**Ayn Rand 1905 - 1982**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand>

  

 

**Ayn Rand** (IPA: [/ˈaɪn ˈrænd/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3APronunciation), [February 2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_2) [[O.S.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Style_and_New_Style_dates) January 20] [1905](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1905) – [March 6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_6), [1982](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1982)), born **Alisa Zinov'yevna Rosenbaum** ([Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_language): Алиса Зиновьевна Розенбаум), was a [Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia)-born [American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) [novelist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novelist) and [philosopher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosopher).[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-0) She is widely known for her best-selling novels [*The Fountainhead*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fountainhead) and [*Atlas Shrugged*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_Shrugged), and for developing a philosophical system she called [Objectivism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivism_%28Ayn_Rand%29).

She was an uncompromising advocate of rational [individualism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individualism) and [laissez-faire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laissez-faire) [capitalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitalism), and vociferously opposed [socialism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism), [altruism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Altruism_%28ethics%29), and other contemporary philosophical trends, as well as [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion). Her influential and often controversial ideas have attracted both enthusiastic admiration and scathing denunciation.

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**Introduction**

Rand's writing (both fiction and non-fiction) emphasizes the philosophic concepts of [objective reality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objective_reality) in [metaphysics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics), [reason](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reason) in [epistemology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemology), and [rational egoism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rational_egoism) in ethics. In [politics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics) she was a proponent of [laissez-faire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laissez-faire) capitalism and a staunch defender of [individual rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individual_rights), believing that the sole function of a proper government is protection of individual rights (including [property rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Property_right)).

She believed that individuals must choose their values and actions solely by reason, and that "Man—every man—is an end in himself, not the means to the ends of others." According to Rand, the individual "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."[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-1) Because she held that [faith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faith) is antithetical to reason, Rand opposed [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion).

Rand decried the initiation of force and fraud, and held that government action should consist only in protecting citizens from criminal aggression (via the police) and foreign aggression (via the military) and in maintaining a system of courts to decide guilt or innocence for objectively defined crimes and to resolve disputes. Her politics are generally described as [minarchist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minarchism) and [libertarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libertarian), though she did not use the first term and disavowed any connection to the second.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-2)

Rand, a self-described hero-worshiper, stated in her book [*The Romantic Manifesto*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Romantic_Manifesto) that the goal of her writing was "the projection of an ideal man." In reference to her philosophy, [Objectivism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivism_%28Ayn_Rand%29), she said: "My philosophy, in essence, is the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute." (Appendix to [*Atlas Shrugged*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_Shrugged))

## Early life

### Childhood and education

Rand was born in [Saint Petersburg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Petersburg), [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia), and was the eldest of three daughters (Alisa, Natasha, and Nora)[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-3) of Zinovy Zacharovich Rosenbaum and Anna Borisovna Rosenbaum, [agnostic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agnostic) and largely non-observant ethnic [Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew). Her father was a [chemist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chemist) and a successful pharmaceutical entrepreneur who earned the privilege of living outside the [Pale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Pale_of_Settlement).[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-4) From an early age, Alisa displayed an interest in literature and film.

Her mother taught her French and subscribed to a magazine featuring stories for boys, where Rand found her first childhood hero: Cyrus Paltons, an Indian army officer in a [Rudyard Kipling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudyard_Kipling)-style story by [Maurice Champagne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurice_Champagne), called "The Mysterious Valley".[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Chronology-5) Throughout her youth, she read the novels of [Sir Walter Scott](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Walter_Scott), [Alexandre Dumas, père](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandre_Dumas%2C_p%C3%A8re) and other Romantic writers, and expressed an interest in the [Romantic movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanticism) as a whole. She discovered [Victor Hugo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Hugo) at the age of thirteen, and later called him the "greatest novelist in world literature."[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-6) Rand wrote that the ideal educational curriculum would be "[Aristotle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle) in philosophy, [von Mises](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_von_Mises) in economics, [Montessori](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montessori) in education, [Hugo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Hugo) in literature."[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-7)

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Ayn Rand studied history and philosophy at [St. Petersburg University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Petersburg_State_University)

Rand was twelve at the time of the [Russian revolution of 1917](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_revolution_of_1917), and her family life was disrupted by the rise of the [Bolshevik](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolshevik) party. Her father's pharmacy was confiscated by the Soviets, and the family fled to [Crimea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimea) to recover financially. When Crimea fell to the Bolsheviks in 1921, Rand burned her diary, which contained vitriolic anti-Soviet writings.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Chronology-5) Rand then returned to St. Petersburg to attend the [University of Petrograd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Petersburg_State_University),[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-8) where she studied history and philosophy.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-9) Here she discovered the literary works of [Edmond Rostand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmond_Rostand), [Friedrich Schiller](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Schiller), and [Fyodor Dostoevsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fyodor_Dostoevsky). She admired Rostand for his richly romantic imagination and Schiller for his grand, heroic scale. She admired Dostoevsky for his sense of drama and his intense moral judgments, but was deeply against his philosophy and his sense of life.[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-10) She completed a three-year program in the department of Social Pedagogy that included history, philology and law, and received Certificate of Graduation (Diploma No. 1552) on [13 October](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_13) [1924](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1924).[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-11) She also encountered the philosophical ideas of [Nietzsche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nietzsche), and loved his exaltation of the heroic and independent individual who embraced egoism and rejected altruism in [*Thus Spake Zarathustra*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thus_Spake_Zarathustra)*,* but later rejected other aspects of his philosophy when she discovered more of his writings.

Rand continued to write short stories and screenplays. She entered the State Institute for Cinema Arts in 1924 to study screenwriting; in late 1925, however, she was granted a [visa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visa_%28document%29) to visit American relatives.

### Immigration and marriage

In February 1926, she arrived in the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) at the age of 21, entering by ship through [New York City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City), which would ultimately become her home. She was profoundly moved by the [city's skyline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buildings_and_architecture_of_New_York_City), later describing it in one of her novels, *The Fountainhead*: "I would give the greatest sunset in the world for one sight of New York's skyline, the sky over New York and the will of man made visible. What other religion do we need? I feel that if a war came to threaten this, I would throw myself into space, over the city, and protect these buildings with my body."[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-12)

After a brief stay with her relatives in [Chicago](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago), she resolved never to return to the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union), and set out for [Hollywood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hollywood) to become a [screenwriter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screenwriter). Already using *Rand* as a [Cyrillic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrillic) [contraction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contraction_%28grammar%29)[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-name-ari-13) of her surname, she then adopted the name *Ayn*, of disputed origin.[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-name-ari-13)

Initially, Rand struggled in [Hollywood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_the_United_States) and took odd jobs to pay her basic living expenses. A chance face-to-face meeting with famed director [Cecil B. DeMille](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cecil_B._DeMille) led to a job as an [extra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extra_%28drama%29) in his film [*The King of Kings*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_King_of_Kings)*,* and subsequent work as a script reader.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-14) She also worked as the head of the costume department at [RKO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RKO) Studios.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Leiendecker-15) While working on the film, she intentionally bumped into an aspiring young actor, [Frank O'Connor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_O%27Connor_%28actor%29), who caught her eye. The two married on [April 15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/April_15), [1929](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1929), and remained married for fifty years, until O'Connor's death in 1979 at the age of 82. In 1931, Rand became a [naturalized American citizen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naturalization); she was fiercely proud of the United States, and in later years said to the 1974 graduating class at [West Point](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Military_Academy), "I can say—not as a patriotic bromide, but with full knowledge of the necessary metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, political and aesthetic roots—that the United States of America is the greatest, the noblest and, in its original founding principles, the only moral country in the history of the world."[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-16)

## Fiction

Rand explained in a 1963 essay titled "The Goal of My Writing" that the goal of her fiction was to project her vision of an ideal man: not man as he is, but man as he might be and ought to be. She developed her philosophy largely in order to support that goal.

