have violated her rights for you don't have permission to use her property.

I advocate a form of copyright — free market copyright — by which I mean copyright as a useful social convention to be maintained and enforced through contract and other market mechanisms. This is in counterdistinction to those who believe that copyright can be derived from natural rights, that ideas or patterns into the public realm, the listeners receive information, not property. For the publicized poems to be property must be transferrable, alienable. Yet, as the egoist J.B. Jefferson to reject ideas as property, drawing an analogy between ideas and candles. Just as a man could light his taper from a candle without diminishing the original flame, so too could he acquire an idea without diminishing the original one. Jefferson wrote: "If nature has made any one thing less susceptible than all others of exclusive property, it is ... an idea, which an individual may exclusively possess as long as he keeps it to himself; but the moment it is divulged, it forces itself into the possession of every one, and the receiver cannot dispossess himself of it." When a poet reads or sells poetry without a contract, when he throws his ideas and patterns into the public realm, the listeners receive information, not property. For the publicized poems to be property must be transferrable, alienable. Yet, as the egoist J.B. Robinson said, "What is an idea? Is it made of wood, or iron, or stone? The idea is nothing objective, that is to say, the idea is not part of the product: it is part of the producer." In other words, if the poet claims ownership of the patterns in his listener's head, this reduces to a form of slavery since the ownership claim is over an aspect of the listener's body. Such a claim is comparable to owning the blood in someone else's arm. Although you can buy blood, that purchase is contractual and is not a natural right.

Thus, another reason that title to a poem is not transferrable — and again, I don't mean any specific instance of the poem, but the
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the voluntaryists are libertarians who have organized to promote non-political strategies to achieve a free society. we reject electoral politics, in theory and in practice, as incompatible with libertarian principles. governments must cloack their actions in an aura of moral legitimacy in order to sustain their power, and political methods invariably strengthen that legitimacy. voluntaryists seek instead to delegitimize the state through education, and we advocate withdrawal of the co-operation and tacit consent on which state power ultimately depends.

arrangement of the alphabet that constitutes all such potential poems — is because it is intangible. those who try to claim property rights in something intangible are trying to bring two mutually exclusive things together. people who claim ideas as property are like aldous huxley who once defined god as a "gaseous invertebrate" . . . only he was joking.

when a poet reads his work, he throws the poetry into the public realm and crosses the line between private and public ideas. everyone owns an idea in his own mind and no one has any right to that specific instance of the idea. and if that specific instance is the only instance that exists — such as a doctor who develops a cancer cure — that idea is protected by his right of self-ownership. his right to live in peace and silence. when an author chooses to publicize his ideas, however, he loses the protection afforded by his self-ownership. he loses what tucker called "the right of inviolability of person."

"to restate this, i own my ideas because they are in my mind and you can get at them only through my consent or through force. my ideas are like stacks of money locked inside a vault which you cannot acquire without breaking in and stealing. but, if i throw the vault open and scatter the money on the wind, the people who pick it up off the street are no more thieves than the people who pick up and use the words i throw into the public realm.

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style that a publisher cannot duplicate a book, then for that same
reason, a shoemaker cannot duplicate shoes. Women cannot
duplicate hairstyles or clothes for these things express as much
style as a sonnet. Yet it is only with the sonnet, with literature that
the originators clamor for special protection. If copyright were not
the norm, if all of us had not grown up with it, we might consider it
as absurd as arresting a houseowner because he painted his
house with the same pattern of colors as another houseowner
painted his two blocks over. To be consistent, the copyright
advocate has to become this absurd. He has to admit that all
speech is a unique personal form of expression and a man should
be entitled to legal protection for every sentence he utters so that
no one thereafter can utter it without his consent. Lysander
Spooner, a defender of copyright much quoted by libertarians,
seemed to consider this possibility when he wrote: “So absolute is
an author’s right of dominion over his ideas that he may forbid their
being communicated even by human voice if he so pleases.”
Think about that. It’s a frightening statement.

I want to end by dealing with the most controversial instance of
intellectual property: namely, do you own your name without
copyright. As for the possible destruction of the publishing
world’s great authors, Shakespeare for example, wrote
without copyright. As for the possible destruction of the publishing
industry, Tucker — a journalist and publisher — explained: “Why
did two competing editions of the Kreutzer Sonata [a book he
published] appear on the market before mine had had the field
for two months? Simply because money was pouring into my pockets
with a rapidity that nearly took my breath away. And after my rivals
took the field it poured in faster than ever.”

