Evolution
After discussing, the concept of individualism, its relevance in various disciplines, the researcher moves further, to relate the concept to Ayn Rand's works. Before analyzing Ayn Rand's individualistic characters, it becomes inevitable on the part of researcher to analyze the individualistic author first. “Man is born with an emotional mechanism, just as he is born with a cognitive mechanism; but, at birth, both are “tabula rasa.”  

Ayn wrote in *Virtue of Selfishness*.

So was it to Alissa Rosenbaum. Alissa, the future Ayn Rand, was born on February 2nd, 1905 in St. Petersburg, Russia. Her life, itself, was an exemplifying saga of all those theories she propounded. Her emotional and cognitive mechanisms, some times repelled, some times merged to create harmony within her. Her novels are her mouth pieces. Whatever, she put on the paper, somewhere, it related to her life. Her compassionate biographer, Barbara Branden observes “Through her fiction Alice had found the philosopher’s stone. She took the base metals of her own life, its mud and dross and suffering – and transformed it into the gold of her work.”

All art is, in some way or other, autobiographical. To an author like Ayn Rand, her fiction reflected not only her ideas but also her sufferings. So, it is a moral responsibility to consider her own life as a factious truth in chiseling her characters. Branden very aptly says,
Her person encompassed the grandeur of the heroes of her novels, their iron determination, their vast powers of intellect and imagination, their impassioned pursuit of their goals, their worship of achievement, their courage, their pride, and their love of life — as well as the terrors, the self-doubts, the lack of emotional balance, the private agonies that are so alien to an Ayn Rand hero. Her virtues were larger than life—and so were her shortcomings.  

To understand the individualistic characters of Ayn, initially, it is important to understand the individualistic, rather ruthless individualistic author first. The traumatic formative years of her childhood in a country, which is going through very drastic internal and external changes had very strong influence on her. The second formative influence was her family. Ironically, Ayn denied the institute of family later in her life, but she could not deny the impact, which haunted her throughout.

She was born in a sophisticated glittering world that was slowly descending into hell. Revolution was sweeping the nooks and corners of Russia. Czar Nicholas had sold more than four millions acres of land to the peasants at low prices, creating a new class in Russia: a class of small peasant landowners. It was a big turning point in Russian Political economic system. It transformed Russia from an autocracy to a semi constitutional monarchy; there emerged a total new class, but at the same time there was a section of society where European civilization and British Political system was preferred as against the mysticism and political absolutism of Russia.

Fronz Rosenbaum was one among them within the strict Jew reservations quota; he was forced to study chemistry, to make his living as a chemist. He was a man of strong integrity and convictions. His greatest pride lay in the fact that he was a rarity in Russia, a self made-man. Ayn shared this feeling of her father, unknowingly throughout her life. His
strongest issue was individualism. He considered ideas and the spread of ideas, is a most important thing of all. Alice remembered his interest in ideas and the spread of those ideas. He was committed to reason. Thus, her father was the first and formative influence over Ayn to form the strong conviction of individualism. As a faithful daughter, taking a step further, Ayn believed that fighting for the right ideas was important, and so was denouncing the wrong ideas.

Amidst the miserable Crimean years, she could remember another personal event which was a great source of significance to her. Her stern remote father became her ‘intellectual alley.’ Alice remembered this new relationship throughout her life. She called it as philosophical mutuality.

By this time, the political scenario in Russia was changing very fast. Political power had passed to the Duma in a revolution created by Russian citizens. The Czar abdicated. Alexander Kerensky became prime minister. Once again Russia was going through another major political change. Bolshevik revolutionaries were returning to the Petrograd from exile. But amidst the victorious cheers and celebrations, there was an ominous note lurking around. Lenin was welcomed by Bolshevik crowds. Rand was to remember the silent effects of revolution. Most of the time she and her family were hungry, ragged, cold and frightened of the regime that ruled them, whether it was Red or White. In 1918, as Russia surrendered to Germany and plunged into civil war, Ayn’s family hurried away to Crimea. Wartimes were followed by famine, disease, and political repression. Russia lay crushed under the Bolshevik heel, helpless, angry and hopeless. The helpless, murderous, frustration and indignation of these consequences laid some where deep down in Ayn’s unconscious. They got their vent in her early writings.
Ayn Rand’s protective parents believed that children should not know about the terrible changes in the society and world. Still, Ayn’s indirect contact with politics began in 1916. Petrograd was disintegrating. Crime became a plague, and no one was secure in his home. The great city was dying, with only its terrible flailing agony as a sign of life. In the beginning, it seemed to Alice,

