

For the New Intellectual; the Philosophy of Ayn Rand Study Guide

**For the New Intellectual; the Philosophy of Ayn Rand
by Ayn Rand**

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Contents

For the New Intellectual; the Philosophy of Ayn Rand Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapter 1, For the New Intellectual.....	5
Chapter 2, We the Living.....	9
Chapter 3, Anthem.....	10
Chapter 4, The Fountainhead.....	11
Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged.....	14
Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged.....	16
Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged.....	18
Characters.....	23
Objects/Places.....	26
Themes.....	28
Style.....	30
Quotes.....	32
Topics for Discussion.....	34



Plot Summary

Ayn Rand, whose real name was Alisa Zinov'yevna Rosenbaum (1905-1982) was one of the 20th century's great American novelist. Originally, Russian, she not only wrote novels, but plays and movies as well. She was widely seen as an important social philosopher. Rand has become famous from her novel sales but particularly due to the ideas that she placed at the core, ideas she tied together in a system she called Objectivism. Rand published her two most famous books, *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* in 1943 and 1957 respectively. It is particularly in the last book that she makes her philosophical commitments clear.

Rand understands her primary metaphysical view as one of metaphysical realism. She believes that the world exists and that there are objective, true or false claims that can be made about it. On Rand's view, the universe is mind-independent: it does not rely on consciousness for its existence. Further, she believes that the oft-discussed dichotomy between body and soul is false, arguing instead that the human being is a compound of form and matter. In both these aspects she follows Aristotle, who she considered history's greatest philosopher.

Rand also has a theory of knowledge, or epistemology, which she understands primarily in terms of reason, which takes sensory experience and organizes it according to its conceptual structure. Concepts, for Rand, refer to facts, and so the structure reason gives to concepts generate knowledge. Concepts are neither beyond the world nor merely in the mind. As a result, good reasoning leads to knowledge of objective truth.

Ayn Rand's ethics begins by asking what ethics is for. For Rand, the answer is happiness. The human being is a living thing and has to choose between a principle of life or death; what makes human life unique is its free will and ability to think. However, thinking is inherently volitional and requires a choice on behalf of the individual. Ethics is necessary to make sense of our ends and need to survive and all ethical commitments flow directly from this rational commitment. Further, ethics commands rational egoism, or rational self-interest. Sacrificing one's life for others is inherently irrational.

Finally, Rand's politics are rooted in freedom, limited government and property rights; her novels usually include some conflict between the individual and the state, and between the individual's characteristic activity - creation and production, and the collective or state's characteristic activity - theft, parasitism, destruction. She believed that reason justified capitalism and that capitalism was the only social system compatible with man's nature.

All of these ideas are worked out in *For the New Intellectuals*. The problem with the modern academy is that the intellectuals have become corrupted by mystical and barbaric ideas. The *New Intellectuals* accept Ayn Rand's philosophical commitments, or are Objectivists. The point of *For the New Intellectuals* is to communicate these ideas to those who are willing to think and take back the academy from those who destroy it and consequently the rest of culture.

The book therefore includes five broad chapters. The first chapter, "For the New Intellectual" is a brief essay expounding upon the above themes. The next four chapters—"We the Living," "Anthem," "The Fountainhead," and "Atlas Shrugged"—are excerpts from Rand's four books of the same name which illustrate the philosophy introduced in the first chapter. The book ends with John Galt's famous 100-page speech in Atlas Shrugged, which lays out the philosophy of objectivity in detail.



Chapter 1, For the New Intellectual

Chapter 1, For the New Intellectual Summary and Analysis

Rand opens proclaiming that in a dying society, individuals have two choices: to deluding themselves or facing the truth and rebuild. She sees the United States as following the first course and wants her story to be the one that wakes it up. A culture should be judged by its dominant philosophy, as express in morality, politics, economics and art. Intellectuals are a nation's bodyguards but America's bodyguards have become corrupt. All the primary philosophical, psychological, economic and social doctrines of the age preach that man is feeble, as is his mind, that he has no free will, responsibility or merit, that he is wicked and that no man should strive to be great.

The reaction to decline is no solution as it involves becoming anti-intellectual, relying on folksy wisdom instead. The intellectual professions are crucial. Today's intellectuals have retreated from the values of reason and freedom into faith and force. We are told to embrace ideologies appropriate for savages living in mudholes, rather than one appropriate to a civilization that runs railroads and airlines.

Businessmen and intellectuals came into existence together, both born of the industrial revolution; both are sons of capitalism and without it, they will die. The pre-modern archetypes of the man of faith and the man of force reject humanity, represented by the Witch Doctor and Attila the Hun. The two may seem different but they share a preference for the 'perceptual' method of functioning, rather than reason. Reason must be exercised by will, but perception is automatic, animalistic. Neither Attila nor the Witch Doctor create, but only control and destroy. The Witch Doctor's weapon is more effective and pernicious, for he uses morality rather than the sword. He separates morality from the practical.

But Attila and the Witch Doctor need each other in order to suppress reason, for where morality fails the club might succeed and vice versa. Attila needs protection from reality, and the Witch Doctor must avoid thinking of tomorrow. The two form an alliance, and humanity is ruled by guilt and fear, especially those who produce and think.

The men who produce and think rule themselves by reason and choice. They use their consciousness deliberately to survive, rather than brutes or mystics, they are thinkers.

Freedom and philosophy first arose in Ancient Greece, where political freedom reigned and Attila could not always protect the Witch Doctor. Reason was identified and understood as man's ruling faculty. Plato constructed a monument to the Witch Doctor. However, Aristotle's philosophy was the intellect's "Declaration of Independence." He defined the basic principles of rational existences and consciousness, insisting on one reality perceived by man and that it exists as an absolute. Man's mind is his only tool of knowledge.



After Greece, Attila ruled in the Roman Empire, but the Middle Ages that followed was ruled by the Witch Doctor often allied with Attila. The Witch Doctors controlled everything. Philosophy was enslaved to theology. However, when Aquinas reintroduced Aristotle, the Renaissance was soon to come and the Witch Doctor was blasted "sky-high." The dominance of mysticism was broken. Attila held on with the divine right of kings but the industrial revolution finished him. Men could control their physical nature. A society would then be born, led by the Producers, the United States of America.