As a writer I am eager to maximize my profits. I am not so
eager, however, to claim ownership over what is in your mind. My
attitude toward writers and lecturers who throw their products into
the streets and yet wish to have an invisible thread of ownership
attached to each instance of it is simply this: If you want your ideas
to yourself, keep them to yourself.

— Wendy McElroy

“Health” Freedoms in the Libertarian Tradition
by Carl Watner

“Health” freedom, by which I mean the freedom to take our
health into our own hands in any way we choose, depends on our
right to own and control our own bodies. This principle of self-
ownership represents the single most important element of the
libertarian tradition. Since the 17th Century it has been the under-
lying basis of the struggle for individual rights. In the context of this
article, it has manifested itself in the pursuit of various hygienic
and dietetic reforms during the 19th Century. These
include the advocacy of temperance, vegetarianism, water cures,
Grahamism, and sexual hygiene, as well as agitation against
medical licensing laws, and compulsory vaccination. The purpose
of this article is to broadly describe the history of the self-
ownership principle with respect to “health” freedoms during the
19th Century and to portray a few of the personalities intimately
connected with it.

Historians of the 19th Century have noted that Henry David
Thoreau was a vegetarian for at least several years. Although he is
well-known as the author of the famous essay on “Civil
Disobedience,” it is not widely realized that Thoreau was involved
in the radical abolitionist movement. Since slavery reflected the
theft of a person’s self-ownership, it was just as wrong as the
denial of a person’s right to doctor himself or herself. Two of
Thoreau’s closest friends were Amos Bronson Alcott and Charles
Lane, who started a utopian farm community near Concord,
Massachusetts in the summer of 1843. The farm, which was called
Fruitlands, was intended to be a self-sufficient homestead, where
the principal staple of daily food was to be fruit. The main belief of
both Alcott and Lane was the sacredness of all sentient life —
“that beast, bird, fish, and insect had a right to control their
individual lives.”

The close relationship of Lane, Alcott, and Thoreau illustrates
the integral relationship between radical ideas in health and
politics throughout much of the 19th Century. Lane, an English-
an, helped publish The Healthian, before he came to this
country in 1842. In 1843, he wrote a series of letters for William
Lloyd Garrison’s The Liberator, in which he advocated “a
voluntary political government.” He was opposed to compelling
people to live their lives in any particular way, so long as they
remained at peace with one another. This included their dietary
and health practices, as well as their political relationships. Lane
saw taxation as theft and coercion; taxes were not voluntary, for he
was arrested and Thoreau was jailed for non-payment of their poll
tax. It was Lane’s series of letters on voluntaryism which largely
influenced Thoreau’s own resistance to the government. After
Lane returned to England in 1846, he wrote A Brief Practical Essay
on Vegetarian Diet (1847) and Dietetics: An Endeavour To
Ascertain The Law Of Human Nutrition (1849).

The radical abolitionists were not only involved in the agitation
against slavery. Health reforms were in the air during the first three
or four decades of the 19th Century. Perhaps the most popular
health reformer of the era was Sylvester Graham, who began his
career as a temperance lecturer in Pennsylvania in 1830. While
others spoke for women’s rights and the peace movement,
Graham concluded that the way to individual salvation was
through the stomach. In his hands, the temperance ideal
developed into something far more comprehensive than
moderation in drink. It evolved into the ideal of sensible living and
good health in all its phases: of a sound mind and a sound body.
Graham's concern with personal hygiene and diet brought his ideas to a wide audience, both in the lecture hall and in the home. He published his *Science of Human Health* in 1839, which emphasized the relation of physiology to hygiene. "Graham boarding houses" were established, where the devotees of both sexes could partake of the eating of "Graham bread" and the taking of a bath "in very warm water at least three times a week." In Boston a special bookstore was established to supply them with food for thought and such periodicals as the *Graham Journal and Health Journal and Advocate* were published.

Graham's influence spread through a wide network of converts. Among them were many influential abolitionists, such as Gerrit Smith, Edmund Quincy, and William Lloyd Garrison. Others, like Amos Bronson Alcott's cousin, Dr. William Alcott, and Mrs. Asenath Nicholson, were enthusiastic about "Mr. Graham's rules." Mrs. Nicholson wrote *Nature's Own Book* in which she advocated vegetarianism (even though Graham's diet allowed some fish and meat). Some like Mary Gove ran a school in Lynn, Massachusetts where she introduced bloomers, the brown bread supper and free love under the guise of "individual sovereignty." Such people were "not only reformers in Diet, but radicals in Politics," as one contemporary noted.

