

## The Rewriting of Ayn Rand's Spoken Answers

*Robert L. Campbell*

Since Ayn Rand's death in 1982, her Estate has gradually put nearly all of her literary remains into print. Rand's heir Leonard Peikoff (1984) personally edited her unpublished fiction; he has subsequently assigned editorial duties to a small group of writers affiliated with the Ayn Rand Institute or with him personally. Over the years, the project has covered her unpublished letters, journals, and diaries (Mayhew 1995; Berliner 1995; Harriman 1997; Valliant 2005) and her recorded speeches and answers to questions (Boeckmann 2000; Mayhew 2001; 2005).

Now that the effort has wound to its conclusion, with a compilation of Rand's radio interviews (Podritske and Schwartz 2009), a thorough assessment of the editing to which all of this material has been subjected seems overdue.

Literary executors have been unpleasantly stereotyped on account of efforts, sometimes sorely misguided, to protect the late writer's reputation. Why else would readers be just now about to receive an unexpurgated autobiography from Mark Twain, who died 100 years ago (Rohter 2010)?

Still, the estates of many writers have put a premium on historical accuracy and on the archival preservation of vital documents.

Under Leonard Peikoff, however, the Estate of Ayn Rand has often operated by a different set of priorities: the inculcation of philosophical ideas approved by its leader and the promotion of Ayn Rand as their ideal embodiment.

Conferring on himself the title of "intellectual heir," Peikoff (1989a) responded to an unauthorized biography (Branden 1986) by insisting on the near-perfection of Ayn Rand as a person while discouraging those in his orbit from writing about her life in detail.

Two other unauthorized volumes have now been published (Burns 2009; Heller 2009); the closest thing to a full-length authorized production, by literary scholar Shoshana Milgram, still has no announced date of publication. And to justify his role in casting out dissenters, Peikoff (1989b) proclaimed the inherent dishonesty of virtually any system of ideas not identical to Rand's philosophy as interpreted by himself.

Pronouncing Objectivism a "closed system," Peikoff (1989b; 1993) has, on the one hand, identified it with the philosophical ideas expounded by Rand during her lifetime, no more and no less. He has staked his legitimacy on transmitting what she taught him, unmediated by any intellectual contribution or significant interpretation of his own.

On the other hand, Peikoff (1989b; 1993) has put himself forward as the authoritative interpreter of Rand's actual meaning, not to mention the ultimate arbiter of what will be presented in the Ayn Rand Institute's extensive education, training, and outreach programs.

If her literary executor's chosen mission is even approximately what I have described, aspects of this mission might trump historical accuracy—or even the special significance with which her followers invest Ayn Rand's words—when it comes time to ready her previously unpublished material for release. An off-the-cuff remark preserved on a recording might, on occasion, come into conflict with the image that Peikoff has projected of her. Some extemporaneous comment might contradict a tenet in the received interpretation of her thought, or refer to a person with whom she later had a falling out, or point to unexpected historical contingencies, or reveal some small aspect of her character of which her heir has preferred not to speak.

## **Rand the Unchanging**

What appears to be the Estate's vision has been starkly enunciated by Peikoff's associate James Valliant (2010):

Compared to most other thinkers, compared even to the most consistent of them, Rand was a rock of intellectual changelessness and consistency in a tumultuous sea. From her ideas about religion, to her taste in literature, to her love for America, it's actually hard to find any sharp "elbows" in

Rand's thought of any kind beyond the stylistic adjustment to differing venues for her thought.

[. . .] The process of Rand's development was largely the process of finding the right words to express her original intention and the language to fit her unique vision with precise clarity.

The Estate may be concerned to present a Peikoff-approved Rand, one who, as far as the eye could see, subscribed to the very same total philosophy that Peikoff taught under her sponsorship and has promoted since her death. This would be a Rand who never changed her mind about anything or anyone important, a Rand historically unsituated, a Rand free of transitory, potentially embarrassing sentiments or associations.

In a response to Valliant, Jennifer Burns (2010) wrote that for him:

language does not precisely express concepts or meaning: if Rand changed the language she used, it was not because her ideas changed but because she simply expanded the repertoire of words she had at her disposal.

From Valliant's position it might be taken to follow that whenever Rand's words stray from the Peikovian ideal, it isn't her thoughts that have deviated. Her words simply stand in need of correcting.

To be fair, Rand occasionally lent her own voice to this unchanging-thinker chorus. Consider the boast with which she led off a Q&A session at the Ford Hall Forum:

Q: In the last 25 years, have you had an important change of opinion?

A: Oh, I think you make it too restricted. Put it this way: in the last 64 years, I have not [lengthy applause]—not philosophical opinions. If you understand the term, that is fundamental views of the nature of man, of existence, and of the means of human knowledge and human values.

I certainly have learned a great deal in these years and in the last 25 years, and I have improved very frequently some formulation, some details of the conclusions which I reached, but never the philosophy nor the fundamentals. (Ford Hall Forum 1969, 2:07–3:23)<sup>1</sup>

At the age of 64, Rand was expecting her audience to believe that she had been subscribing to the very same philosophy since birth. And in other spoken answers, to be discussed below, she refrained from indicating her one-time devotion to Friedrich Nietzsche and from acknowledging that a single American nonfiction writer influenced her thinking between 1926 and 1946.

### **The Editing of *Ayn Rand Answers***

Standing in the way of any editorial assessment, however, has been the Estate's policy of restricting access to the Ayn Rand Archives and the archival subcollection of Ayn Rand Papers. With rare exceptions (historian Jennifer Burns being the most notable), the documents and recordings housed in the Archives have been available only to those affiliated with the Ayn Rand Institute or operating under the direction of Leonard Peikoff. Few of those who might be interested in comparing the edited treatments with the unedited originals have been in a position to do it.

What's more, those who are granted access to the original documents in the Ayn Rand Archives must receive permission from the Estate to quote from them. So past documentation of discrepancies between the originals and the edited versions has had to rely on spot comparisons with prior publications of the same material (as happened with a few of Rand's journal entries; Sciabarra 1998) or, for those who have been granted access to the Archives, it must be limited to those examples for which permission to quote has been given (Burns 2009).

There is an exception, however. Many of the question and answer periods that followed Rand's public speeches or lectures are available to the public in recorded form. The Ayn Rand Bookstore sells them on compact disks. Some, in turn, are also available as streaming audio on a website maintained by the Ayn Rand Institute.<sup>2</sup>

Anyone who wishes to go to the trouble can therefore make

detailed and extensive comparisons between Rand's actual words and the renditions in a book that was edited for the Estate by philosopher Robert Mayhew and published under the title *Ayn Rand Answers: The Best of Her Q&A*.

Mayhew's own statement, in the introduction to *Ayn Rand Answers*, makes a *prima facie* case that such comparisons are needed:

Given the extemporaneous nature of the material, it is not surprising that the transcripts required editing—as Ayn Rand herself suggested they would. At one point during her 1969 nonfiction-writing course, she said that she was a writer, not a speaker, and that she did not speak well extemporaneously. Someone replied that she should listen to her answers to questions. She responded:

“That depends on whether the question is interesting. If it's a proper question, so that I know the context from which it's asked and I know it's worth answering, that is very inspiring. Sometimes, I may give an answer that's almost publishable—but not quite. It might be good for a first draft, but it would still need editing.” (Mayhew 2005, x)

Mayhew appears to be saying that Rand's own words needed a lot of improving. The reader would be inclined to presume that he didn't fail to supply it.

Recently Burns, after examining original documents housed in the Archives, has generally described several Estate-produced volumes—Boeckmann (2000), Mayhew (2001; 2005), and Schwartz and Podritske (2009)—in the following terms: “These books are derived from archival materials but have been significantly rewritten” (2009, 293).

Consequently, I have set out to investigate the following issues concerning *Ayn Rand Answers*:

- What were Rand's original words, and how faithful was Mayhew to them?
- When Mayhew made changes, what was the rationale for them (when this can be determined)?
- Did Mayhew's editing express Rand's meaning more clearly than

she had when speaking? Did he improve in any other way on the originals?

- Finally, did this editing tend to promote a Peikoff-approved image of an unchanging thinker?

I was able to work with a fairly large data set (it is more fully described in Appendix A). It allowed me to check the originals of 201 out of the 370 answers published in the Mayhew volume, or 54% of the items appearing there. It also allowed me to check 92 answers that Mayhew chose not to use (I can't say what the percentage is of all of the unused answers, because I have not been able to check Mayhew's remaining sources, as itemized in Appendix B).

### **Mayhew's Editorial Procedure**

My research has shown that Mayhew's editing rarely left a whole sentence untouched. He rewrote nearly everything that Rand said. Many of Rand's answers were sharply abridged, and not on account of obvious repetitiveness. Mayhew also divided long or multi-section answers into separate items; wrote a new question for a section of an answer that he chose to present on its own; and rearranged parts of an answer internally.

Mayhew routinely substituted words or expressions that suited his personal taste for those that Rand was in the habit of employing. Where Rand liked to say "has to," he overwhelmingly preferred "must." In place of "Negro," he put "black." Readers of *Ayn Rand Answers* may come away with the impression that her productive vocabulary included "owing to," "the agent," "legalize," "exit poll," and "critique"—even though none of these are known to have figured in Rand's speaking or writing.

Mayhew's broader insensitivity to verbal nuance is frequently on display: a country is "Red" instead of "wrecked," "bother" is changed to "bother with," "expand" morphs into "extend." A device to which Mayhew turns again and again is putting emphasis on single words, unsupported by anything in Rand's diction or intonation.

An entirely different problem arose on a few occasions when Mayhew borrowed a bit of editing from another source—and failed to let his readers in on it. Unbeknownst to the reader, 14 of the 370 answers in Mayhew's book were actually edited by Rand herself.

Mayhew did not publicly reveal this fact until nearly 5 years after his book had gone on sale.

Most seriously, Mayhew tampered with some answers. He removed references or allusions to persons who did not remain in good odor with Rand or, subsequently, with Peikoff; he cut out discussions of potentially embarrassing biographical issues, such as the morality of amphetamine use; he avoided expressions of opinion deemed inconsistent with Peikovian Objectivism, such as her comments about the TV show "Charlie's Angels." Some answers that Mayhew chose not to use at all appear to have been excluded for comparable reasons.

To support my evaluation of Mayhew's editing, I will compare fresh transcriptions of Rand's spoken words with Mayhew's published renditions. Such comparisons can be tedious and space-consuming, so I have had to be selective. But I have provided enough extended examples to illustrate all of the salient characteristics of Mayhew's editing.

My transcriptions are purposely raw; they include all of Rand's hesitation pauses, false starts, and other disfluencies, as well as audience reactions and interjections by the moderator. When I quote from them, I present her words completely unedited. I have not adopted this policy because I think a book ought to consist of transcriptions so raw as these. Rather, it is because accurate transcriptions are the starting point for such a publication as *Ayn Rand Answers*, and providing them here will help readers get as close to the source material as possible.

Mayhew has conspicuously never taken credit for the transcriptions he used in *Ayn Rand Answers*. He invites the inference that many, if not all, were the work of other hands. One wonders whether he even did much listening to the recordings while preparing his volume. Such inattention is particularly unfortunate where Rand is concerned, because she was a native speaker of Russian, not of English. An able transcriber can help the wider English-speaking audience past such pronunciations as *wvoter* for "voter," *avoid* for "avoid," *apprahprate* for "appropriate," *warrld* for "world," *Rrreegan* for a political figure she disliked, and a "live" that is scarcely distinguishable from "leave." The misheard words that dot Mayhew's volume were most likely contributed by transcribers not fully used to Rand's

Russian accent.

## The Answers Mayhew Used

Of the 286 answers I was able to transcribe from recordings (see Appendix A for details about sources), *Ayn Rand Answers* includes 194, or just over two-thirds. After a degree of cutting, pasting, and rearranging, these 194 original answers appear as 201 published items.

Mayhew devoted all of two sentences to explicating his overall policy in editing *Ayn Rand Answers*: “Most of the editing I did consisted of cutting and line-editing to bring the material closer to the level of conciseness, clarity, and smoothness appropriate to a written work. Very little had to be cut owing to repetition” (2005, x).

From Mayhew’s standpoint, the original answers must never have been sufficiently concise, clear, or smooth. He rewrote nearly all of them.

## Cutting Up and Rearranging

Among the procedures that Mayhew employed, but did not see fit to acknowledge in his introduction, were dividing long or multi-section answers into separate parts; providing new questions for sections of an answer that he chose to present on their own; and rearranging parts of an answer internally.

For instance, Rand made guest appearances after 8 of the lectures in Peikoff’s 1976 series on *The Philosophy of Objectivism*. After Lecture 7, she was asked to comment on the just-concluded presidential election. The original questions were these three (all had been submitted in writing, so Rand read them out loud to her audience):

Do you have any comment to make on the result of the presidential election? Why did Ford lose? (Lecture 7, CD 2, Track 5, 12:35–14:25, CD 3, Track 1, 0:00–0:28)

Uhh, can it be that the sense of life reactions of the voters have changed so much over four years, or is it mostly, or 100%, the fault of Gerald Ford for evading the basic issues? Will the Republican Party have any role to play in defending capitalism, or must the issue be fought entirely on the campuses, newspapers, and in the professions? (CD 3, Track



1, 0:29–12:57)

What signs should we watch for in the Carter administration, in terms of the more dangerous policies he might adopt? And what do we do now? (CD 3, Track 1, 12:58–14:55)

Mayhew rewrote the questions to suit his mild cutting and extensive reshuffling of 17 minutes of spoken material. Here are the *four* questions *à la* Mayhew:

Could you comment on the 1976 Presidential election? Why did Ford lose? What do you expect from Carter? (2005, 69–70)

Could you comment on Ronald Reagan and his role in the 1976 presidential election? (70–71)

Has the sense-of-life reaction of Americans changed so much since the 1972 election? (71)

Will the Republican Party have a role in defending capitalism? (52–53)

Rand went to considerable lengths to blame Reagan for undercutting Ford's campaign. Because none of her questioners had brought Reagan up, Mayhew apparently felt a need to create a new question of his own.