The Founding Fathers was not passive or death-worshipers, nor were they power-seekers and looters. They were thinkers, rejecting false dichotomies and tied together political and intellectual freedom, and so the free mind and the free market are corollaries.

Capitalism arose in the 19th century and it wiped out slavery in matter and spirit; it gave rise to the businessman and the intellectual. Capitalism demands the very best of humanity and rewards him accordingly. All humans are integrated by the businessman and the intellectual. The chief intellectual is the philosopher. The lieutenant commander-in-chief of the intellectual is the scientist, a great liberator who releases men from bondage. The businessman is the soldier of liberty, who brings science in the form of production to the people; he raises man's standard of living.

Rand then proceeds to discuss the philosophers of error, such as Descartes, who rejected direct knowledge of the sensory world; he built his philosophy on the premises of the Witch Doctor. Hume was such an empiricist that he never saw "causality" and based his philosophy on Attila, as he saw nothing but consciousness or self. Post-Renaissance philosophy made a concerted attack on man's conceptual faculty and Aristotle. Man's reason was detached from perception and for many, perception was the only reality.

Kant closed philosophy to reason, giving a metaphysical expression to the epistemology of Attila and the Witch Doctor; his world barred in principle knowledge of reality as it truly is, turning the world over to Attila and the mind to the Witch Doctor. He saw his aim as to save the morality of self-sacrifice and so morality had to be saved from reason. For Kant, morality was best when it was selfless, something that disgusts Rand.

From Kant followed the "plain witch-doctory" of Hegel who thought that everything is Idea. This was seen as the philosophy of reason. Businessmen rose to spectacular achievements, but this was the corruption leaking into philosophy. In response to Kant and Hegel, the businessman was giving the philosophy of Pragmatism, believing that all philosophy must be practical, rejecting absolute principles and standards. Kantian pragmatists arose from these, holding that objectivity consists in what works for society, or collective subjectivism.

The scientist was given another defense against Hegel, the combination of "neo-mystic Witch-doctory and Attila-ism" of the logical positivist, who thought that metaphysical ideas were meaningless and that scientists are a special elite who manipulate symbols in a way that manipulates reality. Knowledge consists only in words. Science could be



saved so long as it never claimed it was certain and that he remove all morality from science.

The philosophers failed to challenge the Witch Doctor's moral code; it was from this that all errors followed. They would doubt the existence of physical objects, the deliverance of the senses, defy kings, and proclaim themselves atheists, but they would never doubt that man should sacrifice and that he has no right to exist for his own sake. This is the greatest and oldest of errors. It is called Altruism.

Only Nietzsche had the gall and sense of self to rebel against it. He still thought that man was moved not by reason but his will to power. He destroyed the Witch Doctor but made Attila the ideal. Jeremy Bentham championed capitalism but his utilitarianism made altruism the justification for capitalism. Herbert Spencer thought that capitalism was justified, but by the survival of the human species. Karl Marx was altruism's most perfect advocate, defending a society "where all would be sacrificed to all."

Philosophers would never embrace a code of rational morality. It has cost them their kingdom, however: philosophy. Reason and morality have a reciprocal relationship; they must go together. Intellectuals also share in the guilt of the philosophers. The standard bearers of the mind dread reason as an enemy, with Witch-doctory and Attila-ism at the root of their beliefs. The businessmen pushed forward, seeing first-hand the productivity of capitalism, but the intellectuals remained centuries behind. The businessmen were their victims.

Intellectuals became fully Witch-Doctors and came to see businessmen as mere Attilas, as only looters. They hated material reality and wanted nothing to do with it. They thought that the moral errors of the businessmen were the nature of production and came to see fortunes as such as proof of plunder. Altruism allowed intellectual to damn businessmen as having unearned moral stature. But the businessmen would not behave; he had no defense and was vulnerable but he continued to produce. The "common sense" of the businessman was the remnant of Aristotle.

Attila and the Witch Doctor needed their alliance once again, and thus socialism was born; the revolt against freedom yearned for the absolute state. The Witch-Doctors aimed to enforce ideas at the point of a gun. And the Attila-ists denounce building philosophical systems. Many abdicate philosophy and science will follow soon after. The injunction not to judge shows the climax of altruism, and the worst attitude is that of rejecting certainty. To oppose these views, one needs a philosophy.

America will only perish by intellectual default. Collectivism is dead in American but capitalism must be revived. The businessman must be the champion of the intellectuals and the businessman must recover respect for the intellectual and the love of ideas. He must accept the guilt of his complicity, either through actual intellectual guilt or by not fighting back. The businessman and intellectual see themselves as enemies but they are not by nature. They are manipulated by the spirit of Attila and the Witch Doctor.



We need New Intellectuals, which include any man or woman willing to think and not give into despair. They will be America's hidden assets and can see America's miserable culture. The New Intellectuals take initiative and responsibility; they check their premises and identify their convictions, integrating them into a whole. They must be guided by the intellect and reunited the intellectual and the businessman. The New Intellectuals must understand the nature, ethic and history of capitalism, picking up where the Founding Fathers left off. Capitalism and altruism are incompatible; we need a new morality of rational self-interest. A moral revolution must take place.

The New Intellectuals must acquire intellectual weapons and engage in creating a new philosophy of life. However, they must always accept that emotions are not the only tools of cognition and that no man has the right to initiate force against others. Rand then explains the rationale behind the principles as they connect to the foregoing. No man should posture as an intellectual if he tries to elevate a thug into the position of authority of his intellect. No defender of reason can force his ideas on others.



Chapter 2, We the Living

Chapter 2, We the Living Summary and Analysis

We the Living was published in 1936 and tells of the conflict between the individual and the state, between the value of human life and the evil of the state which claims the right to sacrifice it. It takes place in Soviet Russia; the speech is given by Kira Argounova to Andrei Taganov. Kira is engaged in a love affair with Andrei to get money she needs to save Leo Kovalensky's life, a man she is in love with. Andrei is a young Communist, deeply in love with her and was discovering his personal values but arrested Leo for a political crime. He then learns of their relationship. Kira responds.

