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[Ellis Weiner](#)

Posted January 12, 2009 | 06:44 PM (EST)

On Atlas Shrugged as a Guide to Our Times

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A Mr. Stephen Moore [writes](#), regarding the bulky paper doorstep *Atlas Shrugged*, "If only 'Atlas' were required reading for every member of Congress and political appointee in the Obama administration. I'm confident that we'd get out of the current financial mess a lot faster."

Of course he is. But then, Moore is "senior economics writer for the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page." The more he reads bad fiction, the more confident his economic forecasts become.

Atlas Shrugged, for those of you lucky enough to have never read it, was written by the annoyingly-pseudonymed Ayn Rand and published in 1957 and, for reasons that require a deep trek into the heart of American political pathology to unearth, became a huge bestseller. It is to novels as the four heads on Mount Rushmore are to sculpture. In fact--get this--*both took fourteen years to create*, and *both weigh approximately 62,000 tons*.

The story concerns railroad heiress Dagny Taggart (beautiful, slim, etc.), and her efforts to keep Taggart Transcontinental in business in the face of government redistributionist perfidy, corruption, and wrongheaded, prosperity-sapping niceness. Meanwhile, tycoons across the land are quitting their enterprises and mysteriously disappearing. Dagny, tormented by a triangular relationship with handsome, hard-charging, married Hank Rearden (steel, miracle alloy "Rearden Metal"), and handsome, childhood friend, and seemingly-feckless-playboy Francisco d'Anconia (Chilean copper mines), eventually discovers where those vanishing entrepreneurs went, as she learns the answer to the repeated question, "Who is John Galt?"

(Spoiler Alert: In fact, they've repaired to a valley in the Colorado mountains, where they go on strike against "society" and, under the leadership of the demi-god John Galt, create their own idyllic community, where they mint their own gold coins and manufacture their own cigarettes stamped with dollar signs. What? You haven't read it and now it's "spoiled"? Tough. You should thank me.)

For this deeply adolescent piece of social science fiction one must read over 1,000 pages of tiny type, most of which are covered with blocks of print into which the reader's consciousness slams as though into a brick wall. Characters lecture each other in a stilted, faux-heroic tone about such matters as "the human spirit" and "intelligence" and "ownership" and "the meaning of money" and "rationality." It's every bit as good as it sounds, a thousand pages of this:

"Don't ask me to tell you now what trail I've followed, trying to trace that motor and to find its inventor. That's not of any importance, even my life and work are not of any importance to me right now, nothing is of any importance; except I must find him."

Don't you love that semi-colon? Me, too. The heroes are all handsome or beautiful except for Ragnar Danneskjold, a pirate--really--who is handsome *and* "beautiful." The villains are all detestable weaklings. Everyone else--i.e., the population of the United States of America--is a loathsome, freeloading nobody. Everyone looks at everyone else "with contempt." Paradoxically, although characters repeatedly "chuckle" and address each other in terms described by variants of "mock" (with mockery, mockingly, in a mocking tone, etc.), no one has a sense of humor. The whole vast saga is a mind-numbing forced march

through a swamp of comic book profundity, an interminable one-night three-way between Friedrich Nietzsche, L. Ron Hubbard, and Judith Kranz.

In short, *Atlas Shrugged* is one of the worst books ever written--and, in the words of Gore Vidal, "nearly perfect in its immorality." Still, Moore proudly notes that "...as recently as 1991, a survey by the Library of Congress and the Book of the Month Club found that readers rated 'Atlas' as the second-most influential book in their lives, behind only the Bible."

But of course. People naïve, ignorant, demented, or desperate enough to be primarily influenced by the Bible *would* be influenced by A.S. The books have much in common: vast stretches of unbearable tedium, one-dimensional characters with no resemblance to actual human beings, hectoring speeches full of indignation and moralizing, and discreetly implied sex. Both are works of fiction. The Bible took hundreds of years to compile, and *Atlas Shrugged* takes hundreds of years to read.

And, just as true believers find confirmation of Scriptural predictions in cherry-picked semi-coincidences in real life, so does Moore--former Cato Institute man, presumably a Libertarian, and what people smarter and funnier than I call a "Randroid"--discover that events of today (the bailouts, the economic stimulus packages, etc.) are proving Rand prescient. "...(O)ur current politicians are committing the very acts of economic lunacy that 'Atlas Shrugged' parodied in 1957."