That everybody of any political denomination was in favour of February revolution. And everybody was against the Czar. What fascinated me was that it fit in with my own stage of development—it was the only time I was synchronized with history. It was almost like fiction taking place in reality. That was why I became so interested. I know that I romanticized it a great deal. It seemed the fight for freedom; since that’s why what they were talking about, I took it literally—by which I meant individualism: its man who must be free.4

For Alice all these historical events were like a morality play. It was almost like fiction taking place in reality. It all seemed to her the fight for freedom, by which she meant individualism: its man who must be free. She opposed every authority which imposed anything on anyone. This idea was further formulated her political philosophy.

After the Bolshevik revolution there was no hope of democracy any more. Rosenbaum’s business was nationalized, and the family’s comfortable life abruptly ended. It was a horrible, silent spectacle of brutality and injustice. She would never forget or forgive this reversal of fortune, and she would argue that the most repugnant of Marxist doctrines was the secular altruism that called for the sacrifice of the individual to the common good. These seeds of communism, Ayn Rand knew, for sure, were a horror at the root of all the other horrors taking place around her. It was hard to accept the self-less servitude to others. It was the demand for the sacrifice of the best among men, and for the enshrinement of the common place, that were the unspeakable evils of communism. She
The worst of suffering in those days was not hunger. It was the terrible sordidness of life and the colourlessness of world, where she could bear the rags and the cold and threats of violence, but could not bear the ugliness, the sense of hopelessness that was everywhere around her. This
feeling continued with Ayn throughout her life. She could not face any type of cheapness and ugliness and meanness on the part of individual.

And I was always hungry, no matter how much I ate; I could never seem to get enough in Chicago, I had eaten constantly. It was because of the starvation in Russia; it took several years for the constant hunger to disappear.5

She never complained of the poverty, squalor. It was the attitude of individual which made her indignant.

Alice had not enjoyed the observance of religion and did not miss them nor did she appear to recall ever hearing the problems of anti-Semitism, rising throughout Russia. Ayn Rand never used to mention about either religious matters or about pain and frustration of her Russian years in any of her public meetings. It is a typical psychological trait; it was as if she wanted to bury all the pain inside, not to allow it to come outside. But it is impossible that there might not have been any such encounters. They must be. The pain and terror of Anti-Semitism was so strong that they were blocked from her memory. It was a peculiar mental condition. Her mind rejected to remember those painful, humiliating years. Religion had little place in Rosenbaum house hold, though her mother Anna, was religious in nature. Later, very late in her life, Ayn missed the proper mourning to her parents when she came to know about their death. Her parents were aware of ubiquitous hated of Jews. The problems of anti-Semitism were discussed over the dining table. Her religion had no significance to her. She never denied that she was Jewish. In her later years, as a committed atheist, religion had no significance to her. She had no emotional tie or sense of identification with Jews or things Jewish. The loss of this religious belief made her to form a concept against god. “I had decided that the concept of God is degrading to men. Since they say God is perfect, and
man can never be that perfect, then man is low and imperfect and there is something above him – which is wrong.” 6 The compassionate Barbara interprets these lines:

It was not the concept of God that she would battle throughout her life; it was what she saw as its source, its wider meaning: the rejection of reason. It was to the battle for reason – the tool and the glory of the heroic man – that she would dedicate her life.7

Ayn was not specific about God or religion. Her prime importance was laid on human being. Her experiences, during war times, probably, made her staunch atheist. Even her admiration for America, the nation which believed in God and Church would not shake her atheism.

There are some more observations of Ayn’s childhood which throw more light to understand her on an unprejudiced level. To any human being, childhood forms a link to further future life. A secured childhood assures a better life. In Ayn’s case, it was an insecure childhood. That pain and agony lingered throughout. These incidents help to probe into Ayn’s psychology, on a larger level.

As a child Alice was fascinated by the blinking yellow and red lights of the street car, it was the beginning of the love of technology. Further in life, it was extended to skyscrapers. From childhood, her reaction to world was that of fundamental alienation. Her father’s indifference to her and mother’s disapproval had to be sources of anguish to the child. Ayn named her childhood anguish as ‘a process of self protective emotional repression.’ At that tender age, she even concluded that love and admiration she received were because of the qualities of her mind. This small seedling of importance of intelligence was grown with the years, like an obsession with her. Intelligence was a quality, she admired, even, as a girl. Intelligence and virtue were to interlink in her mind and in her
emotions. She believed that a mind needs the stimulation of its equals. These strong, staunch beliefs restricted Ayn’s social life to much extent. She spent an exclusively aloof life afterwards.