On occasion, Mayhew took answers to different questions and consolidated them. At her 1969 Ford Hall Forum appearance, Rand gave long answers to two different questions about the Vietnam War Moratorium marches (22:07–28:42, 30:55–36:45). After much slicing and reassembly, Mayhew presented these as a single item (2005, 92–93).

On other occasions, he took a single answer and rearranged it internally. Half of Rand's question and answer period after *Philosophy: Who Needs It?* was occupied with a single exchange over racism, the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, the enslavement of African-Americans, and the ill treatment of Native Americans

(9:27–23:01). Mayhew (2005, 102–4) took 13 minutes of spoken material that fills 19 paragraphs of raw transcription, deleting Rand’s first two paragraphs and her last two, cutting most of her 8th through 10th, and moving her relatively brief remarks about the confinement of Japanese-Americans in concentration camps all the way from her 6th paragraph to the end of his truncated rendition. In a much shorter answer, about whether the principles in the Declaration of Independence were still sound (Ford Hall Forum 1972, 37:31–39:45), Mayhew moved Rand’s statement of the continuing relevance of these principles from the beginning of the answer into its final paragraph (2005, 1).

It turns out that in an introduction to an earlier project Mayhew was more forthcoming about his editorial methods. For *The Art of Nonfiction*, he declared, “Part of my job was to integrate this material into a logical presentation. Thus, within every chapter it was necessary to some extent to shift material around” (2001, xiii). The mandate to rearrange must have remained in effect when he undertook *Ayn Rand Answers*.

## Replacing Rand’s Vocabulary with Mayhew’s

Mayhew routinely substituted words or expressions that suited his own taste for those that Rand was in the habit of employing.

Nearly every “has to” became a “must” or disappeared entirely. Thus, Rand’s comment about quarantines and mandatory inoculations originally included the sentence, “Remember that in all issues of protecting someone from physical damage, before a government can properly act, there has to be a scientific, objective demonstration of an actual physical danger” (America’s Persecuted Minority 1962, CD 2, Track 2, 8:01–11:28, Track 3, 0:00–9:01; here Mayhew broke a very long answer about functions of government down into several shorter ones). Mayhew’s version reads, “In all issues of government protection against physical damage, before the government can properly act, there must be an objective demonstration of an actual physical danger” (2005, 13).

A long comment about Nietzsche and individualism included the sentence, “Now a subjectivist, a man who does not care to think, a man who wants to be guided by his feelings, his emotions, his alleged instincts, that kind of man in order to survive necessarily has to then

be a parasite on the thinking of others” (Intellectual Bankruptcy of Our Age 1962, CD 2, Track 2, 7:38–10:45, Track 3, 0:00–2:12). Mayhewized, this became, “A subjectivist is a man who does not care to think—who wants to be guided by feelings and ‘instincts.’ To survive, such a man must be a parasite on the thinking of others” (2005, 117; further issues raised by Mayhew’s handling of this answer are discussed in a later section).

In a very long answer on capitalism, altruism, and charity (Intellectual Bankruptcy 1962, CD 2, Track 1, 1:05–10:40, Track 2, 0:00–4:04), Rand said “has to” nine times; Mayhew’s brutal compression (2005, 27–29) brought the answer down to 42% of its original word count, and the has-tos down to zero.

Answering a question about mental focus and concentration, Rand said of focus that “It’s a set of your mind, it is a strictly epistemological concept, whereas ‘concentration,’ it’s more an action concept. It includes the idea of focus, of attention, and of a particular task, which takes longer than a particular moment, because you don’t concentrate for a second; but ‘concentration’ implies a time element on a c, certain, given task” (Philosophy of Objectivism 1976, Lecture 6, CD 2, Track 4, 9:14–11:05). After Mayhewizing, the passage reads, “It is the ‘set’ of your mind. It is strictly an epistemological concept, whereas concentration is more an action concept. The latter includes the idea of focus, and of a particular task that takes longer than a moment, because you don’t concentrate for a second. Concentration implies a duration or time” (2005, 154). In a much earlier answer, Rand said “I believe that he [the questioner] probably means the second” (America’s Persecuted Minority 1962, CD 2, Track 1, 1:13–5:19). Mayhew changed this to “He probably meant the latter” (2005, 48–49).

Rand sometimes wrote “the latter.” How often did she say it?

In 1962, rejecting the extension of antitrust laws to labor unions, Rand said, “Labor on many occasions has proved itself much more philosophically alert and aware of the issue of freedom than have businessmen, probably because labor leaders are still free to speak but businessmen are not—precisely because of the antitrust laws” (America’s Persecuted Minority 1962, CD 2, Track 4, 3:54–8:00). Mayhew rewrote this as “Labor is often more philosophically alert on the issue of freedom than businessmen—probably because labor

leaders are still free to speak, whereas businessmen are not, owing to antitrust laws” (2005, 39–40).

“Owing to” is a widely employed phrase in Mayhew’s vocabulary. Did it figure in Rand’s?

Rand concluded a comment on the economic and cultural condition of Sweden with “A country like that is on its way toward the sewer, which apparently it has already reached” (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 11:46–13:19). Mayhew recast the line as “Sweden is on its way into the sewer, if she hasn’t already reached it” (2005, 99).

In her writing, Rand occasionally used a feminine pronoun for America. How often did she speak of a country as “she”?

In 1961, Rand fielded a question about how conditions could be improved for “underprivileged, underdeveloped Negroes in Africa or in the American South.” Her answer employed the word “Negro” several times, as was then customary (Faith and Force 1961, CD 2, Track 3, 0:00–7:39). In the 1970s, she used the word “black,” as was then customary (e.g., *Philosophy: Who Needs It* 1974, 9:27–23:01; Ford Hall Forum 1977, 3:32–11:42; Ford Hall Forum 1978, 3:36–5:04). Mayhew has her saying “black” in 1974, 1977, and 1978 (2005, 102–4; 208–10; 105, respectively). He also has her saying it in 1961 (2005, 36–38). Apparently, Rand was not allowed to adjust her usage with the times.

About the rights of the mentally retarded, Rand had this to say:

Q: Do profoundly retarded and severely retarded individuals have rights?

A: Not actual rights, not the same rights as they would apply or belong to a normal individual. They would have the right to be protected, as perennial children, in effect. Just as children are entitled to protection, so do retarded people, simply on the very distant possibility that since they are human they may be cured and they may become, uh, at least partly able to stand on, on their own, or partly, uhh, conscious. So that their protection of their rights is a courtesy extended to them for the fact that they are human beings, even if botched ones. (Ford Hall Forum 1973, 14:44–15:58)

Mayhew found her words too harsh, particularly “botched”:

Not actual rights—not the same rights possessed by normal individuals. In effect, they have the right to be protected as perennial children. Like children, retarded people are entitled to protection because, as humans, they may improve and become partly able to stand on their own. The protection of their rights is a courtesy extended to them for being human, even if not properly formed ones [sic]. (2005, 4)

Rand seems to have viewed mental retardation with profound horror; on another occasion, she declared, “I do not think that the retarded should be *allowed* to come near children. Children cannot deal and should not have to deal with the very tragic spectacle of a handicapped human being” (Ford Hall Forum 1981, Track 4, 7:57–8:59; for the edited version, see Mayhew 2005, 124–25). What was the point of dressing up her opinions in politically correct language?

Occasionally, Mayhew has Rand employing the parlance of today’s academic philosophers:

Q: While I would agree with the speaker concerning the role of individual decisions in such matters as birth control and abortion, I wonder if the speaker would apply the same ideas about individual decisions to the topics of suicide and euthanasia.

A: Well, it’s not, not the same issues, incidentally, because birth control and abortion specifically involve the actions of the individuals who are acting, and to which they, the individuals, have a right. They do not infringe anyone’s rights. They act on their own.

Now, suicide, it would appear to fall into the same category. I would say yes, in principle a man has the right to commit suicide, but it is enormously inadvisable. [Audience laughs] [. . .] (Ford Hall Forum 1968, 22:01–26:01)

As compressed and Mayhewized, this reads:

Birth control and abortion involve the actions of the agent alone. They do not infringe on anyone's rights. Suicide falls into the same category. So in principle, a man has the right to commit suicide—but it is very inadvisable. [. . .] (2005, 16)

Did Rand ever speak or write of “the agent”?

By contrast, Rand did sometimes use such technical philosopher's terms as “refer” and “referent.” But in response to a question whether the Objectivist ethics requires its practitioners to become saints, she said:

I don't know what the concept of a saint means. If it means, in the strictest sense, a *religious* figure, then how could it ever be appropriate to Objectivism? Objectivism is an atheist philosophy; we do not recognize saints, angels, or [laughter and applause build up]... or God.

But the word has also been used in a secular term. By “saint,” people very often mean a person of perfect moral character, or a moral hero. And that is what Objectivism requires of its first novices, just of the buck privates. We don't want anybody *but* saints, in the *moral* sense—which is open to each man, according to the extent of his ability. (Ford Hall Forum 1971, 14:06–17:45)

In Mayhew's hands, this has turned into:

Now, to what does the concept “saint” refer? If it refers to a religious figure, then it can't be appropriate to Objectivism, which is an atheistic philosophy. But the word also has a secular usage: “saint” means a person of perfect moral character—a moral hero—and that is what Objectivism requires of its novices and its buck privates. I want nobody but saints, in the moral sense. This is open to each man according to his ability. (2005, 131)

What would have been lost, had Mayhew retained “mean” and “meaning”? No violation of Rand's theory of concepts would have

been committed. This item further illustrates how Mayhew's editing sometimes inserts the first person singular into answers where Rand had chosen not to use it. Is it wrong to suppose that the author of *Anthem* would know when to say "I"—and when not to?

### **Insensitivity to Nuance**

Mayhew's broader insensitivity to verbal nuance is frequently on display in *Ayn Rand Answers*. When asked about psychoanalyst Erich Fromm's view of love, Rand spoke, in part, as follows:

But it's fascinating to what extent the logic of the wrong premises works.

He advocated the following. If you love someone for reasons—for given virtues, or character traits, or values in the person—that is, in effect, commercial. You must, uh, love a person without reasons. Otherwise, he claims that it is trading; it is, in effect, capitalistic; and he declares that capitalism is the enemy of love.

And if this is his idea of love, I would say that it is true, except that capitalism wouldn't have to bother him. He is free to indulge in any kind of love he wants and if causeless love, unearned love is what he wants, he must have his reasons. [Laughter] (Ford Hall Forum 1968, 1:42–5:29)

Mayhew converted this to:

It's fascinating to what extent the logic of his wrong premises work [sic]. He says that if you love a person for certain virtues or values, then you're being commercial. But you should love a person without reason; otherwise, your love is a trade—it's capitalistic—and capitalism is the enemy of love.

Capitalism *is* the enemy of his idea of love, although capitalism wouldn't have to bother with him. He can indulge in any kind of love he wants, and if he wants unearned love, he must have his reasons. (2005, 136)

Rand meant that Fromm needn't take such exception to laissez-faire capitalism: much as he might hate the market, it would leave him completely free to pursue causeless love. Mayhew apparently took her to mean that other people under a laissez-faire capitalist system would have no need to take action against Fromm. (Mayhew also put emphasis on a single word, *is*, where Rand hadn't; see below for further examples.)

An important answer about anarchy in Galt's Gulch (and Rand's reasons for not believing that it could scale up) originally began like this:

Q: Would you comment please on the difference between government that you advocate in *Capitalism* and the government that you find, say, in Galt's Gulch? I've heard it said by a friend of mine, why is this government, where judges and lawsuits are privately run, why is it denied to us mortals? That's how he puts it. [ . . . ]

A: Because Galt's Gulch is not a society; it's private estate. It is owned by one man who selects those who are admitted so carefully, and even then they have a judge as an arbiter if anything ever came up—only nothing came up among them because they were all men sharing the same philosophy. But in a *general* society, God help you! If you had a society which all shared one philosophy, that would be dreadful.

Galt's Gulch would cons, probably have consisted of—I never named the number—let's say, optimistically, a thousand people who represent the top genius of the world. Even then, they would agree on fundamentals, but they would never be totally identical. And the reason why they didn't need any government is because if they had disagreements, they were capable of resolving them rationally. (Ford Hall Forum 1972, 32:32–37:29)

From Mayhew's standpoint, Rand couldn't *really* have meant that a larger society in which everyone agrees on the same philosophy would be undesirable. She couldn't have been the kind of individual-



ist who wouldn't insist that everyone should agree on philosophical matters; she could only have meant that anarchy is undesirable. So he inserted a phrase to "correct" her:

Galt's Gulch is not a society; it's a private estate. It's owned by one man who carefully selected the people admitted. Even then, they had a judge as an arbitrator, if anything came up; only nothing came up among them, because they shared the same philosophy. But if you had a *society* in which all shared in the same philosophy, *but without a government*, that would be dreadful. Galt's Gulch probably consisted of about, optimistically, a thousand people who represented the top geniuses of the world. They agreed on fundamentals, but they would never be in total agreement. They didn't need a government because if they had disagreements, they could resolve them rationally. (75–76; my italics)

Where the 1972 answer indicated that Rand did not necessarily expect a good society to consist of 100% Objectivists, a 1976 answer showed that she did not always envision herself and a carefully selected doughty remnant as outside of "the culture," morally superior to it, and set implacably against it. An answer after one of Leonard Peikoff's lectures offered a fascinating explanation of her place *within* the broader culture:

Q: In the *Romantic Manifesto* introduction, you state that "it is impossible for young people to grasp the reality of man's higher potential and what scale of achievement it had reached in a rational or semi-rational culture." Is this true for all young people? Can reading about the past, or reading a novel such as *Atlas Shrugged*, provide that sort of grasp of reality?

A: Now, I meant this particular thing in regard to the reality of a culture, of living in a culture, the daily reality, which is almost incommunicable. Some novels can communicate it, but it's not the equivalent of actually living in such a culture. As to: can a novel such as *Atlas Shrugged* provide it, uk, yeah,

you have to omit *Atlas Shrugged* from this consideration, because one always omits the role of one's own work in discussions such as that one. If I'm discussing the state of the culture, I'm not going to say, "It is rotten, depraved, degraded; but of course, remember: my novels are different." That is not my function to do that. It's yours.