In an article about Rand that appeared in [*The Economist*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Economist) in 1991, it is stated that "Rand’s novels sell some 300,000 copies a year, exhorting readers to think big about themselves, build big and earn big. New editions of all her books carry postcards for readers who might be inclined to learn more about Objectivism, the author’s credo, a blending of free markets, reason and individualism."[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-17)

### Early works

Her first literary success came with the sale of her screenplay *Red Pawn* in 1932 to [Universal Studios](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Studios): "[Von Sternberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Von_Sternberg) later considered it for [Dietrich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marlene_Dietrich), but Russian scenarios were out of favour and the project was dropped."[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Turner-18) Rand then wrote the play [*The Night of January 16th*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Night_of_January_16th) in 1934, which was produced on [Broadway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadway_theater). The play was a [courtroom drama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Courtroom_drama) in which a [jury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jury) chosen from the audience decided the verdict, leading to one of two possible endings.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-19)

Rand then published the novel, [*We the Living*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We_the_Living) in 1936. "Rand described *We the Living* as the most autobiographical of her novels, its theme being the brutality of life under communist rule in Russia."[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-20) Its harsh anti-communist tone met with mixed reviews in the U.S., where the period of [The Great Depression](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Depression) was sometimes known as "[The Red Decade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Red_Decade)" in reference to the high-water mark of sympathy for socialist ideals. Stephen Cox, at [The Objectivist Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Objectivist_Center), observed that *We the Living* "was published at the height of Russian socialism's popularity among leaders of American opinion. It failed to attract an audience."[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Cox-21) *We the Living* was first completed in 1934, but was rejected by several publishers, until 1936, when [George Platt Brett](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Platt_Brett) of [Macmillan Publishing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macmillan_Publishing) agreed to publish her book.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-22) Brett said "he did not know if they would make money on it or not, but that it was a novel that should be published."[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-23)

Frank O'Connor and Ayn Rand spent the summer of 1937 in [Stony Creek, Connecticut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stony_Creek%2C_Connecticut), while Frank worked in [summer stock theatre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summer_stock_theatre),[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Cox-21) and Ayn planned the novella [*Anthem*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthem_%28novella%29)*,* a [dystopian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dystopian) vision of a futuristic society where collectivism has triumphed. *Anthem* did not find a publisher in the United States and was first published in [England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England) in 1938.

### *The Fountainhead*

*Main article:* [*The Fountainhead*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fountainhead)

Rand's first major professional success came with her best-selling novel [*The Fountainhead*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fountainhead) (1943), which she wrote over a period of seven years. Its theme, centered on a young architect named Howard Roark, is the independent thinker versus the "second-hander."

The novel was rejected by twelve publishers. It was finally accepted by the [Bobbs-Merrill Company](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bobbs-Merrill_Company) publishing house, thanks mainly to a member of the editorial board, Archibald Ogden, who praised the book in the highest terms ("If this is not the book for you, then I am not the editor for you.") and finally prevailed.[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Cato-24) Eventually, *The Fountainhead* was a worldwide success, bringing Rand fame and financial security.

In 1949 it was made into a [major motion picture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fountainhead_%28film%29) by [Warner Brothers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warner_Brothers) with [Gary Cooper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Cooper) and [Patricia Neal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patricia_Neal); Rand wrote the screenplay. In the sixty years since it was published, Rand's novel has sold six million copies, and continues to sell about 100,000 copies per year.[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Cato-24)

Following the success of *The Fountainhead*, Rand wrote screenplays for two movies, [*Love Letters*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Letters_%281945_film%29) and [*You Came Along*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/You_Came_Along).

### *Atlas Shrugged*

*Main article:* [*Atlas Shrugged*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_Shrugged)

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"[Atlas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_%28mythology%29)," the largest sculptural work at [Rockefeller Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rockefeller_Center) in [New York City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City), by Lee Lawrie and Rene Chambellan, in the [Art Deco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_Deco) style. (1936)

Rand's [magnum opus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnum_opus), [*Atlas Shrugged*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_Shrugged)*,* was published in 1957. Due to the success of *The Fountainhead,* the initial printing was 100,000 copies,[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-25) and the book went on to become an international bestseller. Sales of *Atlas Shrugged* have remained high, and it has been cited by many interviewees as the book that most influenced them. (See [*Popular interest and influence*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#Popular_interest_and_influence), below.)

*Atlas Shrugged* contains Rand's most extensive statement of Objectivism in any of her works of fiction. In its appendix, she offered this summary:

"My philosophy, in essence, is the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute."

The theme of *Atlas Shrugged* is "The role of man's mind in society." Rand upheld the industrialist as one of the most admirable members of society and fiercely opposed the resentment popularly accorded to industrialists. This led her to envision a novel wherein the industrialists of America go on [strike](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strike_action) and retreat to a mountainous hideaway, where they build an independent free economy with gold currency. The American economy and its society in general, deprived of its most productive members, slowly start to collapse, while the government responds by increasing the already stifling controls on industry.

The novel, which includes elements of mystery and science fiction, deals with other diverse issues as wide-ranging as sex, music, medicine, politics, philosophy, industry, and human ability.

## Objectivism: Ayn Rand's philosophical system

*Main article:* [*Objectivism (Ayn Rand)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivism_%28Ayn_Rand%29)

Rand's philosophical system, [Objectivism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivism_%28Ayn_Rand%29), encompasses positions on [metaphysics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics), [epistemology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemology), [ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethics), [politics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics) and [aesthetics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesthetics). While there have been "[objectivist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivity_%28philosophy%29)" theories in the past, Rand's Objectivism uses the term in a new way: it treats knowledge and values as neither subjective, nor *intrinsic in existence* (the traditional meaning of "objective") but rather as *the factual identification,* by Man's mind, of what exists.

### Philosophical influences

Rand was greatly influenced by [Aristotle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle), found early inspiration in [Nietzsche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nietzsche), and was vociferously opposed to some of the views of [Kant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kant). She also had an intellectual kinship with [John Locke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke), who conceptualized the ideas that individuals "own themselves," have a right to the products of their own labor, and have [natural rights](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_rights) to life, liberty, and property,[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-26) and more generally with the philosophies of the [Age of Enlightenment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) and the [Age of Reason](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Reason). She occasionally reported her approval of specific philosophical positions, including some of [Baruch Spinoza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baruch_Spinoza) and [St. Thomas Aquinas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Thomas_Aquinas). She also respected the 20th-century American rationalist [Brand Blanshard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand_Blanshard), who, like Rand, believed that "there has been no period in the past two thousand years when [both reason and rationality] have undergone a bombardment so varied, so competent, so massive and sustained as in the last half-century."[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-27)

#### Aristotle

Rand's greatest influence was [Aristotle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle), especially [*Organon*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organon) ("Logic"); she considered Aristotle the greatest philosopher.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-28) In particular, her philosophy reflects an Aristotelian [epistemology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemology) and [metaphysics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics)—both Aristotle and Rand argued that "there exists an objective reality that is independent of mind and that is capable of being known."[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Sternberg-29) Although Rand was ultimately critical of Aristotle's ethics, others have noted her egoistic ethics "is of the [*eudaemonistic*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eudaemonia) type, close to Aristotle's own … a system of guidelines required by human beings to live their lives successfully, to flourish, to survive as 'man qua man.'"[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Machan-30) Younkins argued "that her philosophy diverges from Aristotle’s by considering [essences](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essences) as epistemological and contextual instead of as metaphysical. She envisions Aristotle as a philosophical intuitivist who declared the existence of essences within concretes."[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Younkins-31).

