

# **Art as "Microcosm"**

## **The Objectivist concept of art as fundamentally the re-creation of *reality*, not things-from-reality**

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In a book of fiction the purpose is to create, for myself, the kind of world I want and to live in it while I am creating it.  
[Rand (1997), 479]

## Preface

One of the most quoted, yet least understood aspects of Ayn Rand's philosophy is her definition of art as "a selective re-creation of reality, according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments."<sup>1</sup> As I have argued previously (Bissell 1997b, Bissell 1998a, 1998b, 1998c), Rand was setting forth a nuanced, sophisticated view of art as a stylized world-in-miniature or "microcosm."

Yet, critics both sympathetic and hostile, and some of Rand's supporters as well, have assumed that she was instead merely advocating what I call the naive form of re-creation theory, a theory that pertains to the *content* of the artwork (stylized representations of *things from* reality). This latter view is notoriously problematic and, as a result, controversy has continued for more than 30 years over both the application of her definition to questionable areas such as architecture and music, and the very validity of the definition itself.

The purpose of this essay is twofold. First, I want to clarify the full meaning of the re-creation theory that Rand actually *did* hold, and to thereby show that attempts to characterize her view of art by restricting her to the naive re-creation theory are misguided. Secondly, I hope to show how Rand's definition, properly understood, actually *does* apply to the various art forms that she (at least, originally) included within the category of art, thus obviating the need for even minor modification (let alone abandonment) of her definition of art. Toward this end, the second and third parts of this essay focus on the difficult cases of architecture and music.

### A. Art as microcosm -- the general argument

[A]rt is a re-creation of the universe from a personal perspective[;] it offers man, in effect, a new reality to contemplate...[Peikoff (1991), 446]

The concept of "art" has historically had a considerable range and variety of meanings. Clarifying Ayn Rand's concept of art as a kind of microcosm or re-creation of reality is the linchpin to dispelling at least some of the confusion and disagreement that has persistently plagued philosophy of art and esthetics. One of the central problems has been the existence of two distinct usages of the term "art." One of them refers to the very broad level of human activity pertaining to "human creation" in general. The other is generally

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<sup>1</sup> Rand first publicly presented this definition of "art" in 1961 in a lecture on esthetics at the Creative Arts Festival at the University of Michigan. It first appeared in print as quoted in Branden 1964 (74).

taken as referring to a special sub-category of human creation, frequently called "fine art;" I will use the term "esthetic art," to explicitly connect with the fact that it is the usage Rand intends when she uses the term "art" in the Objectivist esthetics.

### **1. The Broader Sense of Art as Human Creation and Its Relation to the "Fine Arts"**

As Adler (1961) has observed, art as *human creation*, the "artificial," the man-made, is historically the prior of the two concepts:

Until the end of the eighteenth century, the word "art" was very broadly used to cover all forms of human skill and all the things which men were able to produce by skilled workmanship. (229)

Art in the sense of the artificial or the man-made is a concept that pertains to the various aspects of human productive action. For instance, a *work* of art is a thing or state of affairs that is the end-result of conscious, purposive human activity. Frequently, the *activity* and the capacity, "know-how," or *skill* to engage in that activity are also denoted by the term "art" in its more general usage.

In Aristotelian terms, we may regard *capacity* (potential) and *product* (actualization of potential) as being mediated by *activity* (actualizing of potential). If we then proceed by reference to "art as activity," we may define the different aspects of human creation as follows. The central and most important aspect, "art as activity," is the skilled, purposive human re-arranging of certain elements in reality. This is art as (an act of) *human creation*. "Art as skill" is the capacity to engage in art as activity. It may also be thought of as the degree of excellence or expertise with which one engages in art as activity. Finally, "art as product" or "artwork" is the end result, the product of art as activity. This is another sense of art as human creation -- viz., art as (a product of) human creation. This third sense, art as the product of creation, is apparently something like what Rand had in mind when she coined her definition of "art." She stated (1971) that "the genus of *art works* is *man-made objects* that present a selective re-creation of reality, according to the artist's metaphysical value-judgments by means of a specific material medium" (78, emphasis added).

Within this broad category, there are many possible subdivisions. One, not encountered as much in modern times, is that between the so-called "liberal" and "servile" arts. Another, still in considerable usage, is that between the so-called "utilitarian arts" and "fine arts," the latter traditionally including painting, sculpture, literature, music, dance, theater, and architecture. Many people sense implicitly, and rightly so, that there actually is some fundamental difference between at least *some* "fine art" objects and all other man-made things. The consensus on this issue apparently became so strong during the nineteenth century that, as Adler notes (1961), the word "art" came to be applied, more narrowly than before, to the "fine arts" only (230). Numerous attempts have been made to justify this narrower application of the term "art," and the history of esthetics is in part a graveyard for failed definitions. Hospers (1953) wrote:

Art is a term of which definitions are inevitably persuasive. The word "art" has a favorable emotive meaning, at least to those who practice the arts and talk about them. And thus anyone who has cherished ideals on the subject will want to use the word "art" to denote whatever kind of product he venerates most highly. Semantically, this makes the situation extremely confused, though of course it is quite understandable (516).

In other words, in their attempts to justify using the term "art" to refer to certain kind of man-made objects, various philosophers and critics have instead had to resort to "persuasive" definitions that exclude some of the man-made objects they disapprove of. (In this context, Hospers is using the term "persuasive" not to mean rationally convincing, as in the common usage, but intentionally biased in order to rhetorically sway the reader to one's point of view.) Whether their perspective is "expressionist" or "formalist," "objective" or "abstract," "representationalist" or "non-representationalist," many esthetic theoreticians define "art" in this "persuasive" manner. They take the position that if a given man-made object does not fulfill the requirements met by their theoretical approach to art, then such an object is not an artwork, by their view. Instead, they refer to it as "false art" or "non-art" or "junk" or whatever term they wish to use in denoting that which does not agree with their own "stipulative" definition.

This arbitrary elitism about art, however, is not the only alternative to the all-tolerant egalitarianism of the avant-garde. One can also rule out certain man-made objects according to one's theoretical view of art, if one arrives at one's concept of "art" *objectively*, as Rand has done. What distinguishes Rand's concept and definition of "art" from those that are merely persuasive or stipulative is that she has arrived at her views in full regard of cognitive necessity, including the relevant facts about human value, human needs, and human consciousness. This is so in much the same manner that an objective validation of the laws of logic renders them unchallengeable axioms, rather than merely "stipulative" or "persuasive" (i.e., arbitrary) prescriptions. The laws of logic are prescriptions, true -- but only because first and foremost they are *descriptions* of the facts of reality. As *objective* prescriptions, the laws of logic -- as well as all valid definitions and narrower scientific and moral laws -- tell one to act in accordance with the facts they describe, *if* one wants to act successfully.<sup>2</sup>

Other theorists have used an esthetic criterion of some sort or other as their basis for differentiating man-made objects into various categories of art. But as we shall see in part three of this essay, the esthetic criteria typically offered do not provide a clear-cut means by which an observer can determine objectively (i.e., by reference to the facts) whether or not a given man-made object falls in one category or another. Such difficulties have led some philosophers to advocate that we no longer refer to any category of artificial objects as "art"

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<sup>2</sup> See Rand's discussion (1970, 119) of conditional imperatives.

-- at least, not without some qualification. Notably, there is Adler (1961), who advises us that:

[W]e would do well to return to the traditional and broad use of the term "art" to cover every form of human skill and everything that man can effect by means of skill. Then within this broad meaning, we can distinguish different types of art and at the same time recognize what is common to all of them (230).

This, however, would be a counsel of despair. It would lend support to the skeptic, conventionalist position. It would be a surrender to the notion that no objectively superior criterion can be found (since none has yet) for isolating one group of man-made things from all the rest. One can certainly agree that it would be unfair and arbitrary to select one of the criteria offered thus far as a basis for singling out any subgroup of artificial things, calling them and only them "art." If that were the only option open to us, we would properly avoid it in the interest not merely of egalitarianism or "fairness," but of objectivity and respect for the facts. If that were the situation, we would be well advised to follow Adler's suggestion and use the unmodified term "art" only for the broadest sense and use qualifiers (e.g., "liberal," "servile," "utilitarian," "fine," "commercial," "industrial," "decorative," etc.) to modify any narrower applications of the term.

With this last, I am certainly in sympathy. The last thing I wish to do here is to endorse the Fallacy of the Frozen Abstraction.<sup>3</sup> That is, I would not want to freeze a concept to a shrunken state that includes only some of its legitimate units. Also, from the standpoint of linguistics, it sounds considerably more graceful to say "utilitarian art" or "the commercial arts" or "a work of decorative art," rather than to say, for instance, "the utilitarian object-making skill" or "the commercial object-making area of activity" or "a decorative man-made object." So, on the one hand, I see no compelling reason to abandon or *ignore* the broader use of the term "art," nor to avoid qualifications of it such as the above. But, on the other hand, there are several reasons I do not share the belief of Adler and others that we must *restrict* ourselves to it.

First of all, it has been observed (by Adler himself) that the term "art" has within the past 200 years become widely applied, primarily for esthetic reasons, to the specific case of the so-called "fine arts." Some or all of these "fine art" creations were thought -- in some strongly felt, but hard to specify manner -- to be the ultimate products of creative human imagination. At the very least, they were believed to be essentially different, different in kind, from other human products.

Secondly, if the respect by which even some "fine art" objects re-create reality can be objectively isolated and defined, then our culture's persistent usage of the term "art" in both a broad and a narrow sense can be validated. And it is, in fact, the narrower concept of

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<sup>3</sup> See Rand's brief discussion (1963a, 51) of this fallacy. Also see Bissell 1973 for a lengthier discussion.

“art” -- art as selective re-creation of reality, according to an artist’s metaphysical value-judgments -- that provides such an objective basis for justifiably using the term “art” in the narrower sense than pertains to the “fine arts.”

Thirdly, there is little danger of confusion between the wider and narrower usage. The wider one is seldom used as an unqualified term, except for such obviously broader usage such as “the art of playing bridge,” “the art of love,” “the art of logic,” etc. Such qualified instances of the broader usage are easily distinguishable from the narrower one.

As the second section of this essay will argue, there is no firm, objective criterion for differentiating *all* of the so-called "fine arts" from the rest of human products. *Nor can there be one.* Fortunately, however, there is a criterion that provides a sound basis for differentiating *certain* (perhaps most, but definitely not all) "fine art" objects from all other man-made objects. This criterion is incorporated into the definition of the other valid concept of "art," the narrower concept of art as a kind of *human re-creation*. Rand (1965) has given the fullest definition of this concept: "art is a selective re-creation of reality, according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments" (19). Rand elaborates:

By selective re-creation, art isolates and integrates those aspects of reality which *represent man's fundamental view of himself and of existence*. Out of the countless number of concretes -- of single, disorganized and (seemingly) contradictory attributes, actions and entities -- an artist isolates the things which he regards as metaphysically essential and integrates them into a single new concrete that represents an embodied abstraction. (19-20)

By "selective re-creation of reality," Rand means the creating of an edited, stylized version or image of reality, out of materials existing in reality. She does not use the word herself, but what she is clearly speaking of is the setting up within reality, using materials from reality, of a *microcosm*, an artist's conception of reality.<sup>4</sup> Peikoff (1991) states this idea explicitly:

Guided by his own metaphysical value-judgments (explicit or otherwise), an artist selects, out of the bewildering chaos of human experience, those aspects he regards as indicative of the nature of the universe. Then he embodies them in a sensory-perceptual concrete...The result is a universe in microcosm. (417)

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<sup>4</sup> My own use of this term in reference to Rand's concept of "art" dates back to 1972 and is drawn from other sources, noted in the text. An earlier version of this essay was rejected for journal publication in 1974, when an anonymous screener claimed that the concept of a “microcosm” did not provide significant clarification of Rand’s view of art.

Such an image is constructed "according to one's metaphysical value-judgments." That is, it includes things regarded by its creator as metaphysically important and excludes things he or she regards as metaphysically unimportant. Thus, as Rand (1965) notes, a selective re-creation of reality is, in effect, a *concretization of a metaphysical view*. (20)

In order to represent (concretize) a metaphysical view, furthermore, an image must necessarily present a metaphysical (existential) setting. Such a setting involves an entity (such as a man, still life, or landscape) -- or some other discriminated existent (such as a musical tone or a shadow) that bears analogy to an entity, by virtue of its concrete existence, identity, and actions.

That is, a selective re-creation of reality that concretizes a metaphysical view must present an image of some intelligible subject -- which can include auditory images of melodies -- not just mere patterns of attributes. It must, in this sense, be "representational." The intelligible subject may be something as prosaic and stereotypical as a human figure or a battle scene or a melody -- or something rather more abstract such as a landscape or chunks of wood or metal exerting force against one another in a building or groups of sounds clashing with one another in a musical composition.

Or, to restate this in the contrapositive form: man-made objects that fail to present images of entities (or other discriminated existents) thus fail to represent a metaphysical view. (They *can* suggest -- though not represent -- the *absence* of such a view, however.) The reason that man-made objects that fail to include an image of an entity (or some other discriminated existent) thus fail to represent a metaphysical view lies in the symbolic nature and function of art -- specifically, in the fact that art is a certain kind of *tool of cognition*.<sup>5</sup>

## **2. The Narrower Sense of Art as Tool of Cognition and Esthetic Microcosm**

The narrower sense of "art" as advocated by Rand and numerous other theorists is generally held to be a "non-utilitarian" form of human creation, distinct from the various utilitarian modes of human creation, including clothing, furniture, shipbuilding, and (some would argue) architecture. As I will argue later in this essay, the traditional fine-utilitarian art distinction, resting as it does on a misguided attempt to dichotomize utilitarian and non-utilitarian products of human creativity, reflects an invalid way of characterizing the "fine" or esthetic arts and distinguishing them from other human creations.