While lecturing on hygiene, Graham capitalized on the anti-medical philosophy which was characteristic of his day. If right living was a more certain means to health than were drugs and the doctor, then it was a natural conclusion that if people would but live hygienically, there would be little need for physicians. Although Graham never went so far as to oppose the medical fraternity, his doctrines began to be viewed as a popular substitute for regular medicine.

The call for each person to be his or her own physician had been put forward by Samuel Thomson as early as 1806. Thomson was a New Hampshire farmer who learned much of his medicine at the side of a local herbalist. In 1813, he obtained a patent on his "Family Rights" and began selling his botanical recipes for healing purposes. During the 1820s and 1830s he commissioned agents throughout New England and the southern and western states to spread his home remedies, which eliminated the need for doctors. His *New Guide To Health* encouraged people to take care of themselves and his ideas were patronized by a wide-spread clientele. It was estimated that he had some three to four million adherents out of a total population of seventeen million people at that time. His philosophy had a Jacksonian flavor, reflecting the widespread distrust of elites and the conviction that Americans "should in medicine, as in religion and politics, think and act" for themselves. "It was high time," declared Thomson, "for the common man to throw off the oppressive yoke of priests, lawyers, and physicians ...." The Thomsonians believed that self-medication was safer than being doctored to death. "Being your own physician would not only save your life, ... but save you money as well."

Historians refer to Thomsonianism and the Grahamite movement as the "popular health movement" because Thomson, Graham, and other health reformers appealed to the working class and feminist movement of their era. Although Graham rejected the botanical remedies of the Thomsonians, both equated natural living habits with liberty and classlessness. They realized that any medical system which creates a privileged class which uses law to support itself "destroys true freedom and personal autonomy." Both Thomson and Graham were appalled by the regular medical profession's attempt to gain a monopoly. "Monopoly in medicine, like monopoly in any area of endeavor, was undemocratic and oppressive to the common people." With this attitude, members of the popular health movement started to agitate for the repeal of all medical licencing laws.

Although under the common law, the practice of medicine was open to all corners (subject only to liability for malpractice damages), statutory medical licencing had existed for many centuries in England. Licensure was placed under the control of the College of Physicians which was established in 1518. This group had the right to punish irregular medical practice with both fines and imprisonment. Medical licencing was brought to this country with the English colonists. However, the widely scattered population and the small number of physicians made licencing impractical up until the late 18th Century. Colonial and, then later, state assemblies assumed licencing prerogatives. Between 1760 and 1830 laws against irregular practice became more severe, but with the development of both rival medical systems and the popular health movement and with the accompanying doctrine of educational standards in regular medicine, the scene began to shift.

State after state began repealing their restrictions against irregular practice. Nearly every state which had restrictive licencing laws softened or repealed them. Alabama and Delaware exempted Thomsonians and other types of irregular healers from persecution. Connecticut withdrew exclusive control of the medical profession from the State Medical Society and Louisiana gave up all attempts to enforce its medical legislation. Finally in 1844, after 10 years of pressure, New York State abandoned its licencing law. The popular health movement coincided with a laissez faire attitude on the part of the populace. The American people were impatient with all restrictions, and "were doubtless anxious to maintain their 'liberty' in medical as well as in other matters." They wanted no protection but freedom of inquiry and freedom of action. It was certainly the spirit of the times to open up all fields of endeavor, business as well as professional, to unrestricted competition. "Medicine, with all other human activities, must take its chances in the grand competitive scramble characteristic of the age."

Despite the success of the popular health movement, both in terms of adherents and the removal of monopolistic protection for the regular medical profession, it soon waned for a variety of reasons. Large numbers of Thomsonians began hankering after professional status. Where once they had denounced the transformation of medicine into a commodity, now they sought to commercialize their own remedies. Where once they had protested the elite status of the regulars, they now aimed for such a status themselves. The underlying current of social unrest which had carried the popular health movement along with it was moving in other directions, such as the support of woman suffrage. Furthermore, regular medicine began to adopt enough of the hygiene promoted by Graham and Thomson to save itself. One historian of the Hygiene movement has credited it with these accomplishments:

People learned to bathe, to eat more fruits and vegetables, to ventilate their homes, to get daily exercise, to avail themselves of the benefits of sunshine, to cast off their fears of night air, damp air, cold air and draughts, to eat less flesh and to adopt better modes of food preparation.

