

# Ayn rand's view of technology as seen in the novel "anthem".

[Technology](#)



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After settling in America, Rand found herself in a considerably more satisfying environment where a capitalist society existed in which technological and individual advancement was encouraged. This background led to Ayn Rand's opinion of technology in *Anthem*; through the comparison of the despair of a technologically backward society and the happiness of an individual who steps forth from the conformity of that society, Rand makes the point that technology is a positive advancement.

In the first half of the novel, the totalitarian society in which the main character, Equality 7-2521, lives is depicted as very boring and monotonous, devoid from the comforts and luxuries of a technologically advanced society. Rand, a supporter of capitalism, portrays this philosophy by depicting Equality as dissatisfied and bored with the repetition of his life. Every night he sleeps in a sleeping hall "white and clean and bare of all things save one hundred beds. (28) Some of the people who live around him, also void of these luxuries, are stricken with mental illnesses. For example, Fraternity 2-5503 spontaneously cries for no reason, and Solidarity 9-6347 rises out in his sleep. Equality discovers a hidden tunnel to which he escapes each night; he steals various materials and manuscripts and performs experiments to increase his knowledge. It is Equality's human nature to want to learn more; he attains more satisfaction in his time spent in the tunnel than at any other time in his life.

Through the use of figurative language in the quote, "We wish nothing, save to be alone and to learn, and to feel as if with each day our sight were growing sharper than the hawk's and clearer than rock crystal." (36), Rand depicts Equality's happiness in his individual genealogical advancements by <https://assignbuster.com/ayn-rands-view-of-technology-as-seen-in-the-novel-anthem/>

comparing his feelings to objects that are exceptional and beautiful. The comparison to a hawk suggests the idea of clarity, which is a positive element; the comparison to crystal implies peace and blissfulness, which relates to Equality's happiness.

Further along in the novel, Rand describes an account in which Equality watches a man being burned to death because he had learned and spoken the "Unspeakable Word." Rand depicts the man as saintly, calm, and happy, which gives strength to her view that she believes knowledge and advancement is a positive objective. In Chapter Council of Scholars has said that we all know the things which exist and therefore the things which are not known by all do not exist. But we think the Council of Scholars is blind. (52) Through this passage, Rand institutes her philosophical principle of metaphysics in Equality's character. The Council of Scholars believes that man can create reality, whereas Equality has the belief that all things are what they are, and the task of man's consciousness is to perceive reality, not to create or invent it. Equality believes that the secrets of nature are not for all to see, but only for those who seek them. When Equality presents his invention to the Council of Scholars, the Council is enraged and rejects his idea because "what not thought by all men cannot be true. (73) Therefore, the council's view towards reality and what is true ultimately leads to the fact that the totalitarian society does not advance technologically; eventually, this leads to the despair of the society. After the Council threatens to destroy Equality's invention, Equality flees to the Uncharted Forest. Once again he encounters his love, Liberty 5-3000, and the two travel through the forest until they reach a house built in the Unmentionable Times.

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Here they experience great Joy as the two witness the many luxuries of the technologically advanced society of the past.

As Equality looks upon the remnants of past centuries, it stirs no fear within his heart, but only silent reverence and pity. He admires the society of the past and all of the technological advancements they made. Equality shows his plan for the future in the quote, " Through the years ahead, I shall rebuild the achievements of the past, and open the way to carry them further, the achievements which are open to me, but closed forever to my brothers, for their minds are shackled to the weakest and dullest ones among them. (100)

This displays Rand's view that, in a society where everyone must be equal, the individuals with superior intelligence cannot step forth and make technological contributions to society. Thus, Rand ultimately makes the point that it is human nature to move forward, and, no matter how hard a society tries to stifle this thinking in the realm of technology, there will always be a free thinker who steps forward with advancements in the world of technology. In a totalitarian world, people live in despair because technology does not advance.

Conditions stay the same and society is void of comforts and luxuries. Rand believes that the world requires a laissez-fairer capitalist society so that free thinkers can advance and, in turn, raise the standards of society as a whole. Rand stresses the point that in reality people are different; but, in the totalitarian society of Anthem, reality is perceived in a distorted fashion wherein the people assume they can exist in a society where everyone is

equal. In conclusion, Any Rand has a positive view on technology and sees it as the product of a society in which individuals can prosper.