So, whenever you read me saying that something is so in today's culture or today's philosophy, remember that I am omitting my own works, because I, in that sense, am the observer and not that which is observed. (Philosophy of Objectivism 1976, Lecture 11, CD 2, Track 5, 13:40–14:58; CD 3, Track 1, 0:00–0:24)

From Mayhew's treatment, her final sentence has vanished:

I had in mind the daily reality of living in a culture, which is almost incommunicable. Some novels can communicate it, but that's not the equivalent of actually living in such a culture. As to *Atlas Shrugged*, you have to omit it from consideration, because one always omits the role of one's own work in discussions such as this. If I'm discussing the state of the culture, I won't say, "It's rotten and depraved, but remember, my novels are different." That's not my function; it's yours. (2005, 195)

One of Mayhew's stylistic affectations is attaching emphasis to individual words, in places where Rand's diction doesn't signal it. Commenting on Ralph Waldo Emerson, Rand actually said:

Now I am primarily and first and foremost a defender of reason—not of individualism, not of capitalism. I defend capitalism because I'm a defender of individualism, but I defend individualism only because I am a defender or a champion of reason; that is my epistemological base.

Emerson contradicts me. (Philosophy: Who Needs It 1974, 3:54–9:25)

After undergoing Mayhew-emphasis, the passage came out as:

I am primarily a defender of *reason*, not of individualism or capitalism. I defend capitalism because I'm a defender of individualism; I defend individualism because I'm a defender of reason. That's *my* epistemological base, not Emerson's. (2005, 162–63)

To a suggestion that means can be rationally chosen, but ends cannot be, Rand responded:

I wanted to thank you for your compliment, but disagree very thoroughly with your statement that only means are chosen by reason, that ends—human ends—have to be chosen irrationally. That is precisely one of the worst active, or credos in ethics, which I am out to fight. That is precisely what has destroyed human ethics, or human morality. I do not believe that ends are chosen irrationally. That is the human evil that has taught men that the choice of ends by reason is impossible. Everything I have written is devoted to proving the exact opposite. *We choose our ends by means of reason, or we perish.* (Ford Hall Forum 1969, 3:26–8:44)

Mayhew's rendition of the passage reads as follows:

No! I reject the evil idea that choosing ends by reason is impossible. It has destroyed ethics. Everything that I have written is devoted to proving the opposite. Ends are *not* chosen irrationally. We choose our ends by reason, or we perish. (2005, 107)

Her pattern of emphasis and his do not coincide.

Mayhew applied his own emphasis in 37 different answers, nearly 20% of those that he edited and that I was able to check.<sup>3</sup>

As we will see in a later section, Mayhew has played much dirtier with other answers. But his word substitutions, artificial emphases, and frequent obvious insensitivity to what Rand was saying already warrant suspending, if not revoking, his license to rewrite.

## Unannounced Use of Rand's Own Editing

An entirely different problem arises on a few occasions, when Mayhew borrowed a little bit of editing from Rand herself—and failed to let his readers in on it.

Rand rarely showed interest in putting her spoken answers into print. However, there was a period, after she shut down the *Ayn Rand Letter*, when her Ford Hall Forum speeches were still appearing in pamphlet form but she otherwise lacked publication outlets. Meanwhile, from mid-1976 to mid-1979 her office manager, Barbara Weiss, maintained a sheet called *The Objectivist Calendar*, which posted notices and announcements but left space for an occasional one-page article or review. Rand selected 13 of her Ford Hall Forum answers from 1976, 1977, and 1978 for publication in this venue (for details, see Appendix C).

Answers edited by Rand must be accorded an entirely different status from answers edited by Mayhew. By mixing in without announcement items that Rand edited, Mayhew obliterated that distinction. *The Objectivist Calendar* never achieved wide circulation and hardly any libraries subscribed to it; today it is an extremely difficult publication to get hold of. Unless they owned copies of the *Calendar*, scholars were unlikely to know that Rand had published some of her answers until Mayhew (2010) revealed their existence.

What's more, Rand's editing turns out to have been several touches lighter than any of Mayhew's. She did go somewhat beyond the grammar corrections that she claimed to be making. When she added comments, however, her policy was to enclose them in square brackets so the reader would know that they hadn't been part of her original answer. When she cut a passage out of one very long answer, she put in ellipsis dots. Neither the square brackets nor the ellipsis were carried over into Mayhew's book. As noted in Appendix C, he even did some of his own editing on top of Rand's edits.

Again, Mayhew was more explicit about his procedures in 2001, when he casually announced, "Because of the number of editorial changes I made, it would have distracted the reader had I used the apparatus of brackets and ellipses. Therefore, I use brackets only for text that could not have come from Ayn Rand" (xiii). Since Rand's brackets and ellipses were in text that *did* come from Ayn Rand, he felt comfortable eliminating them.

## Active Editorial Tampering

In two sentences that readers ought to find disturbing, Mayhew declares, “I should mention that some (but not much) of my editing aimed to clarify wording that, if left unaltered, might be taken to imply a viewpoint that she explicitly rejected in her written works. (The original transcripts of all of this material are held in the Ayn Rand Archives, and are available to serious scholars.)” (2005, x).

Such editing *could* extend to correcting slips and speech errors. But in the material that I have been able to examine Rand seldom made such errors. And on the few occasions when Mayhew repaired one, he gave no notice of it.

In an answer about presidential candidates (Ford Hall Forum 1971, 19:40–26:05), Rand referred to “Henry” Wallace when she meant George. While applying heavy modifications to her answer, Mayhew corrected the slip (2005, 60–61). In a comment about the busing of schoolchildren in Boston, she said, “I do not believe that the government should run schools. I believe education should be public, and then children can go wherever their parents want to send them” (Ford Hall Forum 1974, Track 1, 8:06–9:28). Mayhew repaired her obvious speech error as follows: “But I don’t believe the government should run schools. Education should be private, and children should go wherever their parents decide to send them” (2005, 24). In an answer about Patty Hearst, Rand said “If she had that much of a chance to escape, you cannot tell me, unfortunately you couldn’t tell the California jury, that she did it under duress—that she was compelled to do it” (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 35:36–37:43). Mayhew corrected this to “If she had that chance to escape, don’t tell me—unfortunately, you could tell the California jury—that she was compelled to act under duress” (2005, 45).

To a question whether a war between the United States and the Soviet Union would violate the rights of Soviet citizens who were innocent of committing aggression (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 14:51–18:22), Rand responded (the italics and the capitalized “Goddamn” are meant to indicate heated utterances):

The idea that an individual inside a country can be made secure from the social system under which he lives and which he accepts—willingly or unwillingly, even if he is fighting it

—*he still accepts*, he hasn't left the country . . . The idea that *others should respect that man's right and collapse to aggression themselves*—in other words, not be Goddamn pacifists, who would not fight even when attacked, because they might kill innocent people . . . Look, if this were so, nobody would have to be concerned about his country's political system.

In Mayhew's rendition:

The question assumes that an individual inside a country should be made secure from the social system under which he lives and that he accepts—willingly or unwillingly, because he hasn't left the country—and that others should respect his rights and succumb to aggression themselves. This is the position of the goddamned pacifists, who won't fight, even if attacked, because they might kill innocent people. If this were correct, nobody would have to be concerned about his country's political system. (2005, 94–95)

Correcting a speech error, Mayhew took the “not” out of “not be Goddamn pacifists.”

In the same item, he replaced “collapse to” with “succumb to.” A few of Mayhew's other word substitutions are on this order, such as replacing “upset” with “overthrow” (America's Persecuted Minority 1962, CD 2, Track 1, 1:13–5:19; Mayhew 2005, 48–49). Speaking of upsetting a dictatorial regime, instead of overthrowing it, is a suboptimal choice of words, but not a major slip.

What else does this policy encompass? Here is how Mayhew sought to justify it in 2010:

When I asked Dr. Peikoff what Ayn Rand's wishes were regarding this and other unpublished material, he answered that she had told him to do whatever he wanted with it—whatever he thought was best. And he thought it best to make this material available to the broadest audience possible: to those who read Rand's novels and non-fiction, and would be interested in the additional information that such a collection contained, namely, her views on a wide variety of

issues, many not discussed elsewhere. [. . .] And since the book was aimed at such a reader, Dr. Peikoff also wanted to limit its contents to those Q&A that he knew to be consistent with her explicit philosophy, and in some cases to have them edited accordingly. I made this clear in my preface; I did not hide the fact that such editing was done. And of course, I knew that the transcripts and recordings were available at the Ayn Rand Archives (and that many of the recordings would become available online).

Mayhew didn't hide the fact that he had done such editing. He noted that Peikoff, though not commenting on the final manuscript of *Ayn Rand Answers*, "did answer a constant stream of queries related to issues both editorial and philosophical" (2005, v).

In his introduction to *The Art of Nonfiction*, Mayhew had effusively praised Peikoff "for his superb and extensive editorial guidance during its first stages, and for giving the entire manuscript a final editing. The principles of editing he taught me will continue to be useful well beyond my work on this book" (2001, xiv). Operating under looser supervision, Mayhew (2005, v) stated that Peikoff did not read or edit the final manuscript of *Ayn Rand Answers*. Beyond that, he entirely failed to specify how often he had edited an answer "accordingly," where he had done it, and to what extent such edits were made at Peikoff's express direction.

Still, we can see that there are two different ways in which Mayhew applied Peikovian principles of editing and carried out the generalized Peikovian mandate. One was to "limit its contents" by keeping answers in the book but significantly bowdlerizing them. (Another, to be discussed in a later section, was to exclude certain answers altogether.)

A creditable case can be made that retaining answers in mutilated form is more misleading to the reader than leaving them out entirely. And where it can be seen that bowdlerizing has taken place, it is not at all difficult to infer why it took place. For instance:

Q: Would you comment on the impact that Objectivism has had on psychology, and what the cultural effect of that impact has been?

A: I truly couldn't say.

From the more obvious phenomena in the cul . . . in the field of psychology, it's had no effect whatever. The majority of them do not seem to know that such a thing as the mind exists, or that . . . [Applause]

And if so, I don't think they could hear about or know what they're hearing in regard to Objectivism.

There are exceptions, of course, but none that I could name in print. (Ford Hall Forum 1978, 2:24–3:35)

Sciabarra (1995, 403 n.64) noted that this would be the closest Rand ever got to acknowledging Nathaniel Branden's contributions after 1968.

But a reader of Sciabarra's book would find no confirmation in *Ayn Rand Answers*. For in Mayhew's rendition, the final sentence has vanished:

I don't know, except to say that based on the more obvious phenomena in psychology, it's had no effect whatever. Most people in psychology don't seem to know that the mind exists, and so could not know what Objectivism is. (2005, 177)

The other exception, besides Branden (who had been expelled from her circle in 1968), was Allan Blumenthal (whose voluntary departure had been signaled in the terse announcement: "Dr. Allan Blumenthal is no longer associated with the Foundation" for the *New Intellectual* [Weiss 1977]). To achieve compliance with Peikoff's personal policy, Mayhew had to remove allusions to such individuals.

In an answer about Montessori education from 1971, Rand mentioned an article on the subject in her periodical *The Objectivist*. Although Mayhew retained (and often amplified) references to Rand's own published work, he cut this reference. Here, first, is the original answer:



Q: As a parent I recognize the truth of what you say, and I'd like to know what suggestions as a parent I could utilize in dealing with the child that would enable me to prevent the destruction of the child's mind.

A: Uh, the best, best antidote is the Montessori system of education, which I mentioned in the "Comprachicos" article, and also there was an article in my magazine, in *The Objectivist*, on the Montessori method. But, uh, Montessori's system, however, deals primarily with nursery school; that is, it gives a proper foundation to a child, after which he would be safe and impervious. If you send him to, eh, the worst of today's high schools, he may not be very happy, but they won't affect him if he's had a Montessori training. More than that, there are two books which were reviewed in *The Objectivist* which, uhh, are called *Teaching Montessori in the Home*, which is for parents who cannot afford a private nursery school, or who find that there is none in their particular district. Uhh, they are very good books; it's by Elizabeth Hainstock and it's called, uh, *Teaching Montessori in the Home: The Preschool Years* and *The School Years*, uh, it's, in two parts, and she covers precisely this subject and covers the advice, uh, specific practical advice to parents on how to start your child on the Montessori Method and how to help him thereafter when he goes, eh, into public schools.

Also, I understand that there are Montessori groups which are beginning to develop, possibly, a high school based on the Montessori method, because there are writings on that subject, but not as detailed as on the, uh, kindergarten or nursery school level, and there are already attempts or plans being made to carry the system further, which I think would be the greatest movement in this country so far, the most hopeful, and what's wonderful about it is that it's completely grass-roots: unorganized, unplanned. It was groups of parents who started schools for their children because they were appalled at what was being done to the children in so-called progressive nursery schools. Uhh, there's no vested

interest, no particular push behind the movement; it is truly spontaneous, and it is spreading, and with marvelous results. Therefore, any, eh, question in regard to child education, start with Montessori's own book and then look into the existing Montessori schools—not all of them are fully reliable, some of them are slightly mixed or trying to combine two different systems, but still you'll learn more . . . your child will learn more than you will get anywhere else today. (Ford Hall Forum 1971, 41:17–45:05)

Here, now, is Mayhew's complete rendition:

The best antidote is Montessori education, which I mention in “The Comprachicos.” The Montessori system deals primarily with nursery school—that is, it gives a proper foundation to a child, after which he will be safe and impervious. So if you send him to the worst of today's high schools, he may not be happy, but it won't affect him if he's had Montessori training. Besides Maria Montessori's own writings, I'd recommend Elizabeth Hainstock's *Teaching Montessori in the Home*, which provides practical advice for parents on how to start your child on the Montessori method, and how to help him thereafter when he goes into public schools.