Are they? Let's see.

In the novel, stick-figure industrialists and businessmen find their noble, courageous, avowedly "selfish" efforts stymied and undone by stick-figure cowards, weaklings, and corrupt bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. Piece by piece, in Rand's depiction of governmental overreach, capitalism is dismantled. Moore lists several of the more egregious examples from the book: "the 'Anti-Greed Act' to redistribute income (sounds like Charlie Rangel's promises soak-the-rich tax bill) and the 'Equalization of Opportunity Act' to prevent people from starting more than one business (to give other people a chance). My personal favorite, the 'Anti Dog-Eat-Dog Act,' aims to restrict cut-throat competition between firms and thus slow the wave of business bankruptcies."

Moore then goes on, "These acts and edicts sound farcical, yes, but no more so than the actual events in Washington, circa 2008. We already have been served up the \$700 billion 'Emergency Economic Stabilization Act' and the 'Auto Industry Financing and Restructuring Act.' Now that Barack Obama is in town, he will soon sign into law with great urgency the 'American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan.' This latest Hail Mary pass will increase the federal budget (which has already expanded by \$1.5 trillion in eight years under George Bush) by an additional \$1 trillion -- in roughly his first 100 days in office."

To draw an equivalence between these two sets of laws is to be, at best, stupid, and at worst, mendacious. The "Anti-Dog-Eat-Dog Act" has no counterpart or equivalent in what the rest of us know to be real life. It's the creation of a petulant teenager throwing a tantrum about "society." Other edicts are just as contrived and equally silly: No worker, anywhere, is allowed to be fired. No owner is allowed to quit or retire. All patents and copyrights become property of the state. No new products are allowed to be produced. No one is allowed to spend any more or less money on anything than they did in the previous year.

What, here, is being "parodied"? Not American society, either today or in 1957; not the ways in which government and legislation interacts with capitalism; and not even any reasonable depiction of the left. In fact, what's being parodied (if that's the word) is the Soviet Union, from which Rand (nee Alice Rosenbaum) emigrated when she was 21. Yes, in her magnum opus, her "moral defense of capitalism," Ayn Rand dresses the U.S. in Soviet drag, and then watches in triumph as her soap opera heroes beat it up.

The putative reasons presented for these society-crippling regulations--"fairness," "to give others a chance," "because the group is more important than the individual"--are ascribed to the cartoon villains with the implication that they are commonly found out in the world. "This is what the looters and the moochers believe," Rand says. "They hate individual genius and entrepreneurial initiative. They hate rationality. They want to drag all of society down into the depths of mediocrity in which they dwell. These are the laws and regulations they would pass if only they could."

It's an outrage! Or it would be, if it were remotely true. But it isn't. No leftist calls for a ban on new products or campaigns for a law forbidding executives to quit. No liberal calls for a legal limitation on what you can spend in a year. Even in the age of the Internet, when some believe that "information wants to be free" and debate the abolition of copyrights, no one demands that copyrights be ceded to the state. (Quite the opposite, in fact.)

She made it all up. The bad guys are straw men, serving a straw government, empowered by a straw civilization. The whole thing is a mug's game, a poker hand dealt from a stacked deck, a self-subverting and ultimately ludicrous grand opera of bad faith.

Still, the mystery of *Atlas Shrugged* isn't, why is it so bad? Many books are this bad and some are even worse. No, the mystery is, why does anyone who made it out of eighth grade take it seriously?

Yet, obviously, people do. Individuals capable of dressing themselves apparently love this, one of the most turgid, contrived, pompous, and comically over-written books ever published in English. Why?

Because they *believe*. For Randoids, "glibertarians," "conservatives" (whatever that means at this point) and Republicans in general, politics has become a matter of faith.