It is now forgotten how far the regular medical profession protested these reforms, which were largely brought about by people like Thomson and Graham.
While this discussion has concentrated on America, it is worth examining another medical controversy which originated in England and eventually spread to the United States. The protests against compulsory vaccination and inoculation originated in England because it was there that Edward Jenner originated the method of cowpox vaccination in 1796. Although Jenner was rewarded by Parliament in 1803 and 1806, it was not until 1853 that vaccination became compulsory in England. This law, however, met with widespread opposition and local vaccination registrars referred to the measure as a “nullity” owing to the resistance of the people.

Finally in 1871, due to the large numbers of infants which remained unvaccinated, a new statute provided for the appointment of non-medical men to police and enforce the compulsory vaccination law. They were empowered to fine parents of unvaccinated children 25 shillings, or upon their refusal to pay the fine, to imprison them. Passage of the law renewed interest in the Anti-compulsory Vaccination League which had been founded in London in 1853. At the same time, the leading opponents of vaccination in America were active. Among the leaders of the American movement were Dr. Joel Shew, a leading advocate of the water cure system, and Dr. Russell Trall, a prominent hygienist. In 1879, the leader of the English anti-vaccinationists, William Tebbs, founded the Anti-vaccination Society of America. Assisted by what one medical historian refers to as the “medical faddists” of the day. During the 1880s and 1890s, vaccination was opposed by American health magazines, such as Health Culture. The Chicago Vegetarian, The Naturopath and Medical Freedom. The arguments surrounding compulsory vaccination, both in England and the United States, present a very interesting analysis of the nature of “health” freedom. The arguments in both countries roughly break themselves down into two types: the practical or scientific argument over the effectiveness of vaccination and the moral or ethical argument over the use of State coercion to enforce vaccination. Many opponents of vaccination attacked it on medical grounds: that statistically it had not been proven as effective as claimed; that it sometimes caused death; that the decrease of smallpox, for example, was not caused by vaccination but rather by improvements in sanitation and health practices. Others argued that even if there were unanimity among the medical profession on the merits of vaccination, that such unanimity would prove nothing. “It would not be the first time that the no less unanimous profession had been as unanimously wrong.” One of the more astute anti-vaccinationists urged that

Unanimity does not exist, and if it did it could not justify compulsion against our plea that the medical profession does not come to us with a record sufficiently reassuring to tempt us to lay at its feet our right of private judgement and our own sacred responsibilities.

The practical danger that the unvaccinated are a public danger was met by claiming that “vaccination is either good or bad. And its goodness removes the need, as its badness destroys the right. of enforcement on the unwilling.” If vaccination was effective, those who were vaccinated would suffer no harm from the unvaccinated. If vaccination was harmful to the body, as some anti-vaccinationists claimed, then to coercively impose it under the threat of going to jail was criminal.

Those who argued on practical grounds also claimed a right to be heard on the moral side of the question. Even if the anti-vaccinationists were wrong with regard to their assertion that vaccination was not medically effective, they desired to be heard out on their argument that “compulsion is a wrong.” The burden of proof, in their opinion, was on those who wished to resort to compulsion. For example, John Morley in 1888, maintained that “liberty, or the absence of coercion, or the leaving people to think, speak, and act as they please, is in itself a good thing. It is the object of a favourable presumption. The burden of proving it inexpedient always lies, and wholly lies, on those who wish to abridge it by coercion, whether direct or indirect.” John Bright, writing in 1876, disapproved of compulsory vaccination. “To me it is doubtful if persuasion and example would not have been more effective than compulsion: . . . to inflict incessant penalties upon parents and to imprison them for refusing to subject their children to an operation which is not infrequently injurious and sometimes fatal, seems to be a needless and monstrous violation of the freedom of our homes and of the right of parents.”

Bright’s reference to the possibility of accomplishing the same end (the eradication of smallpox) by voluntary persuasion and example illustrates the underlying voluntarist theme in this historical overview of the “health” freedoms. One need not have been opposed to vaccination at all to have been an opponent of compulsory vaccination. One could have been opposed to the compulsion without being opposed to the practice of vaccination. Similarly, some of the opponents of compulsory vaccination were also opponents of compulsory school attendance laws or for those who supported compulsory attendance disapproved of involuntary vaccination. The only principled stand was to oppose ALL compulsion as a means, regardless what position one took with respect to the underlying end.