Kira's point is that Andrei has no right to criticize her for using him because he defends a social order that does so en masse to everyone. The people in the USSR are merely piles of living flesh, not minds. Leo was simply a man and he was destroyed for it. Kira used Andrei and feels no remorse; she asks him how it feels to be treated like a mere tool.



Chapter 3, Anthem

Chapter 3, Anthem Summary and Analysis

Anthem was published in England in 1938 and concerns the meaning of the human ego. The novelette imagines a future where men have accepted collectivism and its consequences, returning to savagery and stagnation. They no longer use the word "I" or any singular pronouns; only plural pronouns remain. The story covers the rediscovery of "I" and the excerpt includes the thoughts and words of the man who made the discovery.

The man realizes that it is he who exists, he who thinks and wills. His being needs no explanation or sanction. His happiness is not a means to an end but is its own goal; he is not the means to anyone else's use and owes nothing to his brothers. He chooses friends among men, but not slaves and masters. "We" must not be spoken save by decision and as second thought. The man sees the face of god and raises it over the earth, the god "I."



Chapter 4, The Fountainhead,

Chapter 4, The Fountainhead, Summary and Analysis

The Fountainhead was published in 1943 and concerns the struggle between individualism and collectivism in the soul of man and distinguishes between the psychology of the individual and the collectivist. It focuses on the career of architect Howard Roark; he breaks with tradition and sees no authority but his own; he strives to maintain the integrity of his work against social opposition and wins.

In "The Nature of the Second Hander," Roark talks with his friend Gail Wynand to whom he explains what he has figured out about the psychology of those whose motives differ from his. Roark sees the collectivist as living only within others, living second-hand. Peter Keating never displayed a self; he only sought greatness in the eyes of others. He wanted to be thought great and that is the root of every despicable act; it results from the absence of self.

The second-hander cares nothing for facts, ideas or work, only other people. He doesn't judge, but repeats, cares only for merit, not pull. Second-handers do not understand reality. They cannot accept a man who standards alone, forgiving criminals and admiring dictators. Happiness is always private; our best moments are personal, untouched by others. The great evil is placing your prima concern in others. What matters is a self-sufficient ego, and that alone.

In "The Soul of a Collectivist" we find a confession of Roark's opposite and foe, Ellsworth M. Toohey, an architecture critic and a sociologist who plots establishing a collectivist society. He addresses one of his victims. Toohey said he intends to rule and only needs to discover the lever; if he can discover how to rule one man's soul, he can get the rest of mankind. The soul of man must be broken. Beat men down with guilt, kill their hopes, corrupt them, and preach altruism, and so on.

The broken man will be glad to obey; and then kill his values and make him unable to recognize greatness. Don't destroy his shrine; instead, make mediocrity a shrine. Don't allow them to be happy, for then they will be free. Tell them to sacrifice and that only then they will be happy. Then rule them as a result.

But you must always resist reason, because that is man's weapon against you. He claims that Peter should not be disgusted. Everyone must agree with it deep down, because all must serve all. Howard Roark doesn't fit the picture. If it cannot be ruled, it must be destroyed. Toohey wants power and has no private purpose. He wants all to live for all, for all to sacrifice and non to profit. Equality in stagnation is what is to be desired. The god of our century is collectivism and it must be worshiped by giving up oneself. Kill the individual and power will follow.



In "The Soul of an Individualist," Howard Roark makes a speech in his defense at his trial for blowing up a government housing project that used his designs but mangled them according to Peter Keating's wishes. The government agency broke the contract and Roark could not sue the government as he would certainly lose.

Roark emphasizes that inventors and producers have always been persecuted; this is reflected in history and legend. Often these individuals were stopped, but other times they succeeded. They were never prompted to create by serving their brothers; their truth was their only motive. Their spirit drove them, their selves, their consciousness. The creators were not selfless.

Men can't survive without his mind but the mind is the possession only of an individual. Nothing is given to men on earth; everything has to be produced. Either men survive by the use of their own minds or they are parasites on others. The creator seeks to conquer nature; the parasite seeks to conquer men. Creators need to be independent, whereas second-handers must secure their ties to others.

Roark then proceeds to attack altruism head on, holding that those who live off of others are parasites. Men should aim primarily to achieve, not give. They should not seek only to alleviate the suffering of others but to become great. We do not have to choose between self-sacrifice or domination but between independence or dependence. This holds regardless of ability level.

All proper relationships involve no sacrifice of anyone to anyone. Everyone in relationships give something to someone else. Work is not done collectively but by individuals coordinating and so the first right on earth is the right of the ego. Men think and work alone. The fight of history is between the creator and the second-hander, between the individual and the collective. The only good men can do each other is to leave one another alone.

America is built on individualism and it is the greatest and freest country in the world. It was based on the right to pursue happiness. Collectivism is an ancient monster, however, and runs amuck. It has taken over Europe and is threatening the United States; it will produce a world in which Roark refuses to live. That is why he blew up Cortlandt. He created and gave it to the people and he destroyed it. The beast produced was a monstrosity, mutilated by second-handers.

He designed Cortlandt to see it erected as he designed it; he wasn't paid. He does not blame Peter Keating, as he was helpless. He was ignored. The owners got what they wanted from him through a contract violation. People blame him for destroying the home of the poor but the poor couldn't have had this home. The poverty of the poor did not give them a right to his work; their need was no claim on his life. He does not recognize anyone's right to his life or energy. He does not exist for others. He recognizes no obligations toward men save to respect their freedom and to refuse to participate in a slave society.

Roark blew up Cortlandt as an act of loyalty to every creator who ever lived and was forced to suffer.



Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged,

Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged, Summary and Analysis

Atlas Shrugged was published in 1957 and concerns the theme of the mind in man's existence; Rand uses the novel to defend a new moral philosophy of rational self-interest. The story tries to show what the world would be like if the mind went on strike, when the produces of the world disappear.

In "The Meaning of Money" Francisco d'Anconia, a copper industrialist and John Galt's closest friend, gives a speech about his decision to be the first to join Galt in going on strike.

Francisco proclaims that money is not the root of all evil. However, the root of money is exchange which cannot exist without goods produced and men able to produce them. Why is it evil? Money simply represents value. If you look to the root of the production of value, you will, again, find money. Money is not made by the strong against the weak but is produced from man's capacity to think. Trading with money is the moral rule of those who respect one another.