The problems this distinction causes are multiple. First, it is a non-objective criterion for subdividing the broad field of human creation in general; I am not going to argue this particular point, however, until the section on architecture. Second, it conveys the mistaken idea that the esthetic arts serve no purpose and do not function as a kind of

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<sup>5</sup> It appears that this particular form of the expression originated with Rand (1961, 55) in her statement, "Emotions are not tools of cognition." However, it should be noted that Veatch (1953, 8) had preceded her in referring to concepts, propositions, etc. as "cognitive instruments," as did Parker and Veatch (1959, 5) in calling them "cognitive tools."

tool or instrument in human living. Third, the true hierarchical location of the narrower concept of "art" is obscured and made to appear as though it were merely one level down from the broader concept of "art" (and differentiated from other human creations by a criterion already noted as problematic).

An analogy may help to clarify this last point. Consider the Aristotelian-Randian definition of "man" as "the rational animal." Taken as a quick way of differentiating human beings from *all other* animals, the possession of the capacity for rationality serves perfectly adequately. However, for a *biologist* who wants to situate the human species in the great evolutionary-biological pyramid structure of different kinds of animals, this will not do at all. It says, in effect, "human beings are rational, all other animals are not," and it waves the others away dismissively as of no relevance. In ethics, this is permissible; in biology, it is not. Instead, a life scientist must carefully relate human beings to the most similar other creatures in the animal kingdom. Then he must group humans and those others together with the next most similar *other* group(s) of animals, and so on until humans and *all other* animals are grouped together as orders, phyla, classes, groups, genuses, and species within the animal kingdom. This is the path of *integration*; the reverse process, *differentiation*, can be used, moving from the broadest grouping down to progressively smaller groupings of creatures, arriving ultimately at the species of human beings (or any other species of animals one may be interested in). In practice, especially when a partially complete section of one's conceptual hierarchy is involved, both pathways may need to be used.

I propose that the same general approach be used in esthetics in regard to the nature of the esthetic arts. Rand's definition of "art" (i.e., "esthetic art") is perfectly serviceable, once properly understood. But part of that proper understanding includes the realization that the esthetic arts are not essentially non-utilitarian. Another part of that understanding is the realization that if Rand's project of fully integrating the various branches of philosophy is to be taken seriously, we must employ the *biologist's* strategy in elucidating the concept of "esthetic art." This means that, using her definition of "[esthetic] art" as our guide, we must trace the *full* hierarchy of concepts that *validly* link "selective re-creations of reality according to the artist's metaphysical value-judgments" into the overall concept of "human instruments" or "tools. "

I suggest we begin, in other words, with the presumption that esthetic art and the concepts it implements are specific kinds of tools, namely, what Rand refers to as "tools of cognition." The rationale for this presumption is, first, the fact that Rand has already noted some important parallels between language and esthetic art<sup>6</sup> and, second, the fact that Rand refers to language and the concepts it implements as "tools of cognition."<sup>7</sup> In particular, I will argue, esthetic art is what Peikoff and others have referred to as a kind of "microcosm", specifically, an imaginary world-in-miniature in which the artist embodies and conveys basic abstractions about man and the world.

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<sup>6</sup> See Rand 1965 (20).

<sup>7</sup> See Rand 1967: "Concepts and, therefore, language are *primarily* a tool of cognition..." (69), and "Language is the exclusive domain and *tool* of concepts" (10).

After distinguishing tools of cognition from mechanical tools, I will then proceed, step by step, with progressively finer distinctions, and indicate exactly *what* kinds of tools of cognition they are. I am confident that, by this manner of exposition, the reader will readily see the plausibility of the view of esthetic art as microcosm. I am also confident that it will become clear why the very much shallower conceptual hierarchy with fine art as "non-utilitarian human creation" not only rests upon a flawed distinction, but also obscures much of the richness of the esthetic arts within the context of human creation in general.

A tool, in the most widely understood sense of the term, is any implement, instrument, or utensil held in the hand and used for cutting, hitting, digging, rubbing, etc. It is any man-made object that uses mechanical energy to physically transform matter in some way. However, the term is used more broadly to refer to anything that serves as a means or instrument for the performance of some action, i.e., anything that serves similarly to, or in the manner of, a tool. In this latter respect, one's feet and hands, for instance, can also be thought of as tools. It is also in this latter respect that Rand has referred to language and the concepts it implements as "tools of cognition." They are so called, because they serve as a means for the cognitive processing of information about the world (i.e., the material of cognition).

At this point, we have a three-level conceptual hierarchy, with mechanical tools such as hammers, saws, shovels, etc. and cognitive tools (language and concepts) on the lowest level, the genres of mechanical tool and cognitive tool on the second level, and the higher genus of tool on the top level.

## TOOL

- I. mechanical tool
  - A. hammer
  - B. foot pedal
- II. cognitive tool
  - A. concept
  - B. language

The next step in developing this conceptual structure is to note the distinction between primary tool and secondary tool. A primary tool is a basic way of grasping and dealing with reality, and a secondary tool is an extension of a primary tool. A secondary tool amplifies or refines what a primary tool does and extends the range of what is possible to us without it. In the cognitive domain, the primary tool is the conceptual abstraction or concept (including integrations of concepts into propositions, arguments, theories, etc.), which provide us with our basic means of *cognitively* grasping and dealing with reality. Just as we grasp or apprehend reality in a physical manner with our hands, so too we cognitively apprehend reality with conceptual abstractions. Our secondary cognitive tool is language or some other kind of symbol. Primary and secondary cognitive tools can be conveniently distinguished by the terms *abstraction* and *symbol*. (Bear in mind that "abstraction" is short for "conceptual abstraction," and that it is to be distinguished from "emotional abstraction.") Abstractions and symbols are mutually dependent on one another, just as are one's hands and one's manual tools. Abstractions have very limited usefulness without

symbols. Symbols arise in order to implement abstractions and are otherwise cognitively useless. There is a parallel in the mechanical domain between hands and feet, which are one's primary mechanical tools and hammers, saws, etc., which serve to implement or facilitate the functioning of one's hands and feet. In each case, secondary tools are man-made objects. (The importance of this last point important in light of the common understanding, which Rand emphasizes, that artworks are man-made objects.)

## TOOL

- I. mechanical tool
  - A. primary mechanical tool
    - 1. hand
    - 2. foot
  - B. secondary mechanical tool
    - 1. hammer
    - 2. foot pedal
- II. cognitive tool
  - A. primary cognitive tool
    - 1. abstraction: concept
  - B. secondary cognitive tool
    - 1. symbol: language

The function and purpose of primary cognitive tools -- i.e., (conceptual) abstractions -- is to serve as the means of integrating our cognitive data. This expands our consciousness beyond the perceptual level characteristic of animals and small children.<sup>8</sup> Of course, in order for abstractions to fulfill the function of *integrating* cognitive data, what they integrate must be *cognitive data*.

A cognitive datum is a *content* of consciousness that arises when one's perceptual or conceptual faculty is directed toward some aspect of reality. The aspect of reality one is conscious of becomes the *object* of cognition. The cognitive content is in a cognitive *correspondence to*, and is cognitively *identified with*, the object of cognition.

As one continues to direct, or *refer*, one's cognitive faculty toward reality, one's cognitive content is referred to the object of cognition. The object of cognition is thus the *referent* of one's cognitive content. In the same sense, one's cognitive content *means* the object of cognition, which is the *meaning* of that content. Thus, to be a cognitive datum, a given content of consciousness must have some aspect of reality as its referent.

Cognitive data on the abstract level are of two types: (a) existential cognitive data and (b) psychological cognitive data. Or, concepts of existence (existential concepts) and concepts of consciousness. Or, extrospective concepts and introspective concepts.<sup>9</sup> (In each version, the wording of the distinction is merely intended to point to the difference between

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<sup>8</sup> See Ayn Rand, *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology* (1966-67), expanded 2nd ed., New York, Meridian, 1990, pp. 5-21, 62-65.

<sup>9</sup> This distinction is first made by Rand in 1967 (29).

our conceptual awareness of physical and psychological phenomena. In no way does the use of "existential" to describe the former deny that *both* kinds of phenomena are aspects of reality that *do* exist.)

On the broadest levels of conceptual abstraction, we are concerned with fundamental facts. In regard to the existential side of reality, we are concerned with the basic nature of the physical world and our relation to it. Such a fundamental grasp is what is referred to by the terms "metaphysical abstraction" or "metaphysical view." And this is to be distinguished abstractions about the basic nature of psychological reality (our mental processes, human consciousness) and our relationship to it -- what might be called "psycho-epistemological abstractions," which are a special kind of psychological abstractions.

Among primary cognitive tools, there are two fundamental distinctions. One is based on the modality of the perceptual or conceptual contents -- viz., visual, auditory, olfactory, etc., and conceptual, propositional, and argumentative. The other is based on the relationship to reality of the content of consciousness. Perceptual images and conceptual ideas both may be either coherent or incoherent (meaningful or meaningless, on the conceptual level), and coherent images and ideas may either be correspondent with reality (veridical) or not (valid or invalid as concepts, true or false as propositions, sound or unsound as arguments).

The function and purpose of secondary tools of cognition -- i.e., symbols and systems of symbols -- is also a cognitively integrative one. They are the means of *physically implementing* our primary, abstract tools of cognition (abstractions).<sup>10</sup> Symbols thus serve as concrete tools of cognition. They allow us to *concretize* and thereby retain the cognitive data integrated by our abstractive faculty into concepts, etc.<sup>11</sup>

In concretizing abstractions, symbols thus convert them and the cognitive data they integrate into the mental equivalent of a concrete.<sup>12</sup> Symbols are concretes that represent -- in the sense of serving or standing as physical proxy for -- some content of consciousness with which they are mentally equated. Symbols exist in a relation of correspondence to those mental contents.

Among secondary cognitive tools, there is a different basic distinction, this one based on the kind of relationship on which the cognitive tool is based. Parker and Veatch say that since human cognition is intentional, i.e., of or about something other than itself, then cognitive instruments (tools) must also be of or about something other than

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<sup>10</sup> In "The Cognitive Role of Concepts," *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 69, Rand says that "Language is the physical (visual-audible) implementation" of our concepts. I hereby extend this usage to both kinds of symbols considered in this chapter.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, where Rand says that "Concepts and, therefore, language are *primarily* a tool of cognition..." Rand further says that "Language is the exclusive domain and *tool* of concepts" in "Concept-Formation," *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> See Rand, "Concept-Formation," p. 10, and "The Psycho-Epistemology of Art," p. 19.

themselves. Cognitive tools must reveal, disclose, refer to, or signify reality. Following the Thomist-Lockean tradition, Parker and Veatch thus refer to cognitive tools as "signs", by which they mean "that which is representative of something other than itself" (p. 14). They refer to concepts as "formal signs," since they are forms of awareness, and to language as an "instrumental sign," since it is the means by which concepts are implemented. Since instrumental signs stand proxy for concepts, I will consider them as identical to symbols and mainly use the latter term.

Within the category of symbols (instrumental signs), then, there are those that stand for concepts in virtue of an arbitrary and automatized relationship of association with the referents of those concepts. This kind of symbol is sometimes called a "conventional sign" (associated by convention), and sometimes an "artificial sign" (in the respect of the arbitrariness of the association relationship). I will refer to it herein as a "linguistic symbol," since this is essentially and distinctively the way in which language is related to the concepts it implements. The other group of instrumental signs or symbols includes those that stand for concepts in virtue of either an observed cause-effect or similarity relationship with the referents of those concepts. This kind of symbol is called a "natural sign", since the cause-effect or similarity relationship is held to be non-arbitrary and non-conventional, instead being based on a common inherent factor between the symbol and concept's referent. To simplify, I am only going to deal with similarity-based natural signs, and I am going to call them "imaginal symbols," since they are the kind involved in esthetic art.

By this point, our concept hierarchy has fleshed out quite a bit:

## TOOL

### I. mechanical tool

#### A. primary mechanical tool

1. hand
2. foot

#### B. secondary mechanical tool

1. hammer
2. foot pedal

### II. cognitive tool/sign

#### A. primary cognitive tool/formal sign--content of consciousness

##### 1. percept(ual image)--two subdivisions:

- a1. visual
- b1. auditory
- a2. coherent
  - i. veridical
  - ii. non-veridical
- b2. incoherent

##### 2. concept(ual idea)--two subdivisions:

- a1. conceptual
- b1. propositional
- c1. argumentational

- a2. coherent (meaningful)
    - i. correspondent to reality (valid, true, sound)
    - ii. not correspondent to reality (invalid, false, unsound)
  - b2. incoherent (meaningless)
- B. secondary cognitive tool/instrumental sign/symbol
- 1. language/conventional sign/linguistic symbol
  - 2. (esthetic) art/natural sign/imaginal symbol

As similar as all symbols are, the ways in which they differ allow them to perform separate, complementary roles as tools of cognition. Those differences show why art is uniquely suited for concretizing our metaphysical abstractions. The two basic types of symbols are linguistic symbols and imaginal symbols -- and they exist most commonly in the forms of language and esthetic art.

A *linguistic* symbol is a concrete which represents an abstraction by means of automatized association. A mental association is arbitrarily established and automatized between the concrete and the abstraction in one's mind. Rand's crucial insight (1967, 63) is that linguistic symbols are employed primarily in a *system* of such concretes. Language is a code of visual-auditory (and/or tactile) symbols that serves the mental function of converting abstractions into the mental equivalent of concretes. That is, by virtue of the *act of automatized association*, the mind treats the abstractions symbolized by language as though they were physical concretes, "out there," instead of locked up inside one's head.

An *imaginal* symbol is a concrete that represents an abstraction by means of *embodiment*. The mental association between the concrete and the abstraction in one's mind is neither arbitrary nor automatized. It is sometimes called a "natural" symbol. Imaginal symbols are employed primarily in isolation, as *individual* concretes, most frequently in the form of what I refer to as "esthetic symbols," or artworks. An *esthetic* symbol is an imaginal symbol that represents a *fundamental* abstraction by means of *stylized* embodiment. Thus, in parallel to Rand's preceding remark about language, an esthetic symbol or artwork is a visual or auditory (and/or tactile) symbol that serves the mental function of converting fundamental abstractions into the mental equivalent of concretes. That is, by virtue of the *fact of stylized embodiment*, which is automatically recognizable, the mind treats the fundamental abstractions symbolized by an artwork as though they were physical concretes "out there," instead of locked up inside one's head.