#### Nietzsche

In her early life, Rand admired the work of [Friedrich Nietzsche](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche), and did share "Nietzsche's reverence for human potential and his loathing of Christianity and the philosophy of Immanuel Kant,"[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Hicks-32) but eventually became critical, seeing his philosophy as emphasizing emotion over reason and a subjective interpretation of reality rather than reality existing independently from the self.[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Hicks-32) There is debate about the extent of the relationship between Rand's views and Nietzsche's, and over what seemed to be an evolution of Rand's view of Nietzsche. [Allan Gotthelf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Gotthelf), in *On Ayn Rand*, describes the first edition of *We the Living* as very sympathetic to some Nietzschean ideas. Bjorn Faulkner and Karen Andre, characters from *The Night of January 16th*, exemplify certain aspects of Nietzsche's views. Ronald Merrill, author of *The Ideas of Ayn Rand* identified a passage in *We the Living* that Rand had omitted from the 1959 reprint: "In it, the heroine entertains (though finally rejects) sentiments explicitly attributed to Nietzsche about the justice of sacrificing the weak for the strong."[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-McLemee-33) Rand herself denied a close intellectual relationship with Nietzsche and characterized changes in later editions of *We the Living* as stylistic and grammatical.

The destruction of Gail Wynand in [*The Fountainhead*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fountainhead) is an example of her later view, a rejection of Nietzsche, that the great cannot succeed by sacrificing to the masses: "her [1934] journals suggest a rejection of traditional false-alternative ethics. Her [May 15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_15) entry, for example, identifies the error of Nietzscheans such as Gail Wynand: in trying to achieve power, they use the masses, but at the cost of their ideals and standards, and thus become 'a slave to those masses.' The independent man, therefore, will not make his success dependent upon the masses."[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Hicks-32) Although Rand disagreed with many of Nietzsche's ideas, the introduction to the 25th anniversary edition of [*The Fountainhead*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fountainhead) concludes with Nietzsche's statement, "The noble soul has reverence for itself."

#### Kant

*See also:* [*Critique of Pure Reason*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critique_of_Pure_Reason)

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Ayn Rand's view of Kant's philosophy led her to consider Kant a "monster"[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-34)

Rand was deeply opposed to the philosophy of [Immanuel Kant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant). Although Rand disagreed strongly with Kant on almost every philosophical issue, their divergence is greatest in [metaphysics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics), [epistemology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemology), and [ethics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethics). In regard to Kant's essential philosophy, his metaphysics and epistemology, she had this to say:

The "phenomenal" world, said Kant, is not real: reality, as perceived by man's mind, is a distortion. The distorting mechanism is man's conceptual faculty: man's basic concepts (such as time, space, existence) are not derived from experience or reality, but come from an automatic system of filters in his consciousness (labeled "categories" and "forms of perception") which impose their own design on his perception of the external world and make him incapable of perceiving it in any manner other than the one in which he does perceive it. This proves, said Kant, that man's concepts are only a delusion, but a collective delusion which no one has the power to escape. Thus reason and science are "limited," said Kant; they are valid only so long as they deal with this world, with a permanent, pre-determined collective delusion (and thus the criterion of reason's validity was switched from the objective to the collective), but they are impotent to deal with the fundamental, metaphysical issues of existence, which belong to the "noumenal" world. The "noumenal" world is unknowable; it is the world of "real" reality, "superior" truth and "things in themselves" or "things as they are"—which means: things as they are not perceived by man.

Even apart from the fact that Kant's theory of the "categories" as the source of man's concepts was a preposterous invention, his argument amounted to a negation, not only of man's consciousness, but of any consciousness, of consciousness as such. His argument, in essence, ran as follows: man is limited to a consciousness of a specific nature, which perceives by specific means and no others, therefore, his consciousness is not valid; man is blind, because he has eyes—deaf, because he has ears—deluded, because he has a mind—and the things he perceives do not exist, because he perceives them.[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-35)

A "straw man" is an odd metaphor to apply to such an enormous, cumbersome, ponderous construction as Kant's system of epistemology. Nevertheless, a straw man is what it was—and the doubts, the uncertainty, the skepticism that followed, skepticism about man's ability ever to know anything, were not, in fact, applicable to human consciousness, because it was not a human consciousness that Kant's robot represented. But philosophers accepted it as such. And while they cried that reason had been invalidated, they did not notice that reason had been pushed off the philosophical scene altogether and that the faculty they were arguing about was not reason. [[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-36)

Rand believed to the contrary, that man can have full, direct awareness of reality. In Rand's view, Kant's dichotomy severed rationality and reason from the real world.

In ethics, Rand criticized Kant for claiming that an action only has moral worth if it is done out of duty, a concept which, according to Rand, was an outgrowth of mysticism and the tradition of selflessness and which had no basis in reality. She also strongly disagreed with Kant's notion that morality has nothing to do with happiness.

"As to Kant's version of morality, it was appropriate to the kind of zombies that would inhabit that kind of [Kantian] universe: it consisted of total, abject selflessness. An action is moral, said Kant, only if one has no desire to perform it, but performs it out of a sense of duty and derives no benefit from it of any sort, neither material nor spiritual; a benefit destroys the moral value of an action. (Thus, if one has no desire to be evil, one cannot be good; if one has, one can.)"[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-37)

In Rand's words,

I have mentioned in many articles that Kant is the chief destroyer of the modern world… You will find that on every fundamental issue, Kant's philosophy is the exact opposite of Objectivism.[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Hsieh-38)

In the final issue of *The Objectivist,* she further wrote,

Suppose you met a twisted, tormented young man and … discovered that he was brought up by a man-hating monster who worked systematically to paralyze his mind, destroy his self-confidence, obliterate his capacity for enjoyment and undercut his every attempt to escape … Western civilization is in that young man's position. The monster is Immanuel Kant."[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Hsieh-38)

## Objectivist movement

*Main article:* [*Objectivist movement*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivist_movement)

In 1950 Rand moved to 120 East 34th Street[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-39) in [New York City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City), and formed a group (jokingly designated "[The Collective](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ayn_Rand_Collective)") which included future [Federal Reserve](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Reserve) chairman [Alan Greenspan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Greenspan), a young psychology student named Nathan Blumenthal (later [Nathaniel Branden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathaniel_Branden)) and his wife [Barbara](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_Branden), and [Leonard Peikoff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonard_Peikoff), all of whom had been profoundly influenced by *The Fountainhead.* According to Branden, "I wrote Miss Rand a letter in 1949 … [and] I was invited to her home for a personal meeting in March, 1950, a month before I turned twenty."[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-40) Rand launched the [Objectivist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivist_philosophy) movement with this group to promote her philosophy.