Never mind that studies show that the economy prospers more under Democratic than Republican administrations. Never mind that the first six years of the Bush administration provided the right with every resource it needed and asked for, from "a war footing" to majorities in Congress to a supine, spineless media, and the results were unalloyed catastrophe (for us, yes, but for them, too). Never mind that the Republican "big tent" is in tatters due to calamities they themselves created, as sideshow barker Limbaugh now tries to con the rubes into coughing up an extra buck to watch Ann the Six-Foot Blonde say rude things about Michelle Obama, while Ring Master Bush sulks in his trailer and thinks the problem was his "rhetoric."

Faith not only requires you to ignore what happens in the world, it praises you for it. The more unsubstantiated, untenable, or preposterous the belief, the more virtuous the believer. So Stephen Moore's solution to global recession is to wave around one of the most unreadable books ever written as though it were holy writ. For him, and for the right, politics is now religion.

And, as with any mythology, believers want to emulate their heroes. Cable traffic on the wing-nut sites after the last election featured many writers and commenters musing about "going John Galt," withdrawing their genius and talents from the rest of us and leaving us to our own moocherly devices. To which all one can reply is, Please do. Knock yourselves out. And take this hideous book with you.

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Are we forgetting that Alan Greenspan, yeah that guy, was Ayn Rand's protege? We are all left wondering what happened when Alan Shrugged!

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[- AlexNYC](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of AlexNYC](#) [permalink](#)

By the times Alan Greenspan shrugged, he had become a multi-millionaire, and the financial industry was in ruins.

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[- JohnConlin](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of JohnConlin](#) [permalink](#)

Atlas Shrugged describes what happens when the most talented and innovative people withdraw and take their ability to produce with them. It celebrates individualism, and abhors collectivism and the life destroying actions of a mob.

Rand witnessed the Russian revolution, and it's destruction of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. She saw what happens when thugs take over, in the name of "the people". The United States is falling into the same fetid cesspool of slavery and death that the Soviet Union became.

Rand believed in the way things could be and should be and 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."

Her books celebrate the sanctity of life, and brilliantly illuminate what happens when the state demands that one give up their life for the lives of others.

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[- Ellis Weiner - Huffpost Blogger](#) [I'm a Fan of Ellis Weiner](#) [permalink](#)



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AlexNYC's reply to this is perfect. I would only add that Rand's "philosophy" may be what you quote her as saying, but Atlas Shrugged presumes to show that philosophy in a fictional setting consisting of people and politics--the two arenas in which Rand, and the Libertarians I've read, know nothing.

To the extent that A.S. is unconvincing as a depiction of life, it fails as a novel AND as an illustration of a "philosophy." It doesn't "brilliantly illuminate" anything except its author's adolescent fantasies about heroism and "rationality." Rand's belief in the way things should be is entirely ahistorical, psychologically obtuse, detestably elitist and anti-democratic, and ultimately authoritarian. She just wants the industrialists to wield power instead of the bureaucrats. All that, and lousy dialogue, too.

She should have just written essays and left fiction to those who have some sense of what people are actually like.

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[- JohnConlin](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of JohnConlin](#) [permalink](#)

Atlas Shrugged fails as a novel -- tell that to the millions of readers that have kept it in print for 52 years!

Ahistorical? -- nope, with bridges falling down, trains crashing into each other head on and the massive corruption that infests government at all levels...her novel was dead on prescient.

Obtuse? -- nope, crystal clear as to what happens when the state is to decide what you can eat, smoke, drink, inject, who you can marry, and can take the fruits of your labor at the point of a gun...

Elitist? Yup...as the first cut on the greatest recording ever made was entitled...So What? Miles Davis was elitist, as are most geniuses...So What?

Authoritarian? -- Nope...anti-authoritarian...the idea is that the state doesn't need to be the authority that governs a persons behavior regarding the things I mentioned above...these should be personal decisions

So the bureaucrats are better suited to wielding power then then industrialists...yes indeed, they are doing a great job...

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- AlexNYC [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of AlexNYC](#) [permalink](#)

Do you really believe then that George W Bush and the people in his administration are the most talented and innovative people? The thugs in our current reality are the Bushies who don't mind the destruction of life and consider it acceptable collateral deaths. They are against civil liberties and privacy rights and have put up every conceivable road block of the common person's pursuit of happiness. The Bushies were by no means heroic and are against scientific progress and knowledge as it may infringe and the power and the wealth of their cronies.