For both linguistic and esthetic symbols, the various possible symbolic forms correspond to the various forms (i.e., modes or channels) of a conceptually conscious being's cognitive faculty: sight (written language and visual art), hearing (spoken language and music), and touch (Braille and sculpture).<sup>13</sup> Literature is a special case. It uses linguistic symbols as a means (i.e., a medium) in which to convey esthetic symbols. Through the medium of language, literature conveys a sensory-perceptual set of images that

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<sup>13</sup> This is adapted and expanded from Rand's remarks (1971, 46, 73) about the forms of art.

embody fundamental abstractions beyond those represented by the language used *per se*.<sup>14</sup>

A linguistic symbol has a *man-made* (artificial) relationship to the abstraction that it represents. It is also an *arbitrary* relationship. Nothing in the nature of such a symbolic concrete necessitates that it be the one used to symbolize a given abstraction. The crucial factor is human volition, the conscious choice to associate a given concrete with a given abstraction. An esthetic symbol, on the other hand, has a *metaphysical* (natural) relationship to the abstraction that it represents. It is also a *necessary* relationship. The relationship, that is, is inherent in the identity of the symbolic concrete and the abstraction symbolized.<sup>15</sup>

This is not meant to suggest that volition is totally absent with regard to esthetic symbols, or imaginal symbols in general. Indeed, the person who so fashions an imaginal symbol that it is inherently able to symbolize an abstraction upon being perceived has to do so through a (perhaps arduous) process of volitional thought. Neither the creator nor any other perceiver of the symbol, however, need volitionally *automatize* an association of the symbol with the abstraction it symbolizes. Nor is this meant to suggest that an imaginal symbol actually is a symbol apart from some conscious person who employs it as such -- nor, consequently, that the relationship between symbol and abstraction exists apart from someone who recognizes that relationship. It is not *intrinsically* a symbol, apart from someone's consciousness.

Rather, the imaginal symbolic concrete is so structured that it is *inherently able to enter into a symbolic relation* with an abstraction *upon being perceived*. An act of artificially assigning the symbolic concrete to a specific abstraction -- and of consciously automatizing the symbolic relationship -- is unnecessary. The abstraction is readily perceived and recognized as being already *embodied* in the symbolic concrete, in much the same way as if it were embodied in some *non-symbolic* aspect of reality.

How can two such radically different types of symbols exist? The reason lies in the nature and requirements of the human conceptual faculty. We form abstractions or concepts, as a system of classification, whenever the scope of our perceptual data becomes too great for our minds to handle. Our conceptual faculty performs the task of reducing a vast amount of information to a minimal number of units. This process takes place according to the principle of *unit-economy*.<sup>16</sup> A concept substitutes one symbol (a word) for the enormous perceptual total of concretes that it subsumes. In order to perform its unit-reducing function, the symbol has to function automatically in a person's consciousness. Only in this way, Rand explains (1967, 64) will the enormous sum of a concept's referents be instantly available to one's conscious mind without the need to mentally summarize or perceptually visualize them.

This automatic function of unit reducing is achieved by two radically different kinds

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<sup>14</sup> See Rand (1971, 46-7) for her definitive discussion of the difference in how literature and the visual arts convey concepts.

<sup>15</sup> This distinction was inspired by Rand (1973, 33). The application, however, is my own.

<sup>16</sup> See Rand's discussion (1967, 63, 65) of this important epistemological principle.

of symbols and symbol-to-abstraction relationships. One is the automatized association of linguistic symbols. The other is the automatically recognizable, stylized embodiment of esthetic symbols. These radically differing symbol-to-abstraction relationships are uniquely appropriate to the respective groups of abstractions the symbols are characteristically applied to. This permits linguistic and esthetic symbols to perform distinct and complementary roles in the division of labor by which our concepts are implemented.

Language covers the full range of conceptual knowledge. Esthetic art covers a more limited domain but covering a much broader perspective: our abstractions concerning existence, consciousness, and our relation to them. More specifically, these abstractions pertain to such issues as: Is the universe intelligible? Is man capable of grasping its nature? Is the universe open to man's effort? Is man capable of achieving his values? Is man capable of virtue and heroism and honor and nobility and happiness? Etc.<sup>17</sup>

These fundamental abstractions are also dealt with, although in a linguistic manner, by *philosophy*. The task of philosophy is to provide us with a comprehensive view of life, which we need as a base, a frame of reference, for all our actions, mental or physical, psychological or existential.

One's metaphysical and epistemological abstractions are of prime importance to one's motivation and moral values, and for this reason Rand (1965) also calls them "metaphysical value-judgments" (19). Both Rand and Branden (1969, 186) hold that these metaphysical value-judgments are involved in every choice one makes, every action one takes, and every emotion one feels. Branden states: "...all value-choices [and value-responses and seeking of values] rest on an implicit view of the being who values and of the world in which he must act" (201).

It must be stressed though that Rand is talking here of the *general* nature of one's actions and ambition being determined by what view one takes of the world and man's nature. She says expressly (1965) that the metaphysical value-judgments determine the *kind* of ethics one will accept and the *kind* of art one will enjoy, not the *specific* ethics nor the *specific* artworks" (19).

Thus, for instance, rather than specifically promoting individualist ethical or political values, a rational view of the world and man is the basis for a person's cultivating the virtue of *integrity* to those specific ethical or political values one has. Similarly, rather than dictating that one will enjoy a hero having some specific set of values and ideals, a rational view of the world and man is the basis for a person's enjoying the sight of a character heroically and with dedication pursuing his values, whatever they may be.

More importantly, in relation to man's need of art, if the basic abstractions provided by philosophy are to be a *usable* frame of reference for our actions, we must be able to deal with them. As Rand (1965, 19) argues, we must be able to retranslate those abstractions

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<sup>17</sup> These are based upon the "metaphysical questions" Rand (1965, 19) raises in regard to the foundations of ethics.

into the perceptual concretes for which they stand -- to reconnect the abstractions to reality -- and hold them all in the focus of our conscious awareness.

Yet, the *meaning* of these basic abstractions is very difficult (if not impossible) to hold in one's direct awareness, for two main reasons. First, the abstractions are diffuse and hard to isolate from the rest of one's contents of consciousness. Like one's self-concept (as discussed by Branden (1969), 103, 186), one's basic abstractions are experienced more as feelings than as thoughts. Second, as Rand (1965) notes, they are inclusive of too many factors, too vast an array of concretes for one to be able to hold them fully in one's immediate, focal awareness at a given time (19). Since *qua* abstractions (or concepts), they do not exist as such -- but are only man's means of viewing that which does exist (which is necessarily concrete) -- one's grasp of them can become extremely precarious at times. As Rand (1965) states:

Amidst the incalculable number and complexity of choices that confront a man in his day-by-day existence, with the frequently bewildering torrent of events, with the alternation of successes and failures, of joys that seem too rare and suffering that lasts too long -- he is often in danger of losing his perspective and the reality of his convictions (23).

Even a rational person with a fully developed, explicit philosophy needs this experience. It is not a matter of verification or validation of one's philosophical views. It *is* a matter of seeing actual instances of those views, especially when much of one's environment seems to contradict them. It provides those philosophical views with an extra dimension of connectedness to reality, in much the same way that a model does in relation to a blueprint.<sup>18</sup>

Fundamental abstractions, in order to "acquire the full, persuasive, irresistible power of reality" (Rand 1965, 23), must be concretized (i.e., objectified) and open to one's direct contemplation. This is vital, in order for one to *retain* one's abstractions -- and the perspective of existence and of consciousness that those abstractions constitute. There is no way to integrate such an immense sum of abstractions through language alone. We need a way to project them in the form of an integrated concretization that illuminates them and makes them intelligible. So, from the standpoint of cognitive economy, a picture *is* worth a thousand words, when it comes to symbolizing our fundamental abstractions.

Like all imaginal symbols, esthetic symbols, or artworks, are capable of embodying abstractions in reality-like fashion. The specific aspect of an imaginal symbol that performs this function is its likeness or image or *semblance*. An esthetic symbol presents a particular kind of semblance of reality, an imaginary or esthetic *microcosm*. This is why we may properly refer to an esthetic artwork as a certain kind of "re-creation of reality."

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<sup>18</sup> Rand offers this metaphor in 1965 (21) and 1963b (169).

In order to integrate these points with the previous step in the "tool" concept hierarchy, it merely need be noted that because imaginal symbols involve the creation of something in a new form (namely, a semblance), they are properly referred to as "re-creations." This will be discussed at more length in the fourth section of this part of the essay. For now, it's important to see that there are two basic kinds of re-creations. One is the re-creation of aspects or, or things from, reality. For lack of a better term, these will be called "things from reality" or "figures." The other kind of re-creation is of reality itself, as already noted; and for reasons to be made clearer in the fourth section below, these re-creations will be referred to as "microcosms."

Among figures (i.e., figural re-creations), there are several relatively distinct types that lie along a continuum of greater or lesser literal similarity to reality. Some are attempts at facsimile or "likeness" (such as a "realist" portrait), some are metaphoric (such as a melody appearing to behave like a dramatic character), and some are highly abstract (such as clashing or harmonizing materials or forces in a work of architecture). Among microcosms (i.e., microcosmic re-creations), there are also several distinct types, distinguished not along a continuum, but instead by the standard of selectivity used in making the microcosm. One may exercise selectivity according to one's ideological value-judgments and create a diorama (which is an ideologically slanted re-enactment of a segment of history). Or one may exercise selectivity according to one's physical value-judgments and create a scale model of the galaxy or of the Earth's eco-system. Or one may exercise selectivity according to what Rand calls one's "metaphysical value-judgments" and create an artwork. Each of these, in its own way, is a re-creation of reality -- a cognitive window into the cosmos, or a portion of it. Each of them is utterly dependent upon *some* kind of figural re-creation, though that re-creation need not be literal or obvious.

Here, then, is the "tool" concept hierarchy at the fullest extent of its development in this essay:

## TOOL

### I. mechanical tool

#### A. primary mechanical tool

1. hand
2. foot

#### B. secondary mechanical tool

1. hammer
2. foot pedal

### II. cognitive tool/sign

#### A. primary cognitive tool/formal sign--content of consciousness

##### 1. percept(ual image)--two subdivisions:

- a1. visual
- b1. auditory
- a2. coherent
  - i. veridical
  - ii. non-veridical
- b2. incoherent

2. conceptual idea--two subdivisions:
  - a1. conceptual
  - b1. propositional
  - c1. argumentational
  - a2. coherent (meaningful)
    - i. correspondent to reality (valid, true, sound)
    - ii. not correspondent to reality (invalid, false, unsound)
  - b2. incoherent (meaningless)
- B. secondary cognitive tool/instrumental sign/symbol
  1. language/conventional sign/linguistic symbol
    - a. word
    - b. sentence
    - c. paragraph
  2. re-creation/natural sign/imaginal symbol
    - a. re-creation of things from reality; figure(al re-creation)
      - i. literal
      - ii. metaphoric
      - iii. abstract
    - b. re-creation of reality; microcosm(ic re-creation)
      - i. historical microcosm--diorama
      - ii. scientific microcosm--e.g., scale model of galaxy
      - iii. esthetic microcosm--artwork

In further developing and clarifying the concept of art as an "esthetic microcosm," it will be helpful to consider the two related theories of the nature of art that are based on this notion of art as an imaginary microcosm. One is the ancient theory of art as *imitation of nature*, and the other is the more modern one of art as *re-creation of reality*. These two theories are similar in several key ways: (1) The standard formulations of them are radically misconceived. (2) The standard criticisms leveled against them are, accordingly, misdirected. (3) They can both be applied to the task of formulating a proper concept and definition of "art" and, in so doing, to show why and how artworks must be representational.

### **3. Art as Imitation of Nature. or of Things-from-Nature?**

The imitation theory is traditionally said to maintain that an artist copies or reproduces things, people, and events from reality. In so doing, he makes an image that is said to be an "imitation" of them. Commenting on the imitation theory, Langer (1953) says:

It is natural enough, perhaps, for naive reflection to center first of all round the relationship between an image and its object; or a graphic description as an imitation of reality...The problem of "imitation," or reproducing the appearance of a model, has harassed philosophers ever since Plato censured

art as a "copy of a copy" (46, 76).

Such a traditional view of esthetic imitation is also presented by Beardsley (1967):

...[T]he famous aesthetic judgment...of the picture on Achilles' shield...hints at the beginning of wonder about imitation, i.e., the relation between representation and object, or appearance and reality...Plato seems also to regard paintings, dramatic poems, and songs as imitations in a narrower sense: they are images...One kind of making is imitation, which Aristotle seems to take fairly straightforwardly as representation of objects or events (18, 20, 22).

Against such a view of imitation, one cannot better begin than with the well-known words of Aristotle himself. In *Physics II*, 8.199a (10-18), he says: "In general, then, art in a sense completes what nature is unable to finish, and in a sense imitates nature."

Randall (1962), further explains:

Aristotle does not mean that art "mimics" nature: art does not imitate nature's products -- that would be quite impossible...it could not possibly make an oak tree or beget a man. Rather, *art does imitate nature's productive activities*. It must be remembered that "nature" for Aristotle is a way of acting, and what art imitates is that way...Art does better, more successfully, just what nature does or tries to do; *it brings that which is possible in materials to a realization*, and thus "completes nature" (275-6, emphasis added).

Aristotle, of course, was applying the concept of "imitation" to art in the very broad sense of *techne*. In this sense, "imitation" applies equally to shipbuilding, for instance, as it does to painting or sculpture. Shipbuilding is a systematic activity directed toward a goal toward which it tends and in terms of which it is defined. Thus, in this sense, human making in general is an imitation of nature.

There is a narrower way to apply Aristotle's concept of "imitation," specifically to the "fine arts." By clarifying it, we will see how to avoid the standard way in which "imitation" is misinterpreted.