Money is simply a tool; it does not buy happiness or generate sound values. Money helps us survive and will remain an effect without replacing you as a cause. The love of money isn't the root of all evil either, because to love a thing requires knowing its nature and to know that it represents the best power in you. Those who tell you money is evil seek to take it from you; if you want to keep money, it demands the highest virtue from you. Money represents a society's virtue.

The destroyers of the world destroy money first. You can't expect men to be good when you destroy their form of survival. Money is the life-blood of the great productive civilization. Money holds within it the nature of human morality. But those who hate money shame you for loving it. Money is the root of all good.

The "Martyrdom of the Industrialists" is an excerpt from a conversation between Francisco and Hank Rearden, a self-made man who has become the country's greatest steel industrialist. He is speaking.

Those who seek to conquer the earth, the industrialists, should not bow to other men. They are hated not for their faults but for their achievements. Rearden accepts undeserved guilt and he should reject it. If you see Atlas holding up the world with blood running down his chest, you should tell him to shrug.

In "The Moral Meaning of Capitalism" Hank Rearden speaks on his behalf at a trial for selling a metal alloy illegally when the government had placed it under rationing and control.



Rearden claims that he works for nothing but his own profit and is proud of what he owns. He refuses to pay his workers more than their services are worth and to sell his products for less than customers are willing to pay for them. He earns his living as every honest man must. The public good should be damned and Rearden refuses to participate in it.

In "The Meaning of Sex," Rand reprints a conversation between Francisco and Hank again; they are in love with the same woman but do not realize this.

Francisco argues that sex is the expression of "a man's sense of his own value." Wealth does not come from material resources but has an intellectual root and meaning. Sex is similarly; it does not function independently from the mind. Sex is not impervious to reason. Men convinced that they are worthless will be attracted to women he hates because she displays his secret self and allows him to avoid facing objective reality.

He will hate sex, hating the vicious desires of his body that his mind cannot repress; he will proclaim that sex is a sin. Hank must not accept any part of this "vicious" creed. You cannot damn sex as evil; this is to act against nature. If you have good values, you will find a person who reflects and expresses those values with you in the bedroom. The man he pursues women alone expect only to be given pleasure; he treats himself as meat. Further, there is no glory in conquering a mindless body.



Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged,

Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged, Summary and Analysis

The next essay tells what occurred at the Twentieth Century Motor Company which put the Marxist slogan, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need" into practice by one of its survivors.

The employee discusses how the owners of the firm introduced the workers to voting on how the plant should be run; six thousand people were there. None of the workers thought the plan would work. They voted for the plan anyway. The next four years were hell. Men had to work harder and harder and grew poorer and poorer. As one large family, they were supposed to work together but they couldn't motivate themselves.

Ultimately, men claimed they needed more but they all had to vote on changes. They began to fight over who got what. All the men became whiners and beggars. Factory production fell in half a year. The owners then asked the workers to work overtime without pay and so the men began to hide their abilities, to slow down and make sure they never did more work than they had to. The profit system wasn't vicious; this system was vicious. Ability became a cost rather than a benefit. Those who tried to stay good had to give up everything and the others grew depressed and corrupt.

What could the men work for? Their brothers? Or those who mooched off of them? They learned to hate their brothers as a result. As time passed, they even discouraged employees from marrying because they didn't want more dependents. The man then explains that while the Starnes family (the owners) sacrificed money, they got something they wanted more, adulation and praise from others. He then describes how the family all benefited.

Ideology caused the Starnes' to do this. They fell for insanity but the workers did too. They got what they deserved. The best men left the factory and things got worse, and worse. Eventually, no one could quit because no one wanted to hire them. The professors and leaders and thinkers wanted to establish a moral law that is unworkable and evil at its root, that destroys men's lives.

In "The Forgotten Man of Socialized Medicine" a brain surgeon explains why he joined the ongoing strike. He claims that he quit when medicine was placed under state control. Doing brain surgery demands incredible skill and he refused to place his services at work for others without proper remuneration. He aimed to avoid working under compulsion at any cost.

In "The Nature of an Artist" Dagny Taggart, Atlas's heroine, is talking to Richard Halley, a famous composer, who has gone on strike. In the speech, Richard wants Dagny to appreciate his music from her understanding and her reason. He wanted to be admired but rationally. The only admiration he wants is what he can earn. He would trade three



dozen modern artists for one real businessman for this reason, as the adulation of the former is irrational and the hatred of the latter irrational as well.

The spirit of courage requires rational praise; he must do more than feel. Finally, there are two sorts of fool in the world, the businessman who does not realize that his represents man's highest creative spirit and the artist who thinks he is the businessman's enemy.



Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged,

Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged, Summary and Analysis

The final part of Chapter 5 is John Galt's one-hundred page speech which pronounces the philosophy of objectivism. Galt begins the speech by proclaiming that he loves his life and his values and sacrifices them for no man. He blames the people of the world for engaging in a practice of sacrificial virtues and accuses them of having sacrificed justice to mercy and happiness to duty.

Galt proclaims that he has stopped the battle of men against those they seek to destroy, the producers. He has stopped the motor and deprived them of man's mind. Galt discourages the people from trying to find them and says that his people refuse to serve them. They will not be sacrificed. And they do not need the people anyway.

The people of the world are morally corrupt, corrupt by mysticism and altruism. Man's mind, however, is his basic tool of survival. And he must choose to think; man is a being of volitional consciousness and has no automatic behavior. Ultimately, all of life is a choice between existence and non-existence. Man's existence is choice; his non-existence is submission. A code of values accepted by choice is a truly moral code.

Those things proper to a rational being's life are good and those which destroy it are evil. Man's life is the standard of morality, as is its purpose. Happiness is a successful state of life, pain, a killer. These men of the mind are on strike in the name of a single axiom: existence exists, something exists which one perceives and one exists possessing consciousness. If nothing exists, there is no consciousness. You cannot escape existence and consciousness. Further, A is A, existence is identify, consciousness is identification.