The group originally started out as informal gathering of friends who met with Rand on weekends at her apartment to discuss philosophy; later the Collective would proceed to play a larger, more formal role, helping edit [*Atlas Shrugged*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_Shrugged) and promoting Rand's philosophy through the [Nathaniel Branden Institute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathaniel_Branden_Institute) (NBI), established by him for that purpose. Many Collective members gave lectures at the NBI and in cities across the United States, while others wrote articles for its sister newsletter, [*The Objectivist*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Objectivist)*.*

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Rand developed and promoted her Objectivist philosophy through both her fiction and non-fiction works, and by giving talks at several east-coast universities, largely through the NBI: "[*The Objectivist Newsletter*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Objectivist_Newsletter)*,* later expanded and renamed simply *The Objectivist,* contained essays by Rand, Branden, and other associates … that analyzed current political events and applied the principles of Objectivism to everyday life."[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-JVL-41) Rand later published some of these in book form.

After several years, Rand's close relationship with the much younger Branden turned into a romantic affair, with the consent of their spouses.[[43]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-42) It lasted until Branden (having separated from Barbara) entered into an affair with the young actress [Patrecia Scott](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrecia_Scott), whom he later married. The Brandens hid the affair from Rand, and when she found out, she abruptly ended her relationship with both Brandens and with the NBI, which closed. She published a letter in *The Objectivist* repudiating Branden for dishonesty and "irrational behavior",[[44]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-thimc-43) never disclosing their affair. Both Brandens remain [*personae non gratae*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persona_non_grata) to the mainline Objectivist movement, particularly the group that formed the [Ayn Rand Institute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand_Institute).

## Political and social views

Rand held that the only moral social system is [*laissez-faire*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laissez-faire) [capitalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitalism). Her political views were strongly [individualist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individualist) and hence [anti-statist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-statist) and [anti-Communist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Communist). She exalted what she saw as the heroic [American values](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_values) of [rational egoism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rational_egoism) and [individualism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individualism). As a champion of rationality, Rand also had a strong opposition to [mysticism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysticism) and [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion), which she believed helped foster a crippling culture acting against individual human happiness and success. Rand detested many prominent [liberal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberalism) and [conservative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_conservatism) politicians of her time, including prominent anti-Communists, such as [Harry S. Truman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_S._Truman), [Ronald Reagan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan), [Hubert Humphrey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hubert_Humphrey), and [Joseph McCarthy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_McCarthy). She opposed US involvement in [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I), [World War II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II),[[45]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-WWII-44) and the [Korean War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War), although she also strongly denounced [pacifism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacifism): "When a nation resorts to war, it has some purpose, rightly or wrongly, something to fight for—and the only justifiable purpose is self-defense."[[46]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-honoringvirtue-45) She opposed U.S. involvement in the [Vietnam War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_War), "If you want to see the ultimate, suicidal extreme of altruism, on an international scale, observe the war in Vietnam—a war in which American soldiers are dying for no purpose whatever,"[[46]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-honoringvirtue-45) but also felt that unilateral American withdrawal would be a mistake of [appeasement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appeasement) that would embolden communists and the Soviet Union.[[45]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-WWII-44) She said also that she considered the anti-Communist [John Birch Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Birch_Society) "futile, because they are not for capitalism but merely against communism."[[47]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-46)

Rand supported [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) during the 1973 [Arab-Israeli War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yom_Kippur_War), which she saw as an attack on a government that supported individual rights: "The Arabs are one of the least developed cultures. They are typically nomads. Their culture is primitive, and they resent Israel because it's the sole beachhead of modern science and civilization on their continent. When you have civilized men fighting savages, you support the civilized men, no matter who they are."[[48]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-47)

Rand is considered one of the three founding mothers (along with [Rose Wilder Lane](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rose_Wilder_Lane) and [Isabel Paterson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isabel_Paterson)) of modern American [libertarianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libertarianism), although she rejected libertarianism and the [libertarian movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libertarian_movement). [[49]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-48)

### Charity

Rand did not see charity as a moral duty or a major virtue and held it to be proper only when the recipient is worthy and when it does not involve sacrifice.[[50]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-49) She opposed all forms of aid given by governments, just as she opposed any other government activity not directed at protecting individual rights.

### Economics

She expressed qualified enthusiasm for the economic thought of [Ludwig von Mises](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_von_Mises) and [Henry Hazlitt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Hazlitt). The [Ludwig von Mises Institute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_von_Mises_Institute) says that "it was largely as a result of Ayn's efforts that the work of von Mises began to reach its potential audience."[[51]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-50) Later Objectivists, such as [Richard Salsman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Salsman), have claimed that Rand's economic theories are implicitly more supportive of the doctrines of [Jean-Baptiste Say](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Baptiste_Say), though Rand herself was likely not acquainted with his work.

### Gender, sex, and race

*See also:* [*Objectivism, Ayn Rand, and homosexuality*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivism%2C_Ayn_Rand%2C_and_homosexuality)

Rand's views on [gender roles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_role) have created some controversy. While her books championed men and women as intellectual equals (for example, Dagny Taggart—the protagonist of *Atlas Shrugged*—was a hands-on railroad executive), she thought that the differences in the physiology of men and women led to fundamental psychological differences that were the source of gender roles. Rand denied endorsing any kind of power difference between men and women, stating that metaphysical dominance in sexual relations refers to the man's role as the prime mover in sex and the necessity of male arousal for sex to occur.[[52]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Ayn_Rand_Answers-51) According to Rand, "For a woman *qua* woman, the essence of femininity is hero-worship—the desire to look up to man." (1968)

Rand's theory of sex is implied by her broader ethical and psychological theories. Far from being a debasing animal instinct, she believed that sex is the highest celebration of our greatest values. Sex is a physical response to intellectual and spiritual values—a mechanism for giving concrete expression to values that could otherwise only be experienced in the abstract. In *Atlas Shrugged*, one of the heroes says "Tell me what a man finds sexually attractive and I will tell you his entire philosophy of life. Show me the woman he sleeps with and I will tell you his valuation of himself."[[53]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-AtlasShruggedSex-52)

In a [McCall's](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McCall%27s) magazine interview, Rand stated that while women are competent to be President, no rational woman should seek that position; she later explained that it would be psychologically damaging to the woman.[[54]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-53) She strongly opposed the modern [feminist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminist) movement, despite supporting some of its goals.[[55]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-new_left-54) Feminist author [Susan Brownmiller](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_Brownmiller) called Rand "a traitor to her own sex," while others, including [Camille Paglia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camille_Paglia) and the contributors to 1999's *Feminist Interpretations of Ayn Rand,* have noted Rand's "fiercely independent—and unapologetically sexual" heroines who are unbound by "tradition's chains … [and] who had sex because they wanted to."[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-McLemee-33)

In *Atlas Shrugged,* Rand has one of her villains, Lillian Rearden, observe that the "band on the wrist of [Dagny's] naked arm gave her the most feminine of all aspects: the look of being chained." Lillian says, "I am humbly aware that the wife of a great man has to be contented with reflected glory—don't you think so, Miss Taggart?" "No," said Dagny, "I don't."[[56]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-55) This novel, along with *Night of January 16th* (1968) and *The Fountainhead* (1943), features sex scenes with stylized erotic combat that some claim borders on [rape](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rape). Rand said that if what *The Fountainhead* depicted was rape it was "rape by engraved invitation."[[57]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-56) In a review of a biography of Rand, writer Jenny Turner opined,