I understand Montessori groups are beginning to develop high schools based on the Montessori method. This would be the greatest and most hopeful movement in this country thus far. What's wonderful about the Montessori movement is that it's completely grassroots and unplanned. Groups of parents started schools for their children because they were appalled at what is taught in “progressive” nursery schools. There's no vested interest behind the movement. It's spontaneous and is spreading with marvelous results. Not all Montessori schools are fully reliable. Some are slightly mixed or try to combine two different systems. Still, your child will learn more in such schools than anywhere else today. (2005, 173–74)

In the course of chopping one piece after another out of the answer, Mayhew removed a reference to “The Montessori Method” by Beatrice Hessen (1970), who was also responsible for recommending books about Montessori education to readers of *The Objectivist* (Hessen 1971). The reason? Beatrice Hessen bought a one-way ticket out of Rand’s circle in 1981, when her husband’s Palo Alto Book Service decided to carry a novel by Kay Nolte Smith—who, in turn, had been expelled several years earlier (Doherty 2007, 538).<sup>4</sup>

A long answer from 1962, about Friedrich Nietzsche and individualism, never acknowledged Nietzsche’s impact on Rand. But it originally mentioned an associate by name:

Q: Miss Rand, you have said that the predominant trend of the intellectuals in the 19th century was collectivism and statism. But there were certain philosophers who advocated individualism of one kind or another, such as, for instance, Nietzsche. What’s your estimate of him?

A: It’s a, euh, very low estimate, philosophically. I will start by saying that he is one of the philosophers with whom I disagree very emphatically on all fundamentals, yet one, uh, who we’re often questioned about—a philosopher usually package-dealed with us, where other people ask us, don’t we agree with Nietzsche. So that I would have to say, first of all, we emphatically disagree and we disagree, incidentally, for the same reason that made Nietzsche ineffectual historically.

So to answer first the first part of your question, yes, there were philosophers such as Nietzsche, there were others, euh, who would call themselves individualists and from certain aspects could, ehh, have been classified as individualists. They remained totally ineffectual and they not only did not stem the growth of collectivism but in fact helped it to grow. Now, euh, Nietzsche is a very good example of this fact.

To begin with, when you judge a philosopher, you must always judge him by the fundamentals of his philosophy; namely, by metaphysics and epistemology. Nietzsche was a

subjectivist. Uh, Nietzsche was actually an antirationalist or an advocate of the irrational. Today, it is the modern school of Existentialism that claims him as one of its ancestors, with a great deal of justice, because Nietzsche believed that, uh, although reason is a valuable tool it is only a secondary tool. Man's basic tool, uh, of guidance, that which man should be guided by and live by, is his instincts, his so-called "blood" or, uh, body, or some undefined something which he is born with, which is above reason, and which should guide him. Nietzsche is a subjectivist.

Now there could be no greater, euhh, contradiction than a subjectivist who calls himself an individualist. It is in fact a contradiction in terms, because the only way in which, eahh, a man can in fact be an individualist, the only meaning of the term, is a man who exercises his independent judgment, a man who thinks independently. That is the essence of what makes an individualist or an independent man.

Now a subjectivist, a man who does not care to think, a man who wants to be guided by his feelings, his emotions, his alleged instincts, that kind of man in order to survive necessarily has to then be a parasite on the thinking of others. Since he does not choose to be rational, he would have to ride on those who do choose to be rational. He, therefore, in fact will be a parasite. Now ap, a parasite who is an individualist is certainly a contradiction in terms.

For fuller detail of this subject, this subject or this issue, I would strongly recommend to those interested that they read the lead article by Mr. Branden in our publication, *The Objectivist Newsletter*. The April issue deals with precisely this subject and the article is entitled "Counterfeit Individualism." It will tell you in greater detail why thinkers such as Nietzsche—and, let's make it wider, all subjectivists—are not, in fact, individualists, and are the exact opposite philosophically of what the Objectivist philosophy advocates.

And because they were subjectivists, incidentally, is why they were not able to stem the tide, uh, of collectivism and why certain collectivist schools, like fascism or Nazism particularly, even claimed Nietzsche as their philosophical justification. Well, that was somewhat unfair to him, uhh, but there certainly were passages in his works which could have justified a totalitarian state, though there were also passages contradicting them. A subjectivist will always be in that kind of trouble. When a man drops reason, then anyone in anything may interpret him as they wish, when they, too, are subjectivists. I mean, in that sense, Nietzsche politically was perhaps the most ineffectual of all thinkers. (Intellectual Bankruptcy of Our Age 1962, CD 2, Track 2, 7:38–10:45, Track 3, 0:00–2:12)

Mayhew's book no longer mentions that associate:

It's a low estimate, philosophically. I disagree with him emphatically on all fundamentals. Judge a philosopher by the *fundamentals* of his philosophy—namely, his metaphysics and epistemology. Nietzsche was a subjectivist and an irrationalist. Existentialism claims him as an ancestor, with a great deal of justice. Nietzsche believed that although reason is valuable, it is secondary; man's basic tool of guidance is instinct or blood. Now there is no greater contradiction than a subjectivist calling himself an individualist. An individualist is essentially a man who thinks independently. A subjectivist is a man who does not care to think—who wants to be guided by feelings and “instincts.” To survive, such a man must be a parasite on the thinking of others. An “individualist parasite” is a contradiction in terms. (See the article “Counterfeit Individualism” in *The Virtue of Selfishness*.) Incidentally, this is why subjectivists could not stem the tide of collectivism. Politically, Nietzsche was perhaps the most ineffectual of all thinkers. Certain collectivists, like the Nazis, even claimed Nietzsche as their philosophical justification. That was unfair to him; but some passages in his works could be used to justify a totalitarian state (while others would

contradict them). Finally, Nietzsche was opposed to capitalism, and contemptuous of the market. (2005, 117)

Comparing the complete items reveals just how heavily Mayhew abridged most of Rand's answers from the early 1960s. The abridgments make them look far more similar than they really were to the Ford Hall Forum answers from her later years; the effect is to minimize the change over time in her thinking and speaking.

And so strenuous was his effort to keep out references to Nathaniel Branden that the index to Mayhew's book (236) ended up containing the entry: "Counterfeit Individualism' (Rand)." Even if Mayhew (or his designate) slipped when preparing the index, leaving the author's name in the answer would almost certainly have prevented such a mistake. Then, for good measure, Mayhew inserted a final sentence that is nowhere to be found on the original recording.

Mayhew's relegation to the Memory Hole of references or allusions to persons who left Rand's circle, or were kicked out, preserves the Peikovian image of Rand by removing all traces of undesirable associations.

In other cases, Mayhew's tampering removed language that, in his opinion or in Peikoff's, might make Rand look bad.

During her final decade, several of Rand's answers raised the prospect of all-out war with the Soviet Union. In one of these, Rand expressed the hope that innocent Soviet citizens would be killed in such a war. Her unaltered language must have proved too bloody-minded:

Why is it important to be concerned about politics? Why should we care about having the right social system? *Because our lives are dependent on it.* Because those systems, good or bad, are established in our name, and we bear the responsibility. So that the Soviet citizens who are innocent *I hope someday will be destroyed* in a proper war along with the guilty. There aren't very many innocent ones, and they're not in the big cities—they're mainly in concentration camps. (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 14:51–18:22)

Mayhew makes her wishes appear conditional ("If we go to war with

Russia”):

But we must care about the right social system, because our lives depend on it—because a political system, good or bad, is established in our name, and we bear the responsibility for it.

If we go to war with Russia, I hope the “innocent” are destroyed along with the guilty. There aren’t many innocent people there; those who do exist are not in the big cities, but mainly in concentration camps. (2005, 94–95)

Then there was the occasion when Rand was asked about the propriety of government bans on three substances:

Judge Lurie, restating: What do you think of the banning of cyclamates, which has not altogether been proved, and, secondly, with regard to the making of the use of marijuana a felony? Marijuana, the gentleman suggests, is a product that is being used by our generation [audience laughs] and he . . . If you think that marijuana is used only by the young, you haven’t spent as much time as I have in the criminal courts. [He chides some audience members for making “unpleasant noises.”] Now the third matter that he regards as an example of the complete use of irrationality is the fact that tobacco, which he regards as having been proved with regard to the deleterious effect that it has, is being promoted because it makes a profit, and he regards this as requiring discussion by you, as to the rationale behind all this.

A: First of all, to clear up a certain confusion I can’t believe exists in your mind about *my* stand: since I’m obviously a defender of reason, individualism, you can gather that, logically, that I am also a defender of capitalism—pure capitalism. *I am not an apologist for the Nixon administration* [applause] or any mixed-economy administration. Now I think Nixon is a great improvement over his predecessor—several of them [applause], including Eisenhower [louder

applause]—and I did vote for him [applause], but I certainly would not, uh, attempt to justify, or think that all the laws they have, the measures they take or policies, are all rational. No, I am probably more in disagreement with the present policies than I might find some with which I would be in temporary agreement.

I do not approve of any government controls over consumption generally, of every kind, so as to eliminate, eh, this confusion in your mind, I would advocate that *all restrictions on drugs be removed*. I don't believe that the government has the right to tell adults what they do with their own health and their own life. I [applause] . . . But that places a much greater *moral* responsibility on the individual. Just because the government shouldn't prohibit, not only marijuana—take the worst of them, whichever it is, heroin, LSD, or cocaine, I don't know what's the worst, or morphine—I don't think the government should prohibit any of them, except, of course, sales, euh, to minors—that would be proper. But for adults, I think they should be free to kill themselves in any way they want to [laughter and applause].

But that is why it is a moral issue. It is the responsibility of the individual not to take the kind of things, physical, chemical things, which destroy his mind. I would say I would fight for your right to use marijuana, and I'd fight you morally to the death that you should not do it—except, of course, in a free society I wouldn't have to deal with you at all if you want to take it and we disagree. All that the government should do is only protect citizens from the consequences of those who take drugs; that is, if they turn to crime, if they rob in order to provide themselves with money, that is the province of the government.

But, you know, drugs would be much cheaper if it weren't for government law, just as pro, under Prohibition. It was the bootleggers who didn't want the repeal of Prohibition, because many criminals made fortunes because alcohol was



forbidden. Same here, it's the underworld that is spreading the drug traffic, particularly to the young, and then the addicts become new pushers because it, the drugs are so expensive and they need the money. It would be much cheaper and easier—and morally much more vicious—on the part of anyone who would, uh, take drugs if they were permitted by the government.

Now, as to cyclamates, that's really a question for a doctor. But to the best information I have [cough], they are . . . pardon this . . . I take them myself in the form of dietary soft drinks and things like that [cough], and, as far as I know from doctors [nervous laughter from audience], there is nothing to the alleged proof, uh, uhh, not only of cyclamates, but also of cigarettes—although I grant you there, um, doctors are more divided on the issue of cigarettes. But there is a division, only we always hear the negative side.

On the issue of cyclamates, except for the original whoever it was that started this, doctors claim that cyclamates are *not* harmful. But that is a question really for the doctors to decide and tell their patients. It's not for the government to pass laws or Prohibition on a moment's notice, on any one unproved experiment . . . experimenter's, uh, whim.

If you want my hypothesis about why this is done, that comes from the psychology of attacking capitalism. Observe, it's attacking any industry which gives people help or pleasure and which makes money for somebody. They're now going after *television dinners* in New York; that's supposed to be harmful because it has preservatives in it. And, of course, the amount of work it serves [sic] to busy housewives is immeasurable. But anything which is of help and which is popular is being attacked, and there is another motive: such an attack will get you into the newspapers. Look at Ralph Nader [some laughter]—that's the real motive here. (Ford Hall Forum 1969, 8:46–16:49)

Mayhew has made so many changes that his rewrite needs to be studied in its entirety:

**What is your view on laws against cyclamates and marijuana?**

I do not approve of any government controls over consumption, so all restrictions on drugs should be removed (except, of course, on the sale to minors). The government has no right to tell any adult what to do with his own health and life. That places a much greater moral responsibility on the individual; but adults should be free to kill themselves in any way they want.

It is the moral responsibility of the individual not to take substances that destroy his mind. I would fight for your legal right to use marijuana; I would fight you to the death that you morally should not do it—except that in a free society, I wouldn't have to deal with you at all. What the government *should* do is protect citizens from the criminal consequences of those who take drugs. But drugs would be much cheaper if it weren't for government, as liquor was much more expensive under Prohibition. Bootleggers didn't want the repeal of Prohibition, because they made a fortune. Similarly, the underworld is spreading drugs. It would be cheaper, easier, and morally more vicious on the part of the drug addict if drugs were legalized.

On the issue of cyclamates—which I use myself in the form of diet soft drinks—doctors claim they are not harmful. Doctors must decide this and inform their patients. It is not the role of government to pass laws on a moment's notice, on the basis of unproved experimental whim.

My hypothesis about why people are calling for the prohibition of cyclamates involves the psychology of the critique of capitalism. Critics attack any industry that helps people or gives them pleasure and profit. They're now going after TV

dinners because they contain preservatives that are supposedly harmful. Of course, TV dinners are a big time-saver for busy housewives. And there is another motive: such attacks get you in the newspapers. Take Ralph Nader—that's his real motive. (2005, 14–15)

Some passages are so loosely related to the original that they barely qualify as paraphrasing. Mayhew put in words like “legalized” that Rand didn't use on this occasion, and “critique,” which she may not have used on any occasion. Rand was careful to emphasize the nonviolence of her opposition to people taking certain drugs: “I would say I would fight for your right to use marijuana, and I'd fight you morally to the death that you should not do it.” The point was lost on Mayhew, who recast her words as “I would fight you to the death that you morally should not do it.” Whoever prepared the transcription misheard her statement about cyclamates being banned on account of “one unproved experimenter's whim,” and the error was left uncorrected.

Worst of all, Rand's remarks about cigarettes (made while she was coughing) have been expunged, along with the questioner's reference to tobacco. Given Peikoff's lingering sensitivity about Rand's 1974 operation for lung cancer and her unwillingness to disclose the nature of her illness to her followers, could there be any doubt as to the motives for tampering here?