Man survives by gaining knowledge. Thinking involves identification and integration which yields knowledge. This requires logic, which maintains that a contradiction cannot exist. Reality exists and truth is the recognition of reality. Your mind is the only judge of truth and his reason is his moral faculty. Rational processes are more processes and thinking is the only true virtue, whereas non-thinking is annihilation. The ruling values of life are reason, purpose and self-esteem. Reason is the tool of knowledge, purpose the choice of happiness the tool is used to achieve and self-esteem which produces and inviolable conviction that his mind can think and that he is worthy of living.

There are virtues of rationality, independence, integrity, honesty, justice, productiveness and pride. Galt then goes on to analyze them. In the process, Rand explains that man is a compound of consciousness and matter and that the unreal has no value. She argues that justice is treating others according to their merits and engaging in only voluntary activity.



John Galt is the man who has earned what others didn't fight for, the thing the people renounced, betrayed, corrupted and so on. John Galt wishes to live; life is the reward of virtue. Galt then argues that there are two fundamental emotions - joy and suffering. Emotions are rational estimates of that which furthers your life or threatens it. The irrational, if taken as a standard of value, will lead the emotions in the opposite direction.

The symbol of mutual respect in life is derived from the trader, where value is created not redistributed. Men owe no obligations to each other save to be rational. Men must produce through reason and not force. Galt then explains that voluntary human action is the root of all justice and the expression of the proper fundamental values.

The people are worshipers of the zero. The name of this absurdity is Original Sin; a sin with no volition slaps morality in the face and is a contradiction in terms. There is no justification for guilt from actions that result from no volition. There was no fall of man and the (Galt is saying this implicitly) Christian morality of mercy and love for man is evil. Christianity preaches that the body is evil, as do other religions. They cut men in two and set them at war with each other, body against soul. Man's mind was neglected in all of this.

Real existence, the person of faith tells you, is beyond what one can perceive. This is the morality of death. The good is not God; God is beyond conceivability and this puts the good beyond conceivability. Society is no substitute for God, as it suffers from the same difficulty. Selfishness is no virtue, and neither is sacrifice. Sacrifice surrenders value and is immoral.

Your self is your mind; if you denounce it, you are a chunk of meat and nothing more. Religion and society want you to surrender your mind. Those without self-esteem accept guilt and ask no questions. It cannot be moral to serve the happiness of others and not your own. Happiness is only valuable when it is an achievement; it is only possible when it is an achievement. Morality is not rooted in need, because this grounds morality in defect.

Love expresses one's values and it is the greatest reward you can earn for your character, person and achievements. You cannot divorce love from values.

The leech has a metaphysics of mysticism, where zero is the standard of identification. A leech seeks to escape from his own reality. Mystics curse matter and muscle. Their secret is their wish to destroy their eyes, eardrums, senses, to blank out their minds, matter, existence, reality. For them, there must be no higher goal than their wish. They seek to escape the law of identity, that A is A. The wish of the mystic is therefore incoherent. Galt then goes on to expound upon this point.

You subvert your consciousness when you ignore reason. You try to drown causal connections between your actions and the consequences. You rebel against causality due to fraudulent desire. The mystics survive by oppressing you and making life on earth unbearable. Then they charge you for relief. The religious mystics prey on the body of mankind. They aim to deny all axioms, all absolutes and wish to return you to



something beyond the worst aspects of the dark ages. This reality produces the savage mind who does not understand that A is A.

Faith is inferior to reason; faith involves destroying your mind. It requires that you surrender your power to perceive; it is the denial of reality. Faith did not solve the problem of production; humanity did. The people of faith and altruism proclaim that everyone is born with a right to basic sustenance regardless of what they do and whether they help produce it.

You cannot be reduced to a hunk of meat or a pulp without your consent. If you allow it, you deserve it. Mystics surrender their mind when it encounters the minds of others. Mystics claim that they feel powers superior to reason, but that is just how feeling misleads. Dictators are mystics too and mystics are potential dictators. He dreads reason. The belief in God leads to death. And mystics aim at destruction.

Galt claims that twelve years ago, when he lived in the world, he was an inventor. He was of the professions that came last in human history. He discovered a source of energy, and produced a motor that would have made him a fortune. It would have raised the efficiency of everyone. However, he heard himself sentenced to death for his achievement at a factory meeting. The leaders told him that his invention was the property of all and that he had no right to live. Then he saw what was wrong with the world. He quit the factor and the world, devoting his life to saving those who were abused.

The people claim that they can't harness the forces of matter but they want to control men's minds. They want to be a social order on the view that you are incompetent to run your own life. This is zero-worship.

The people claim that the creator, the inventor has no moral authority and is unworthy of recognition. John Galt is the first man of ability who refused to accept this. He organized the great to go on strike. The Dark Ages was produced by a similar strike. This time the men of reason will survive because they have the morality of life. The men of reason are superior to those of supernatural visions. They have left the inferior to die in their own hatred of life. Many people make a compromise with the morality of life and the morality of death, but the two cannot coexist. The morality of death will not stop harassing the morality of life.

Men who refuse to judge, who neither agree nor disagree, who reject absolutes and personal responsibility, these men are responsible for the blood spilled in the world. In every issue, one side is right and the other wrong but the middle is always evil. Those who are half-living mix the holy and the profane. It is treason.

The people cling to hypocritical endorsement of faith, which is the hatred of life and reason. They hate self-esteem because they believe in being unselfish. One should never doubt one's self without cause. One only betrays oneself and one's mind. For those who are of this view, perfection must always be placed beyond one's grasp, in the past, in the sky, in the distant future.



To escape this horror, you must proclaim "I am, therefore I will think." You must accept that your life depends on your mind; trust your mind even when you know little. Would you be safer to remain ignorant? Distinguish between errors of knowledge and morality; accept that happiness is the only moral purpose of your life. If you want self-esteem refuse to accede to the demands of others to sacrifice you. Morality is not too hard to practice either.

The motor Galt invented was unrecognized by the people. They would not see the hero in their souls. You would not give recognition to man's mind. Galt and his friends Francisco and Ragnar vowed to avenge the country and release its soul. Reason cannot survive on the morality of sacrifice and the great men, the men of the mind will not return until a road is built to the new morality, until the morality of sacrifice is no more. And America will be rebuilt on the premise at its foundation.

Men have rights through the morality of choice. No rights exist without the right to translate them into reality. Men's property and creation must be their own. The law of causality is the source of property rights. Governments exist only to protect man's rights, e.g., to protect him from physical violence. Only fools ask for more. They should not see the gain of some as their loss; the people earn their pay from the inventions of others.