"the sex in Rand’s novels is extraordinarily violent and fetishistic. In *The Fountainhead,* the first coupling of the heroes, heralded by whips and rock drills and horseback riding and cracks in marble, is ‘an act of scorn … not as love, but as defilement’—in other words, a rape. (‘The act of a master taking shameful, contemptuous possession of her was the kind of rapture she had wanted.’ In *Atlas Shrugged,* erotic tension is cleverly increased by having one heroine bound into a plot with lots of spectacularly cruel and handsome men.)[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Turner-18)

Another source of controversy is Rand's view of [homosexuality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality). According to remarks at the [Ford Hall Forum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford_Hall_Forum) at [Northeastern University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northeastern_University_%28Boston%2C_Massachusetts%29) in 1971, Rand's personal view was that homosexuality is "immoral" and "disgusting."[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Ford-57) Specifically, she stated that "there is a psychological immorality at the root of homosexuality" because "it involves psychological flaws, corruptions, errors, or unfortunate premises."[[59]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-58) A number of noted current and former Objectivists have been highly critical of Rand for her views on homosexuality.[[60]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-59) Others, such as Kurt Keefner, have argued that "Rand’s views were in line with the views at the time of the general public and the psychiatric community," though he asserts that "she never provided the slightest argument for her position, … because she regarded the matter as self-evident, like the woman president issue"[[61]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-60) although in her article "About a Woman President" Rand said that that issue was *not* self-evident.

In the same appearance, Rand noted, "I do not believe that the government has the right to prohibit [homosexual behavior](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexual_behavior). It is the privilege of any individual to use his sex life in whichever way he wants it."[[58]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Ford-57)

Rand defended the right of businesses to discriminate on the basis of [sexual orientation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_orientation), [race](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_%28classification_of_human_beings%29), or any other criteria. Rand argued that no one's rights are violated by a private individual's or organization's refusal to deal with him, even if the reason is irrational.

Rand opposed ethnic and racial prejudice on moral grounds, in essays like "Racism" and "Global [Balkanization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkanization)," while still arguing for the right of individuals and businesses to act on such prejudice without government intervention. She wrote, "[Racism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism) is the lowest, most crudely primitive form of [collectivism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collectivism) … [the notion] that a man is to be judged, not by his own character and actions, but by the characters and actions of a collective of ancestors,"[[62]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-61) but also opposed governmental remedies for this problem: "Private racism is not a legal, but a moral issue—and can be fought only by private means, such as economic [boycott](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boycott) or social ostracism."[[63]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-62)

### HUAC testimony

In 1947, during the [Second Red Scare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Red_Scare), Rand testified as a "friendly witness" before the [House Committee on Un-American Activities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_Committee_on_Un-American_Activities).([transcript here](http://www.aynrand.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=6125)) Her testimony regarded the disparity between her personal experiences in the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) and the fanciful portrayal of it in the 1943 film [*Song of Russia*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song_of_Russia). Rand argued that the film grossly misrepresented the socioeconomic conditions in the Soviet Union and portrayed life in the USSR as being much better than it actually was. Furthermore, she believed that even if a temporary alliance with the USSR was necessary to defeat the Nazis, the case for this should not have been made by portraying what she believed were falsely positive images of Soviet life:

"If we had good reason, if that is what you believe, all right, then why not tell the truth? Say it is a dictatorship, but we want to be associated with it. Say it is worthwhile being associated with the devil, as Churchill said, in order to defeat another evil which is Hitler. There might be some good argument made for that. But why pretend that Russia was not what it was?"[[64]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-HUAC-63)

After the hearings, when Rand was asked about her feelings on the effectiveness of their investigations, she described the process as "futile".[[64]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-HUAC-63)

## Later years

### Visiting lecturer

Rand was a visiting lecturer at several universities, beginning in 1960 when she talked at [Yale University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yale_University), [Princeton University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princeton_University) and [Columbia University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_University). In subsequent years, she went on to lecture at [University of Wisconsin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Wisconsin%E2%80%93Madison), [Johns Hopkins University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johns_Hopkins_University), [Harvard University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_University) and [MIT](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massachusetts_Institute_of_Technology).[[65]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-64) She received an honorary doctorate from [Lewis & Clark College](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_%26_Clark_College) in 1963.[[66]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-65)

For many years, she gave an annual lecture at the [Ford Hall Forum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford_Hall_Forum)[[2]](http://www.fordhallforum.org/), answering questions from the audience afterward.

### Declining health and death

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Grave marker of [Frank O'Connor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_O%27Connor_%28actor%29) and Ayn Rand.

In 1973, she was briefly reunited with her youngest sister, Nora, who still lived in the Soviet Union.[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-JVL-41) Although Rand had written 1,200 letters to her family in the Soviet Union, and had attempted to bring them to the United States, she had ceased contacting them in 1937 after reading a notice in the post office that letters from Americans might imperil Russians at risk from [Stalinist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Stalin) repression. Rand received a letter from Nora in 1973 and invited her and her husband to America; but her sister's views had changed, and to Rand's disappointment Nora voluntarily returned to the USSR.[[67]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-66)

Rand underwent surgery for [lung cancer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lung_cancer) in 1974, and conflicts continued in the wake of the break with Branden and the subsequent collapse of the NBI. Many of her closest "Collective" friends parted company, and during the late 1970s her activities within the Objectivist movement declined, especially after the death of her husband on [November 9](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/November_9), [1979](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979).[[68]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-67) One of her final projects was work on a television adaptation of *Atlas Shrugged.* She had also planned to write another novel, *To Lorne Dieterling,* but did not get far in her notes.[[69]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-68)

Rand died of [heart failure](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heart_failure) on [March 6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_6), [1982](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1982) at her 34th Street home in [New York City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City),[[70]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-69) years after having successfully battled cancer, and was interred in the [Kensico Cemetery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kensico_Cemetery), [Valhalla, New York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valhalla%2C_New_York). [David Kelley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Kelley) read [Kipling's](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudyard_Kipling) poem "[If—](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If%E2%80%94)" at her graveside.[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-JVL-41)[[71]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-70) Rand's funeral was attended by some of her prominent followers, including [Alan Greenspan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Greenspan). A six-foot floral arrangement in the shape of a dollar sign was placed near her casket.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Leiendecker-15)

## Legacy

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A quote from Rand, featured in an American Adventure exhibit in the [Epcot Centre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epcot_Centre), [Walt Disney World](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walt_Disney_World).

Rand's books continue to be widely sold and read, with 25 million copies sold (as of 2007), and 800,000 more being sold each year.[[72]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-71) Rand and Objectivism are less well known outside [North America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_America), although there are pockets of interest in [Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe), [Australia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia), and [New Zealand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand). Her novels are reported to be popular in [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India)[[73]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-72) and [Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey) (where filmmaker [Sinan Çetin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinan_%C3%87etin) publishes her works) and to be gaining an increasingly wider audience in [Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa). She also enjoyed some popularity in Israel, through the early work of Moshe Kroy. Generally, Rand's work has had little effect on academic philosophy; her followers have been largely drawn from other professions. The Anthem Foundation for Objectivist Scholarship offers resources to study Objectivism at [The University of Texas at Austin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Texas_at_Austin), Ashland University in Ohio, and the University of Pittsburgh. At the University of Pittsburgh, professors James Lennox and [Allan Gotthelf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Gotthelf) head the research. Both scholars are renowned for their illuminations of Aristotle's writings. [Duke University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_University)'s professor Gary Hull is a member of the Ayn Rand Institute and has lectured courses incorporating Objectivist literature and discussion. Professor [Allan Gotthelf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Gotthelf) also points to certain modern trends in academic philosophy which make philosophers more receptive to Objectivist ideas. Chief among them are the notions of essence and concept as epistemological, developments in virtue theory ethics, and current projects in normative philosophies of science and logic. Following Rand's death, continued conflict within the Objectivist movement led to establishment of independent organizations claiming to be her intellectual heirs.