On the subject of libertarians, Mayhew unquestionably shares Rand's antipathy. But he occasionally took out her most extreme rhetoric. Here is one of the things that she had to say about the Libertarian Party:

Add to it the fact that such membership of theirs, or leadership, as I've heard about consists of men of every kind of persuasion, from religious conservatives to anarchists—who, who might as well join the Communist Party or the Socialist Workers Party, as far as an ideological consistency or firmness is concerned. (Ford Hall Forum 1974, CD 2, Track 3, 0:06–1:44)

In Mayhew's hands, this became:

Further, their leadership consists of men of every persuasion, from religious conservatives to anarchists. (2005, 73)

On another occasion, she laid into anarchism:

Those are the men who want to be hippies, but they don't want to preach collectivism—those jobs are already taken [applause] so they think they can do the same by preaching anarchism, and if you look up in any children's encyclopedia that includes such words, anarchism is an outgrowth of, and a logical one, of the extreme anti-intellectual side of collectivism. It is the collectivism of the spirit.

I would deal with a Marxist—there would be a much greater chance of reaching some kind of understanding and much greater respect. The anarchist is really the scum of the intellectual world of the Left. The Left has given them up and grown beyond it, so the Right picks up another discard of the Left and me-toos. (Ford Hall Forum 1971, 26:08–28:46)

Again, Mayhew decided to tone down her rhetoric:

They want to be hippies, but don't want to preach collectivism because those jobs are already taken. But anarchism is a logical outgrowth of the anti-intellectual side of collectivism. I could deal with a Marxist with a greater chance of reaching some kind of understanding, and with much greater respect. Anarchists are the scum of the intellectual world of the Left, which has given them up. So the Right picks up another leftist discard. (2005, 72)

In a comment about the military coup in Chile that overthrew and killed Salvador Allende, Rand flatly refused to accept factually correct reports that the Pinochet regime was killing or torturing political opponents.

Judge Lurie: Your opinion of the junta that overturned

Allende, and the statement of the gentleman is that the junta tortured and massacred thousands.

A: Those stories I don't believe; I would want to have proof from some authorities better than the extreme Left. But I express my opinion of the junta: I don't think that they have any idea what they're doing, I don't think they're, know what they want—if they do, they're going about it the wrong way. I think they're immeasurably better than what, than the Allende government, but I don't believe they will be able to achieve much, because the country is wrecked. Uhh, I don't know any signs of their ideology. They had none before, which was what permitted Allende, who was incidentally a minority, euhh, government—he did not get a real majority—but it was made possible by the fact that his opposition didn't have any particular prob, program, and the experience has not given them any particular program. But compared to Allende I would say they're gentlemen and scholars and giants. [some laughter from audience] (Ford Hall Forum 1974, Track 3, 1:45–2:59)

With the benefit of hindsight, Mayhew hedged her denial:

At present, I don't believe those stories. I want proof from authorities more reliable than extreme leftists. Given what I do know of the junta, I'd say they have no idea what they're doing; and, I don't think they'll achieve much, because the country is too Red. But they're better than the Allende government. (2005, 98)

Whoever transcribed the recording also misheard “wrecked” as “Red.”

Rand never made a comment in print about restitution to the victim as punishment for a crime. A 1977 answer would seem to be significant for this reason alone:

Q: If a man infringes the rights of another, why does being incarcerated constitute his getting his just due, as opposed to

paying monetary retribution [sic]? Uh, more broadly, what is the proper kind of punishment and how is it morally justified?

A: I don't know what's wrong with incarceration. I, I missed your first sentence. Can you, uh, repeat it? What did you say is wrong with incarceration?

Q: I didn't ask to say anything was wrong with it. I asked what's the moral justification, as opposed to monetary retribution to the victim.

A: Oh, monetary retribution would be proper if the man has the money. But if he has spent it, and you put him into slavery to earn, uh, whichever he has embezzled, you would have the use of slaves and it would be much worse for society—I don't care what happens to the criminal—worse for society to maintain, if you tried to make them work it out.

But the proper reason, the moral justification for incarceration is in the statement of your question: If a man has committed a crime, and it's been proved, something has to be done about it of an unpleasant kind. Something has to be done in the nature of punishment.

It is not society's duties [sic] to, um, re, what do they call it, rehabilitate. Not only is it not a duty if we knew how, but nobody *knows* how, and it's highly doubtful that it can be done. If a man permits himself to be a criminal, we treat him, but in the same manner that he demands. He wants to deal in force; we answer him by force, and we put him in jail to protect the rest of us from the next time he feels like expressing himself. (Ford Hall Forum 1977, 23:50–25:53)

Mayhew must have decided that the world was not ready for Rand's opinion on restitution. In his rendition, the first paragraph has disappeared, and the entire answer now reads:

The moral justification for incarceration is that if a man has committed a crime and it's been proved, something of an unpleasant nature has to be done about it—something in the nature of a punishment. It's not society's duty to rehabilitate criminals—even if we knew how, which nobody knows, and I highly doubt whether it can be done. If a man permits himself to be a criminal, we treat him in the same manner that he demands. He wants to deal in force; we answer him by force, and put him in jail to protect the rest of us from the next time he feels like “expressing himself.” (2005, 45)

And Mayhew has once again put in the first person singular what Rand chose not to.

On a lighter note, there was the question about Rand's favorite TV shows:

Q: Could Miss Rand tell us the TV programs that she watches for pleasure?

A: Heh heh, I wish I could! There is truly *nothing* today, but nothing. I watch, rrr, the evening news just for information, but for pleasure? Well, I th, I'm afraid to name them because you will all think it's terribly important. I think the three I'm going to name are very bad, as they have terrible flaws; they're only semi-Romantic, but at least semi. That's “Hawaii Five-O,” “Barnaby Jones,” and the new one, “Charlie's Angels.” [Laughter] Now, this is *not* philosophy and not even a great pleasure, but it's a good relaxation, when you're very tired [Laughter] . . .

Oh, by the way, uh, euh, to the author who sent me the question about the poems, I have, uh, Kipling's complete poems, so don't send me copies of them.

And I would find this the, perhaps the right moment to say one general request, ub, pertaining to art and sense of life. Please do not send me books, unless it's one by your own and you're sure that you won't shock me. If it's a good

Objectivist work, yes, I'd like to see it. But, uh, no books for pleasure. Don't recommend them.

And above all, don't ever, ever send me records or recommend music. *You have no way of knowing my sense of life*, even though you have a better way of doing it than I can know yours, because since you've read my books, my sense of life is all over every page, and you would have *some* grasp of it, but *I hate to think how little*. I hate the kind of very painful embarrassment, which I feel when somebody sends me—it's happened several times with records—ek, music which they feel they *know* I'd love and it's the exact opposite, it's impossible music. I feel completely misunderstood, yet I know the person's intentions were good. I hate to do anything about it, to acknowledge or not to acknowledge, and I think the best way would be to explain to you why nobody except my husband actually can give me paintings or records and know infallibly, as he does, what I would or would not like. Nobody else can be that sure, so please, don't try it. It's no reflection on you, nor on me. It's just that sense of life is enormously private. (Philosophy of Objectivism 1976, Lecture 12, CD 2, Track 3, 10:14–13:06)

Mayhew preserved only the last paragraph of this answer, grafting it on the end of a different one about sense of life that had come earlier in the session. In the process he changed “music which they feel they *know* I'd love” into “music they *know* I'd love.” This was a matter about which Rand was fastidious: she avoided saying that anyone knew something, unless she thought it was true:

Speaking of one's inability to know another's sense of life, now might be a good time to make a request: Please don't send me records or recommend music. You have no way of knowing my sense of life, although you have a better way of knowing mine than I have of knowing yours, since you've read my books, and my sense of life is on every page. You would have some grasp of it—but *I hate to think how little*. I hate the painful embarrassment I feel when somebody sends



me music they *know* I'd love, and my reaction is the opposite: It's impossible music. I feel completely misunderstood, yet the person's intentions were good. Nobody but my husband can give me works of art and know infallibly, as he does, that I'll like them. So please don't try it. It's no reflection on you or on me. It's simply that sense of life is *very* private. (2005, 185–87)

Outright tampering is not frequent in *Ayn Rand Answers*. But even if he had not praised Peikoff for teaching him how to edit, Mayhew's strong affiliation with Peikoff reliably predicts what he would be minded to conceal. There is no credible explanation for such editorial practices except that the Estate wants Rand to be seen as an unchanging thinker who never held opinions even mildly at variance with Peikovian Objectivism, never did anything that might embarrass Peikoff, and never associated with persons who do not enjoy Peikoff's wholehearted approval. Such values as faithfulness to Rand's own words, historical accuracy, and intellectual honesty are of distinctly lesser importance.

Could there be other instances of tampering among the 169 items in *Ayn Rand Answers* (see Appendix B) that I have not been able to check against the originals? There is no obvious way in which they would differ from the 201 that I have been able to check, so a plausible hypothesis would be that some of the remaining 169 have also been tampered with. To be investigated.

### **The Answers Mayhew Didn't Use**

Of the 286 answers I was able to transcribe from recordings (see Appendix A), *Ayn Rand Answers* includes 194, or just over two-thirds. That leaves 92 that Mayhew chose not to use.

An answer not used provides less evidence about editorial practice, because it shows no changes or rewrites. All we know is that it was excluded. Still, it's reasonable to expect that the same values and priorities that informed the rewriting of some answers would have prompted the exclusion of others.

Mayhew has provided just one express criterion for leaving out any of Rand's spoken answers: inconsistency with her explicit philosophy. This, on the face of it, is rather odd. Some answers

might be so trivial or ill-formed as to be unworthy of reproducing. One might also expect that repetition of material published during her lifetime might keep answers out of a posthumous volume. But redundancy was evidently not a criterion: “Many, though certainly not all, of these Q&A present Ayn Rand’s views on issues that she does not discuss elsewhere” (2005, ix).

In the absence of specifics from the editor, there is only one way to arrive at the criteria he used: to inspect as many as possible of the answers that Mayhew chose not to include, note the patterns that they form, and employ inference to the best explanation.

### **Trivial Answers**

Some of the 92 items that Mayhew left by the wayside would be uninteresting by anybody’s standards.

Rand occasionally referred a questioner to one of her published articles, then moved on smartly to the next person waiting at the microphone (e.g., referring a questioner about her views on poetry to *The Romantic Manifesto*, Ford Hall Forum 1973, 4:38–5:24, or a questioner who wanted to know her views of different styles of dance to the same book, Ford Hall Forum 1977, 26:34–27:13). Or she suggested that her just-concluded talk might be published as a pamphlet (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 23:23–24:39), as indeed it soon was. Or she commented briefly on the recent shutdown of the Objectivist magazine *Persuasion* (Ford Hall Forum 1968, 5:31–6:07). Or she quickly dismissed a report that she took to be an unfounded rumor or an instance of the conspiracy theory of history (Ford Hall Forum 1974, Track 2, 7:52–8:37; 1978, 29:37–30:41).

Slightly more interesting are the occasions on which Rand declared that she had no knowledge of the idea or publication a questioner was asking her to evaluate. For instance, at Ford Hall Forum (1971, 0:06–0:53), she said she had not heard of an article on anarchism by Roy Childs. The next year she appeared not to understand a question about the works of philosopher Henry Veatch. The questioner couldn’t reword it to the satisfaction of the moderator, Judge Reuben Lurie,<sup>5</sup> who moved on to the next person:

Q: I have an epistemological question. Do you view the cognitive relation in terms of intentionality, as does the neo-

Thomist H. B. Veatch?

A: No! And I don't even know who he is, but I don't speak that kind of language. Intentionality? Do you mean volition? Yes.

Judge Lurie: Please, Miss Rand, please. (To the audience:) Now, let's quiet down. (To the questioner:) I want you to put your question simply and don't seek an effect. (Ford Hall Forum 1972, 9:40–11:04)

### Answers about Uncompleted Works

Rating a little higher on the interest scale are the questions she was regularly asked about two big writing projects.

Q: When can we expect to see Miss Rand's next novel, and her next collection of essays, or volume about Objectivist philosophy?

A: Uh, no, the, uh, Objectivist philosophy, that is a full treatment, not in the form of essays. I would say by the time I am 70, and maybe later. That I cannot promise; I am not working on it.

As to that, my next novel, I hope—if I am optimistic—within the next two years, but don't hold me to it. I can't promise, unfortunately. (Ford Hall Forum 1968, 6:55–7:41)

The next year she was attributing lack of progress on the novel to her work on *The Objectivist* (Ford Hall Forum 1969, 20:39–21:59). Blame was subsequently reassigned to the demands of publishing her *Ayn Rand Letter* (Ford Hall Forum 1971, 45:07–46:34; 1972, 26:50–28:44; 1974, Track 2, 8:38–9:03).

In 1971, she acknowledged that her planned treatise on epistemology was on hold: “No, I am not writing that today. If I live long enough, I think I will. I haven't given it up, I have filed notes for it. But no, not now” (48:26–49:28). Questioners kept bringing up the treatise (Ford Hall Forum 1972, 26:25–26:49). After closing the *Ayn*

*Rand Letter*, she merely declared, “I am now contemplating and sort of doing preparatory stages but have not yet decided on two different books” (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 13:20–14:50). The next year, she said she was “making notes for some future book” on epistemology (Ford Hall Forum 1977, 2:14–2:43).

She eventually came near admitting that she had put the novel aside: “The world is in such a low state that I could not bear to put it in fiction. I am trying to get around that difficulty, and I may or may not succeed—I don’t know, though I have certain ideas” (15:02–15:34). Of all the project-related answers, this was the only one that Mayhew would pick up (2005,195–96).

And at her last recorded question-and-answer session, she was merely asked whether she was “writing or contemplating the writing of another book”: “I’m contemplating, yes, but I’m in a very difficult situation at present and I cannot promise you when I will give you another book” (Ford Hall Forum 1981, Track 5, 1:35–1:51).