All men are free to rise as far as they choose. If they spend more mental energy, they will receive more back, even if they do not receive financial remuneration.

The men of the mind only wanted to be free, to be left alone. Had they been left with that, they would have continually given to the world. The people were intimidated, jealous and did not compete with their intelligence. Instead, they used force and preached sacrifice.

To those who desire to live, Galt urges them to recapture their soul's honor and to stop supporting their own destroyers by withdrawing their sanction. They must refuse to rise on the looters' terms; and if not, they should escape. They must adopt the standard of life and reason, and when they escape, the looters' state will fall. Galt's Gulch will open its doors to all those who deserve to enter. The sign of the dollar is their symbol, the sign of free trade and free minds. The new country will be a sanctuary for rational beings.

In this new world, rational beings can rise in the morning with the spirit known in childhood, the spirit of eagerness, adventure and certainty. This future is available to all but it requires a struggle. Galt then addresses the heroes hidden in the world, those that are prisoners. Galt proclaims his love for them and asks them to leave the world. He asks them not to sacrifice themselves to the worst of people.

If the great ones are to break with the world of the past, they must reject the view that men are sacrificial animals who exist for the pleasure of others. They must fight for pride, reason and the morality of life. Only in doing so, can these heroes win their freedom and happiness. Galt ends with his motto and the motto of these men: "I swear

—by my life and my love of it—that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine."



Characters

Ayn Rand

Ayn Rand is not a character in *For the New Intellectuals*. Instead, she is its author and the entire book is an illustration of her unique ideas. Rand was born February 2nd, 1905 in Russia before the rise of the Soviet Union. Eight years after the October Revolution that brought the Bolsheviks to power, in 1926, Rand emigrated to the United States, finding work as a screenwriter in Hollywood. Rand wrote *We the Living* in 1936 and *Anthem* in 1938, excerpts from which are included in *For the New Intellectuals*.

The Fountainhead was written following Rand's interest and participation in political activism in the doomed 1940 presidential campaign of Republican Wendell Willkie. She wrote the book in 1943 as a romantic and philosophical drama illustrating her radically anti-statist and anti-altruist ideas. The book raised her to fame and led to a screenplay for the film.

Thirteen years later, after a variety of personal struggles and successes, Rand would publish *Atlas Shrugged*, the tour de force novel representing her deepest political and philosophical ideas. The book was her last novel and led to her transition to doing philosophy full time.

For the New Intellectuals is an expression of Rand's ideological development. Written in 1961, Rand uses the text from her four novels to illustrate her philosophical principles. She asks the reader to track the development of her ideas which culminate in Galt's speech in the last part of Chapter 5. She also includes a helpful introductory essay which explicitly lays out her ideas so that they might be more easily detected in the text.

John Galt

John Galt is the fictional character and protagonist of *Atlas Shrugged*. He does not appear in most of the text; however, he inspires the often repeated question, inside and outside of the novel, "Who is John Galt?" As time progressed in the book, it becomes clear that Galt has created and invented a powerful motor that could revolutionize the world's production of energy. He also represents the values of the individualist capitalist. His character and ideas contrast with the socialist, statist institutional structures that pervade the book. Galt represents the "Atlas" of Greek Mythology, who carries the world on his shoulders.

In the book, Galt was born in Ohio, the son of a garage mechanic, and began college at sixteen where he met two other soon-to-be important entrepreneurs; they major in physics and philosophy together. Afterwards, Galt goes to work for the Twentieth Century Motor Company as an engineer, where he designs his new motor, but the company decided to run itself based on communist principles and Galt abandons the motor and retreats from the world. Galt then organizes the entrepreneurs, composers,



innovators, etc. of the world and leads them on a strike to stop the world and show the collectivists and altruists of the world who really makes the world go forward.

The strikers retreat into Galt's Gulch, a Colorado town which is hidden in a valley. Due to his relationship with Dagny Taggart, Galt is captured and tortured by the government. He is then rescued by Dagny and the strikers and return to the Gulch to plot to take over the government and return freedom to America. Galt's speech is the last chapter of the book and explains Rand's Objectivist philosophy.

The Witch-Doctor

The Witch-Doctor, sometimes known as the mystic, is a historical archetype representing the religious classes who emphasize faith and feeling over reason.

The Attila

The Attila is a historical archetype representing brute force and violence over reason.

The Intellectual

The intellectual creates through his thinking and asks questions rather than seeking to control others. The intellectual is opposed to the Witch-Doctor.

The Businessman

The businessman creates by producing value in the market economy through free economic transactions with others. The businessman is opposed to the Attila.

Howard Roark

The protagonist of the Fountainhead, Howard Roark is an architect who represents the Randial ideal individual.

Peter Keating

An aspiring architect and key character in the Fountainhead, Keating lacks all the talents and virtue of Roark and mooches off of his ideas.

Ellsworth Toohey

The villain of the Fountainhead, Toohey is a popular art critic and is a virulent collectivist. He hates Roark and seeks to destroy him and all other true individuals.



Dagny Taggart

Dagny Taggart is the protagonist of *Atlas Shrugged* and is the Operating Vice-President in Charge of Operations for Taggart Transcontinental. Dagny makes the railroad work and is also the person who becomes obsessed with uncovering John Galt's identity, trying to track him down throughout the book.

Francisco d'Anconia

A central character in *Atlas Shrugged*, he is the owner of the world's largest copper mining empire and the first love of Dagny Taggart. He also went to school with Galt.

Ragnar Danneskjold

Another classmate of Galt's, and a world famous pirate. However, he only takes from those who steal, such as governments. He is also among the original strikers.

Kira Argounova

The main character of *We the Living*, a novella critical of communism. Kira is the protagonist, the daughter of a capitalist and attacked by the socialist state.



Objects/Places

The Soviet Union

The setting of *We the Living*.

A Totalitarian Future

The setting of *Anthem*, a totalitarian world where personal pronouns have been abolished.

A Dystopian United States

The setting of *Atlas Shrugged*, where the state has grown large and socialistic.

Galt's Gulch

The town hidden in a Colorado valley where Galt and the world's other great creators live.