In fact it was radicals like Thoreau and Charles Lane who understood that involving the government in such matters as education and medicine only made “public” issues of such private matters. They wondered why if religious or personal conscientious objections could be raised against vaccination, why not against compulsory schooling too? In fact to be a consistent defender of “health” freedom, they realized it would be necessary to argue for the principle of self-ownership in all areas of human activity. To allow the State to oppress even one person would be to threaten all people’s freedoms. Indeed, this is one reason why they opposed chattel slavery and were so opposed to government in general. Thoreau and Lane and their disciples argued that no person or group, including the government, had the right to initiate coercion or its threat against other peaceful individuals. These early apostles of voluntarism advocated an all voluntary society where no one’s “health” freedoms were impinged on and where no one had the right to violate someone else’s right of self-ownership, even under the guise of the “public good.” They realized that “health” freedoms were really just one aspect of their larger right of self-ownership and that all freedoms were integrally related to one another. They knew that all human freedoms—whether they relate to our health or our labor or our property—depend on the inviolability of our self-ownership rights to our own bodies. This is their libertarian message across the time span of more than a century.
Book Review of The Ayn Rand Companion
by Mimi Reisel Gladstein

by David Soian

Mimi Reisel Gladstein is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Texas in El Paso. Though she has written a number of articles of literary analysis before, including two on Ayn Rand. The Ayn Rand Companion is her first book, published in October of 1984. Considering the confused, primitive, and often irrational attempts in the past by a variety of authors to write about Ayn Rand, this is a most amazing volume — it is the only book about Ayn Rand and her philosophy, Objectivism, that I know of. written at attempts in the past by a variety of authors to write about Ayn Rand, this is a most amazing volume — it is the only book about Ayn Rand and her philosophy, Objectivism, that I know of. written by an obvious outsider to the movement, which displays dispassionate erudition in analyzing its subject matter. If this is a sign of things to come, then we are witnessing a new stage in the world’s relationship to Ayn Rand: even if they disagree with her, at last they are taking her seriously.

In this book Professor Gladstein has a number of purposes, many of which she fulfills eminently well. She wishes to summarize the life of Ayn Rand and to give us a peek into Rand’s unique and complex personality. she wishes to examine the fictional works of Rand for the limited purpose of describing their plots and the many characters that populate them (a particular treat in helping one recall past pleasures with Ayn Rand’s fiction); she wishes to give her readers, who are not familiar with Ayn Rand’s non-fiction works; a brief (though admiring) summary of some of the ideas they contain; and, in her last chapter, she wishes to “synthesize the critical reaction to Rand so that readers of her works can evaluate both the thoughtful and the vituperative.”

The second and third chapters consist of detailed literary analyses of Ayn Rand’s fiction from a variety of perspectives, including a remarkable “Compendium of Characters.” The Early Ayn Rand had not been published at the time of this writing, so none of its literature was included here. Gladstein points out that (to 1984) all of Rand’s major literary works tell the same kind of story — about the battle of an individualistic protagonist against the forces of collectivism and mediocrity in his society (“ironically,” she says, the protagonists also have to fight other individualists who are betraying that battle). This battle is seen by Ayn Rand as leading to a more positive outcome in direct relation to the chronological order in which her books and plays were written. And whether the battle turns out well or not, it is clear that, “Not God, nor country, nor cause, precedes the individual in Rand’s hierarchy of values.”

Gladstein speaks of how clearly Rand communicates, in her fiction, whether a character is to be viewed positively or negatively. She shows the progressive development of the theme of the productive versus the parasitical through all of Ayn Rand’s fiction. And she indicates the importance of the emotional element in Rand by observing that Rand’s heroes and villains alike both instantly recognize the like-minded, and that when her heroes love, they do so at first sight, with seemingly unlimited reverence and passion for the object of their love.

One of the refreshing techniques used by Professor Gladstein in this book is her reliance on introductions, both on the book level and at the chapter level, to give the reader the purpose and essence of what is to follow. In this way you know what to expect in what you are about to read, making it easier to understand. And her extensive footnotes are put at the end of each chapter, where they belong, not at the end of the entire book. Another interesting feature is the inclusion of extended bibliographies.