During her final decade, questioners were eager for progress reports on filming *Atlas Shrugged* (Ford Hall Forum 1972, 21:08–21:31, 26:00–26:34; 1974, Track 3, 0:00–0:05). In 1978, her response to “Could you tell us what you’re working on now?” was, mysteriously, “I am working on something very problematic and very interesting. Ek, you’ll hear about it in the newspapers, when and if it comes true” (25:28–26:02). She was alluding to a projected *Atlas Shrugged* mini-series, which failed to materialize. In her final Ford Hall Forum appearance (1981, 7:10–7:56), she announced that a new contract had been signed to produce *Atlas Shrugged*. That, too, would fall through.

On one occasion, Rand referred to work applying Objectivism to the foundations of mathematics, which she thought might be carried out in the future by two unnamed followers (Ford Hall Forum 1971, 28:47–29:43). Nothing has come of it. Mayhew did publish two answers in which Rand acknowledged that she had neither developed a philosophy of science (Ford Hall Forum 1977, 20:16–21:35; Mayhew 2005, 177) nor solved the problem of induction (Objective Communication 1980, Lecture 1, not transcribed; 2005, 177).

One can sympathize with any author having to field repeated queries about uncompleted long-term projects. In 1972, she made a mild complaint about the novel: “But don’t make me sound like a rat

every year, although I appreciate your inquiry [laughter from audience]; I can't tell when, but you see I have been busy" (26:50–28:44). All the same, Mayhew's decision to leave these items out draws attention away from Rand's failure to complete her three biggest projects after publishing *Atlas Shrugged*.

### Answers about Former Associates

Then there are the answers at the opposite end of the significance scale from "please read my article." One comes from an appearance at the Ford Hall Forum, a little over three months after her break with Nathaniel Branden and the sudden dissolution of the Nathaniel Branden Institute:

Q: Miss Rand, would you please explain the current status of NBI and of *The Objectivist*, and the reasons for them?

A: No, I will not. [Applause]

Since know enough to ask this question, you know that there's something is going on there. And if you know that, you should know that for 50 cents you can buy the May 1968 issue of *The Objectivist*, which will tell you what happened and the reasons for it. [Tepid applause] (Ford Hall Forum 1968, 1:00–1:39)

The tone of this response was distinctly cagey.

About another former associate, Rand had the following to say:

Q: Can you tell me, please, whatever happened to Martin Anderson, who wrote a rather interesting book 10 years ago called *The Federal Bulldozer*. I haven't heard anything about him or from him since then.

A: I know *of* him. I don't believe he has written anything since. And the unfortunate thing is that he worked as an economic adviser to Ronald Reagan, which is somewhat of an intellectual dead end. [Laughter] (Ford Hall Forum 1977, 23:09–23:45)

One might not know that *The Federal Bulldozer* had received a long, favorable review in *The Objectivist* (Hessen 1966). One would never know that Rand had been a guest at Martin Anderson's wedding (Burns 2009, 235).

These answers appear to have been cut for the same reason that references to Nathaniel Branden and Beatrice Hessen were excised from answers that Mayhew chose to include.

### **Answers about Contemporary Figures and Issues**

To a question about the ideas of maverick psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, Rand replied, in part, "He seems to be for individual rights, but I cannot always follow his argument—I have questions, I have certain serious questions about some of his premises—therefore, I have not read enough to criticize him. All I can say is he's promising" (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 40:55–41:32). To a question about Arthur Koestler, several of whose books had gotten a positive reception from Nathaniel Branden: "I do not regard him important enough to have any opinion of, and I have not read enough of him to form any views, nor have I any interest to read enough of him" (Ford Hall Forum 1977, 11:45–12:06).

From 1968 through 1974, Rand's Ford Hall Forum appearances regularly featured questions about her attitude toward Richard Nixon, a President about whom it is fair to say she was deeply ambivalent. Mayhew did not include all of these. For instance, she declared that the recently published Pentagon Papers brought discredit on Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon, but most of all on the mainstream media:

Q: What is your view of Daniel Ellsberg's exposé of the Pentagon Papers?

A: Not very much. Not of his particular action. I've barely even followed whatever he thinks he's doing. I don't know, and care less.

As to the Pentagon Papers themselves, well, you know, it's fairly . . . it was fairly obvious if you read the papers at the time what was going on. And that if anybody should be

disgraced now, it's actually the press, because *why didn't they report it at the time?* It, they may not have had the, ehh, background conversation of some private councils but they certainly saw the trends and events and an awful lot of verbatim statements that are being exposed now were sometimes published on the back pages somewhere.

I think the first disgrace is, of course, the American press, uh, I mean, as a result of those papers—and the rest, two Democratic presidents. And now there's going to be a third one. (Ford Hall Forum 1971, 31:50–33:05)

Rand's 1973 appearance at the Ford Hall Forum took place the day after Richard Nixon ordered the firing of Archibald Cox, the Special Prosecutor who was investigating Watergate, in what became known as the Saturday Night Massacre. Mayhew left her detailed, sharply observed answer (Ford Hall Forum 1973, 7:10–11:18) out of his compilation.

After one presentation of her speech on “Faith and Force: Destroyers of the Modern World,” Rand was asked, in part, “Who in your mind best enunciates capitalism today?” She responded with a lengthy set of recommendations, urging an audience of students at Purdue University to read *Capitalism in One Lesson* by Henry Hazlitt, *Omnipotent Government* and *Socialism* by Ludwig von Mises, and *Capitalism the Creator* by Carl Snyder. She specifically rejected a book that the questioner had mentioned—*The Capitalist Manifesto*, a now forgotten tome by Louis Kelso and Mortimer Adler—and expressed strong reservations about the writings of Friedrich Hayek:

Above all, I would *not* recommend Hayek, euhh, who, uh, is very often mentioned and is probably one of the more widely known economists who is allegedly for capitalism, but he is not; he is actually middle-of-the-roader. He is for a mixed economy and, therefore, a great favorite among the liberals. He's a liberal capitalist, if you know what that means, and that is a contradiction in terms and you'll get nothing but pretty difficult confusions out of his books. Therefore, if you read him, read him very critically, but I would not

recommend him, certainly not as a guide to capitalism. (Faith and Force 1961, Track 5, 4:01–10:09)

Rand talked fast during this session, generating long but balanced answers; she was far less defensive than on most of her available Q&A's from the Ford Hall Forum, actually inviting some of her questioners to ask follow-ups. Although Mayhew accepted 7 of the 8 answers from the session, usually abridging them substantially, he passed this one over entirely.

### **An Answer about Arbitrariness**

The doctrine of the arbitrary assertion is a curious, inadequately explored part of Objectivist philosophy. Part of what makes it curious is that while Rand obviously endorsed the doctrine, as Peikoff taught it in his 1976 lecture course on Objectivism, she made no actual use of it in anything that she published during her lifetime (see Campbell 2008). It turns out that a quick answer after one of Peikoff's lectures is her only available response to an explicit question about the doctrine:

Q: If a man makes an arbitrary claim and you discuss it, is it rationally valid to explain why you will not discuss it; that is, that arbitrary claims are with, without reference to reality?

A: Well, there's no rule about it. The answer is: if you wish. If you think that the person you're talking to, who is making an arbitrary statement, doesn't fully realize the issue or is open to reason, you can explain why you will dismiss him. Uhh, most cases . . . it's not worth explaining. But, it's as you wish, as you judge the particular situation. (Philosophy of Objectivism 1976, Lecture 6, CD 2, Track 5, 12:33–13:13)

Would she have given such a cursory, off-hand answer had the doctrine been one of her own? Readers are surely entitled to wonder—which may be why Mayhew chose not to use the answer.

### **An Answer about Kantian Moral Theory**

On a 1962 radio show, Rand took questions in the studio about



a shortened version of “The Objectivist Ethics,” which she had delivered a week earlier. She was asked:

how is the transition from the “is” to the “ought” accomplished exactly? And how can a statement involving the term “ought” be deduced from premises which do not contain such a term? Don’t we get at best what Kant called a hypothetical imperative? That is, if you want to be rational, do so-and-so, or if you wish to survive, do such-and-such. But let’s suppose that I don’t desire to survive.

Her 10-minute answer charged “the Hume-Kant axis” with mounting a “rebellion against the possibility of ethics or, more specifically, a rebellion against ethics as choice.” One section may explain why it was the one long answer out of 4 from this session that Mayhew decided not to include:

But now we are not talking about psychological determinism here; we are talking about ethics. And once we talk about ethics, we have already admitted the fact that man has choice. If he has choice, then a hypothetical imperative—if you want to call it that—is all that ethics can properly be concerned with.

Only I will immediately challenge the term. Uh, neither “imperative” nor “hypothesis” are terms applicable to the fact that man has to make choices [word partly covered by noise in the recording]. What does Kant’s term imply? Well, of course, it implies the opposite of what he was aiming at; namely, his categorical imperative. What did he mean by that? Some sort of, apparently, innate instinct, which forces us to make a certain kind of choice in certain circumstances. Some sort of categorical imperative for a duty which we all are born with and have to follow.

Well, of course, if this were true—which it isn’t—if in fact we had such an instinct, it would be outside the province of morality or ethics. It would have nothing to do with ethics

since it would be an innate imperative which we could not resist. It would not be open to our choice. And this is the basic contradiction in the whole Hume-Kant attitude toward ethics. I'd make it wider—in the whole mystic attitude toward ethics. If any ethical proposition, any, uh, commandment or precept, cannot be resisted, if it is from God or our glands or any authority other than our free will choice, if it cannot be resisted, it no longer belongs in the realm of ethics, and it's a contradiction in terms to talk of an irresistible imperative or an irresistible choice, choice which we cannot help but make. If we could not choose, we are no longer in the issue of ethics. (Objectivist Ethics 1962, CD 2, Track 1, 11:08–12:09, Track 2, 0:00–11:54)

The answer makes it obvious that in 1962 Rand understood hardly anything about Immanuel Kant's ethical theory. Before publishing "Causality versus Duty" in 1970, she had had time to learn a lot more about it—presumably from Peikoff, whose own articles about Kant's moral theory were then being featured in *The Objectivist*. Surely Rand the changeless thinker had always understood Kant and always recognized the precise philosophical threat that he posed.

### Politically Sensitive Answers

Even more interesting to some potential readers is the occasion when Rand was asked about taking amphetamines. Only the questioner could know whether he was after a personal statement, but her initial reaction presumed it:

Q: It has been shown that stimulant drugs such as the amphetamines may prolong the ability to concentrate in tired individuals. Do you think it is moral to use these drugs under normal circumstances, even though certain deleterious side effects almost always occur?

A: *That's not a moral question . . . it's just . . .*

(Judge Lurie jumps in to restate the question, then the questioner restates again, then Judge Lurie makes a second

restatement.)

A: It all depends on the context of a given person and, uh, a given state of health. Therefore, consult your doctor about it. (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 21:36–23:19)

From the late 1960s onwards, Rand sometimes raised her voice or expressed anger during stretches of her answers; I have transcribed such stretches in italics. On this particular occasion, the moderator's intervention gave Rand time to collect herself and produce a calmer response. Mayhew was surely aware, when he kept the answer out, that Rand's use of amphetamines had been talked about over the years. The issue was brought up in Barbara Branden's book (1986) and has received much more attention in recent biographies (Burns 2009; Heller 2009).

Rand sometimes went out on a limb claiming that no one had ever influenced her and no one had ever helped her.

Judge Lurie: In the first 20 years of your coming to this country, were there any American writers, particularly in the field of non-fiction, who influenced your ideas?

A: No, not a single one. I wish there were. [Applause] (Ford Hall Forum 1973, 17:00–17:20)

Apparently H. L. Mencken no longer counted as an influence; neither did Isabel Paterson, Carl Snyder, Leonard Read, or Rose Wilder Lane. Mayhew kept this answer out of his book. As an affirmation of changelessness, could it be a little too easy to refute?

Finally, an item from 1971 has become notorious:

Q: I read somewhere that you consider all homosexuality immoral. If so, why?

A: Because it involves psychological flaws, corruptions, errors—or unfortunate premises—but there is a psychological immorality at the root of homosexuality. Therefore, I regard it as immoral, but I do not, uh, believe that the

government has the right to prohibit it. It is the . . . privilege of any individual to use his sex life in whichever way he wants it. That is his legal right, provided he is not forcing it on anyone. And therefore the idea that it is proper among consenting adults is the proper formulation, legally.

Morally, it is immoral, and, more than that, if you want my really sincere opinion, it's disgusting. [Judge Lurie chides some members of the audience for hissing.] (Ford Hall Forum 1971, 12:00–14:05)

Even though this remark is by far the most widely known of any mentioned in this section—it's the only one that's been featured in a book (Sciabarra 2003)—Mayhew still excluded it. His rationale can't have been redundancy; Rand made just one other recorded public comment on homosexuality, in a two-for-one response that also covered bigamy (Ford Hall Forum 1968, 35:50–38:20; Mayhew 2005, 18). By contrast, Mayhew put in 10 different answers sharply criticizing libertarians; he appears to have used every available item<sup>6</sup> on that particular subject, despite substantial overlap in their content.

The 1968 answer seems to have gotten the sole nod because it is less severe in its condemnation: “If by unnatural sexual acts, you mean homosexual, I would say that all acts, uh, laws of that kind should certainly be repealed. Which, by that I do not mean that I *approve* of such practices, or regard them as necessarily moral, but, uh, it is totally improper for the law to interfere in the personal relationships between two adults.”

Bypassing the 1971 answer does not just give the reader a distorted picture of Rand's views on homosexuality. It fails to situate her historically. In 1971, her judgments weren't all that far from the cultural norm in the United States.

The problem is that Peikoff and his junior associates, while continuing to heap scorn and condemnation on libertarians, no longer consider sexual orientation to be a moral issue. In the intervening years, Rand's view of gays and lesbians has become an embarrassment to them. Hence, its sharpest expression had to be kept out of *Ayn Rand Answers*, just as her use, back in 1937, of the long-obsolete slang term “nance” had to be kept out of *Journals of Ayn Rand* (Burns 2009,

292, 344 n.7).

Of the 92 answers that Mayhew decided to cut and I have been able to transcribe, a reasonable case can be made that more than half should have been included in a compilation of Rand's Q&A's. A few of the answers he omitted are so important that leaving them out deprives readers of significant insights (e.g., the 1971 answer on the Pentagon Papers) or serves to keep them in the dark about matters that Mayhew prefers they not know (e.g., the 1976 answer on amphetamines).

