



ANTHEM by Ayn Rand

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Biography, Themes, Literary Elements

Ayn Rand

- ✦ *Ayn* rhymes with “*mine*”
- ✦ Born February 2, 1905 in St. Petersburg, Russia
- ✦ A Russian-American novelist
- ✦ Studied history and philosophy at the University of Petrograd



Ayn Rand



✦ Known for works such as

✦ *The Fountainhead*

✦ *Atlas Shrugged*

✦ *Anthem* (novella)

Ayn Rand



- ✦ Left her home in Russia for the United States.
- ✦ Rand's hatred of the communism in Russia inspired her novella *Anthem*
- ✦ Rand believed in the rights of the individual and despised the communistic society of Russia.

Anthem



- ✦ *Anthem* is a **novella**: shorter and less complex than a novel; longer and more complicated than a short story.
- ✦ Rand wrote *Anthem* in 1937 after moving to America
- ✦ Rand saw America as an ideal society



Anthem Themes



✦ Five major themes for *Anthem*:

- ✦ Collectivism
- ✦ Individualism
- ✦ Conformity
- ✦ Equality
- ✦ Love

Theme: Collectivism



- ✦ **Collectivism:** emphasis on collective rather than individual action or identity.
- ✦ The protagonist in *Anthem* lives in is a collectivist society.

Theme: Collectivism

- ✦ A great example of collectivism would be participating on a team.
- ✦ The New York Yankees, represent a group of people, working together, for one common purpose.



Collectivism



- ✦ With **collectivism**, the individual
 - ✦ is owned by the group
 - ✦ has no right to a private existence
 - ✦ has no right to lead his own life, pursue his own happiness, or use his own property
 - ✦ exists only as part of the group

Theme: Individualism



- ✦ **Individualism** is the opposite of collectivism.
- ✦ Individualism focuses on individual action and identity.
- ✦ The main character in *Anthem*, **Equality 7-2521**, decides to rise against his society and claim his individuality.

Individualism



- ✦ With **individualism**, the individual
 - ✦ has rights
 - ✦ will not run anyone else's life, nor let anyone run theirs
 - ✦ will not rule or be ruled
 - ✦ will not be a master nor a slave
 - ✦ will not sacrifice themselves to anyone, nor sacrifice anyone to themselves

Theme: Individualism



✦ Individuality is
the theme of
Lady Gaga's
"Born This
Way"

I'm beautiful in my way,
'Cause God makes no
mistakes.

I'm on the right track, baby
I was born this way.

Don't hide yourself in regret,
Just love yourself and you're
set.

I'm on the right track, baby.
I was born this way

Theme: Conformity



- ✦ **Conformity** is closely related to the theme of individuality.
- ✦ According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, to **conform** means to be similar or identical, or to be obedient or compliant.
- ✦ In *Anthem*, Equality 7-2521 is expected to conform to society, but he goes against those expectations.

Conformity



- ✦ School uniforms are an example of conformity.



Theme: Equality



- ✧ **Equality** occurs when things are like (or the same) in status, quality, nature, etc.
- ✧ The protagonist in *Anthem* is named Equality 7-2521.
- ✧ Before reading this book, what might this tell us about his society? Are people in collectivist societies truly equal?

Literary Elements



Motif

A recurrent device, formula, or situation that often serves as a signal for the appearance of a character or event; a reoccurring theme.

The following motifs are present in *Anthem*.

- ◆ The use of *darkness* and *light*
- ◆ The presence of *ignorance* and *knowledge*
- ◆ The idea of *transgression* and *punishment*

Literary Elements



- **Rhetorical Devices:** A *rhetorical device* is a use of language that is intended to have an effect on its audience.
- Repetition, figurative language, and even rhetorical questions are all examples of **rhetorical devices**.

Literary Devices



Antithesis – a rhetorical device literally meaning “opposite,” in which two opposite ideas are put together in a sentence to achieve a contrasting effect.

Examples:

- Speech is silver, but silence is gold.
- Money is the root of all evils: poverty is the fruit of all goodness.
- You are easy on the eyes, but hard on the heart.

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