Just like what the fundamentalists do with the bible, too many libertarians cherry pick what they feel will benefit their own pockets in regards to the ideologies of Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged and dismiss the fundamental concept of what is good and fair for the common people. Government that is by the people and for the people tends to work well so long as we do not allow it to be perverted by special interests.

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- JohnConlin [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of JohnConlin](#) [permalink](#)

Wow -- I don't believe I mentioned George W. Bush in my comments. My answer to your first question is no. My question to you, based on your second set of comments, is just exactly what is "the fundamental concept of what is good and fair for the common people."? Is this something you are to decide? If not, then who exactly is to be the "decider" ;-)?

The last part of your statement "Government that is by the people and for the people tends to work well so long as we do not allow it to be perverted by special interests." -- captures the problem of big government perfectly...when the government has control of things that should be private (education, health care, retirement plans, drug and sexuality choices, resuscitation of failed businesses, etc...), then the perversion by special interests you speak of is inevitable...

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- JNYCA [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of JNYCA](#) [permalink](#)

Seriously.

Yes. Obviously the book is not humorous, and perhaps Ayn could have made her characters a bit more realistic, and her plot a bit more moderate, but it's a book.....it's interesting because the characters etc. are symbolic. This can come off as simplistic, but I think the main goal is to teach people to think for themselves, value themselves, to value and take pride in their work, to be miss-trustful of their govt. (as all people should...."absolute power corrupts absolutely"), and supply them with questions.

The book romanticizes politics, and industrialism the way 50 cent romanticizes gang life.....it's an extreme version of an idea....it shouldn't be taken as a way of life.....perhaps some of it's theories are a bit simple, but as a beginner novel to these sorts of thoughts it is great.....it creates excitement and gets a lot it's readers thinking and questioning.... drawing the conclusion that this book is the same as the bible is totally silly, and simplistic. This book rallies against those types of thoughts the bible preaches. Ayn herself encouraged debate and rationalism, the bible does not.

The main point.....people should think for themselves, and think about their thoughts' outcomes... and honestly, I think that's the main point of Atlas shrugged.....even if it means creating a farm inside a volcano or wherever that farm was.....

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- robdiego [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of robdiego](#) [permalink](#)

If anything seems like bad fiction it has to be this very time in which we live. Consider that Obama came into power with the help of ACORN, that ACORN and Obama teamed up to create the sub-prime crisis and then we handed control of the Executive Branch right over to him. Is that not weird? Madoff is a piker by comparison. In fact, this is worse than Enron and yet...no one speaks to power, no one asks questions, no one seeks the truth of what is the biggest scandal in the history of our country, even bigger than Watergate. Isn't that eery? Don't you get chills up your spine?

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- Ellis Weiner - Huffpost Blogger [I'm a Fan of Ellis Weiner](#) [permalink](#)



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Yes, I get chills up my spine, but not at what you cite. I get them from the fact that a person able to operate a computer is able to seriously (I assume) write the phrase "ACORN and Obama teamed up to create the sub-prime crisis..."

If you believe that, you'll love Atlas Shrugged. As my mother said when I told her I didn't want to go to medical school, "Try it!"

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- Buntyskid [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Buntyskid](#) [permalink](#)

Wonderful, entertaining and informative deconstruction of Atlas Shrugged. Your well placed adjectives are always a particular delight.

I agree with the comment above praising Mr and Mrs Weiner in having you. I very much enjoy your writing. Thanks.

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- bigbingtheory [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of bigbingtheory](#) [permalink](#)

In College I was encouraged by many I respected to read the Ayn Rand garbage. I went to the Brown University (no I didn't attend the University) book store and picked up a copy of Atlas Shrugged and read with horror Rand's philosophy of the "evils of altruism." Sorry toots, giving a rat's behind about your fellow man is a human trait and a valuable one. I knew that instant the book was a complete waste of time. She might as well have been trying to convince me that humans should forgo food and water to purify themselves. Bunk. And it's astonishing that the right wing cling so tightly to FICTION, as a blue print for governance. And they demonize communists and socialists. At least those philosophies have actual philosophical works based on actual human observation instead of make believe.

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[- ProudLiberalDan](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of ProudLiberalDan](#) [permalink](#)

It's amazing how often one has to remind conservatives that Atlas Shrugged is FICTION.