Gilbert and Kuhn (1972) relate how painters of the Renaissance viewed their art. They studied mathematics, anatomy, etc., in order to arrive at "a total philosophical treatment of nature" that would enable them "to compose a *second* nature, thus following after God's way and partaking in his perfection" (175, emphasis added). In his article on Baumgarten, a German Rationalist and the founder of esthetics, Tonelli (1967) says: "The [fine] artist is not an imitator of nature in the sense that he copies it...*he imitates nature in*

*the process of creating a world or a whole*" (256, emphasis added).

These writers are touching on a crucial idea for the philosophy of art: the concept of a *microcosm*. This is the notion, dating back to the ancient Greeks, that "the structure of the universe can be reflected on a smaller scale in some particular phenomenon..." (Gilbert and Kuhn 1972, 6).

The *Oxford English Dictionary* says that the primary and earliest usage of the term "microcosm" refers to man as a microcosm of the world, ("The 'little world' of human nature; man viewed as an epitome of the 'great world' or universe.") This usage is clearly related to the Greek view of "man as the measure of all things." The *OED* also, however, includes an extended sense (definition 2): "applied to a community or other complex unity regarded as presenting an epitome of the world, or as constituting 'a little world' in itself." This second, extended sense of "microcosm" agrees with Gilbert and Kuhn's observation and seems entirely applicable to the view of art as microcosm, not only as referring to literature and painting and sculpture, but also to music and architecture. Each of these is a "complex unity" capable of standing in for the world and conveying something abstract about the world.

Tonelli (1967) says that *cosmology*, the theory of the structure of the universe, is very likely the basis upon which the ancient Greeks developed the doctrine of art as imitation of nature. To see this, however, we must "take imitation in its literal and true meaning, not as the duplication of isolated things, but as *the active attempt to participate in a superior perfection*" (256, emphasis added). In other words, Tonelli is saying, the fundamental meaning of art as "imitation of nature" is *not* the depiction of *things from* nature, but *the emulation of nature in creating something*. What a "fine artist" creates, in emulation of nature's creative powers, is, specifically, an artificial "world or a whole," i.e., a *microcosm*.

Among Rand's own associates, Blumenthal and Blumenthal (1974) note in a lecture available only in audiotape form that the ancient Greeks regarded *music* as a microcosm. Peikoff (1982) explains how the work of most artists in a culture "becomes a microcosm" that embodies the basic ideas of some consensus within the culture (169). He later (1991) states in passing that art in general presents a microcosm:

Guided by his own metaphysical value-judgments (explicit or otherwise), an artist selects, out of the bewildering chaos of human experience, those aspects he regards as indicative of the nature of the universe. Then he embodies them in a sensory-perceptual concrete...The result is a universe in microcosm. (417)

Following Gilbert and Kuhn and Tonelli, then, we can see that the imitation of nature present in all art (as *techne*) takes on an added dimension when it occurs in the form of a work of "fine art." And that dimension is not fundamentally a *figural* kind of *techne* (though it depends upon such), but rather a *microcosmic* *techne*, moreover, one stylized in

such a way as to present a broad view of man's place in the universe. Aristotle did not say it explicitly, but it is clear that certain imitations of nature present a man-created microcosm that embodies basic abstractions.

This interpretation of "fine art" as imitation is closely related to the proper view of the re-creation theory of the nature of esthetic art. I will now proceed to elucidate the re-creation theory.

#### 4. Art as Re-creation of Reality, or of Things-from-Reality?

Like the imitation theory, the re-creation theory is often misunderstood as saying that the essence of art is merely the copying or reproducing of concrete things, people, and events from reality. Arguments for, and mainstream challenges to, the "re-creation" theory (and its earlier incarnation, the classical "imitation" theory) have been flawed and ultimately undercut by this misdirected focus on the more concrete level of artworks. (By "more concrete level," I mean the *contents* of the microcosm presented in an artwork, i.e., the re-creation *within* the artistic microcosm of *things from* reality, such as human figures, still life, etc.) Even the pre-eminent Rand-oriented esthetics theorists, Kamhi and Torres (1997), are prey to this error, as is Rand (1969) herself, specifically in regard to music and architecture. The worst problem created by this error, especially in architecture and music, is that when only the subtler kinds of things from reality are re-created, they tend to be overlooked. Thus, it is frequently held, reality is not being re-created by certain artworks, or that they are "not really" artworks, or both. Thus, Rand's definition of "art" is thought to be invalid -- or her views of music and/or architecture not to fit that definition -- or both.

According to the standard misinterpretation, the image of the things copied or reproduced in an artwork is the "re-creation." Again, it is Langer (1953) who provides what seems to be a telling critique:

...[An] object that already exists -- a vase of flowers, a living person -- cannot be re-created. It would have to be destroyed to be re-created. Besides, a picture is neither a person nor a vase of flowers. It is *an image, created for the first time* out of things that are not imaginary, but quite realistic -- canvas or paper, and paints or carbon and ink. [46, emphasis added]

Hospers (1967) echoes Langer's remarks in writing:

"Art is a re-creation of reality" -- but is all art a re-creation of something, even music? (One would have thought that it was *the creation of something*, that is, *a series of tonal relationships that never existed in that order before the composer created them.*) And in what sense does music deal with reality? (52, emphasis added)

Hospers later (1982) repeats this unattributed reference to music as re-creation:

"Music is not the *recreation* of anything -- music is an act of pure *creation*, of combinations of sound that are unlike anything that existed in the world before those sounds were created by the composer" (177). This statement does not attribute the concept of "re-creation" to any specific theorist, and the term is not introduced in the discussion leading up to the statement. Apparently, however, Hospers intended "re-creation" to be taken as synonymous with "representation" or "imitation," which he *did* discuss previously in that chapter. If so, this is further indication that Hospers views the idea art as re-creation of reality in the narrower, secondary sense of re-creation of *things from* reality. Most recently (2001), Hospers has continued to question the validity of referring to artworks as microcosms, and whether one is saying anything with such language beyond noting the fact that music expresses states of feeling (313-4). In contrast, Langer (1953) completely rejected the idea of art as "re-creation" in regard to creating images of *things from* reality. However, it is quite clear from the introductory quotes that she endorsed the *idea* (without the terminology) that art re-creates reality by creating an image of *reality*, i.e., of an imaginary world or universe.) Her writing simply abounds with such references to "worlds" and "universes," across *all* the various forms of art.

The first thing to note about these criticisms is that they are directed specifically toward a naive, concrete-bound form of the re-creation theory. They focus on *things from reality*. They are dubious arguments, revolving on an ambiguity in the meaning of the term "re-create." More importantly, they fail to recognize the subtler kinds of secondary re-creation present in an artwork, and they fail to deal with the primary sense of art as a re-creation of *reality*, i.e., the creation of an esthetic microcosm. The unfortunate fact of the matter is that the subtler kinds of re-creation are difficult enough to identify even if one does have a grasp of the primary re-creation involved in art. Without that perspective, it's all too likely that one won't know what to look for on the secondary level.

What exactly *does* "re-creation of reality" mean? As opposed to the re-creation of an *aspect* of reality, that is. A conceptual analysis of the terms involved is definitely in order.

"Re-create" means: *to create anew* (ACE). Analyzing this definition in turn yields an important distinction. First of all, "create" means: *to bring into existence* (ACD). Secondly, "anew" has two distinct meanings: (a) *again*, and (b) *in a new form* (ACE). Thus, "re-create" can mean either (1) *to bring into existence again* (that which no longer exists), or (2) *to bring into existence in a new form* (that which exists, existed, or will exist, in some other form). In the fundamental philosophical sense of the term, "reality" means *that which exists independently of ideas concerning it* (ACD). In alternate terms, it also means *that which is real* (ACD): or (since "real" means: *being an actual thing with objective existence* [ACD]): *that which is an actual thing with objective existence*. Thus, reality is the universe, the totality of that which exists. Reality is the concrete, actual world of entities, their actions and attributes.

Since this objective reality does exist, "re-creation of reality" cannot mean bringing reality into existence *again*. First, reality is *everything* that exists, and it exists now. So anything additional which comes to exist is merely an *augmentation* of reality, not a re-

creation of it, in this sense. Secondly, such an attempt to bring reality into existence again could not be made from a void, but only from previously existing elements of reality. Thus, it is actually *not* a re-creation of reality, but rather the bringing into existence of a *duplicate of a previous state of reality, minus those elements taken to construct the duplicate*. (This is necessarily one-half of that previous state.) Such an unlikely state of affairs is, therefore, not the simultaneous existence of two realities -- the old one and a new one. Instead, it is only one reality, consisting of two identical halves, one of which has been constructed from what were previously elements of the now-diminished other half.

So, instead, "re-creation of reality" must mean *bringing reality into existence in a new form*. But in *what* other form than its concrete, actual form might reality exist? The answer is found in the area of psychology dealing with our cognitive awareness of reality. We are capable of narrowing our mental focus to some aspect of reality, some segment of our field of awareness. We are able to regard that aspect or segment *as if* it were a world or universe, a reality *as if* nothing else existed, *as if* it were all that existed. This attitude or mental set is a psychological pre-condition of esthetic experience. (Esthetic experience and the esthetic attitude are discussed in more detail in the first section of Part B of this essay.)

It is further possible that a given segment of reality may display what a person regards (according to some standard) as most significant or important about reality. (This means that a vast number of less relevant or significant aspects of reality will somehow be absent.) Such a segment of reality is thus a *microcosm*: a particular phenomenon that reflects the structure of the universe on a smaller scale. (The frame of reference, of course, is a given person's own, perhaps tacit, view of the universe.) Were a person to view that segment of reality, that microcosm, he would have the distinct impression that he was viewing *reality itself*. He would have assumed the "esthetic attitude" toward that microcosm. In this way, a musical composition, or a gripping novel, or an arresting painting or statue, or an inspiring work of architecture acts as a kind of cosmic peep show. It gives the viewer an imaginary window on the world, as he allows his awareness of the real world to fade into the background of his awareness.

Note that this is not *a* reality that is being *created*, but *the* reality that is being *re-created*. It is *the* (one and only) reality, shown in an enhanced and clarified manner, purified of elements that a given person holds to be irrelevant and distracting.

Of course, this impression is just that: an impression, a seeming-like or semblance of *the* reality. It is (the one and only) reality in *semblance-form*, rather than the actual-form (in which it already exists as an unrepeatable and thus literally unre-creatable form).

Even if what the segment of reality displays does not reflect a given person's own view of the universe, he may well perceive it as reflecting someone else's view, or at least a possible view for someone. Thus, the esthetic function of the segment of reality is the same, regardless of one's quite differing evaluation and responses to the reflected views themselves.

Human beings are capable of creating entities that are semblance-forms of reality.

That is, we are capable of creating reality in a semblance-form or *image*. Since this created image of reality is a new form of existence, different from that of which it is an image, we speak of it as a "re-creation of reality." From this, it is only a short step to Rand's definition of art as "a selective re-creation of reality, according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments."

Nor is Rand the only thinker in history to arrive at this understanding of what it means to re-create reality. Kant (1790), for instance, said: "The imagination (as a productive faculty of cognition) is a powerful agent for *creating, as it were, a second nature* out of the material supplied to it by actual nature" (528, emphasis added). Parker (1926) said: "...a work of art is a *reconstruction of sensuous reality* into an image of desire...building up in the imagination *a little world* that shall satisfy his wishes..." (48, 30, emphasis added). Camus (1951/1956) said: "In every rebellion is to be found...*the construction of a substitute universe.... This also defines art...The artist reconstructs the world according to his plan.*" (255, emphasis added).

Now we can see what is wrong with Langer's critique of the naive formulation of the re-creation theory. It is now clear that even though it is not the primary re-creation in the picture, the vase or the living person is indeed re-created. The sense of "re-create" that Langer correctly attacks, "being brought into existence again," is only one of the possibilities.

The other sense of "re-create" is that of being brought into existence in another form. In this latter sense, the vase and the living person certainly *are* re-created.

On a secondary level, then, the picture is at once the *creation of an image* of a person or vase (as Langer maintains) and the *re-creation* of a person or vase (as Langer denies. On the primary level, similarly, the picture is both the *creation of an image* (microcosmic version) of reality and the *re-creation* (a microcosmic version) of reality.

What the picture represents, however -- the embodied abstraction conveyed by the artwork -- is not the concept of the entity presented within the artwork's image. It is, rather, the *abstract meaning* embodied in that entity's image. Rand, for instance, does not say that a fiction writer chooses to present specific concrete "men and events," but instead some "*kind of men and events*" (1963b, 166) -- in other words, not Andrew Carnegie and the events comprising the building of his business empire, but an imaginary world of heroic men, tumultuous events vs. scoundrels, sinister events, etc. An author may indeed draw upon concrete persons or events for inspiration, but a novel so inspired is not, or ought not to be, a portrayal of those concretes. It is the presentation, instead, of a world containing the kind of people or events that those concretes inspire or exemplify. And yes, an author has to concretize "the kind of men and events," but that image of a concrete (concretization) is not the same concrete that inspired the making of the image. (Rand 1971 (47) makes similar comments about visual art.) Thus, whether a novel or painting re-creates a particular person or object from reality, or merely a certain kind of person or object, what is represented is *what that particular or kind embodies*, namely, a certain *fundamental abstraction about the nature of reality*.

This is the basic sense in which esthetic art is "representational." A portrait of a sailor, for instance, does not stand for that sailor, nor even for the kind of sailor or man that that sailor is. Rather, in presenting a microcosm, a reality-in-miniature, in which that kind of man exists and embodies a certain abstract view of reality, it stands for that abstract view. It is the painting, the artwork, after all, that is the symbol, not the subject of the painting (the sailor). And this is true for all art, including much art in which there is no discernible entity (as is the case in music). What is required is not that the subject be an entity per se, but that it be *intelligible*, discernible by the alert viewer, and that it embody some abstract view of the world. The intelligible content of the artwork, whether entities or musical figures or landscapes or whatever, must be such that it contributes to the artwork's functioning as a microcosm. There must be something "reality-like" about the artwork's content. As we will see in parts B and C of this essay, this is particularly important in the way that music and architecture function as esthetic microcosms (i.e., as art).