Ayn was to recall her ‘tiddly wink’ music; she heard it as a six year old. For her, that music bore no awareness that pain ever could exists. Probably, little Alice was aware of the unexplained terror around her. She wanted to shed it off in the music. It contained no pain, no tragedy but it was considered as uncultured taste. It was the beginning of series of value clashes with the people around her. At this tender age Alice learned to keep her deepest emotional reactions locked up inside her self.

She was learning, painfully, to keep her deepest emotional reactions locked up inside herself, to view them as too personal, too private to be shared or made vulnerable to the rejection of others.8

The invention of stories was an absorbing idea around her. She wrote with ease as if a kind of Atlantis is behind her, or a lost Garden of Eden. She observed the battle between the good and evil was to take important place in her writings. At that age she was discovering, without yet the words to name it, the Aristotelian principle that the fiction writer creates the world as it might be and ought to be. She disliked the sentimental tragedy of Russian children’s stories, and her own stories had a sunlit, benevolent quality and culminated in the success of heroes. She firmly believed that even though her kind of people doesn’t exist around but they exist somewhere, and she promised herself to find them out on her own way. The search was started unknowingly, even before she was a grown up. The French detective story of a battle between good and evil was the beginning of a literary search and crusade. This basic human fight of good and evil was to engage her ever after. It made her to see the world as a
giant battle field in which her personal god and devil were locked in endless conflict.

‘My concept of good and evil’, she would later comment, ‘already in the process of being formed, saw its vindication everywhere.’ - as it reality had become the sort of fiction later she would create; a conflict, written larger than life, between two opposing views of man, two opposing views of human society, two opposing views of morality.³

As a writer and as a human being, she had chosen to be on the side of the good. As Alice matured, the detective and the jewel thief became opposing philosophical ideas- ideal heroes and contemptuous parasites but the principle remained the same.

In this process, she read a short story *The Mysterious valley* written by Maurice Champagne. The hero, Cyrus, in that story left a tremendous impact on little nine year old Ayn. She decided to be a writer. Inspiration of Cyrus created Roark and Galt. Cyrus was a man of enormous audaciousness, defiant independence. He was a personal inspiration. She liked him because he was a man of action and totally self-confident. This character helped Ayn to concretize her kind of man; intelligent, independent, courageous—the heroic man. She intellectualized her characters with these basic features. She believed that the portrayal of the human potential is the essence of Cyrus, the heroic man. She wanted to see heroes, so she invented characters who were daring, independent, courageous.

Another great event in her literary career was the discovery of a writer, whose work profoundly influenced her future literary development—Victor Hugo. In her Crimean years, Ayn discovered the novels of Victor Hugo and Dostoevsky. The stories of heroic individuals fighting great
adversity attracted the little girl. Dostoevsky helped Rand to see life at a glance with an objective eye. She found in Dostoevsky a great novelist, who was too honest to hide things ‘as they are’, and refused to pretend that man’s life was glorious. Nothing threatened him and the man of vision went forward exposing the frailties of life, one after the other. He presented the evil world, full of chaos and confusion and the good was pushed in it like a baby weeping in the cradle. As a sincere novelist, Dostoevsky kept wetening the child with grave concern but never extended a helping hand to him. Dostoevsky, the negative Catalyst, proved a sound influence on Rand’s blossoming imagination and enabled her to solve the enigma of life and arrive at the conclusion that ‘contradictions don’t exist’.

In her essay *Art and sense of life* Rand announced Dostoevsky as her powerful guide.

I like Dostoevsky for his superb mastery of plot structure and for his merciless dissection of the Psychology of evil, even though his philosophy and his sense of life are diametrically opposed to mine........Now to demonstrate the difference between an intellectual approach and a sense of life, I will restate the preceding paragraph in sense-of-life terms: ______ Dostoevsky gives me the feeling of entering a chamber of horrors, but with a powerful guide.10

Dostoevsky’s determination to reveal life ‘as it is’ was a clue to analyze life exactly, with a blend of her own bitter experiences in Russia, leading her to taste life at its Peak in America. But the credit for presenting an ideal hero goes to Victor Hugo. There was a deep psychological influence of the man on her. He was the single influence on her in all literature. The larger-than-life scale dimensions in his works attracted her. She was fascinated by Hugo’s sense of life. She was aware of Hugo’s integration of themes, ideas and action. She liked his heroic, larger-than-life scale of man portrayals, and effective description of events. She wanted
to match with the grandeur, the heroic scale, the plot inventiveness and those eloquent dramatic touches of Hugo. She liked a minor character in Hugo's *Les Miserables* called Enjolras. He was the austere, implacable rebel, the marble lover of liberty. He had but one passion, the right; but one thought, to remove all obstacles. Ayn saw the dedicated purposefulness and the love of rectitude that were to form her own concept of human greatness. All her heroes were planned in the same pattern. She named this literary form as 'Romantic realism'; She could find values in Hugo. This passionate enthusiasm for the values was like an obsession for her.