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I agree, too many people consider this work of fiction as factual, or embrace the concepts within as an ideology. I enjoyed reading Atlas Shrugged, but then I also enjoyed Harry Potter, and I don't believe the boy wizard will go flying by on his broom either. The people who bought into the Ayn Rand view of unregulated capitalism are those most responsible for the economic fiasco the US and the rest of the world have now reached. Just because someone has acquired wealth or power it doesn't make them smarter or better than the rest of the population.

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[- expattam](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of expattam](#) [permalink](#)

So I have a question to all you who have read the venerable tome.

Did ANYONE get all the way through John Galt's (in)famous speech?

I live in a sheltered valley of Colorado, where sometimes the inversion is so dense that I am sure we are not visible from the outside world. We don't make our own cigarettes, so we've all but banned them completely. Though we don't mint our own gold coins, we have more than our fair share of the ones available. We do have some of the best scientific minds working here, with NOAA and NCAR, not to mention CU and it's scientific brilliance. But, one wonders, why Didn't Frau Rand mention the #1 party school ranking of CU Boulder? I don't think that Boulder Valley is exactly what she had in mind.... we're all pretty much liberal, but we are about as similar to her mythical Colorado valley as our current Republican driven mess is similar to RandWorld.

Great article!

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[- DukeLavery](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of DukeLavery](#) [permalink](#)

Maybe she was thinking of Colorado Springs? But I doubt she'd approve of the bastion of Christian fundamentalism that city has become, atheist that she was.

Which brings me to John Galt's speech. I am one of the few people in the world who actually has read it all the way through. What starts out as a boring tirade against liberalism/socialism turns into the most hateful screed against Christianity that I have ever read. Ayn Rand, er, I mean John Galt, thinks all the problems in the world arise from "false" values - you know, like sacrifice and altruism and brotherly love - which arise from the dreadful Judeo-Christian belief that we are all sinful and imperfect! It's not just the religion she condemns, she condemns the ethics it teaches. In Ayn Rand's world, some people *are* in fact better than others, and the lessons the Bible has to teach are beneath them.

The only thing more amazing than Ayn Rand's attack on the philosophy of Christianity, is that half of her fans are Christian fundamentalists.

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[- CharlieMarlowe](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of CharlieMarlowe](#) [permalink](#)

I am impressed that you paid attention enough to Galt's speech to analyze it. All I can remember from it is thinking that the first paragraph contained all that needed to be said; the rest was excruciatingly mind-numbing repetition.

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[- WorkingClass](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of WorkingClass](#) [permalink](#)

Its hard for ordinary people to believe that people in high office can be morons. I am thinking of our most famous Randite Alan Greenspan . The real libertarian is Thomas Jefferson. Ayn Rand is for sophomores of all ages.

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[- bigbingtheory](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of bigbingtheory](#) [permalink](#)

Jefferson was libertarian? Then why did he found the University of Virginia as a free college? Why did he fight for a public school system? And why did he advocate for government helping it's citizens and protecting them from corporate malfeasance? You're thinking of Madison, not Jefferson.

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[- jmchugh](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of jmchugh](#) [permalink](#)

"No leftist calls for a ban on new products." Mr. Weiner must not be paying attention to environmentalists!

It's hard to argue against Mr. Weiner's piece. A lot of it comes down to your philosophy.

Mr. Weiner thinks the characters in Atlas impossible. That depends on your view of the possible. It also depends on a view of literature that says: all characters must be based on real living people. Miss Rand disagreed with that style of literature.

The ideas are sophomoric? That depends on how you view clarity in thinking.

It also depends on your ideology. A book with more liberal ideas, similarly styled, probably wouldn't offend Mr. Weiner so much.

I think a lot of Mr. Weiner's views come down to his underlying premises, which are open to debate.

I would encourage readers to try the book out for themselves. At a minimum I think readers will find it to be an engrossing story.

As to Atlas's predictive power, Miss Rand took current thinking and stretched it to its logical conclusion. It is not meant as an exact predictor of future events.

But I must chuckle (Sorry Mr. Weiner!) when thinking of Atlas, and then contemplating the widespread policy of the government strong arming banks to lend to unqualified buyers, and then blaming the banks when these borrowers couldn't repay!