Are there unused answers from the sources I haven't checked (in Appendix B)? Presumably. If there are, should all of them have remained unused? Plausibly not, but there is no way to know without examining the data.

## The Faulty Rationale

Now that we know in some detail what his editing consisted of, we may be inclined to take a different view of the justification that Robert Mayhew presented for his labors:

Given the extemporaneous nature of the material, it is not surprising that the transcripts required editing—as Ayn Rand herself suggested they would. At one point during her 1969 nonfiction-writing course, she said that she was a writer, not a speaker, and that she did not speak well extemporaneously. Someone replied that she should listen to her answers to questions. She responded:

“That depends on whether the question is interesting. If it's a proper question, so that I know the context from which it's asked and I know it's worth answering, that is very inspiring. Sometimes, I may give an answer that's almost publishable—but not quite. It might be good for a first draft, but it would still need editing.” (2005, x)

For starters, we are stuck with a question as *Robert Mayhew* (2001) paraphrased it and an answer as *Robert Mayhew* rewrote it; the source material (Appendix B) for that set of lectures is presently unavailable to the public.

What's more, those who knew Rand do not necessarily concur with this judgment of her extemporaneous speaking. Remarking on the "fast mind" that she regularly exhibited in conversation, Henry Mark Holzer (2010) has said, "She could speak almost as well as she wrote: not the accent—the sentences, the structure."

In any event, if he had taken Rand's comment as laying down rules for editorial practice, Mayhew would have significantly shortened his book. *Ayn Rand Answers* often presents Rand's complaint that she had been asked an improper question. For instance, that the questioner was acting as Paul Samuelson's "transmission belt" by bringing up his negative remarks about Alan Greenspan and herself (Ford Hall Forum 1968, 17:23–19:40; Mayhew 2005, 133). Or that the questioner had no business referring to her "hostility" toward politicians (Ford Hall Forum 1969, 46:20–48:01; Mayhew 2005, 57–58). Or that a question about "philosophy professors that I've had" who "say they fail to find argumentation" for her views had no function except to repeat a "*vicious, vicious lie*," and was therefore unworthy of an answer (Ford Hall Forum 1978, 12:10–15:08; Mayhew 2005, 132). Or that a question whether "apart from basic moral premises, is it ever really proper to talk about an Objectivist position on an issue" was necessarily dishonest (Philosophy of Objectivism 1976, Lecture 10, CD 2, Track 5, 2:01–11:46; Mayhew 2005, 143–45). While Mayhew ramps down her rhetoric on these occasions, he always leaves in Rand's charges that the question has to be dishonest or that the questioner has insulted her by asking it.

## Lost Trust

Over time, Mayhew (2005, 2010) has leaned heavily on Rand's 1969 remark about making her spoken comments publishable. That remark was pertinent when *Rand* was putting her answers into writing. In other words, it applies to 14 out of the 370 answers in his collection. It doesn't apply when *anyone else* is trying to put her answers into writing. Robert Mayhew is not Ayn Rand.

It would be highly presumptuous for Leonard Peikoff, let alone one of Peikoff's junior associates, to imagine that he could edit Ayn Rand's statements the way Ayn Rand would have. It should be clear from many examples I have given here that Robert Mayhew could not hope to reproduce her style. And neither the examples already

supplied nor many others for which space is lacking yield any evidence that he could improve the clarity of her off-the-cuff remarks.

When he failed to mark any difference between 14 revisions by Rand and 356 by Mayhew, he lapsed over into carelessness, if not active dishonesty.

When he made unannounced cuts of material that he or Peikoff preferred that readers not see, historical accuracy was being sacrificed so that Rand could always be seen as the changeless exemplar of Peikovian Objectivism. Intellectual integrity had been sacrificed as well.

Ayn Rand ought to be allowed to speak for herself, as she was manifestly capable of doing. Other writers should give up pretending that they can improve her speeches, as they are manifestly incapable of doing. With an author as renowned for her manner of expressing her thoughts as for the thoughts themselves, “Hands off!” is the only editorial advice worth supplying.

Consequently, no one should have any further use for a book in which Ayn Rand has been rewritten by a lesser author.

Compulsively rewritten, right down to changing:

Q: Miss Rand, do you pay income taxes, and if so, why?

A: Because they are taken from me at the point of a gun.  
(Ford Hall Forum 1976, 1:23–1:43)

to:

Yes, because they are taken from me at gunpoint. (Mayhew 2005, 8)

And converting her parting shot at her very last recorded Q&A, from:

Moderator: Ah, would you give us a word about the Women’s Liberation movement?

A: I would be the last person to give it to you, because I am a male chauvinist. [Laughter] (Ford Hall Forum 1981, Track 5, 6:53–7:14)

into:

I'd be the last person to give you that. I'm a male chauvinist.  
(Mayhew 2005, 106)

Robert Mayhew couldn't even leave her one-liners alone. He'd been given a license to rewrite; he used it.

As Burns (2009, 291) has noted about another book in this series (her italics), "The *Journals of Ayn Rand* are thus best understood as an *interpretation* of Rand rather than her own writing." Mayhew's editing, we may conclude, is no more reliable than the editing that his colleague David Harriman performed on Ayn Rand's unpublished journals.

## **How Rand's Answers Should Be Handled**

From our detailed examination of *Ayn Rand Answers*, it emerges that the Estate has invested too few resources in transcribing Rand's words, and too many in rewriting them.

Even when he didn't tamper with Rand's answers, Mayhew's editing has clouded and distorted them. Quoting from his book means quoting another author's interpretation of Rand, in which some of the words and around 90% of the sentences are not her own. Any quotation taken from Mayhew's volume is virtually guaranteed to be historically inaccurate. Neither the student of history nor the general reader stands to benefit from assured inaccuracy. The Estate should withdraw the Mayhew volume and replace it with a more complete, very lightly edited collection of Rand's answers to questions.

Once the transcription has been done with care, there isn't that much work left for the editor. His or her main chore is taking out the hesitation pauses and false starts. Where some little correction to Rand's grammar is advisable, it should be indicated in square brackets. Work in an occasional footnote to explain a change of wording or a fleeting allusion, and the job is done.

For a sample of the editing I recommend, see Appendix D.

For another, see the extended passages from the first answer that Rand gave after her "Faith and Force" speech in 1961, as quoted by Gregory Salmieri in one of his contributions to the ARI-sponsored



collection *Essays on Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*.

Space won't permit me to reproduce the entire extended passage that Salmieri chose to quote. Here, in my transcription, are the first five paragraphs:

In *Atlas Shrugged*, I showed you the practical way of dealing with collectivism—only never take things literally when they are inapplicable, or rather, take them literally only when they apply literally. What do I mean by that? Well, in *Atlas Shrugged*, I show that men go on strike. The men of intelligence and ability go on strike against collectivist slavery, and the world left without minds perishes. And then the meh, the men of the mind, the men of intelligence, of self-esteem, are free to start rebuilding the world.

Now the state in which we exist today, the state of collectivism we have reached, is not yet as bad as the one I present in *Atlas Shrugged*. I intended *Atlas Shrugged*, in effect, to present the society of about 10 years ahead of the time at which you read the book. It's just the immediate future or the next consistent step, if the trends of the present are to be continued. But there is no historical determinism, and these trends do not have to be continued. So long as we have not yet reached the state of censorship of ideas, one does not have to leave a society in the way the characters did in *Atlas Shrugged*; one does not yet have to break relationships with the society.

But do you know what one has to do? One has to break relationships with the culture, meaning: while you live in this society, break all cultural relationships, meaning withdraw your sanction from those people, groups, schools, or theories which preach the ideas that are destroying you. If you read *Atlas Shrugged*, you will understand what I mean by the, uh, situation of the sanction of the victim. It's the, uh, situation in which the good people are helping their own destroyers and are showing how many ways men are guilty of that, through generosity or ignorance. Men are supporting their

own destroyers materially and spiritually, in their private lives and in their public lives.

Now what we have to do today: anyone who is serious about saving the world would have to first discard all the kind of ideas, the entire cultural philosophy which is dominant today. Do not accept any of their ideas. Stand on your view as much as if you had to go into a separate valley like in *Atlas Shrugged*. Stand on your own, your own mind. Check your premises. Define your convictions; define them rationally. Do not take anyone on faith, and do not believe that your elders know what they're doing because they don't [some laughter]. You have to be the responsible creators of a new culture, if there is to be any culture.

That is the sense in which *Atlas Shrugged* is applicable to *our* period. We are not yet totally collectivized. We have a chance. (Faith and Force 1961, Track 1, 0:23–8:49)

This is Ayn Rand speaking. Does anyone think these words ever needed rewriting? Unfiltered, with the occasional stumble left in, they are far more eloquent and better organized than nearly anything her latter-day epigones will be coming up with. What rationale could there ever be for compressing and blandifying this statement (as is done in Mayhew 2005, 54–56)?

Salmieri explains, “I quote here from a transcript of the event [. . .] so as to retain the more personal and advice-giving character of Rand’s extemporaneous remarks” (2009, 452 n.25); he further encourages readers to listen to the original recording. (Salmieri’s transcription [2009, 449–50], which he cut somewhat on account of length, diverges from my own over a couple of small details.)

Realistically, *Ayn Rand Answers* will not be withdrawn and replaced so long as Leonard Peikoff, who trained its editor and commissioned and oversaw its production, remains in control of Ayn Rand’s Estate. It may be a long time before something better replaces the Mayhew compilation. Until a high-quality collection does become available, those who write about Rand should, whenever possible, emulate Salmieri’s example and quote directly from the original Q&A sessions.

When the originals are unavailable, as unfortunately remains the case for some items, the prudent course will be to remind readers that nearly everything in *Ayn Rand Answers* has been rewritten by Robert Mayhew, that only very short stretches of it are Rand's own words, and that some answers may have been doctored to make her look changelessly philosophically correct.

## **Appendix A: Sources Transcribed for This Article**

The original questions and answers consulted and transcribed for this article were accessed through streaming audio at <<http://www.atlashrugged.com>> or CDs sold by the Ayn Rand Bookstore. Where CDs and tracks are mentioned, commercial CDs are the source; where only overall timings are given, the source was <<http://atlashrugged.com>>. I have listed sources in chronological order, including the number of original answers and the number of answers used in Mayhew's book.

When the original speeches and Q&A sessions were recorded, hardly anyone was thinking about historical preservation. The technical quality of the surviving recordings is highly variable. Some of the Ford Hall Forum tapes, which derived from radio broadcasts on which questions from the audience were scarcely audible, have been subjected to editing so clumsy and abrupt that it occasionally eliminates parts of the moderator's clarification or even of Rand's answer. On one recording, the broadcast microphone cut in and out three times, causing 20 seconds of one of Rand's answers to be lost (Ford Hall Forum 1969, 3:26–8:44; Mayhew 2005, 164, abridged the answer as though nothing had happened).

Faith and Force: Destroyers of the Modern World. 1961. Speech and Q&A given at Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. 8 answers, 7 used by Mayhew.

America's Persecuted Minority: Big Business. 1961/1962. Speech given at Ford Hall Forum, Boston (17 December 1961); Q&A at WKCR studio, Columbia University, New York City (1962). 7 answers, 4 used by Mayhew (totaling 6 items after he split some of them up). Mayhew added one answer that is not on the available recording.

The Intellectual Bankruptcy of Our Age. 1962. Speech recorded at WKCR studio; Q&A at WKCR studio. [Rand first gave this speech at the Ford Hall Forum on 26 March 1961, and the CD identifies the recording as being from that venue, but it is obviously a studio remake without an audience.] 4 answers, 2 used by Mayhew.

The Objectivist Ethics. 1962. Abridged speech recorded at WKCR studio; Q&A at WKCR studio. [The surviving recording of the Q&A was taken off someone's table radio, and the audio quality is unusually poor.] 4 original answers, 3 used by Mayhew (4 after splitting). Mayhew added 2 answers not on the available recording.

Of Living Death. 1968. Speech and Q&A live at the Ford Hall Forum, 8 December 1968. 20 answers, 14 included by Mayhew.

Apollo and Dionysus. 1969. Speech and Q&A live at the Ford Hall Forum, 9 November 1969. 13 answers, 12 used by Mayhew (13 after splitting).

The Moratorium on Brains. 1971. Speech and Q&A live at the Ford Hall Forum, 14 November 1971. 28 answers, 17 included in the Mayhew volume.

A Nation's Unity. 1972. Speech and Q&A live at the Ford Hall Forum, 22 October 1972. 24 answers, 14 used by Mayhew (15 after splitting).

Censorship: Local and Express. 1973. Speech and Q&A live at the Ford Hall Forum, 21 October 1973. 15 answers, 9 used by Mayhew (10 after splitting). The available recording of the Q&A is incomplete; Mayhew added 8 answers that are not on it.

Philosophy: Who Needs It? 1974. Speech and Q&A live at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, 6 March 1974. 4 answers, 3 used by Mayhew.

Egalitarianism and Inflation. 1974. Speech and Q&A live at the Ford Hall Forum, 20 October 1974. 26 answers, 13 used by Mayhew.

The Moral Factor. 1976. Speech and Q&A live at the Ford Hall Forum, 11 April 1976. 23 answers, 16 used by Mayhew (17 after splitting).

The Philosophy of Objectivism. 1976. 12 lectures, with Q&A, given by Leonard Peikoff in New York City. Rand answered some of the questions after Lectures 5 through 12 in the series.

Lecture 5. One answer by Ayn Rand, one used by Mayhew.

Lecture 6. 15 answers, 11 included in Mayhew's book.

Lecture 7. 3 answers, 3 used by Mayhew (4 items after splitting).

Lecture 8. 3 answers, 3 used by Mayhew.

Lecture 9. 2 answers, 2 used by Mayhew.

Lecture 10. 6 answers, 4 used by Mayhew.

Lecture 11. 19 answers, 14 used by Mayhew.

Lecture 12. 7 answers, 6 used by Mayhew (5 after recombining).