Aristotle made her conscious of Reason, Dostoevsky presented a desperate world for Rand to learn much from, Victor Hugo offered characters, who, though full of idealism, could not achieve their idealism but Rand made her characters achieve their ideals. Although Aristotle, Dostoevsky, and Victor Hugo, all influenced her mind and thought, Rand did not become either an Aristotelian or Hugoesque or Dostoevskian. Her final stand is her own and she remained individualistic Rand all through.

She believed that there could be no such thing as a desire or an action which had nothing to do with mind, and with value. She hated stories of magic, hopeless romances and contemptuous love stories. At twelve, she despised the idea of love as the main concern. This intellectualization made her alone. She was aware of the fact that she was unable to approach people. “A process of alienation appears to have been sweeping through her life with ever increasing force, to work its ever increasing havoc in her future.”

This precocious intelligence served her throughout her life. There was intellectual alienation, political alienation clubbed with economic miseries. Amidst all these havocs the sixteen year old Alice decided for an
indefinite future, that she was going to embody all these experiences in her novels. Throughout her university years, she was a voracious reader.

It (thus Spake Zarathustra) was for her, an exciting, unexpected discovery of a spiritual alley, the first she had ever found on an adult level. Here was a writer (Friedrich Nietzsche) who felt as I did about man, who saw and wanted heroic in man; here was a writer who believed that a man should have a great purpose which is for his own sake, for his own happiness and his own selfish motives. Here was a writer who revered the heroic in man, who defended individualism and despised altruism.12

Thus spake Zarathustra was an initial inspiration. Nietzsche defended individualism and despised altruism. She felt, like him, that man should have a great purpose, a purpose which is for his own sake, for his own happiness, and his own selfish motives. The superior man could not be bothered enslaving others, that slavery is immoral, that to enslave his inferiors is an unworthy occupation for heroic man. But her excitement had a jolt, when she found him steadily anti-reason. For her, suffering was the accidental, the unimportant. It should not blur one's vision of joy, never to become metaphysical.

After college hours she discovered operettas, where she met Leo, her first love. As she showed more intensity in love, he began to draw away from her. Once again it was painful, this time, the pain was neither Philosophical nor socio-economical. It was personal agony. Her contempt for suffering restored her. For Ayn, pain is humiliation. She would not allow her love for Leo to be a tragedy, and to become a scar on her soul. Her conviction was that the joy is the meaning of human existence. She made Leo alive throughout her literary career. She named the hero of the *We the Living* Leo, and preserved him like a jewel. The feeling of her, for him, was important to Ayn, not the person particularly.
She identified herself with professional literature of her kind. She was always aware of the value of her work. While working as a tour guide, at the Peter and Paul fortress, she was engaged in a ferocious intellectual struggle to find some way to build her intellectual individuality.

A Russian Jew, named Horry Portnoy, a distant relative of Rosenbaum family immigrated to the United States. He sponsored Alice to America. The journey of Alice to become Ayn was nearing its goal. She left Russia with an old Remington – Rand type writer and three hundred dollars. At Hudson River, she selected a new name for herself—Ayn. It was the name of a Finnish writer, which rhymed with pine. She touched her dreamland with the fifty dollars in her purse, the type writer held in her arms, mainly, the stories outlined in her mind, and the sense of life as exaltation.

She looked back at Russia as a nation that glorified the tragic and the malevolent, glorified the very qualities that were the antithesis of what she wanted in her own life and what she wanted to create in her stories. She left behind her, the stranglehold of a blood-soaked dictatorship, and the soul-shriveling terror of a life without hope or future. “I saw America as the country of individualism, of strong men, of freedom and important purposes. I thought, this is the kind of government I approve of.”

She adopted and adapted America with full devotion. The new patriotism never ceased.