### Ayn Rand Institute

*Main article:* [*Ayn Rand Institute*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand_Institute)

In 1985, [Leonard Peikoff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonard_Peikoff), a surviving member of "[The Collective](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ayn_Rand_Collective)" and Ayn Rand's designated heir, established "The [Ayn Rand Institute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand_Institute): The Center for the Advancement of Objectivism" (ARI). The Institute has since registered the name "Ayn Rand." The Ayn Rand Institute "works to introduce young people to Ayn Rand's novels, to support scholarship and research based on her ideas, and to promote the principles of reason, rational self-interest, individual rights and laissez-faire capitalism to the widest possible audience."

### The Objectivist Center and The Atlas Society

*Main article:* [*The Atlas Society*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Atlas_Society)

Another schism in the movement occurred in 1989, when Objectivist [David Kelley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Kelley) wrote "A Question of Sanction," in which he defended his choice to speak to non-Objectivist [libertarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libertarianism) groups: "It was a response to an article by [Peter Schwartz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Schwartz) in The Intellectual Activist, demanding that those who speak to libertarians be ostracized from the movement...[I] observed that Objectivism is not a closed system of belief; and that we might actually learn something by talking to people we disagree with." [[74]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-73) Kelley's description of the reasons behind the break is disputed by the Ayn Rand Institute. Peikoff, in an article for [*The Intellectual Activist*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Intellectual_Activist) called "Fact and Value" argued that Objectivism is, indeed, a closed system, and that truth and morality are directly related.[[75]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-factandvalue-74) Peikoff expelled Kelley from his organization, whereupon Kelley founded The Institute for Objectivist Studies, now known as [The Atlas Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Atlas_Society), which has its own web site that is focused on attracting readers of Ayn Rand's fiction, downplaying her role as a philosopher. The associated Objectivist Center division deals with more academic ventures. The Atlas Society/Objectivist Center also publishes *The New Individualist* (formerly *Navigator*).

### Popular interest and influence

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The Fountainhead Cafe, a coffee shop in [New York City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City) inspired by Objectivism. The sign reads "Eat Objectively, Live Rich".

Although Rand's influence has been greatest in the United States, she has a growing international following.[[76]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-75) Her books were international best sellers, and they continue to sell in large numbers.[[77]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-76) For example, *Atlas Shrugged* is consistently in the top few hundred best sellers at Amazon.com;[[78]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-77) 185,000 copies were sold in 2007, fifty years after it was first published.[[79]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-78)

When asked in a 1991 survey by the [Library of Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Congress) and the [Book-of-the-Month Club](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book-of-the-Month_Club) what the most influential book in the respondent's life was, Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* was the second most popular choice, after the [Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible).[[80]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-79) Readers polled in 1998 and 1999 by Modern Library placed four of her books on the 100 Best Novels list ([Atlas Shrugged](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_Shrugged), [The Fountainhead](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fountainhead), [Anthem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthem_%28novella%29), and [We the Living](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We_the_Living) were in first, second, seventh, and eighth place, respectively) and one on the 100 Best Nonfiction list ([The Virtue of Selfishness](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Virtue_of_Selfishness), in first place), with books about Rand and her philosophy in third and sixth place.[[81]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-80) However, the validity of such polls has been disputed.[[82]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-81)[[83]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-82) A Freestar Media/Zogby poll conducted in 2007 found that around 8 percent of American adults have read *Atlas Shrugged*.[[84]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-83)

In addition to those listed in the Infobox, many other notable individuals have acknowledged that Rand significantly influenced their lives, including: [James Clavell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Clavell), [Edward Cline](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Cline), [Mark Cuban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Cuban), [Steve Ditko](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve_Ditko), [Terry Goodkind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terry_Goodkind), [Alan Greenspan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Greenspan), [Hugh Hefner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Hefner), [Erika Holzer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erika_Holzer), [Angelina Jolie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelina_Jolie), [Billie Jean King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billie_Jean_King), [Anton LaVey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anton_LaVey), [Rush Limbaugh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rush_Limbaugh), [Frank Miller](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Miller_%28comics%29), [Ron Paul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ron_Paul), [Neil Peart](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil_Peart), [Kay Nolte Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kay_Nolte_Smith), [John Stossel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Stossel), [Clarence Thomas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clarence_Thomas), and [Jimmy Wales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jimmy_Wales).[[85]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-84) Rand's philosophy of [Objectivism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivism_%28Ayn_Rand%29) continues to influence workers in the arts, business, and science. The "Randex" Web site updates a list of recent media references to Rand or her work.[[86]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-85)

[BioShock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BioShock), an award-winning video game released in the summer of 2007, is built around a story influenced by Ayn Rand's philosophy and *Atlas Shrugged*.[[87]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-86)

She appears on a 33 cent U.S. postage stamp,[[88]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-87) which debuted [22 April](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/April_22) [1999](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1999) in New York City.

### Rand's work and academic philosophy

During Rand's lifetime her work was not given much attention by academic philosophers, and currently only a few leading research universities consider Rand or Objectivism to be an important philosophical specialty or research area. Many adherents and practitioners of [continental philosophy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_philosophy) criticize her celebration of self-interest, so there has similarly been little focus on her work in this movement. However, since her death in 1982, there has been an increase in academic interest in Ayn Rand's work. For example:

* Fellowships for the study of Ayn Rand's ideas have been established at academic institutions such as the University of Texas at Austin,[[89]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-88) Ashland University in Ohio, Cambridge University, and the University of Pittsburgh.[[90]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-89)[[*verification needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3AVerifiability)]
* Courses of the Ayn Rand Institute's [Objectivist Academic Center](http://www.aynrand.org/site/PageServer?pagename=education_academic_oac_faq) are accredited, so students can obtain university credits for studying Objectivism.[[91]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-90)
* The Ayn Rand Society, founded in 1987 and affiliated with the [American Philosophical Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Philosophical_Association), has been active in sponsoring seminars.[[92]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-91)
* The *Journal of Ayn Rand Studies* (JARS), a scholarly, peer reviewed journal dedicated to the study of Ayn Rand - principally her philosophic work, is published twice yearly. JARS is nonpartisan and accepts articles that are favorable to or critical of Rand's positions. The stated editorial position is to remain unaligned with any advocacy group, institution or person. "While we publish essays by Objectivists and those influenced by Rand, we are especially interested in publishing scholars who work in traditions outside of Objectivism—including those who are critical of Rand's thought. We promote and encourage scholarly give-and-take among diverse elements of the academy." [[93]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-92)

In a 1999 interview in the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* Rand scholar Chris Matthew Sciabarra said, "I know they laugh at Rand," while also noting a growing interest in her work in the academic community.[[94]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-93)

In 2006, [Cambridge University Press](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambridge_University_Press) published a volume on Rand's ethical theory written by ARI-affiliated scholar [Tara Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tara_Smith_%28philosopher%29), a philosophy professor at the [University of Texas at Austin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Texas_at_Austin). The book is titled *Ayn Rand's Normative Ethics: The Virtuous Egoist.* Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews recently published a review of Smith's book by Helen Cullyer of the University of Pittsburgh. The review ends with the following:

"It should be stressed in conclusion that whether one is a fan or a detractor of Ayn Rand, the issues raised by this book are manifold and provocative. This book should force a debate of renewed vigor about what we mean by egoism, whether and how the egoism/altruism dichotomy should be applied within eudaemonistic ethical theories, and what our ethical theories imply about our political outlook. Smith provides us with a version of egoism that will need to be argued against by those who find it distasteful or misguided, rather than simply dismissed."[[95]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-94)

A 2006 conference at the University of Pittsburgh, "Concepts and Objectivity: Knowledge, Science, and Values," featured presentations by Objectivists Onkar Ghate, [Allan Gotthelf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Gotthelf), James Lennox, and Darryl Wright alongside non-Objectivist academics such as A.P. Martinich and [Peter Railton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Railton).[[96]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-95)

### Student activism

One of the reasons for the prominence of Ayn Rand and Objectivism in the news and popular culture relative to other philosophical theories[[97]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-96)[[98]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-97)[[99]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-98) may be related to the dozens of student groups dedicated to promoting and studying the philosophy of Objectivism[[100]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-99)[[101]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-100)[[102]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-101) spread across the U.S., Australia, Canada, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Norway.[[103]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-102) These clubs often present controversial speakers on topics such as abortion, religion, and foreign policy, often allying with controversial conservative (and sometimes liberal) organizations to organize their events. For example the NYU Objectivism Club hosted a joint panel[[104]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-103) on the [Muhammad cartoons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jyllands-Posten_Muhammad_cartoons) that received nationwide coverage for NYU's censorship of the cartoons.[[105]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-104) There are several dozen speakers sponsored by the Ayn Rand Institute[[106]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-105) and other organizations, who give nationwide tours each year speaking about Objectivism.

The [Ayn Rand Institute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand_Institute) has spent more than $5M on educational programs advancing Objectivism, including scholarships and clubs. These clubs often obtain educational materials and speakers from the ARI. The [Objectivist Club Association](http://www.objectivistclubs.org/) and [ObjectivismOnline](http://www.objectivismonline.net/) provide free hosting and organizational resources for Ayn Rand clubs. There are also several conferences organized by various organizations, such as the [Objectivist Conferences](http://www.objectivistconferences.com/), which are attended by several hundred "new intellectuals" each summer for two weeks and feature dozens of philosophy courses and presentations of new publications and research.

## Criticism

### Philosophical criticism

Academic philosophers have generally dismissed Rand's ideas, and *Atlas Shrugged* in particular, as sophomoric, preachy, and unoriginal.[[107]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-106)

A notable exception to the general lack of attention paid to Rand in academic philosophy is the essay "On the Randian Argument" by [Harvard University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_University) philosopher [Robert Nozick](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Nozick), which appears in his collection, *Socratic Puzzles.* Nozick is sympathetic to Rand's political conclusions, but does not think her arguments justify them. In particular, his essay criticizes her foundational argument in ethics—laid out most explicitly in her book *The Virtue of Selfishness*—which claims that one's own life is, for each individual, the ultimate value because it makes all other values possible. Nozick says that to make this argument sound one needs to explain why someone could not rationally prefer dying and thus having no values. Thus, he argues, her attempt to defend the morality of selfishness is essentially an instance of [begging the question](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Begging_the_question). Nozick also argues that Rand's solution to [David Hume](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hume)'s famous [is-ought problem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Is-ought_problem) is unsatisfactory.

Rand has also been accused of misinterpreting the works of many of the philosophers that she criticized in her writing. According to Fred Seddon, author of *Ayn Rand, Objectivists, and the History of Philosophy*, Nathaniel Branden stated that she never read any of Kant's works.[[108]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-107)

Raymond Boisvert, a philosophy professor at Siena College in Loudonville, stated that Objectivism is a "fairly marginalized movement." He continued to say that Rand's theories are seen as being out of sync with the complex interrelationships and interconnected systems of modern life.[[109]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-108)

*For more details on this topic, see* [*Objectivism (Ayn Rand)#Ayn Rand on the history of philosophy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Objectivism_%28Ayn_Rand%29#Ayn_Rand_on_the_history_of_philosophy)*.*

### Literary criticism

Rand's novels, when they were first published, "received almost unanimously terrible reviews"[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Turner-18) and were derided by some critics as long and melodramatic.[[110]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-109) However, they became bestsellers due largely to word of mouth.[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-Turner-18) Scholars of English and American [literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literature) have largely ignored her work, although Rand has received occasional positive reviews from the literary establishment. For example, in the *Literary Encyclopedia* John Lewis of Ashland University calls her works "the most intellectually challenging fiction of her generation."[[111]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-110) In addition, when *The Fountainhead* was published, Lorine Pruette, a [*New York Times*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_Times) reviewer, wrote that Rand "has written a hymn in praise of the individual," stating that "you will not be able to read this masterful book without thinking through some of the basic concepts of our times."[[112]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-111)

The most famous review of Rand's novel *Atlas Shrugged* was written by the conservative author [Whittaker Chambers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whittaker_Chambers) and appeared in [*National Review*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Review) in 1957. It was unrelentingly scathing. Chambers called the book "sophomoric"; and "remarkably silly," and said it "can be called a novel only by devaluing the term." He described the tone of the book as "shrillness without reprieve". Chambers accused Rand of supporting the same godless system as the [Soviets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_Soviet_Union), claiming "From almost any page of Atlas Shrugged, a voice can be heard, from painful necessity, commanding: 'To the gas chambers—go!'"[[113]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-112) Five decades later, *The Intellectual Activist* published a reply, arguing that Chambers had not actually read the book, as he misspelled the names of two major characters and used no quotations from the novel in his critique.[[114]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-113)

Another critic, Mimi Gladstein (author of *The New Ayn Rand Companion*), called Rand's characters flat and uninteresting, and her heroes implausibly wealthy, intelligent, physically attractive and free of doubt while arrayed against antagonists who are weak, pathetic, full of uncertainty, and lacking in imagination and talent.[[115]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-114)

Rand's aesthetic views differed substantially from those of the academic mainstream. She explained in a 1963 essay titled "The Goal of My Writing" that the goal of her fiction was to project her vision of an ideal man: not man as he is, but man as he might be and ought to be. Rand presented her theory of aesthetics more fully in her 1969 book, *The Romantic Manifesto: A Philosophy of Literature*.

### Cult criticism

[Murray Rothbard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murray_Rothbard) (who helped define modern [libertarianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libertarianism) and [anarcho-capitalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarcho-capitalism)),[[116]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-115) Jeff Walker,[[117]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-116) and [Michael Shermer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Shermer) (founder of [The Skeptics Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Skeptics_Society)),[[118]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-117) have accused Objectivism of being a cult, claiming that it exhibited typical cult traits, including slavish adherence to unprovable doctrine and extreme adulation of the founder. Rothbard claimed, as one example, that in a New York wedding two Objectivists "pledged their joint devotion and fealty to Ayn Rand, and then supplemented it by opening *Atlas [Shrugged]* — perhaps at random — to read aloud a passage from the sacred text."[[119]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-118) Some critics use the epithet 'Randroid' (a portmanteau of Rand and android) to describe Rand's followers.