Thus, an artwork differs from pictographic symbols in a very precise, specific way. A pictograph uses an image of an entity in order to convey the abstraction or concept of the entity itself. An esthetic artwork, on the other hand, uses an image of an entity in order to convey another, broader abstraction exemplified by that imaginary entity. For instance, a painting of a man might convey an abstract view of the heroism possible to human beings and of the world as being open to human effort. A pictograph, on the other hand, would merely convey the concept of "man" itself. In each, the image of a man is *presented*. The difference lies in what is *represented*. In the pictograph, what is represented is man himself, which requires only the re-creation of a thing from reality, the creation of an image of a thing from reality (viz., of a man). In the artwork, on the other hand, what is represented is a broad abstract view about the nature of man's relationship to reality, which is possible only by means of an additional re-creation, the creation of an image of reality itself.

We can deal with Hospers' criticisms in a similar manner, although it is somewhat more complicated to do so. The question of what things from, or aspects of, reality can be found as secondary re-creations in music is not so easy to answer. Once we exhaust the trivial category of onomatopoeic effects (e.g., the call of the cuckoo, the rumble of the thunderstorm, the murmur of the brook, the ring of the anvil, etc.) -- i.e., the re-creation of the superficial sensory qualities of things from reality -- what indeed is left beyond mere patterns of sound? The third part of this paper will apply the basic insights about primary and secondary re-creation of reality to the challenge of understanding music.

There we will see that, even in the difficult case of music, all art is a *re-creation* of reality, insofar as it lends itself to be perceived as a semblance-form of reality, a microcosm, a world-in-miniature. To that same extent that his work may be so regarded, an artist may be said to engage in the *imitation* of nature. (Thus, the comment by Kagan (1986), "Through the invention of new, purely instrumental forms such as the symphony and concerto, divorced from song and dance, [music] was the first of the arts to be 'freed' from th[e] Aristotelian task of imitating nature" (87), can be seen on a deeper level to be false. These instrumental forms allowed music to be more directly focused, as never before, on imitating nature's creative powers by building up an *aural world*, and not just devoted to

the relative banalities of imitating birds, storms, etc.)

In this respect, it does not matter what specific "imitations" or "re-creations" are found in artworks. The essence of art is the microcosm, the primary re-creation of reality, the primary imitation of Nature in building up a world or whole. Art is an imaginary world-in-miniature that contains some "re-creation" or "imitation" of things from reality/nature. The theories of art as "imitation of nature" and "re-creation of reality" are thus intimately related. The imitation theory focuses on the role of the artist in imitating the world-creating actions of nature, while the re-creation theory focuses on the world created according to the artist's basic view of reality. They are complementary, *fundamental* theories of the nature of art.

The application of these theories to understanding the various forms of art is sometimes relatively easy and straightforward, as in the cases of painting and literature. In other cases, such as those of music and architecture, it is more difficult. The problem with music is its apparently non-representational nature, musical tones not generally serving well to portray people and objects. Efforts have been made to rescue music's status as a form of art by alleging that it represents or re-creates man's emotional experience, but this is neither unique to music nor fundamental to understanding its esthetic power, as will be explained in the final part of this essay. The sticking points for architecture are its seeming uniqueness among the arts in playing a utilitarian role in man's life (art supposedly must be non-utilitarian) and, like music, its seemingly non-representational nature. As the following portion of this essay will seek to show, these points are neither fatal to the inclusion of architecture among the arts, nor to Rand's definition of "art."

## **B. A difficult case -- Architecture as Microcosm**

Architecture is the first manifestation of man creating his own universe, creating it in the image of nature...[Le Corbusier 1923, 73]

Before considering architecture directly, I will first discuss one of the other, non-essential, invalid notions and classifications of art: "fine art" (as opposed to "utilitarian art.") It is a key element in my argument for applying the theory of art as microcosm to the field of architecture

### **1. Utility vs. Contemplation and the Invalid Category of "Fine Art"**

The so-called "fine arts" have traditionally been held to be distinct from other human products in that they are non-utilitarian objects -- specifically, esthetic, contemplative objects. Rather than intended for practical, everyday use, they are expressly intended for contemplation. Rand (1965) adopts this traditional outlook in claiming that art "serves no practical, material end...no purpose other than contemplation" (16). The reason this distinction does not hold up under scrutiny is twofold. First, "fine art" *does* serve a

practical need -- a need of human consciousness. As Rand (1965) herself points out, the survival and maintenance of one's consciousness is just as important and *practical* a matter as the survival and maintenance of one's body, the latter in fact *depending upon* the former (17). Thus, it is invalid to limit the concept of "practicality," as Rand does, to the material realm, viz., to actions directed toward one's *physical* survival.

Second, and more importantly, *any* object in the world -- artificial or natural, let alone "fine" or "utilitarian" -- can become an object of, and thus serve the purpose of, contemplation. As John Hospers (1946) points out:

Much confusion results from the failure to remember that "the esthetic" refers [primarily] to a kind of *attitude* rather than the *objects* toward which that attitude is taken...Confusion enters when we ask whether the...objects...are *in themselves* esthetic; actually what is esthetic is our attitude toward them -- and this can be esthetic in some occasions and not on others...*I see no theoretical limit to the number of objects toward which it is possible to take the esthetic attitude* (7-8).

It might be asked whether Hospers means the same thing as Rand does by the term "esthetic." Without resolving this question completely, it suffices to note that Hospers is very clear on the nature of the "esthetic attitude." Hospers (1946) says that the fundamental attitude involved in esthetic experience (which includes, but is not limited to, our "contemplating works of art") is the separation of that experience "from the needs and desires of everyday life and from the responses which we customarily make to our environment as practical human beings" (4). He adds that an esthetic attitude "can occur only when this practical response to our environment is held in suspension," and we are perceiving something "not for the sake of action, but for the sake of perceiving (4)." Rand's own comment about art serving no practical purpose, but only contemplation indicates that her view of the proper attitude in contemplation of artworks is identical to what Hospers means by the esthetic attitude as taken specifically toward artworks.

Further support for this view comes from Smith (1969), writing in Rand's magazine, *The Objectivist*:

...the proscenium arch is a physical statement of the metaphysical fact that drama is distinct from actual life experience, that it re-creates reality in a form to be contemplated for its own sake. The aesthetic distance -- the actor's self-containment in the world of the drama -- is the psychological precondition of the actor's function *qua* artist and of the audience's role as a contemplator of the work of art (11).

Rand and Hospers are of one accord, then, in viewing the esthetic attitude as

*essential* to our contemplation of artworks. Rand (1965), however, further takes this attitude as indicative of "one of the *distinguishing* characteristics of a work of art" (16, emphasis added), while Hospers as we have seen finds it not to be distinguishing at all and thus of no use whatsoever in defining "art." Hospers, in other words, is in this instance pursuing a course consistent with the principles of definition elucidated by Aristotle and Rand herself, while Rand is not! (If this point seems arcane or of little relevance, imagine this parallel. Suppose Rand and Hospers both agreed that being a physical entity was an essential characteristic of human beings, but that Rand further held that being a physical entity was also a *distinguishing* characteristic of human beings. Hospers, on the other hand, would rightly hold that being a physical entity is no basis for distinguishing human beings from all other living things, let alone from all other physical entities.)

Thus, Hospers' above-quoted remarks conclusively rule out any classification, Rand's included, of "fine art" vs. "utilitarian art" based on an object's *actual* contemplative function or the *viewer's* attitude. What if instead, however, a classification were attempted based upon the *creator's* attitude -- i.e., the contemplative function for which the man-made object was *intended*? What if "fine art" objects were regarded as being those man-made objects intended by their makers to be esthetic, contemplative objects, rather than utilitarian objects? This criterion, too, opens the door wide to subjectivism. Only here it is the subjective desire of the creator, instead of the viewer, that determines what is or is not to count as a "fine art" object. Far from delimiting the "fine arts" (painting, sculpture, music, dance, theater, literature) from other man-made objects, once again the category of "fine art" is wide open to any and all man-made objects. According to this definition, anyone with absolutely no talent or training can create some nondescript object and legitimately call it "art." On this criterion, he would be justified in doing so merely because he *intended* it to be a contemplative (rather than utilitarian) object. This view is the source of such "artworks" as a bale of hay painted in blue-and-white polka dots, or two strips of black tape running along a museum floor parallel to the wall, or a "musical composition" consisting of several minutes of silence. A further consequence of this approach to art is that would normally be a utilitarian object -- e.g., a table, an automobile, a pencil, etc. -- could be exhibited in a museum and called "art." That this, too, has, in fact, been done, shows that the suggested definition according to a maker's intent renders the category of "fine art" so broad as to be meaningless and thus useless for distinguishing between "fine art" and "utilitarian art" objects.

Such is the result of trying to define and delimit a subcategory of man-made things according to the subjective criterion of *someone's attitude toward those things* or *someone's decision about how to use those things*, rather than according to the objective criterion of *the nature of the things themselves*. Such is the result of failing to specify a clear, objective criterion for differentiating all or some "fine art" objects from the rest of man-made objects. (In this regard, it is truly unfortunate that Rand incorporated such non-objective elements into her concept of "art." It has caused misunderstanding of her objectively based *definition* of "art" and has led to misapplication of that definition, particularly in regard to music and architecture.) The remedy for such debasing of the world of art is, of course, *objectivity*. -- i.e., to focus on the nature of the various entities involved, on the things they do and the characteristics they possess. Otherwise, search as one might, one will never find a non-

arbitrary way to distinguish paintings, sculpture, etc. from other things and to call the former, and only the former, "art."

People have, in fact, made such a distinction for centuries -- arbitrarily. Due to the virtually total congruence between traditional works of "fine art" and what qualifies as an esthetic re-creation of reality, such a practice was relatively safe. This traditional ostensive definition of the "fine arts," however, was ripe for challenge by the proponents and practitioners of "non-objective" or "abstract art." In the final analysis, this challenge has been beneficial. It has kept "objective" or "representationalist" art advocates honest. It has required explicit, conceptual precision in the defense of "representational" art, the merely arbitrary and subjective no longer sufficing in this issue. Its value, in other words, is that it has spurred the search for a rational, objective basis for the distinction of *certain* "fine art" objects from the rest of man-made things and a firm foundation in place of the traditional emotionalistic grounds that are so easily and justifiably rejected. Note, however, that the challenge to the traditional view also implies that the "fine art" vs. "utilitarian art" distinction is *non-fundamental* and of limited cognitive import. Whatever limited value there may be in viewing human productive activity according to this classificatory scheme dwindles rapidly, once the skeptic shows the weaknesses inherent in such a non-objective classification.

Of course, there is always *some* knowledge -- however limited its application or importance -- to be gained from studying intent or attitude or other psychological factors involved in art. But in order to carry out the central program of providing a fundamental differentia by which to classify man-made objects, one must refer to the *attributes of the objects*. Just such a differentia, based on a nuanced understanding of Rand's objectively derived definition of "art," has been offered here. It sets "representational fine art" objects apart from all other man-made things -- including "non-representational fine art" objects, which that do not function as an esthetic microcosm, i.e., which do not contain intelligible material that embodies a basic abstraction. The asserted purpose of the creator and the asserted experience of the viewer, can now be objectively examined, and accepted or rejected, in terms of what is actually there in the object.

Suppose, for instance, a creator claims to have re-created reality in terms of his metaphysical value-judgments, but cannot specifically show or explain by reference to his creation exactly *what* basic aspect of reality he has embodied therein. Because of the absence of any intelligible material embodying a basic abstraction, such a creator is revealed to be either a poor artist or worse: a person trying to undercut and destroy the field of art. Or, suppose a viewer claims to have viewed a re-creation of reality according to the artist's metaphysical value-judgments, but cannot specifically show or explain by reference to the object viewed exactly *what* basic aspect of reality he views as being embodied therein. Again, because of the absence of any intelligible material embodying a basic abstraction, such a viewer is revealed to be either deluded or worse: someone trying to delude others. In general, for an object to be a re-creation of reality, it must function as a microcosm by presenting *something* (i.e., some intelligible content) *somehow* (i.e., by some means). And if the aspect of reality allegedly presented in the microcosm is claimed to be "abstract" or difficult to grasp, but no one can demonstrate that it is really there, the rational

presumption must be that it is not really there. In such a situation, there is no esthetic microcosm; such an object, despite the protestations of its creators and viewers, is not art.

To summarize: art as selective re-creation of reality, according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments, is the only fundamental and objective criterion that allows an intelligent observer to judge what is or is not art. It is also the only way to validly retain the traditional "art as fine art" formulation, even in part. It entails a recognition of the nature, fundamental value, and purpose of fine art: namely, as a symbol that presents a microcosm embodying an artist's view of the world. There may be some utility in viewing human creative, productive activity according to the fine art/utilitarian art distinction. As a cognitive classification, though, it is disastrous -- as skeptics are quick to argue. By its failure to specify the essence of certain man-made objects, as against all other man-made and natural objects, this distinction provides no justification for claiming the philosophy of art to be anything narrower than the study of human, productive activity in general. For this purpose as well, then, the narrower concept of art as "re-creation of reality" is cognitively indispensable. It is the only way to get at the *essence of art* and, in so doing, provide the foundation for a valid theory of esthetics.

## 2. Architecture with (or without?) sculpture as an art form

There is a great deal of disagreement among Objectivists and among academic philosophers more broadly as to whether architecture is, as Rand long held, a form of art. While the default position might be seen as including architecture among the esthetic arts, there is some basis in Objectivist theory for arguing that architecture is in fact *not* a form of art.