New York City

The setting of the architectural and spiritual struggle at the heart of the Fountainhead.

Man's Mind

The crucial tool that all men must choose to use or renounce their humanity.

Innovation

Rand believes that creativity and innovation is the highest human activity.

The Morality of Life

A morality which promotes an individual's rational self-interest and requires freedom and creativity to have a happy life.



The Morality of Sacrifice

A morality rooted in altruism, mercy and sacrifice, rooted only in serving others and being ruled by power. This leads to unhappiness and self-loathing.

Money

The root of all good, money represents the voluntary, creative and cooperative activity of humanity.

Selfishness

The heart of a rational morality of life; morality is meant for man and serves his ends. For this reason, it could not possibly command anything but selfishness.

Galt's Motor

Galt's invention that would revolutionize the world's production of energy but that he has hidden from the world.

Cortlandt Homes

The housing project Roark was commissioned to build, which he agreed to only on the condition that his design be implemented. When the design was botched and ruined by the government, Roark blew up the homes.

Galt's Speech

The extended speech propounding Objectivist principles that Galt gives near the end of Atlas Shrugged.



Themes

Man versus the State

A constant theme that runs throughout Ayn Rand's novels is the conflict between the individual and the state. The individual, if she is morally good, acts on a principle of freedom. She refuses to be made a slave and refuses to enslave anyone else. She interacts with other adults on terms of mutual respect and reciprocity, trading value for value and always and everywhere avoiding taking from others undeservedly. The good individual finds happiness in the development of her projects, plans and character.

The state, in contrast, is an agglomeration of brute force used to enforce altruism and parasitical self-interest at gunpoint. It is represented by the historical archetype of Attila, the man who tries to achieve happiness and prosperity through the violent domination of others. The modern social democratic welfare state is, too Rand's eyes, only a nicer, muddled version of the Soviet or Communist state, which completely subordinates the individual to the collective.

For Rand, ethics are those principles that advance the rational self-interest of the individual and promote his happiness. Collectivism, therefore, is the antithesis of any truly ethical principle. It is one of the most fundamental sorts of evil. The modern nation-state, in any form, expresses this evil through the use of violence against individuals, stealing the fruits of their labor and redistributing it to the undeserving.

These themes are most clearly illustrated in *We The Living* and *Anthem* but also appear strongly in books with broader themes, like *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, where Roark's project is distorted and mutilated by the state and Galt is tortured by the state for innovating and hiding his innovation from the world.

Producers and Parasites

For Rand, the highest ideal of man is to use his mind by his own free choice in order to promote his self-interest. This path, if chosen freely, will yield happiness. Men for this reason cannot justify using the energies of others to promote their self-interest against those others' will. In fact, such parasitism cannot possibly make a man happy because it denies the principle at the center of his being, the principle that is the only true path to happiness.

To be happy, man must produce, create and invent. He must apply his reason to the problems of the world and the obstacles of nature and master them or conquer them entirely. He creates value in production, whereas the parasite destroys value or steals it and transfers it to the undeserving. The producer expresses the principle of life, therefore, the principle of happiness, whereas the parasite expresses the principle of death, and the principle of self-hatred and misery.



All of Rand's heroes are somehow members of the producer class. In *We the Living*, for instance, Kira is the member of a capitalist family, a family whose labor provided jobs to others and raised their standard of living. Howard Roark, the protagonist of the *Fountainhead*, is a gifted architect who creates beautiful buildings for all to enjoy. But he does not do so out of altruistic motives, but only to express his own values.

John Galt and the other strikers are the great producers of the world, the "Atlases" that make the "motor of the world" run. Without them, society cannot survive. And so when the great producers retreat into Galt's Gulch, the world falls apart. The strikers, as with Rand's other heroes, rebel against being used as the tools of others.

Reality

Ayn Rand's metaphysics is a realist metaphysics. In other words, she believes that reality is mind-independent. As such, she rejects all philosophies which hide true morality elsewhere. Platonism locates the "forms" in another world, and treats them as the most truly extant beings. Christianity places the greatest reality in God and Heaven, the first of which is beyond our comprehension and the second of which comes after death.

Kantianism holds that direct access to the world is impossible and that instead concepts are contained within the mind; knowledge of reality is impossible. All of these creeds Rand despises because they all, in some form or another, deny reality to men.

Thus, a deep theme in Rand's work is reality. She understands true ethical principles as either affirmations of existence or non-existence. Rational self-interest expresses a commitment to existence because it expresses a commitment to the principle of life, which is how the human being persists by nature. However, altruism expresses a commitment to non-existence because it leads people to feast on the life energy of others rather than generating value through their own voluntary activity.

Ultimately, only selfishness can bring about reality and only altruism can destroy it, cutting man off from the world. Reality is where everything beings in Rand's philosophy. Reality leads to Rand's understanding of reason as the process by which reality is discerned through the combination of concepts and experience. This epistemology leads man to understand reason as his foundational principle which generates rational egoism and a politics of limited government and capitalism.

Style

Perspective

The perspective of *For the New Intellectuals* is directly and obviously the perspective of its writer, Ayn Rand. As we have seen, Ayn Rand was a Russian-born American novelist who escaped communist seven years after it came to power. She immigrated to the United States, despising Soviet institutions through and through and came to fall in love with American history, the American founders, 19th century American capitalism and the great creative energies of mid-20th century American society, particularly in literature, music, movies and art.

As time progressed, Rand focused more and more on her writing, first writing novellas and moving to novels. Her novels increasingly reflected an explicit philosophy, which she came to call Objectivism. It is explicitly stated in the philosophy of John Galt as expressed by Galt in his speech to America in *Atlas Shrugged*.

Objectivism, therefore, is the perspective of *For the New Intellectuals* and the express purpose of the book is to outline the philosophy of Objectivism in lieu of a clear philosophical work outlining its principles. Objectivism has four components: a metaphysics, an epistemology, an ethic and a politics. Its metaphysics is described as reality, its epistemology is described as reason. Its ethics is an ethic of rational self-interest and its politics is radically limited government and capitalism.

The four themes are combined in the perspective expressed by Rand in the book. Different aspects of the Objectivist creed are emphasized in Rand's different novels, but the philosophy of Objectivism as a whole is present in increasing degrees in the novels as time progresses.