Objectivists argue that even if some of Rand's followers have acted like cultists, this was not intended by Rand. They note that in response to one fan who offered her cult-like allegiance, Rand declared, "A blind follower is precisely what my philosophy condemns and what I reject. Objectivism is not a mystic cult".[[120]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-119) Her close associate, Mary Ann Sures, remarked:[[121]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-120)

"Some critics have tried to turn her certainty into a desire on her part to be an authority in the bad sense, and they accuse her of be­ing dogmatic, of demand­ing unques­tion­ing agreement and blind loyalty. They have tried, but none successfully, to make her into the leader of a cult, and followers of her phi­los­o­phy into cultists who accept without think­ing everyth­ing she says. This is a most unjust accusa­tion; it’s real­ly perverse. Unques­tion­ing agreement is precise­ly what Ayn Rand did not want. She wanted you to think and act independently, not to accept conclusions because she said so, but because you reached them by us­ing your mind in an independent and firsthand manner. She was adamant about it: your conclusions should result from your observa­tions of reality and your think­ing, not hers. Now, she could help you along in that process, and, as we all know, she did. But she never wanted you to substitute her mind for yours."

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* [*The Art of Fiction*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Art_of_Fiction) (edited by Tore Boeckmann) (2000)
* *The Art of Nonfiction* (edited by Robert Mayhew) (2001)
* *The Objectivism Research CD-ROM* (collection of most of Rand's works in CD-ROM format) (2001)
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* *Ayn Rand Answers* (edited by Robert Mayhew) (2005)

### Film adaptations

Without Rand's knowledge or permission, [*We the Living*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We_the_Living) was made into a pair of films, *Noi vivi* and *Addio, Kira* in 1942 by Scalara Films, [Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome). They were nearly censored by the [Italian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy) government under [Benito Mussolini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benito_Mussolini), but they were permitted because the novel upon which they were based was anti-Soviet. The films were successful, and the public easily realized that they were as much against Fascism as Communism. These films were re-edited into a new version which was approved by Rand and re-released as *We the Living* in 1986.

[*The Fountainhead*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fountainhead_%28film%29)[[122]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-121) was a [Hollywood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hollywood) film (1949, Warner Bros.) starring [Gary Cooper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Cooper), for which Rand wrote the screen-play. Rand initially insisted that [Frank Lloyd Wright](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Lloyd_Wright) design the architectural models used in the film, but relented when his fee was too high.[[123]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-122)

A [film adaptation of *Atlas Shrugged*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlas_Shrugged_%28film%29) is in pre-production as of early 2008, with production possibly starting in December if the script can be revised in time.[[124]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-123) In September 2007, Lions Gate Films reported that it had hired [Vadim Perelman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vadim_Perelman) to revise [Randall Wallace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Randall_Wallace)'s script and to direct the film, with screen star [Angelina Jolie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelina_Jolie) cast in the role of Dagny Taggart.[[125]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-124)

[*The Passion of Ayn Rand*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Passion_of_Ayn_Rand),[[126]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayn_Rand#cite_note-125) an independent film about her life, was made in 1999, starring [Helen Mirren](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_Mirren) as Ayn Rand, [Eric Stoltz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Stoltz), [Julie Delpy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julie_Delpy) and [Peter Fonda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Fonda). The film was based on the book by [Barbara Branden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_Branden), one of her former associates, and won several awards including an Emmy for Helen Mirren and a Golden Globe for Peter Fonda.

### Screenplays

In addition to the screenplay of *The Fountainhead*, Rand also collaborated on screenplays of *You Came Along* and [*Love Letters*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love_Letters_%281945_film%29) both filmed in 1945.

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### General information

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* [The Objectivism Wiki](http://wiki.objectivismonline.net/)
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* ["Ayn Rand" entry from the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/r/rand.htm)
* [American Writers: Ayn Rand](http://www.americanwriters.org/archives/player/rand.asp) [C-SPAN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C-SPAN) 2002 [RTSP](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Real_Time_Streaming_Protocol) videos.
* [Ayn Rand](http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=851) at [Find A Grave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Find_A_Grave)

### Rand's writing and speeches

* [*Anthem*](http://www.noblesoul.com/orc/texts/anthem/complete.html) — The complete text of the novel, which has fallen into the public domain
* [*Atlas Shrugged*](http://www.ayn-rand.com/ayn-rand-atlas-shrugged.asp) — Book outline
* [*The Fountainhead*](http://www.ayn-rand.com/ayn-rand-fountainhead.asp) — Book outline
* [*We The Living*](http://www.ayn-rand.com/ayn-rand-we-the-living.asp) — Book outline
* ["Philosophy: Who Needs It?"](http://www.tracyfineart.com/usmc/philosophy_who_needs_it.htm) — Address To The Graduating Class Of The United States Military Academy at West Point, New York - [March 6](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_6), [1974](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1974)
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* [*We the Living*](http://www.libertyhaven.org/bookstore/B00004LC7UAMUS169912.shtml) — Video outline
* [Works by Ayn Rand](http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Ayn%2BRand) at [Project Gutenberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Gutenberg)
* [Rand's papers at The Library of Congress](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/faidfrquery/r?faid/faidfr:@field%28SOURCE+@band%28rand+ayn%29%29)

### Films

* [Ayn Rand](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0709446/) at the [Internet Movie Database](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Movie_Database)

### Organizations promoting Ayn Rand's philosophy

* [The Ayn Rand Institute](http://www.aynrand.org/) — Information on Ayn Rand and her philosophy. Founded by [Leonard Peikoff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonard_Peikoff), Ayn Rand’s heir.
* [The Center for the Advancement of Capitalism](http://www.capitalismcenter.org/)
* [The Atlas Society and The Objectivist Center](http://www.objectivistcenter.org/)

### Popular influence

* [Celebrity Ayn Rand Fans](http://www.theatlasphere.com/metablog/cat/celebrity-rand-fans/) — Cites Rand's influence on newsworthy figures
* [BioShock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BioShock) - A Next Generation video game influenced by the work of Ayn Rand

### Critical views

* [Big Sister is Watching You](http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles2/ChambersAynRand.htm) by [Whittaker Chambers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whittaker_Chambers), originally from the [National Review](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Review)
* [A Half-Century-Old Attack on Ayn Rand Reminds Us of the Dark Side of Conservatism](http://www.capmag.com/article.asp?id=4081) by Robert Tracinski, rebutting Chambers's review
* [The Concerned Novelist](http://www.tpe.org.tr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=102&Itemid=107) by Alper Ecer, (originally published in the Turkish academic magazine "Liberal Thought" of Association of Liberal Thinking)

### Audio and video

* [1982, 1985 audio interviews with Leonard Peikoff about Ayn Rand](http://wiredforbooks.org/leonardpeikoff/) by [Don Swaim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Swaim) at [Wired for Books](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wired_for_Books).
* [1961 interview with Ayn Rand](http://www.americanwriters.org/archives/player/rand.asp)
* [Ayn Rand Phil Donahue Interview Part 1 of 5](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzGFytGBDN8)
* [The End of the Road - 4 Apr. 1968 broadcast on WBAI](http://www.archive.org/details/AynRandCommentaryTheEndOfTheRoad)
* [Campus Or Battleground: A Report on the Events at Columbia University - 15 Oct. 1968 broadcast on WBAI](http://www.archive.org/details/AynRandCommentaryCampusOrBattleground)
* [The Invasion Of Czechoslovakia - 30 Oct. 1968 broadcast on WBAI](http://www.archive.org/details/AynRandCommentary-TheInvasionOfCzechoslovakia)

**END**