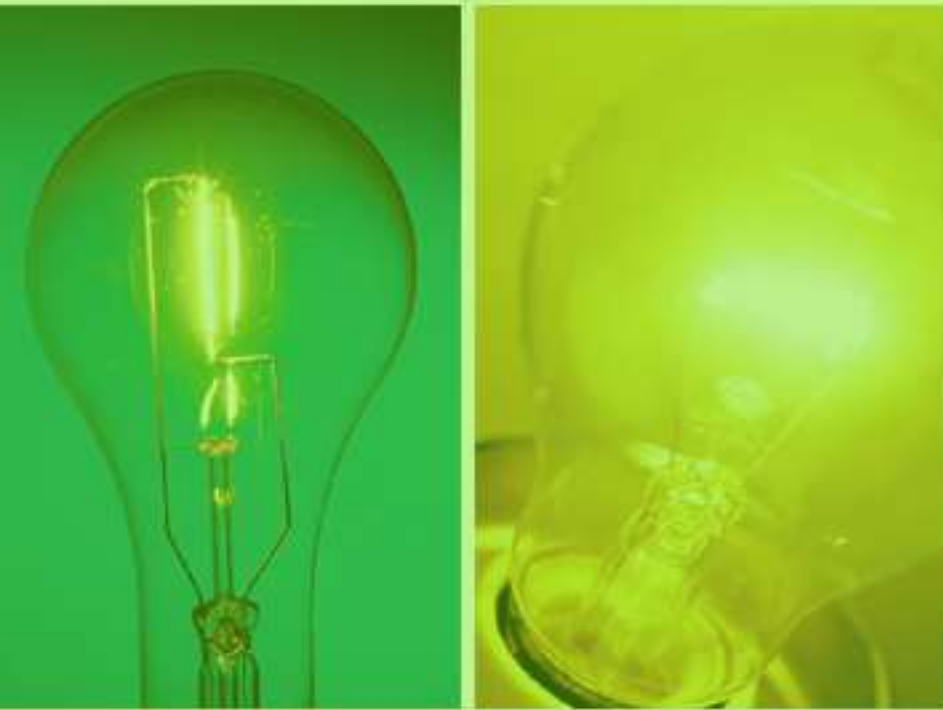


# Ayn Rand and *Anthem*



“The truth is not for all men,  
but only for those  
who seek it.”



# Background

- She was born in Russia in 1905
- Age 6 – taught herself to read
- Age 9 – decided to make writing fiction her life's work.
- During teens, she witnessed the Kerensky and Bolshevik Revolutions.
- Her family's pharmacy was taken over by Communists.
- She “visited” America in 1926 and never went back to Russia



# Development of Her Writing

- Due to life under Bolshevik rule, she is radically pro-capitalist and anti-Communist.
- She worked in Hollywood for a few years, sold a screenplay, and published her first novel, *We the Living*, in 1934. It is the most autobiographical of her works.
- Other works include *Anthem*, *The Fountainhead*, and *Atlas Shrugged* (considered by many to be her finest work) as well as many others.
- The Randian hero is one whose ability and independence cause conflict within the masses but who perseveres nevertheless to achieve his values. Rand views this as the ideal.



# Objectivism

- The name of Rand's philosophy
- She states:
  - “Reality exists as an objective absolute—facts are facts, independent of man's feelings, wishes, hopes or fears.
  - Reason (the faculty which identifies and integrates the material provided by man's senses) is man's only means of perceiving reality, his only source of knowledge, his only guide to action, and his basic means of survival.



# Objectivism

- Man—every man—is an end in himself, not the means to the ends of others. He must exist for his own sake, neither sacrificing himself to others nor sacrificing others to himself. The pursuit of his own rational self-interest and of his own happiness is the highest moral purpose of his life.
- The ideal political-economic system is *laissez-faire* capitalism.



# *Laissez Faire* Capitalism

- Men deal with one another, not as victims and executioners, nor as masters and slaves, but as *traders*, by free, voluntary exchange to mutual benefit.
- No man may obtain any values from others by resorting to physical force, and *no man may initiate the use of physical force against others*.
- The government acts only as a policeman that protects man's rights; it uses physical force only in retaliation and only against those who initiate its use, such as criminals or foreign invaders.
- In a system of full capitalism, there should be (but, historically, has not yet been) a complete separation of state and economics, in the same way and for the same reasons as the separation of state and church.”



# Dystopian/Anti-Utopian Literature

- This type of literature presents the world as it should NOT be.
- Collectivism is presented as the worst possible society.



# Collectivism

- “The subjugation of the individual to the group —whether to a race, class, or a state does not matter. Collectivism holds that man must be chained to a collective and collective thought for the sake of what is called ‘the common good’.”
- This is illustrated in *Anthem* in such quotes as:
  - “We are one in all and all in one. There are no men but only the great WE, One, indivisible and forever.”





# Individualism

- “Individualism regards man—every man—as an independent, sovereign entity who possesses an inalienable right to his own life, a right derived from his nature as a rational being. Individualism holds that a civilized society...can be achieved only on the basis of the recognition of individual rights—and that a group, as such, has no rights other than the individual rights of its members.”
  - “I am not a tool for their use. I am not a servant of their needs. I am not a bandage for their wounds. I am not a sacrifice on their alters I am a man.”



# Egoism

- Ego is essential for an identity to be a unique human being; it is “the ‘I’ or self of any person.”
- Rand believes that man’s self is his mind, “the faculty of reason.” There is no collective brain.
- Is egoism a religion? In *Anthem*, Equality says, “This on god, this one word: ‘I.’” The final words of the book refer to the “sacred word: Ego.”
  - No—it is not a religion. Rand says she titled the book *Anthem* “because this is my hymn to man’s ego.”
  - For Rand, the self is like a god, but not in the religious sense. It is a “god” in that it is one’s highest value, the source of what is good in life on Earth.



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# More on Rand's Philosophy

- Objectivism rejects any belief in the supernatural—and any claim that individuals or groups create their own reality. Man is to perceive reality—not create it.
- Objectivism rejects mysticism (acceptance of faith or feeling as a means of knowledge) and skepticism (the claim that certainty or knowledge is impossible).
- Objectivism rejects any form of determinism, the belief that man is a victim of forces beyond his control (such as God, fate, genes, etc.).