In her essay "Art and Cognition," in two statements about art and architecture, Rand (1971) expressed three distinct premises that were in conflict with one another. She stated that architecture "combines art with a utilitarian purpose and does not re-create reality..." (46) and that "utilitarian objects cannot be classified as works of art" (74). Rand's clashing premises are: (1) Architecture is a form of art -- yet it cannot be a form of art, because it is utilitarian, and because it does not re-create reality. (2) Architecture does not re-create reality and thus does not fit Rand's *definition* of art as "re-creation of reality" -- yet it must re-create reality, because it is a form of art. (3) Art is strictly "non-utilitarian," so architecture, which is utilitarian, does not fit Rand's claim about one of art's *distinguishing characteristics* -- yet art includes architecture, so art *cannot* exclude the utilitarian.

It is true that the *simplest* resolution of this conflict would be to reject the first premise and affirm the second and third premises. If architecture is utilitarian and does not re-create reality, and if Rand's definition and characterization of art is to be upheld, then perhaps bruising the egos or feelings of a few architects is unavoidable. Nevertheless, the primary concern should be that the *correct* resolution is made of Rand's conflicting statements. Whether or not that resolution is also in accord with traditional, Establishment views about architecture and with Rand's own presumed final opinion (not publicly stated, but implied) on the matter should not be a matter of concern. The remainder of this essay will present a resolution of conflicting premises that entails a rejection of *both* the second

and third premises. The first step in the resolution is to acknowledge that architecture in fact *does* re-create reality and is thus an exemplification of (not an exception to) Rand's definition of "art." The second step is to acknowledge that while architecture necessarily has a non-utilitarian aspect, it is not necessarily *exclusively* non-utilitarian in function and is thus living proof that the "non-utilitarian" criterion of art needs to be re-conceived less stringently.

a. Architecture as a re-creation of reality.

The reason some theorists, including Rand, fail to realize that architecture re-creates reality is that they are still caught up in the narrower, naive view of art as re-creating *things from reality*, rather than re-creating *reality*. What thing from reality does a house re-create? Why, it's just a house. It doesn't *re-create* a house. It *is* a house, and that is what architecture *creates*! The truth is that art, including architecture, re-creates *both* things from reality *and*, by that means, reality itself, in the form of the esthetic microcosm, the world-in-miniature that is the artwork. The things from reality that are re-created in architecture (with rare exceptions, such as the sail design of the Sydney Opera House) are not so obvious and prosaic as the person or bowl of fruit in a painting. Nevertheless, without *some* secondary re-creation (i.e., of things from reality), there can be no *primary* re-creation of reality, no esthetic microcosm. By now, my strategy for transcending the limited view of the naive re-creation theory should be clear. I intend to argue that architecture re-creates reality by creating a special kind of microcosm or world-in-miniature. It creates the image of *a world in which a certain kind of person lives in a certain kind of habitation*.

This image of architecture as *human domain*<sup>19</sup> can be grasped most clearly when sculpture and architecture work together in providing the experience of a microcosm. Seeing such an image when only one or the other is present is more difficult and takes a special effort of abstraction and perspective. As Tracinski (1998) notes:

A sculpture shows only a human figure, perhaps with a few other objects; one must infer, from the figure, the type of world he lives in. Architecture, by contrast, provides a world, from which one can infer the kind of man who is to live in it. This is the reason why historically there has been a close relationship between architecture and sculpture (11).

In other words, it may be difficult to get the idea of microcosm just looking at a statue; you have to back up and imagine the world (or habitation) in which such a person might live. And it may be difficult to get the idea of architecture, apart from its utilitarian role, as also being a re-creation of reality, unless you at least imagine a certain kind of person living within that habitation, which is one thing that sculpture helps you to do. Imagine Roark's Stoddard Temple without Mallory's nude statue of Dominique -- or the statue without the temple -- and you can grasp concretely what I mean by this point.<sup>20</sup> Thus,

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<sup>19</sup> Langer (1953) uses the term "ethnic domain" (95).

<sup>20</sup> See Rand ([1943] 1968, 451).

I disagree with both Torres and Kamhi (2000), who claim that the temple "depends for its meaning on the figurative sculpture at its center" (197) and Enright (2001, who claims that "the textual evidence is to the contrary" (349). Instead, I think it's clear that the statue and the temple synergistically enhanced each other's meaning, which would have nonetheless been considerable standing alone.

The one point that Langer, Rand, and Tracinski all stress is that what is essential to architecture is not the re-creation of *things from reality*, but the creation of a microcosm. Langer writes: "A universe created by man and for man...-- not, indeed, by simulating natural objects...-- is the spatial *semblance* of a world, because it is made in actual space, yet is not systematically continuous with the rest of nature in a complete democracy of places" (97). (This, by the way, is the architectural equivalent of the proscenium in theater, and the frame in painting. Like these other art forms, architecture stands apart from the world, even while it may be harmonizing with portions of it.) Tracinski (1998) notes:

As Ayn Rand points out, [architecture] does not produce a re[-]creation of reality. It does not show us, for example, a building in the shape of a human figure. Nor does it attempt to directly imitate man's natural environment...Architecture does what no other art can do. All other art forms re[-]create some portion of the world -- a single human figure, or a two-dimensional scene on a canvas...Architecture creates a man-made, *idealized world* -- an environment created by the architect... (10-11).

Note that Tracinski all but says the microcosm or "idealized world" is itself a re-creation of reality. This is a telling example of the grip still held by the narrower or "naive" re-creation model. Furthermore, I think it's clear that Langer, Rand, and Tracinski are wrong about the presence of the secondary level of re-creation in architecture, as well. It is subtler than a portrait of a person or a still-life, for instance -- which no doubt feeds into the tendency not to see it -- but it is there, just as surely as it is there in a landscape painting, for example. Tracinski (1998) herself observes that such a painting "may not portray any actual human figure, but...still conveys a view of the world in which man lives" (11). The landscape may convey a view of the world as being dangerous and hostile, or peaceful and benign, or dynamic and exciting, etc., but it cannot do so without *some* use of entities and their attributes and (at least implied) actions. Sharply thrusting mountains, decaying trees, a surging ocean tide, etc. are all *things from reality* that can be re-created in a painting, even if no garden-variety "representational" entities (such as human beings) are in evidence. What is important is that the view of man's relationship to the world is conveyed at least *indirectly*. And the same is true in architecture, as Tracinski's wonderfully detailed examples of Wright's Fallingwater and Gehry's Weisman Art Museum clearly illustrate.

As a brief indication of how re-creation of reality operates on the secondary level in architecture, one example will have to suffice. Fallingwater has cantilevered terraces that

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jut out at right angles to one another and are supported by central stone masses. As Tracinski observes, it is "Wright's choice of these particular stone masses and these exact right-angle cantilevers [that] creates a balancing of forces that produces a sense of dynamic harmony" (14). The structurally stable appearance of Fallingwater results from those "active, counteracting forces" (15). It is the creation, in a new form, of stability through counteracting forces between parts of Fallingwater that re-creates the kind of entities that relate to one another in this manner in the natural world. The result is, on the level of the microcosm, the impression of a world that is "rationally ordered, harmoniously integrated, and seamless joined with nature. It tells us that the world makes sense...The theme of Fallingwater is rational order and its consequence: man's harmony with this world" (22).

Langer (1953) illustrates the various worlds of which architecture can create a "semblance" -- i.e., the various ways in which it can re-create reality in the primary sense. In all cases, the world created by architecture "is the counterpart of a Self. It is a total environment made visible. Where the Self is collective, as in a tribe, its World is communal" (98). Architectural products reflecting the collective or public aspect of human existence thus take the form of temples, tombs, fortresses, halls, theaters, etc. For an individual self (or, by extension, his family), the world created is the home. Because a human being's actual environment, Langer says, "is a system of functional relations, so a virtual 'environment,' the created space of architecture, is a symbol of functional existence" (98).

Architecture and sculpture are, Langer says, are exact complements of one another. "Each articulates one half of the life-symbol directly and the other by implication; whichever we start with, the other is its background" (101). While sculpture and architecture can and do stand alone, they also are able to supplement each other, to help each other articulate their clear meanings "that would otherwise be lost" (102), or might be less emphatically articulated, as in the *Fountainhead* example above.

To Langer, there is no question as to the metaphysical significance and esthetic meaning of architecture. Although her terminology differs from that adopted in this essay, it is clear that she viewed architecture as the creation of a microcosm and thus, in this sense, would have agreed that it is also the "re-creation of reality." Presented with examples such as Tracinski's, it is also clear that she (and Tracinski and Rand) would have conceded that there is also a subtle form of *secondary* re-creation of reality in architecture. These considerations lead us to reject the second of Rand's three premises that resulted in her erroneously abandoning her view that architecture is a form of art.

*b. Art as necessarily though not exclusively non-utilitarian.*

It now remains to be considered how serious an obstacle the utilitarian function of architectural works presents for Rand's view that a restriction to a certain kind of *non-utilitarian* function is a distinguishing feature of artworks. There is no question that architecture is intended to have a practical physical function. But is practicality and attractiveness *all* there is to architecture? And there is no question that artworks are intended to have a non-utilitarian, contemplative function. But must artworks be *exclusively*

non-utilitarian in their essence? These rhetorical questions are intended to suggest that the standard utilitarian-contemplative distinction is a false dichotomy. They are intended to suggest that the more reasonable approach is to consider art as being able, in some instances, to serve both a utilitarian purpose and a contemplative purpose, and to adopt a three-place classification scheme to reflect this reality. The rigid two-place scheme, with the exclusively non-utilitarian criterion art, is probably what led Rand into her conflicted position on architecture, and is probably the reason why, shortly before her death, she apparently abandoned her view that architecture is art.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, Rand chose to reject the view required by her definition of "art" that architecture is a re-creation of reality, rather than to abandon the traditional premise that art is exclusively non-utilitarian. What she failed to address is the fact that utility and contemplation are not mutually exclusive functions, but lie on a continuum. Along this continuum, there are clear-cut cases of exclusively utilitarian function, equally definitive instances of exclusively contemplative function, and still other obvious examples where both functions are fulfilled. Architecture is not the only art form that fits this pattern, as the wide variety of "functional music" and esthetic music illustrates.

Purists can object to the use of Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance" for a processional march as being a perversion or negation of its artistic status, but the simple fact is that it is a very effective utilitarian piece of music. (And there are others, such as Wagner's "Bridal March" from *Lohengrin*.) Yet, its *use* as a processional does not thereby make it non-art. What is essential is not whether it *is* used only for contemplation of a world-in-miniature, but that it *can* be used in this way. If one can mentally filter out the utilitarian aspects of its use, so that one can discern a microcosm conveying metaphysical value judgments, then it is a re-creation of reality.

Similarly, a visitor to one of Frank Lloyd Wright's masterfully designed buildings, is perfectly capable of an act of selective attention, by which he abstracts away (visually tunes out) all the people living or working in it. He can then focus on it as an image of a certain kind of human habitation, and on what it implies about the basic nature of the world and of human life. This is completely parallel to what he can do in regard to a statue (as an image of a certain kind of human, and what it implies about the basic nature of the world and of human life) -- apart from its accepted, if not intended use as a pigeon roost!

Thus, Rand's third premise, too, must be abandoned -- or, rather, modified to reflect the hybrid status of utilitarian-and-esthetic works such as architecture. That premise should be: whatever its other functions, a thing can only be art if it *also* is capable of fulfilling the

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<sup>21</sup> On their website, <http://aristos.org/whatart/ch10.htm>, Torres and Kamhi provide evidence indicating that Rand may have suggested to Binswanger that he omit an entry for architecture in *The Ayn Rand Lexicon*, on the grounds that architecture's being utilitarian conflicted with her premise that art is essentially non-utilitarian. This interpretation of Rand's and Binswanger's conversation cannot be considered conclusive, however, since an entry for "Visual Art" was allowed to stand, in which architecture was included along with sculpture and painting.

non-utilitarian function of conveying basic abstractions by embodiment in a world-in-miniature. Architecture is capable of doing this; so it is art.

As the various examples above were intended to illustrate, there is much that architecture can do to imitate things from nature or re-create things from reality, in the secondary sense. Architecture truly does imitate nature and re-create reality, so long as those actions are not construed so stringently as to require attempts to portray persons or things and their actions, as in paintings and literature. These secondary re-creations are the necessary means to the building up of an artwork, an esthetic microcosm that presents an image of a world or whole. As we will see in the next and final part of this essay, there is much of this sort of thing happening in music, too.

### **C. Another difficult case: music as microcosm**

Creation of "virtual space" is common to all works of plastic art; but that is only the making of the *universe* in which the symbolic form exists [emphasis added, Langer 1952, 79]...Space, in music, is a *secondary illusion*...a universe of pure *sound*, an audible world...[emphasis in original, Langer 1952, 117, 104]

In the first part of this essay, I sought to clarify the meaning of a crucial component of Ayn Rand's definition of "art" -- viz., art as a "re-creation of reality." I argued that Rand's definition of "art" is essentially correct and derives from the insight that art is one important form in which human beings are able to create a world-in-miniature, a *microcosm*. In the second part of this essay, I discussed the concepts of "esthetic experience," "esthetic attitude," and "esthetic distance" and their importance to our experience of art. The frame for the painting, the pedestal for the statue, the proscenium for the stage -- these all mark the esthetic boundary between this world and the world of an artwork, and they all testify to the truth of Rand's definition. On the basis of that clarification, the question of what reality *music* re-creates takes on a whole new meaning.

The answer seems to lie in music's ability to give rise to sensory and mental processes that have qualities and inter-relationships similar to those in other very specific experiences. The impressions that these conscious processes give rise to can, under ideal conditions, be quite vivid. They are the natural basis of program music, such as Beethoven's 6th Symphony and Richard Strauss' Alpine symphony -- and applied program music, such as opera and movies and television soundtracks. Similarities are commonly experienced between certain kinds of musical passages and visual experience and our mental grasping of a goal-directed series of events. To the extent that one's mind experiences the musical sounds in a way analogous to its experience of goal-directed progressions, the musical sounds are the *creation of an image of* such events and the *re-creation of* such events. Again, on the primary level, the musical work is both the *creation of an image of* reality and the *re-creation of* reality -- to the extent that it functions as a microcosmic context for the musical sounds.