It is a land where utopian became reality, where Coleridge had planned to establish his pantisocracy. It is a common wealth of nations. It had proved the truth of one of Hegel’s chief axioms that unity dominates the diversity of elements.
When she came to Chicago, she was received by her relatives very warmly. Their greeting projected that she belonged to them. Ayn never expected it. She was never able to understand an unconditional personal acceptance. The dormant conditions she faced as a child and adolescent in Russia practically killed most of the natural human feelings in her. But she liked the warmth of relations. On the contrary, her self-absorption attitude was difficult to face for that family. In Chicago she concentrated on film-script writing and improving English. Despite her pangs of homesickness, she never wanted to think of Russia, probably, she hated the prevalent conditions of Russia, not Geographical Russia as such. Only the future mattered to her. America mattered to her. She wanted to shed off the past from her mind. The way she had chosen was that she never talked about her family also.

But equally important was Ayn’s attitude toward the Phenomenon of family. It was a phenomenon to which she seemed indifferent, “it’s not chosen values.” She observed, “One is simply born into a family. Therefore it’s of no real significance.”

To work for a livelihood was hard for Ayn, but it was part of life. While roaming around Hollywood studios, she was ruminating her story plots and catching her newly learned language with all its nuances.

Another important event in Ayn’s life, these days, was she met Frank O’Connor. Even though, Ayn spiritualized their relation throughout her long life, basically, it was a marriage of convenience. Her marriage with him provided her political security as well personal security, and social security. For the first time, in her life, Ayn enjoyed this kind of security. She was overwhelmed. Still, she could not cope up with her emotional insecurity in the relation. From his side, Frank, faithfully, maintained the
relation with all its upheavals, till his death. He never complained. His respect and admiration for Ayn were deep and enduring. She wanted a man to be labeled on her name and Frank was there ready to be labeled. The ruthless marriage devoured him into the inexplicable passiveness of life. In turn, even for Ayn it was hard to merge, mentally, with the relation. The lack of communication pained her.

It was very typical in her personality that she philosophized her every positive, negative qualities, rather the negative qualities in a more elaborate way, so as to give auto-suggestions to her mind that she has to accept the situation. She believed in dominance, not in surrendering. In order to save herself from unwanted situations, she commanded her brain to accept her philosophizing. This inherent psychological twist of her mind created more problems, in future, not only for her, but also for the people around her. She never could forget the bitter past, she lulled it in her ruthless individuality, but the past haunted her even without conscious knowledge. Throughout her life she had to face a sort of mental distance with all her near and dear ones, whether it was Nathaniel or Nora, her sister.

Ayn's life sketch would be incomplete without Nathaniel's unique reference. It was the relation of its own kind. They shared a multi-dimensional relationship. Probably, because, it was not just man woman love, it was mutual love of ideas. To perpetuate a feeling is to remove from it the finer edge of its power. Ayn could do it with Leo. She made her pain transitory in nature where she can enjoy the pleasure and pain of first love at the same time. Ayn could not repeat it for the second time with Nathan, because it was not just love of a woman to a man. The multifaceted passion for him ruined her. Nathaniel analyses their relation:
If I proceed with this, if I tell Ayn's and my story, set in the contract of my relationships with Barbara and Patrecia, it will be a new opportunity to write about love, different kinds of love - from love of persons to love of ideas to love of causes - and the extraordinary things love sometimes leads us to do. Additionally, an opportunity to write about a brilliant, innovative thinker-an exalted and tortured woman. And to write about the psychology of intellectual movements and why and how even the best of movements can bring out the worst in people as well as the noblest. More personally, it will allow me to explore the process of individuation, the drama of growth and evolution, as it has worked in my own life. There is something frightening in this - underneath every truth there always seems to be a deeper truth, and that is the appeal and the incentive.

Personally, "She did not love easily or often; but when she did, it was with a consuming and lasting passion." It proved in Nathaniel's reference. She respected him for his intellectuality. They used to have deep conversations about psychology. His explanation of why man needs human companionship and is motivated to find human beings he can value and love, appealed to Ayn, she formulated that love is a response to a highest value. For her, it was a battle to remain a woman in this relationship. Throughout her life, she had fought against her softness, her tenderness, and her feminine attributes. She had married a man whom she could control. The lack of intellectual communication with Frank tormented her. Nathaniel came into her mental arena as an 'ideal man.' Ayn Rand, the consummate hero-worshipper, invited him with open mind and wide spread arms. Her stern features took on softness and a femininity, as if; cold marbles had been warmed by an inner fire.