Tone

The tone of *For the New Intellectuals* is characteristic of the personality of Ayn Rand. It is first wholly sincere. Rand expresses sharply counter-intuitive ethical principles, hiding nothing. Rand is not ashamed of anything she believes and increase affirms it directly. The tone of the book is also bold and unabashed. Everything Rand states she states with absolute and complete resolution. She is out to affirm the existence of absolutes and reject the mushy middle as a compromise with evil.

The tone is also fervent and zealous. Rand's ideology is the expression, in her mind, of her ultimate values. If one really believes in one's values, then she will state them with zeal and unyielding commitment. This commitment is illustrated in all of her major characters, who refuse to compromise with the grim, totalitarian realities they struggle against in her novels.



The tone of Rand's novels is never light-hearted but always serious. Rand seeks to communicate profound and radical principles that are the absolute center of a human's life. No levity is appropriate to these attempts to express the true philosophy to the reader. Her characters are uncharacteristically an unusually focused, serious and often cold.

Yes, there is something cold about Rand's tone. She expresses disgust with parasites, and is merciless to those who she regards as evil and beyond redemption. She encourages disdain for those who embody evil principles and believes that love is not something due to all persons. Instead, love must be earned according to one's characters. Few humans are truly worthy of love.

Structure

The structure of *For the New Intellectuals* is part essay and part novel. The book begins with a short preface, where Rand, speaking in her own voice, explains that the point of the book is to invite the honest and noble to arise and become the New Intellectuals that must reclaim society. She notes that this requires adopting the philosophy of Objectivism and that in lieu of a philosophical treatise, which she hopes is forthcoming; a brief statement of her principles will have to do.

In Chapter 1, *For the New Intellectuals*, Rand argues in favor of her principles particularly through a class analysis that separates the two evil, parasite classes, as represented by Attila and the Witch-Doctor from the two productive classes, the businessman and the intellectual. Attila is a parasite because he rules through violence, whereas the Witch-Doctor is a parasite because he rules through an evil morality and false religion.

The businessman produces value in the world and expresses the principles of the intellectual, whereas the intellectual is responsible for contact with reality itself and knowledge of the true principles of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and politics.

The remainder of the book expresses these ideas in increasing explicitness. Chapter 2, "We the Living," is Rand's first novel and portrays the fight between a woman from a capitalist family, Kira, and the Soviet State. Chapter 3, "Anthem," portrays a totalitarian future where personal pronouns are abolished and a single individual rediscovers the principle of individualism.

Chapter 4 contains various excerpts from Rand's book, "The Fountainhead," and reflects on various themes of Objectivist philosophy, including the idea of parasitism and "the second hander" and the principles of the individualist. Chapter 5 contains excerpts from Rand's book, "Atlas Shrugged," and is the lengthiest and most explicitly philosophical of the last four chapters. It covers many topics, and it ends with Galt's speech which explicitly expresses Objectivist principles.



Quotes

"Let me be the child in that story and declare that the Emperor is naked—or that America is culturally bankrupt." (Chapter 1, For the New Intellectual, 3)

"But Aristotle's philosophy was the intellect's Declaration of Independence." (Chapter 1, For the New Intellectual, 20)

"The first society in history whose leaders were neither Attilas nor Witch Doctors, a society led, dominated and created by the Producers, was the United States of America." (Chapter 1, For the New Intellectual, 23)

"A free mind and a free market are corollaries." (Chapter 1, For the New Intellectual, 23)

"Who are to be the New Intellectuals? Any man or woman who is willing to think. All those who know that man's life must be guided by reason, those who value their own life and are not willing to surrender it to the cult of despair in the modern jungle of cynical impotence, just as they are not willing to surrender the world to the Dark Ages and the rules of the brutes." (Chapter 1, For the New Intellectual, 57)

"All stones are cobblestones to you. And diamonds—they're useless, because they sparkle too brightly in the sun, and it's too hard on the eyes, and it's too hard under the hoofs marching into the proletarian future. You don't pave roads with diamonds." (Chapter 2, We The Living, 70)

"And now I see the face of god, and I raise this god over the earth, this god whom men have sought since men came into being, this god who will grant them joy and peace and pride. This god, this one word: I." (Chapter 3, Anthem, 75)

"Isn't that the root of every despicable action? Not selfishness, but precisely the absence of a self." (Chapter 4, The Fountainhead, 79)

"The man who speaks to you of sacrifice, speaks of slaves and masters. And intends to be the master." (Chapter 4, The Fountainhead, 84)

"Offer poison as food and poison as antidote." (Chapter 4, The Fountainhead, 88)

"The creator's concern is the conquest of nature. The parasite's concern is the conquest of men." (Chapter 4, The Fountainhead, 92)

"There is only one kind of men who have never been on strike in human history. Every other kind and class have stopped, when they so wished, and have presented demands to the world, claiming to be indispensable—except the men who have carried the world on their shoulders, have kept it alive, have endured torture as sole payment, but have never walked out on the human race. Well, their turn has come. Let the world discover who they are, what they do and what happens when they refuse to function. This is the strike of the men of the mind." (Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged, 103)



"If you saw Atlas, the giant who holds the world on his shoulders, if you saw that he stood, blood running down his chest, his knees buckling, his arms trembling but still trying to hold the world aloft with the last of his strength, and the greater his effort the heavier the world bore down upon his shoulders—what would you tell him to do? 'I ... don't know. What ... could he do? What would you tell him?' To shrug." (Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged, 115)

"I swear—by my life and my love of it—that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine." (Chapter 5, Atlas Shrugged, 242)



Topics for Discussion

What is Rand's emphasis on reason so important to her philosophy?

Who are the Witch-Doctor and the Attila? What is their relationship in history? How do they affect the businessman and the intellectual today?

Who are the Witch-Doctor and the Attila? What is their relationship in history? How do they affect the businessman and the intellectual today?

How does Rand structure the productive classes of society? Who are their enemies? Whose ideas are their enemies?

What is Rand's metaphysical position?

What does Rand believe about knowledge? What views about it does she reject?

What is Rand's core ethical principle? What makes it so controversial?

What are Rand's politics? How do they follow from her more basic principles?