As I will show, what is unique about music is *not*, as Rand claims, that it affords different levels of complexity and ease of integration (which *all* the temporal, dramatic arts do). Instead, the unique value of music lies in the fact that it does this in the field of *auditory perception*, rather than in concepts and language, as does literary drama. In other respects, such as characterization and plot (and granting that there is valuable literature and music that does not contain one or the other), they are strikingly parallel.

### 1. Virtues and shortcomings of Rand's esthetics of music

When art as a metaphysically slanted re-creation of reality is understood as a kind of microcosm, it becomes clear that, even for the problematic case of music, Rand (1969) has got it right: "...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, etc....[O]ne feels: 'Yes, *this* is *my* world and *this* is how I should feel!' or: 'No, this is not the world as I see it'" (61). Music, like all art, is the creation of *another version* of this reality (hence, reality is re-created), a micro-world containing some of the *kinds* of things (including, but not limited to, emotions) that are present in this world -- though not necessarily the attempt to replicate *particular instances* of those kinds.

This point must be understood particularly in regard to emotions, which in a real sense *are* things from reality, and which are often held to be the subject matter of music, music supposedly being (unlike the other arts) a kind of "language of the emotions." The microcosm view of music does *not* amount to a claim, as Torres and Kamhi (2000) allege, that an *emotional* or *feeling state* (or even a long succession of them) is a world-in-miniature. Emotional and feeling states are *things from reality* that in representational form, become "furniture" or content of the new, idealized reality, the imaginary world that arises within work of music, just as they are present in other dramatic art forms such as the novel or a stage presentation. To repeat: the world-in-miniature in music is *not* the emotional or feeling states "re-created" in aural form. Instead, the musical microcosm is the whole aural *vista* the listener is presented, *within which* secondary re-creations of feeling states and other phenomena can be and often are presented as content to help flesh out the more specific nature of that vista.

Further, while the emotions are undeniably a *real* aspect of reality and should not be denied the status of representation in music merely because they are internal processes, music is by no means unique in functioning as a "language of the emotions." In so functioning, music must follow pretty much the same general procedures as literature and theatrical drama at *their* most effective. A panoramic vista must be presented or implied, and within that vista must be presented perceivable figures that serve to embody the basic view of the world that the vista represents; and music does this no more and no less than the other arts. Thus, the myth that music is the "language of the emotions" is only true in the sense that *all* art is the language of the emotions, i.e., of one's sense of life. Rand's comment (1971) that music "evokes man's sense-of-life emotions" (46) is no less true for any of the other arts.

In general, while emotionally related impressions and series of events *must* be conveyed by *some* means, they *may* be conveyed by *any* means consistent with the nature of art as re-creation of reality. In particular, if concrete-level emotions are to be suggested by music, it is by presenting a *musical* analogy to the internal and external physical accompaniments of the emotions. Also, if abstract-level progressions of emotions are to be suggested by music, it is by presenting a series of *musical* events that entice the listener to engage in a progression of mental processes that generate, develop, and resolve (or thwart) his expectations.

In this respect, the physical accompaniments of emotions are conveyed by *characterization* in literature and music, while the progressions of emotions are conveyed by *plot* in literature and music. Musical characterization is the composer's means for inducing listeners to experience a melody as if it were a single dynamic musical entity behaving in a certain way and/or having things happen to it. Musical plot is the composer's means for inducing listeners to experience a musical form as it is were a single dynamic musical *process*, in intricate system of means and ends (or causes and effects) aiming at a certain musical goal(s).

The nature of concrete-level characterization and action in music has long been the subject of much disagreement. On the broader level, however, the analogy between purposefulness or goal-directedness conveyed by progressions of musical events and plot in literature has long been acknowledged by music theorists and laymen alike.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, on the one hand, Rand might plausibly be excused for not seeing the parallel between melody and concrete-level actions of literary characters. On the other hand, however, the major emphasis that she places on the presence of teleology or goal-directedness in Romantic literature<sup>23</sup> leads one to reasonably expect her to have incorporated insights about that factor into her writings on music. Indeed, her essays are rife with statements about both plot and characterization that can be directly extended to music. For instance, Rand (1968) says: "A plot is a purposeful progression of logically connected events leading to the resolution of a climax" (82). "The plot of a novel serves the same function as the steel skeleton of a skyscraper: it determines the use, placement and distribution of all the other elements...Just as one cannot pile extraneous weight or ornamentation on a building without regard for the strength of its skeleton, so one cannot burden a novel with irrelevancies without regard for its plot. The penalty, in both cases, is the same: the collapse of the structure" (84). "Since the nature of an action is determined by the nature of the entities that act, the action of a novel has to proceed from and be consistent with the nature of its characters (87)".

Moreover, some of her own best esthetics theorizing would seem to *demand* such application. Commenting on the "popular notion that a reader of fiction 'identifies himself

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<sup>22</sup> See Leonard B. Meyer (1967) for one of the clearest expositions of goal-directedness in music. Such music, from Bach to Bartok, he refers to as "teleological." (71-2).

<sup>23</sup> See especially Rand 1969a, 99-105; Rand 1968, 82-87.

with' some character or character(s) of a story," Rand (1966a) explains that:

[T]o identify with" is "a colloquial designation for a process of abstraction: it means to observe a common element between the character and oneself, to draw an abstraction from the character's problems and apply it to one's own life. Subconsciously, without any knowledge of esthetic theory, *this is the way in which most people react to fiction and to all other forms of art.* (37, first emphasis in original, second emphasis added).

Arthur Koestler (1965) concurs, at least in the case of literature, for which "The magic tie is identification," (345) a mental state that results when one allows the subject/object distinction between oneself and another person or thing to blur or fade away. This happens by means of an act of projection, introjection, or empathy. Such a process can occur whether it is performed toward another *real*, physically existing person or toward an illusory, fictional person, as in a movie, play, or novel. In either case, one has "for the moment more or less forgotten [one's] own existence and participates in the existence of another at another place and time." (278) Koestler further says that "the extent to which a character in a novel 'lives' depends on the intensity of the reader's participatory ties with him," i.e., upon the "partial breakdown of the crust of personal identity" (345). In other words, identification depends upon one's temporarily *inhibiting* one's "self-assertive tendencies" and momentarily *suspending* one's own anxieties, ambitions, and other concerns (278). "This remains true," Koestler says, "regardless whether the reader admires, despises, hates or loves the fictional character" (345-6).

Presumably "all other forms of art" is intended to include music. Yet, the reader of "Art and Cognition" (Rand 1971, 50-64) would scarcely realize that we respond to music in this way. That there is indeed an *existential* basis for our identification process in music, and not just a rather vague sort of abstraction suggested by the interaction between our stored memories and values and the cognitive processes taking place during musical perception. That, as listeners, *we do in fact identify ourselves with the tones and melodies taking place in music*, as surely as if they were characters in a novel or a play. That, as listeners, *we do in fact get drawn into progressions of musical events*, as surely as if they were the events in the plot of a novel or play.

The Rosetta Stone that once and for all reveals the fundamental similarity between the psychological mechanisms that operate in our response to dramatic music and literature was unearthed by Steven Pinker (1997) in his account of a film made by social psychologists Heider and Simmel (1944). The plot of their movie consists of the striving of a protagonist to achieve a goal, the interference by an antagonist, and the final success of the protagonist with the aid of a helper. The "stars" of this movie are three dots (!), which Pinker says it is impossible *not* to see as "*trying* to get up [a] hill...*hindering* [the first dot]...and *helping* it reach its goal." (322) The point is that people, even toddlers, "interpret certain motions...as animate agents [which] propel themselves, usually in service of a goal." (322) The behavior of musical tones in dramatic music is completely analogous to that of

these dots and is naturally, unavoidably experienced in the same way.

The process of identification, as described by Rand 1966a and Koestler 1964, however, is almost too cerebral, too intellectualized a process to completely account for our emotional attachment to an unfolding literary or musical process. The missing key ingredient is *empathy*, the awareness that one has an internal sense of -- one feels "in one's gut," so to speak -- what another person is feeling, or what feeling a character or musical passage is portraying. It is the closest that human beings can come to mental telepathy, the *impression* that they are actually inside another person's skin or head, experiencing what the other person is going through.

This impression, paradoxically, arises from one's own internal body awareness which is *also* a form of perception, even though it is commonly distinguished from perception of the world outside one's body by various labels such as "sensation," "proprioception," or "interoception."<sup>24</sup> When one attributes one's own internal body state to a person or character that one is raptly observing, this completes the emotional circuit that makes one's identification with that person or character fully and convincingly real.

Much the same thing happens in musical experience in which, for example, the tension in one's perception of dissonant musical tones or one's uncertainty about what is going to happen next is projected back into the music, and a melody is perceived as anguished or a musical passage as suspenseful. Once one's own inner state is projected onto another person or character or musical passage (especially melody), the emotions portrayed by the "body language" and goal-directed actions are attributed with the flavor of one's own experience and thus acquire the semblance or appearance of *real* emotions.<sup>25</sup>

This is the mechanism underlying psychological identification in general, which more specifically allows not just music, but all of the dramatic arts to function as a "language of the emotions." As such, it is also the basis of the experienced similarity between music and literature, all of the necessary ingredients for the identification of which, as noted, Rand seemed to possess. Consider, for instance, her moving description ([1957] 1992) of Richard Halley's "Concerto of Deliverance:"

It was a symphony of triumph. The notes flowed up, they spoke of rising and they were the rising itself, they were the essence and the form of upward motion, they seemed to embody every human act and thought that had ascent as its motive. It was a sunburst of sound, breaking out of hiding and spreading open. It had the freedom of release and the tension of purpose. It swept space clean, and left nothing but the joy of an unobstructed effort. Only a faint echo within the

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<sup>24</sup> This distinction is discussed in more detail in the third section below. Also see Damasio 1994, 232; Kagan 1994, 285-90; and Bissell 1997a.

<sup>25</sup> I am indebted to my wife, Becky, for pressing me to expand upon these points.

sounds spoke of that from which the music had escaped, but spoke in laughing astonishment at the discovery that there was no ugliness or pain, and there never had had to be. It was the song of an immense deliverance (20).

In stark contrast to the above passage, Ayn Rand's last, best attempt to explain our experience of music is flawed by a regrettable pair of failures. She has failed the signal failure to even acknowledge, let alone explain, the extensive structural and functional analogy between music and literary drama, as well as the fundamental similarities in our responses to them.

Fully redressing this shortcoming in the Objectivist esthetics will require consideration of the musical, psychological, and physiological factors that underlie the analogies to spatial location and motion and goal-directedness. The former analogy has been given rigorous treatment in Bissell 1999, so the aim of this part of the essay will be to focus on the latter analogy, along the lines explored by Meyer (1967, 1973, 1989, 2000).

(Note: Sections 2-4 are not included in this version)

### **5. The Analogy to Goal-Directedness in Music and the Musical-Literary Analogy**

Consider the following imaginary situation. Suppose I observe a man at a number of indifferent, isolated times, and suppose I gradually notice an overall integrating factor that unites all the different, single glimpses of him. Then suppose I mentally integrate these separate awarenesses into a single mental unit, a single action-progression undertaken by the man. Now, what is the metaphysical status of this man, the referent of this integrated product of awareness? Is he an "entity" only by virtue of my having integrated my awarenesses of him as he engages in an action-progression? No, he has been an entity who existed at all of the times that I was aware of him, and who also happens to have engaged in an action-progression. Even though I base this integrated awareness upon a number of discrete, separate awarenesses, rather than an unbroken continuity, I am still aware of a single, unitary man, persisting through time. I do this to the extent that I recognize certain essential things that are the same in each of my separate awarenesses of the man at time 1, time 2, etc. This experience of identity-as-persistence-through-time is, of course, an inference. It is an extension from our simpler awareness of persistence-through-time that is based on continuous, unbroken observation.

Something very similar happens in our awareness of a melody. We hear a progression of tones with different pitches and with approximately the same tone color and volume, and we experience the pattern as a unit. When, later in a musical piece, we hear the same progression of tones but played, perhaps, in a different key, at a different tempo, by a different instrument, etc., it is still perceived and recognized by the experienced listener as the *same melody*. And this is essentially the same as our numerous separate awarenesses of a man as being awarenesses of the same man. This clear-cut analogy is the basis for two very significant types of experience in music: the awareness of an illusion or semblance of

physical motion and of goal-directed action.

As already noted (viz., the discussion above of the 1944 Heider-Simmel film experiment), human beings have a natural propensity to interpret and respond to even the *semblance* of physical motion in anthropomorphic terms. This feature of melody thus constitutes a major part of the explanation of why we respond to an unfolding musical process similarly to the way we respond to the actions of people in literature, drama, and real life. Melody is able to provide a convincing and engaging analogy to an entity — specifically, a literary character — engaged in physical movements and gestures.

As striking as this analogy is, however, it is but a partial explanation of music's emotional effect, and for two reasons. First, the analogy between music and space is necessarily an incomplete one. It is certainly possible (though regrettably beyond the scope of this essay) to pursue a more detailed correlation of tonal attributes such as texture, rhythm, and harmony to spatial attributes. The analogy, however, would become more and more tenuous, as we attempted to integrate less well-defined correlations into the whole. While a pair of countermelodies, for instance, might plausibly be compared to a pair of lovers or combatants, (for a plausible example of the former, consider the middle section of Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G Minor), at some point the attempted one-to-one matching of nuances becomes simply pointless.

There will be leftover musical details and aspects of one's emotional response that (as discussed above in the Introduction) relate more to the felt qualities of tone than to the semblance of motion per se. 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.<sup>26</sup>

Secondly and more importantly, however, if purely physical action were the only analogy that music were capable of portraying, many of us would find music dull and uninteresting in rather short order, just as we do literature that presents little more than fist fights, chase scenes, and battles. Meaningful activity in general involves more than mere physical motion. To borrow a few of Rand's choicer words (1968): "Since art is a concretization of values, there are not many errors as bad esthetically — or as dull — as...physical action divorced from any psychological conflict or intellectual value-meaning" (86-7).