As Rand maintained, the businessman is always the scapegoat for socialism's failures.

And come on, Barney Frank? He's a character right out of Atlas.

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- [BBopper](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of BBopper](#) [permalink](#)

NEW

Hey, check it out: at your local library, I think you'll find that A.S. is categorized as Didactic Fiction. Sounds right to me.

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- [shanefish](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of shanefish](#) [permalink](#)

Since when were any lenders and the investors they sold to strong-armed? Get a grip! If our nation is living in a fantasyland novel, I'd liken it to a 1984 or Brave New World, rather than a Rand novel. The people to blame are the idiots who live and work in major cities, who thought a \$800,000 home was a sound investment and the corporate welfare morrins who loaned them the money. I got my home through a first-time homebuyers program and chose a house 35% less than what I qualified for. Now I am supposed to subsidize your bad homeloan on my tiny salary?

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- [BlackJAC](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of BlackJAC](#) [permalink](#)

Plot Holes abound with your comments:

- * There's no point in releasing a new product for the sake of releasing a new product
- * Basing characters on real people makes those characters far more plausible rather than being cardboard-cutout stereotypes
- * There's no heroic struggle against conventionality. Either an idea flies or it doesn't; there's no evil conspiracy trying to keep the innovative down.
- * If anybody was forcing banks to lend to unqualified customers, it was the banks' own boards of directors and/or stockholders in the name of profit
- * Rand was living in an era where Corporate America was far less ruthless than today. She'd be eaten alive today by the current crop of business school graduates

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- [got2Bkidding](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of got2Bkidding](#) [permalink](#)

When I buy a work of fiction, it is for entertainment.

Ms. Rand's work is neither entertaining or "prescient".

While L. Ron Hubbard wrote very good Sci Fi, I understand some people actually think of him as a prophet and have built a religion around his Dianetics.

Ms. Rand doesn't even write good fiction. Are we supposed to just grant her authority, because she wrote a very large not so good book? I'd rather give authority to Dr. Seuss.

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- [RightWingMarine](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of RightWingMarine](#) [permalink](#)

if you can't attack the thoughts themselves just attack the writer. Eillis Weiner complains endlessly that Atlas Shrugged is long and the book is heavy and Ayn Rand doesn't have perfect prose. Then he succumbs to simple name calling calling anyone who sees similiarity between the book and events of today "stupid." That's an argumentative technique that just isn't used to it's full potential anymore.

A.S. is not a perfect prediction of what has transpired but there are some disturbing similarities. All of the laws passed in the book have not come to pass in reality but the book is an example of Liberal thought run amuck, not a timed prophesy. The antagonists in the book bemoan over who is to blame for their troubles and if certain situations are fair. Pres Obama during a debate stated that he would "...look at raising the capital gains tax, for purposes of fairness."

A.S. teaches people that instead of demanding equality and fairness in all things to take their futures into their own hands, to not be idle and demand more and more from productive members of society but to be productive themselves.

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Ah yes, so the rich are the productive members who I should model my life's work after? Oh boy!

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Two words: "Nikola Tesla." Two more: "Sammy Glick."

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A book of fiction teaches one thing, fiction. The premise laid out in her books that captains of industry are swimming in virtue and will do what's right by people is seriously naive and flawed. The idea that people can "do it on their own" with no help from anyone else is also bunk, garbage, phooey. It's fiction, a daydream and it's bad fiction at that. To use it as some kind of guide in life is a foolish pursuit. It would be nice if people really did have the ability to make it solely on their own grit. Reality is everyone, everyone, is helped by others in some way. Even if you start your own business, you are getting help from those who went before you, the government for establishing a justice system that allows contracts to be binding and mean something. Fact of the matter is we all need each other on some level and Objectivism denies this simple elemental truth. I like Jack Kerouac's On the Road, doesn't mean I think it should be a blue print for my life. Try reality.