Gladstein scatters many fascinating facts about Ayn Rand throughout her book. For instance, how many people know that Ayn Rand had lung cancer in 1973 and had one lung removed, most likely due to her vaunted cigarette smoking? As Gladstein put it, “The cigarettes that had saved Rand effectively as a dramatic symbol served her ill in real life.” And, it is claimed by Gladstein, that after 18 years of close association with the Brandens, Ayn Rand never once told them her former name (changed when she arrived in America). Barbara Branden had to do research to find out it was: Alice Rosenbaum (I personally regard this last claim as apocryphal).

Despite the fact that I believe Professor Gladstein has been quite fair and careful through most of this work, I must admit that when she makes a mistake, it’s a whopper. Thus, she seems unaware that the Constitution of the United States can hardly be said to “synthesize Rand’s philosophy,” in that there is not one mention of the concept of human rights throughout the body of that document (the phrase Gladstein quotes comes from the

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Declaration of Independence). And Gladstein has the gall to compare The Fountainhead with One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest in the development of their popularity. The latter is a story about a lunatic asylum, replete with "stream of consciousness" babbling.

William F. O'Neill's book, With Charity Toward None, is described by Gladstein as "evenhanded," "no axe to grind," and "reasonable," and she concludes that he "is especially approving of the fact that [Ayn Rand] has provoked so many people into thinking." In fact, Professor O'Neill is an enemy of virtually everything Ayn Rand stands for — including reason itself. His critical analysis of her ideas is a massive hodge-podge of wild, brain-cracking argumentation, all peppered with hundreds of scholarly references to make it all quite impressive — to those impressed by this sort of performance. Obviously, Gladstein is numbered among them.

But Gladstein's most amazing error comes when she lists the characters of Ayn Rand's works and summarizes their personalities. Under the heading of "The Heroic Protagonists" is listed one name for each novel. For instance, Kira Agrounova appears under We The Living, Under Atlas Shrugged appears Dagny Taggart! Only when we get to the heading entitled, "Other Primary Heroic Personages," do we find, third on the alphabetic list, John Galt. Thus, Gladstein has so misconstrued the meaning of Atlas Shrugged as to consign its central and unifying figure to a subordinate position of importance. Could this be due to her self-admitted advocacy of "feminism"? Hopefully not. Or could it be due to the fact that John Galt is such an impossibly great hero, not merely for Atlas Shrugged, but for all of human literature ever written, that he was unreal to Gladstein and therefore could not be taken seriously by her? Perhaps. But there are still other possible reasons, one of which I will refer to later.

Where Professor Gladstein shows the premise that made her previous errors possible is in the last chapter, "Criticism of Rand's Works." Here she gives a remarkable overview of the opinions of Rand's works expressed in different media by a large variety of Objectivist detractors, semi-admirers, and admirers. The problem is that she is strongly attracted to a certain one of these views.

It is a view that would substitute for a philosophy of life on earth and a rational mode of ethics for man, a form of solipsism where the highest action a man could take is the intellectual/emotional equivalent of the contemplation of his navel. Those who accept this view put emotions close to reason in man's hierarchy of values. Thus, Professor Gladstein, while criticizing Albert Ellis' book, Is Objectivism A Religion?, also seems to accept his claim as to Objectivism being detrimental to the psychological well-being of its "practitioners." She favorably quotes Nathaniel Branden's criticism that Objectivism leads to emotional "repression," which he (along with Gladstein) views as wrong.

But, in fact, man can only grow if he regards his emotions as secondary to his reason. He must develop finely tuned, automatic means of inhibiting them whenever they would detract from the proper use of his rational faculty. As soon as emotions are viewed as primaries, they undermine man's reason, take over his mind and body, and make him progressively more blind to the nature of the world about him and what it requires for his continued existence on earth. Such an idea freezes men on the intellectual/emotional level of their adolescence, where they were just beginning to form a set of mature values (and emotions) to live by for the rest of their lives. You must regard your emotional "self" as important, at least for the major long term problems of life, largely because you have created it — and only after you have created it — by reason. And you must never regard it as more important than reason.

It is the evil idea of the primacy of emotions that Professor Gladstein obviously has some sympathy with throughout her book, and which therefore detracts from its spirit of objectivity. This also might be the reason why she has failed to grasp the importance of John Galt for Atlas Shrugged — he is the ideal of reason incarnate, and if emotions are to subjugate reason, who cares about the idea of reason incarnate; who cares about John Galt. But if read critically, The Ayn Rand Companion has much nostalgia to offer confirmed longtime Ayn Rand lovers such as I, and very much information for anyone who wants an accurate summary of the life and works (but not the ideas) of Ayn Rand.

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