

Ayn rand

Philosophy



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The 20th and 21st century have seen a great many theories put forward with regards to the way in which humans should interact and the means through which biology and psychological understanding have advanced. However, regardless of this increase in knowledge and the proliferation of theories and explanations that had come to exist during this time, arguably one of the most absurd approaches that has been taken is with regards to Ayn Rand and the “objectivist” approach. In brief, Rand, among other things, argued for an increase in the selfish motivation and drive that exists within humanity. Seeing this as the ultimate virtue for individualism and accounting for each and every positive outgrowth of the human experience, RAND puts forward the premise that selfishness should not be viewed as a vice but should instead be viewed as a means of furthering fulfillment and overall worth within the individual. Nevertheless, as absurd as the objectivist approach might be, this author will seek to understand and define the way in which Rand integrated with the concepts of self sacrifice and/or altruism. In seeking to define this, it is the hope of this author that a more nuanced and effective interpretation of what Rand actually meant can be affected. From the first reading that was presented, the court room speech from Howard Roark provides the reader with a solid interpretation of the fact that selflessness seemingly has no place within virtue. Rand goes on to explain that, “The degree at a man's independence, initiative, and personal love for his work determines his talent as a worker and his worth as a man”. As such, it is the student’s interpretation that the objectivist standpoint is shortsighted, incomplete, and incompatible with an operational society. For instance, regardless of the philosophical prowess through which Rand presents this idea, it must be understood that an objectivist state and/or

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society has not once been exhibited on the face of the planet. To some degree or another, a safety net and/or degree of welfare for the less fortunate within society has always existed. Ultimately, society was formed due to the fact that individual humans in and of themselves were not able to provide for the environmental and biological requirements for their own existence; necessitating them to group together and form community through which a shared sense of responsibility and effort generated a greater ability to achieve key needs. However, the fact remains that better Rand has oftentimes been misunderstood and her works have been interpreted to denote any form of selflessness or altruism as a weakness at best and a tragic flaw which reduces the effectiveness and worth of an individual at worst. Yet, the fact of the matter is that Rand it did not specifically see selflessness as wrong in and of itself. As a means of categorizing this, she instead sought altruism and selfishness, when directed towards those who are loved or those in which a particular value necessarily exists, as a net positive. However, rather than rescuing the objectivist standpoint from ridicule, this only further confuses Howell and objectivist philosopher can and should approach the world in which they live. Whereas Rand had previously noted that selflessness was not in and of itself a virtue, within the second quote which was listed for this analysis, Rand specifically details the fact that selflessness and altruism have a place; albeit only in specific instances and/or circumstances. Naturally, deciding when such a circumstance exists and when selflessness should be employed over individualism and selfish nature is a question that is not categorically answered within the first, the second, nor indeed any other subsequent quotes from Rand within the work in question. Ultimately, the objectivist

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theory, in encouraging and promoting an increased level of selfishness within mankind, is gratuitous. By very nature, humans are encouraged to preserve their own lives and seek their own ends and/or needs. As such, in encouraging an increased level of selfishness, Randy is merely reinforcing a primitive and environmental programming that has sought to be lessened over the past several thousand years as society and community had been able to address humans needs and wants in a more effective manner than they ever could have individually. Naturally, there is something positive to be said for self-sufficiency and the degree and extent to which an individual's labor can be attributed to the individual alone. However, seeking to build an entire worldview around an individualist and selfish standpoint will ultimately lead to a less integrated world and a less satisfied individual.