As a matter of fact, however, certain music *is* experienced as being analogous to more than just physical motion. Quite often we hear not only "the essence and form of upward motion...the freedom of release...the joy of an unobstructed effort," but also the "triumph...the tension of purpose." That is, we often experience events in music as seeming to be *purposeful* and *logically connected*, leading to the resolution of a climax. This, then,

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<sup>26</sup> See Lippman 1952, 243-246, 250-252; Kurth 1947, 116-136.

is a second level on which the attentive listener will note a similarity between dramatic music and literary drama. On the more concrete level, the parallel drawn is between melodic movement and actions of characters; on the more abstract level, between melodic-harmonic progression and plot.

This resemblance between such progressions of musical events and *plot* in literature is unmistakable and not at all accidental. A most lucid exposition of the nature of goal-directedness in music is offered by Meyer (1967):

What characterizes the music with which most of us are most familiar - the music of Bach or Haydn, Wagner or Bartok? Their compositions differ in many important ways: in melodic style, rhythmic organization, harmonic idiom, texture, and instrumental timbre. But they are alike in one fundamental respect. In their music, tones are related to and imply one another....Such music is perceived as having a purposeful direction and goal. As we listen, we make predictions -- albeit unconscious ones -- about where the music is going and how it will get there. Of course, our predictions may not be correct. What we may expect may or may not occur or may do so at an unexpected time or in an unexpected way. But whether expected or not, what actually does take place is colored by the fact that predictions were made. That is, musical events are felt to be normal and regular, surprising, amusing, or even shocking, as they conform to, or deviate from, our predictions. Such goal-directed music I shall call *teleological* (71-2).

In contrast, as Meyer points out, much avant-garde music is "anti-teleological." That is, it sets no goals, stirs no expectations, and is essentially directionless. Auditory disorder and lack of perceivable organization is pursued by some composers through the systematic use of chance as a compositional technique, while others (perhaps ironically) achieve the same effect through "total ordering" or "serialization" of a number of the aspects of music (e.g., pitch, duration, timbre, dynamics, etc.). Common to both these approaches is a deliberate and consistent avoidance of any kind of musical syntax that would organize musical tones and relate them to one another, thus creating a musical foundation for prediction and expectation and goal-directedness.

Nearly all music in our culture, however, is experienced as being goal-directed and not merely as "tone in motion," because the melodic motion takes place within a context of harmonic and rhythmic relationships between tones. For any given musical style system, and for any given musical piece at any given time, certain relationships are experienced as being more probable or less probable than other relationships. That is, it will seem more likely that a tone or group of tones will be succeeded by one particular tone or group of tones, rather than some other tone or group of tones.

Now, tones may be related to and appear to imply one another merely, on the one hand, because we have heard them in such a relation so many times in the past that the relationship and our expectation of it are automatized. On the other hand, the expectation may arise because of some natural or inherent relationship among the tones (as discovered by the listener). (In fact, some of the relationships which appear to be of the latter type are actually only conventional ones. And conversely, some apparently conventional relationships are based upon natural relations. I shall discuss one prime example of this directly.) In either case, as Meyer (1967) notes, it is true that:

What remains constant from style to style are not scales, modes, harmonies, or manners of performance, but the psychology of human mental processes [whether operating on convention or natural relationships in reality] -- the ways in which the mind, operating within the context of [whatever] culturally established norms [exist in any given situation], selects and organizes the stimuli that are presented to it (7).

The broad stylistic system that has pre-dominated between the Renaissance and the present day -- and which consists of tonal harmony based upon the diatonic scale -- allows for probably the most precise, striking sense of relationship between successions of tones and chords (harmonies) that is possible within any style system. There is a firm mathematical-physiological basis for this experience, too: the connections between the partials of the various harmony tones and the fundamentals (or roots) of the harmonies involved.<sup>27</sup> Since some of these relationships are felt physiologically as being more direct than others, they are more highly expected to occur in a piece than other, less-direct-feeling ones. So, we subconsciously expect, or regard as probable, that the tones existing in these relationships will follow one another, as opposed to the tones existing in less direct relationships. This gives rise to the anticipation of definite projected melodic and harmonic goals -- even if only on a subconscious and subverbal level.

Thus, there is a natural basis in tonal harmonic music -- and to a ore limited extent in other types of music, as well -- for experiencing in musical events a logically connected progression, which is perceived as such. And that logically connected progression seems purpose or goal-directed, because certain melodic-harmonic-rhythmic goals are most strongly implied and expected in a given piece of music. Such a progression or sequence could not be constructed or experienced in music unless the main "character" of the music (the main melodic phrase, motif, theme, etc.) were engaged in the "pursuit" of some purpose -- unless, that is, the melody appeared to be motivated by some goal(s) which direct its action. Meyer (1967) explains how:

The "character"...of a piece of music will, when well-defined, influence our expectations about subsequent musical events,..., just as our estimate of the character of an individual will influence our expectations about his behavior in a given

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<sup>27</sup> See Helmholtz, 350-362, 364.

set of circumstances. Conversely, the way in which expectations are satisfied, delayed, or blocked plays an important part in the characterization of [a melody], in the same way that we make inferences about an individual's character on the basis of his behavior in a particular...situation (7).

We may thus be said to *understand* a melody, in the same sense that we use with regard to persons or literary characters, whenever we understand *why it acts as it does* -- i.e., when we understand a melody's actions and know what to expect of it. We understand the "musical motivation" of the melody. We have grasped the stylistic premises or principles, if only subconsciously, which form the melody's character and "move" it to action. To paraphrase Rand in carrying this analogy further: to re-create the reality of his melody, to make both its nature and its actions intelligible, it is their musical motivation that a composer has to reveal. He may do it gradually, revealing it bit by bit, building up the evidence as the music progresses, but at the end of the musical work, the listener must know *why* the melody did the things it did -- even if this is only realized subconsciously by the listener.<sup>28</sup> This is the basic outline of a compositional approach often used in "serious" or "classical" music. It accounts for the common observation that such music seems to "tell a story." Composers have often used a single (or several) melodic ideas (phrases, motifs, etc.) in order to tie together (unify) their multi-movement works. The melodic material appears within varying harmonic and rhythmic circumstances, thus lending each movement a different mood or outlook. Two accessible examples of this style of composition are Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5 in D minor.<sup>29</sup>

Although a discussion of the four major attributes of a piece of teleological music is beyond the scope of this essay, it is interesting to note the inter-relationship between musical plot and musical characterization. To paraphrase Rand again: the musical events (of the plot) depend on the characterization of the melodies (tones) which enact them -- and the musical characterizations cannot be achieved except through the events of the musical plot. But although these two attributes are inseparable in a good piece of teleological music, it is still the case that the crucial attribute is (as in literature) *plot*: "a *purposeful* progression of logically connected events leading to the resolution of a climax." Implicit in musical plot structure is the metaphysical premise of *volition* or final causation -- "i.e., the process of choosing a goal, then taking steps to achieve it" (Rand 1968, 47). That is, a fundamental view of man's nature and the nature of the world in which he lives --viz., that *life is value-oriented* -- is implicit in the attribute of plot in music.<sup>30</sup> Thus, we see that the same meaning that Rand attaches to Romanticism in literature applies wholesale to music. Most music of the past 400 years or so is "Romantic" to a degree, in being teleological or goal-directed in

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<sup>28</sup> The details of this analogy derive from Rand (1968, 52-3).

<sup>29</sup> For a more theoretical discussion of musical motifs, based upon insights of Meyer, Koestler, and Gestalt psychology, see Pike (1971, 79-81).

<sup>30</sup> See Rand 1969 (99-105) for a discussion of the relation between Romanticism, volition, and values.

character; but the music that most strongly emphasizes the plot device of the climax was written right in the heart of the era commonly referred to as the Romantic Period (approximately 1820-1900).

A case might be made that goal-directedness (i.e., "plotfulness") is the highest rational esthetic value that can be obtained from a piece of music -- higher, for instance, than the sensuous aspect of music, as embodied in the various timbres and textures the composer uses. Whether or not goal-directedness is the rationally best musical value, however, it is not the *only* rationally proper value to seek and obtain from music. There are indeed many lesser, rationally proper values to be found in music -- rhythm and tone color (along with texture), to name but two. Some of the world's most exciting, beautiful music *emphasizes* these aspects, as opposed to harmonic-melodic goal-directedness -- Stravinsky's Firebird and Ravel's Bolero, for instance. It is also possible, of course, to achieve great success and creative inventiveness with these aspects, and yet keep them subordinate to (as means to the end of) goal-directedness. A composer can use them to articulate (to give definiteness in marking off) the various levels of complexity to be perceptually integrated by the listener. (A good example of this is Rachmaninoff's Variations on a Theme of Paganini.) And these are but three of the aspects of music, among literally dozens, to which one may respond favorably or unfavorably (and justifiably so), depending upon the context of one's values, experience mood, etc. Music, and the other arts -- like life in general -- is best experienced as a cornucopia, not a strait-jacket.

In this connection, and by way of concluding this part of the essay, it is appropriate to comment on Rand's suggestion, led by her view of musical tones as sensations, about the value of music. Music, Rand said (1971), is so cognitively valuable because:

Music is the only phenomenon that permits an adult to experience the process of dealing with pure sense data...Music offers man the singular opportunity to reenact, on the adult level, the primary process of his method of cognition: the automatic integration of sense data into an intelligible, meaningful entity (59).

Granted, there *is* integration involved in musical experience, but as I have already shown, it is *not* the integration of sensations. Rather, as has been made clear by Meyer (1967) and others, music involves the integration of perceived tones into ever higher hierarchical levels of perceptual complexity of pattern. And the unfolding events from which these patterns are formed are strikingly similar to the progression of events in a literary drama. Thus, I would reformulate Rand's assertion about musical value as follows: music offers us the opportunity to reenact, solely within the perceptual field of hearing, the volitional process of integrating actions and values and goals into a complex plan of goal-directed action.

This insight allows us to see, again, the subtlety and thoroughness of Rand's approach to the esthetic and philosophical evaluation of art. From a cognitive and esthetic standpoint, it is the *complexity* of an artistic microcosm that determines the kind of artwork

one will prefer (and, necessarily, value). From a motivational and metaphysical standpoint, it is the *emotionality* of the microcosm that determines which of a group of similarly complex artworks that one will enjoy (and, necessarily, value). As Rand (1971) clearly indicates, although the degree of complexity and ease of integration is the basic factor in determining musical preference, the re-creation of reality as a *microcosm* is all-important in determining what one will enjoy (and, necessarily, value):

Within the general category of music of equal complexity, it is the emotional element that represents the *metaphysical* aspect controlling one's enjoyment...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... (61).

Although Rand did not recognize it or explicitly connect it to her comments on music, the same aspects function in one's preferences in literature and drama. There *is* a deeply important element of complexity and ease of integration that determines whether one will prefer light fiction or heavy literature. But within either category, and any gradations in between, it is the *kind* of world, the kind of microcosm, the kind of re-creation of reality presented that determines one's values and thus enjoyment of literature. It is a simple inductive conclusion from empirical observation that this is one important way that value operates in *all* the temporal, dramatic arts including, most significantly for this discussion, music.

Thus, like architecture, music contains valuable types of secondary re-creations of reality more subtle than the traditional stereotype of portraiture -- and it employs these images in the service of creating a primary re-creation of reality, the musical microcosm. Musical characterization, including the sense of melodic motion; musical plot, including the sense of melodic-harmonic-rhythmic goal-directedness -- these and other factors work together to create the sense of a musical *world*. As a composer and performer, I find that my own experience of music very much parallels that of Ayn Rand in regard to story-writing -- and I know that I am far from alone.

## Conclusion

Architecture and music have strong similarities to one another, despite their considerable differences. And they both have deep commonalities with the other forms of art, despite the very significant ways in which they are unique. In specifying *how* architecture and music re-create reality on the primary and secondary levels, we have also shown that they are more generally like the other arts in the fact *that* they do so. All art, including music and architecture, *must* re-create reality in *some* form, but *may* do so in *any* form, consistent with the nature of the physical medium employed and the cognitive mode addressed by a particular type of art. This is as we would expect, if philosophy of art is to have one fundamental explanation for all of the arts that also amounts to a "Grand Unified Theory of the *Arts*." In order to be separate species of art, they must have their own

distinguishing characteristics; but in order to all be members of the genus of art, they must also all possess the common denominator for works of art. Differentiation and integration must work together -- in art, as it is in nature.

### Acknowledgments

This essay is adapted from "The Nature of Art, Deriving a Rational Esthetics" and "The Nature of Music, Evaluating Music Objectively," the third and fourth chapters of an unpublished manuscript, *Esthetics, Objectively*. I was commissioned to write this manuscript in 1971 by Equity Incorporated (Milo A. Schield, Joel Myklebust, and Douglas B. Rasmussen), and I completed it in 1991. I appreciate very much their generous financial support of my research and writing, as well as their providing the opportunity to present portions of my work at a series of Equitarian Associates conferences around the Midwest between 1971 and 1974. Earlier versions of portions of this essay appeared in *Journal of Ayn Rand Studies*, *Objectivity*, and *ART Ideas* and received welcome critical input from Thomas V.V. Burnham, Stephen Boydston, Louis Torres, Michelle Kamhi, Dean Brooks, and Becky Bissell. I am especially grateful to Kamhi and Torres for their encouragement to develop for publication my views on the imitation and re-creation models of art and on Rand's analysis of music and perception. Regardless of our differences in substance and emphasis, we are in full agreement that public attention to and critical analysis of Ayn Rand's esthetics views are long overdue. This monograph and their own *What Art Is* (2000) represent a continuing attempt to remedy that situation.

The realist theory of intentionality on which I base my analyses of perceptual cognition and symbols is presented in Parker and Veatch 1959, Sellars 1922, and Warren 1970. The formulations and applications to esthetics and music psychology, however, are my own. I also rely heavily upon the sources and insights into the perceptual experience of musical pitch provided by Lippman 1952.

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## **Endnotes**