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I read AS 40 years ago. However I remembered enough of it to notice some similarities between our current financial crisis and the economic breakdown described in the book, to be worried. This was around early November, 2007. I started selling stocks and mutual funds and got out of the market and saved a lot of money. Thanks Ayn. Your book paid for itself many times over.

y the way, Rand had it in for Nixon and couldn't say enough bad things about him. I am glad she didn't live long enough to with GWB and his fellow facists, Bernake and Paulson She would have moved back to Russia.

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[-SethBLiNK](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of SethBLiNK](#) [permalink](#)

Wow, RWM, you certainly went a long way round to find fault with PE Obama.

Forgive me for oversimplifying, but the basic premise of much of AR's writing is that when we bend over backwards to level the playing field for the least gifted among us, thereby penalizing the most gifted, society as a whole suffers. Therefore things that are done in the name of fairness can be damaging.

And the way you connect that to the world today is by pointing out that our next President promise to "look at raising capital gains tax, for purposes of fairness."

What about all the whiners who claim that progressive taxes, capital gains taxes and estate taxes are unfair?

If fairness is a wrong reason, it's wrong on both sides.

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does anyone else remember the South Park episode where Officer Barbrady learns to read but unfortunately the book in question is "Atlas Shrugged" after which he announces he'll never read another book again in his life.

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[-yesivoteddem](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of yesivoteddem](#) [permalink](#)

ive read that Brad Pitt and Ms Jolie have been working to bring Atlas Shrugged to the movies.

from Cinema Blend:

Angelina Jolie has long been rumored to be interested in a movie adaptation of the classic Ayn Rand novel "Atlas Shrugged". Today Variety finally confirmed her involvement.

Angelina is signed to star in the film as the powerful female Railroad Tycoon Dagny Taggart. The incredibly long book is the story of the rise and fall of big industry in America wrapped in a lot of ideological posturing about the importance of being allowed to achieve without restraint. Basically the idea of the book is that some people are simply better than the rest of us, and we should leave them alone to let them achieve and produce. Because enough people buy into that, it's often tagged as one of the most influential books of all time.

The movie version of Atlas Shrugged is being put together over at Lionsgate. At one point Brad Pitt was rumored to be in contention for one of the lead male roles, and with Angelina now confirmed it wouldn't be a shock to see her man sign up as well. Both would be a perfect fit for Rand's world, Jolie in particular is a perfect fit for the take-no-prisoners, supremely confident, and supremely sexy Dagny Taggart. The film should do wonders for the sales of women's business suits..

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and train travel

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I just wanted to add that this was the most entertaining blog I have read in a long while. Could you please write a similar one on "the Fountainhead."

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God, no kidding. Atlas Shrugged must be the official Republican Handbook. Or, would be if they could read.

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- Irtnog [See Profile I'm a Fan of Irtnog](#) [permalink](#)

I know. I couldn't believe Moore's piece when I first read it. I mean, Atlas Shrugged was after all a work of FICTION. For those of you who don't want to slog through it, take a gander at Kurt Vonnegut's "Welcome to the Monkey house" some of the same themes, equality, egalitarianism, government control etc. The difference is Vonnegut knew he was writing satire and the story is a heck of a lot shorter than Rand's.

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How about God Bless You Mr. Rosewater? I'd like an economy based on the wealthy putting their money to benefit mankind.

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- CharlieMarlowe [See Profile I'm a Fan of CharlieMarlowe](#) [permalink](#)

Sorry, Irtnog, I unconsciously borrowed your line about the difference between Rand and Vonnegut in my response.

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- CharlieMarlowe [See Profile I'm a Fan of CharlieMarlowe](#) [permalink](#)

"Harrison Bergeron" is the title of short story to which you refer in "Welcome to the Monkey House" (I read this in high school, I didn't read Atlas Shrugged until I was in my 40s.) This story should be required reading in high school. The difference between Vonnegut and Rand is that Vonnegut was purposely writing a parody. For those who want to read intelligently written anti-Soviet, anti-communist works, try "The God that failed: six famous men tell how they changed their minds about Communism", published in 1948 or 1949.

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The more intelligent of the truly bad people in this country tend to be Randistic. Our less intelligent of the bad amongst us gravitate towards Bill O-Reilly's or Ann Coulter's writing.

Both porcine and greedy, but one actually capable of accumulating the wealth of other's, and the one's who will serve them.

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Ayn Rand's Ideas Applied

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