Global Balkanization. 1977. Speech and Q&A live at the Ford Hall Forum, 10 April 1977. 18 answers, 9 used by Mayhew. The available recording of the Q&A has serious technical faults and is incomplete; Mayhew added 9 answers that are not on it.

Cultural Update. 1978. Speech and Q&A live at the Ford Hall Forum, 16 April 1978. 20 answers, 15 included in Mayhew's book.

The Age of Mediocrity. 1981. Speech and Q&A live at the Ford Hall Forum, 26 April 1981. 16 answers, 9 used by Mayhew.

The Q&A sessions from "The Philosophy of Objectivism" series were transcribed by Roger Bissell and revised and corrected by Robert L. Campbell. All other Q&A sessions were transcribed by Robert L. Campbell.

To keep things simple, I cite the starting and ending times of each

complete question and answer, even if I quote only a portion of the exchange.

### **Appendix B: Sources Not Transcribed**

The Art of Fiction. 1958. Informal lectures given at Ayn Rand's apartment, New York City. 17 answers used by Mayhew.

The Political Vacuum of Our Age. 1961. Speech and Q&A to a group of Republican women in Indiana. 11 answers used by Mayhew.

*The Great Challenge*. 1962. CBS TV show. 7 answers used by Mayhew.

America's Persecuted Minority: Big Business. 1963. Speech and Q&A given at McCormick Place, Chicago. 6 answers used by Mayhew.

Our Cultural Value-Deprivation. 1966. Speech and Q&A given at the Ford Hall Forum, Boston. One answer used by Mayhew.

The Wreckage of the Consensus. 1967. Speech and Q&A given at the Ford Hall Forum, 16 April 1967. 22 answers used by Mayhew.

*Night Call*. 1969. Radio show. 13 answers included in Mayhew's book.

The Art of Nonfiction. 1969. Informal lectures given at Rand's apartment. 40 answers used by Mayhew.

The Anti-industrial Revolution. 1970. Speech and Q&A given at the Ford Hall Forum, 1 November 1970. 15 answers used by Mayhew.

Objective Communication. 1980. 12 lectures with Q&A, given by Leonard Peikoff in New York City. Rand answered some of the questions after Lecture 1; 18 answers were included in Mayhew's

book.

Only the Q&A's from "The Art of Fiction" lectures (on which I may be commenting in a future article) and the "Objective Communication" course are available commercially.

### Appendix C: Answers that Ayn Rand Edited

From June 1976 through June 1979, Barbara Weiss, who had been Ayn Rand's personal secretary since 1964, put out on a roughly bimonthly basis a publication called *The Objectivist Calendar*. Each of its 20 issues consisted of a few pages of offset-printed typescript. As the title indicates, the *Calendar's* principal function was to announce public appearances by Rand and members of her circle, as well as the availability of taped lecture courses.

Between the closure of *The Ayn Rand Letter* in 1976 and the launch of *The Objectivist Forum* in 1980, there was no other published source for such listings and notices. The *Calendar* carried an occasional short article or book review and, under the title "Questions and Answers," Weiss published edited transcripts of some of Rand's answers from the Ford Hall Forum. (In four other issues, Rand answered questions from readers; these were not taken up in *Ayn Rand Answers* and are therefore beyond the scope of the present article.)

Weiss's preface to the first such answer gave a succinct description of their purpose:

From time to time, I intend to publish part of the question-and-answer period that followed Ayn Rand's lecture at the Ford Hall Forum in April, as they might be of topical interest to our readers. The questions will not necessarily be published in the order in which they were asked. The following is a portion of that question-and-answer period. Miss Rand has edited the answers grammatically, but the content is essentially unchanged. (Rand 1976a, 2)

In all, 13 of Rand's answers were published in the *Calendar*. Five came from her 1976 appearance at the Ford Hall Forum:

- A brief answer on which of the Founding Fathers she most admired (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 0:53–1:19; Rand 1976a, 2). Mayhew (2005, 1) reproduces Rand’s mildly edited version.
- Her response to the 1976 US copyright law (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 24:40–27:56). Rand removed a reference to Channel 13 (WNET), the PBS station in New York City, and made some other changes to her wording (1976a, 3); Mayhew (2005, 21–22) reproduced Rand’s edited version, except for a note added by Barbara Weiss identifying the objectionable sections of the law.
- Her statement on the right to an abortion (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 41:41–42:56). Mayhew took Rand’s slightly edited version (1976a, 2–3) and edited it a little more (2005, 17).
- Her views on the Equal Rights Amendment (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 18:30–20:15). Rand (1976b, 2) made a minor change to acknowledge that the 19th Amendment to the Constitution refers to men and women; Mayhew (2005, 106) reproduced her edited answer.
- A three-headed monster concerning Israel versus the Arab countries, Henry Kissinger, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (Ford Hall Forum 1976, 27:58–35:29). Rand published the entire answer (1976c, 2–3) with mild editing of the sections on the Israeli-Arab conflict and Kissinger. Much longer than the other two, the Solzhenitsyn section was first published minus a paragraph expressing suspicion of writers who rose to prominence under the Soviets. Rand also eliminated part of a paragraph about Solzhenitsyn hankering to take Russia back to the days before Peter the Great, marking this cut with ellipsis dots. And Weiss tacked on a new final paragraph, marking it with square brackets and the words: “Miss Rand wants to add the following.” Mayhew split the answer into three parts, discarded the bit on the Arab-Israeli conflict, reproduced Rand’s edited answer on Kissinger (2005, 99), and re-edited Rand’s edited answer on Solzhenitsyn (64–65). He took Rand’s published version, filled in the ellipsis with a two-sentence synopsis of the passage she had cut, and presented the new final paragraph, shorn of its brackets and “Miss Rand wants to add,” as part of the original answer.



From her 1977 appearance at the Forum, Rand published another 4 answers:

- A comment about growing population, scarce resources, and the appeal of capitalism (Ford Hall Forum 1977, 21:13–23:08; Rand 1977a, 2). Mayhew (2005, 35–36) did a little further editing on Rand's published version.
- A comment about man's altering of nature (Ford Hall Forum 1977, not transcribed; Rand 1977a, 2). Because the original recording is unavailable, I can't assess most of Rand's editing. However, she added a sentence in brackets:

[Man does not “alter” nature—he merely rearranges its elements to serve his own purposes.]

Mayhew (2005, 31–32) dropped the brackets.

- Career advice for aspiring writers (Ford Hall Forum 1977, not transcribed; Rand 1977b, 2). Mayhew (2005, 220–21) made some small changes to Rand's edited version.
- An 8-minute speech about the television series based on Alex Haley's *Roots* (Ford Hall Forum 1977, 3:32–11:42). Rand recognized the importance of this answer and published an edited version of it (1977c, 2–4). As usual, her editing went some distance beyond grammar correction, but the homiletic paragraph that she inserted just before the end was originally presented in square brackets:

[The truth, of course, is that genealogy, race or tribe do not make or break your character. *You* do—and the credit or blame is exclusively yours.]

Mayhew (2005, 208–10) basically reproduced her published answer—minus the square brackets.

And from her 1978 appearance, there were 4 more:

- A response to the controversy over the American Nazi march in Skokie, Illinois (Ford Hall Forum 1978, 9:42–12:07). To her edited version (Rand 1978a, 2), Rand added two paragraphs at the end:

[I would like to add that the matter of “the overt expression of genocide” is irrelevant to the issue of free speech. The issue of free speech is concerned with the *content* of a man’s speech and does not protect only the expression of *good* ideas, but *all* ideas. If it were otherwise, who would determine which ideas are good and which are forbidden? The government?]

[Furthermore, there is no principle by which genocide—a crime against a group of men—can be regarded as *morally* different from (or worse than) a crime against an individual: the difference is only quantitative, not moral. It can be easily documented that Communism means and requires the extermination—the genocide, if you wish—of a particular human species: the men of ability. The communists and the Nazis are merely two variants of the same evil notion: collectivism. But both should be free to speak—evil ideas are dangerous only by default of men advocating better ideas.  
– A. R.]

Otherwise following Rand’s edited answer, Mayhew (2005, 20–21) retained the first added paragraph (no brackets, of course) and cut the second.

- Comments on the recent Soviet military buildup (Ford Hall Forum 1978, 6:45–8:58; Rand 1978b, 2). Mayhew (2005, 88) reproduced Rand’s published version.
- The need to change American universities (Ford Hall Forum 1978, 15:10–16:18; Rand 1978b, 2). Mayhew (2005, 175–76) reproduced her mildly edited version.
- Irrationalism as the one most dangerous philosophical concept (Ford Hall Forum 1978, 5:10–5:37; Rand 1978b, 2). Mayhew (2005,

165) again reproduced her slightly edited rendition.

Probably because of her husband's final illness, Rand did not speak at the Ford Hall Forum in 1979. Barbara Weiss, who would soon quit working for Rand, shut the *Calendar* down in June 1979, offering refunds to subscribers who were still owed issues.

### **Appendix D: A Sample of Acceptable Editing**

Here is my rendition of the item on anarchy in Galt's Gulch from the 1972 Ford Hall Forum Q&A. I've barely edited the question or the answer. (The question comes out somewhat longer than it did in the body of this article, on account of some back-and-forth between the questioner and Judge Lurie that I cut there.)

Q: Would you comment, please, on the difference between government that you advocate in *Capitalism* and the government that you find, say, in Galt's Gulch? I've heard it said by a friend of mine, "Why is this government, where judges and lawsuits are privately run, denied to us mortals?" That's how he puts it. Why is the lack of government in Galt's Gulch in *Atlas Shrugged* denied to a hypothetical rational society?

A: Because Galt's Gulch is not a society; it's [a] private estate. It is owned by one man who selects those who are admitted so carefully, and even then they have a judge as an arbiter if anything ever came up—only nothing came up among them because they were all men sharing the same philosophy. But in a *general* society, God help you! If you had a society [in] which all shared one philosophy, that would be dreadful.

Galt's Gulch would probably have consisted of—I never named the number—let's say, optimistically, a thousand people who represent the top genius[es] of the world. Even then, they would agree on fundamentals, but they would never be totally identical. And the reason why they didn't need any government is because if they had disagreements,

they were capable of resolving them rationally.

But now how do you project a multi-million nation, in which there can be every kind of viewpoint, every kind of brain, and every kind of morality—and you want no government? What do you think I was talking about when I talked about the Middle Age[s]? *There is your no-government society, which leaves men at the mercy of the worst bandits possible*, because when there is no government, every criminally inclined individual will resort to force, and every intellectually or morally inclined individual will be left helpless. Government is the absolute necessity if men are to have individual rights, for the simple reason that you do not leave force at the arbitrary whim of other individuals.

And your so-called libertarian anarchism is *nothing but whim worship* if you refuse to see this point, because what you refuse to recognize is the need of *objectivity* among men, particularly, men of different views—and it is proper and good that mankind at large, or as a [sic] large a section as a nation—should have different views. *It's good to have different views, provided you respect each other's rights*. And there is no one to guard rights except a government under strictly objective rules.

How would you like it if McGovern had his own gang of policemen and Nixon his own? And instead of presenting a campaign, they were fighting it out in the streets? What do you think that would do to you? The rest of us would be caught in the crossfire. Would that make any sense? And yet it certainly has happened throughout history.

A rational society, or a group of rational men, is not afraid of the government—in a proper society, as existed even in this country in the beginning, a rational man doesn't have to know that a government exists, because the laws are clear and he never breaks any. That is the proper way for men to live, and that's the proper government.

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## Notes

1. Robert Mayhew’s practices are yet to be examined. And in this instance, they are not terribly important, because his editorial changes were modest. In Mayhew’s rendition, Rand says:

I haven’t changed my philosophical opinions—that is, my fundamental view of the nature of man, of existence, of human knowledge and of values—in the last sixty-four years. I’ve learned a great deal over the years, and frequently improved some formulations and details of my conclusions, but never the fundamentals. (2005, 231)

2. The only other posthumously published volume that currently permits such comparisons is *The Art of Fiction*, edited by Tore Boeckmann from a series of informal lectures that Rand gave in her apartment in 1958. The original lectures are available on CDs from the Ayn Rand Bookstore. I hope to address *The Art of Fiction* in a future article.

3. Of the 201 answers that I was able to check against the originals, Mayhew was the sole editor of 189. Who edited the other 12? See the next section—and Appendix C.

4. Withholding credit from Beatrice Hessen was already Harry Binswanger’s (1988) policy when he published his *Ayn Rand Lexicon*. Binswanger used part of a brief interview that Rand had provided to Hessen for one of her articles. In the entry on “Imagination,” Binswanger (1988, 210) presents an excerpt from the interview, citing it as follows: “Ayn Rand, quoted in ‘The Montessori Method,’ *TO* [*The Objectivist*], July 1970, 7.” The author of the article is left unidentified. For a list of contributors to the periodicals that Rand edited who were deliberately excluded from Binswanger’s *Lexicon*, see Campbell 2008, 164–65 n.31.

5. From the early 1960s through the mid-1970s, Judge Reuben Lurie served as the moderator at the Ford Hall Forum. Rand was comfortable working with Judge Lurie, to the point that she accepted his making occasional comments of his own, and even called him back, when he was no longer the regular moderator, to officiate at her 1976 appearance. One of Judge Lurie’s duties was to repeat the questions so the entire audience could hear them. He appears in transcriptions because on many of the Ford Hall Forum recordings, the questioners are off-mike and barely audible

either to the hall audience or the radio audience; in the versions now available, the original questions have sometimes been edited out entirely.

6. Because of rapid changes in political nomenclature that took place in the United States at the end of the 1960s, Rand did not refer to libertarianism or libertarians in any of her answers until 1971. All of her comments on libertarianism were therefore made between that year and 1981. Unless the later sections of her 1973 and 1977 Ford Hall Forum Q&A's contained critiques not put to use by Mayhew (he did take one from the unavailable portion of the 1973 broadcast: 2005, 72–73) or there was something more from Leonard Peikoff's 1980 course on Objective Communication (Mayhew used one from this venue as well: 2005, 73–74), *Ayn Rand Answers* entirely exhausts the stock of answers blasting libertarians.

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