Her reason chose him. Nathaniel had no power to resist her. Her passion for him was a triumph beyond any he had ever dreamed. It was a triumph that ennobled him. It was a morganatic marriage. He was an alienated adolescent, when he read The Fountainhead Ayn was a once-in-a lifetime exception to him. He was an intellectual heir and spiritual equal of
her heroes. Ayn defined a woman’s love as surrender. There was a conflict in her regarding this love. On one hand, it was a terror of surrender which could bring humiliation as in the cases of her father and Leo; on the other hand, fear of loss of her independence. Anguish became an increasingly heavy burden for Nathaniel. All at once, his teacher, mentor, lover was in agony, and it was his joy to find a solution. Both of them tried to revive and revitalize the relation, but failed. The volcanic affair gave incredible happiness and nightmarish times of anguish. There was a total lack of dignity in the way they dealt with each other.

They learned emotional repression and its inevitable concomitant: the alienation from self. However, the thunderous relation of eighteen years, which went through many transformations such as, from student and teacher, to friends, to colleagues, and partners to lovers and ultimately ended in as adversaries. The relation ended in a colossal fatal way. The ability to take pleasure in the shining moment, fragile from the beginning of her life, she received its final and mortal blow with the loss of Leo and Nathan, never to be regained. They had to be heroes, to justify her love. They had to be transformed into the stuff of fiction – the fiction of Ayn Rand.

Throughout her life, Ayn was to draw to her intellectual young men with whom she could share the philosophical interests. Ayn turned to others for the conceptual understanding and the passionate concern with ideas that she needed. She hungered for people who shared her own vision of life and man. Her charismatic certainty in all her odds was commencing. It was a major provocative talent.

Ayn always said about herself that she could explain her each and every emotion, because her every emotion is interlinked with Reason. It was true, if only she would not have met Nathaniel. He was the only man,
with whom the faculty of reasoning got damaged. She was an idol to him. He was an ideal man to her. She tried once again, to philosophise this relation, as usual, as it was her habitual action, but she failed. Even though, it was not an enigmatic relation, it was not a normal one either. It was intricate, complicated. It excited them. It exalted them. It execrated them.

When it was a broken affair with Leo, Ayn just turned him into a character and stored him too preciously as a token of love in her novel. But it was not so with Nathaniel.

In her intellectual and spiritual loneliness, she longed, throughout her life, for such a man: a man who would be her equal, who would see the world as she saw it, and who represent the challenge she had never found.18

She met the man, enjoyed the spiritual partnership and reciprocity of feelings. But they could not sustain the relation. Further, in her life, whenever, any aspect of her character or personality were understood or loved she would react with pleasure but at the same time with an authentic air of bewilderment. This psychological trait in Ayn was somewhat typical. She felt, as she later said, a painful kind of anger or contempt for any one who seemed to love what she loved, but also responded to what she considered boring and stupid; it was as if, through such a response, her love was desecrated “one may not light a candle before a god – and also before the figure of clown.” 19 This feeling of self-exaggeration, in a way, proved as a tragic-flaw of Ayn. It ruined her last years. She could not absorb the fact that Nathaniel would also like some other person after liking her. It brought the fatal breech between Nathaniel and her. In 1968 she announced their parting on professional levels also. “She had always hated suffering. She had suffered too much, for too many years. She had always worshipped joy. She had been joyless for too long.” 20
On the whole, the years of evolution were tough. She faced many humiliating situations with a very strange kind of vengeance. She appeared normal in outward way but inside she was very volcanic. The outburst came finally through her writings. But the pain exhausted her on individual level. This individuality exuberantly found in chiseling her characters with meticulous finery.

Still, life had a lot more to offer Ayn Rand. The second section projects her personal reflections in her literary works.

II

The political atmosphere was very different in America. It was as if Ayn carried collectivism with her to America. 1930’s was a worst decade for the Nation. It had been named the ‘Red Decade.’ Roosevelt had inaugurated his National Recovery Administration, by which the nation’s industry, agriculture, and manufacturing became subject to centralized economic planning; the break with the laissez-faire free market was gathering momentum. Intellectuals, businessmen, labour leaders embraced doctrines of ‘totalitarian communism.’ There is no longer ‘I’, remained in the scene. ‘We’ dominated the situation. The day of individual is dead. In these situations, Left-Right coalition is also a possibility. In the Congress of the United States there was a high degree of cooperation between left-wing liberals and right-wing conservatives, with each faction maneuvering for its own favorite kinds of legislation. Here the differences between Left and Right are differences between the kind of power Left and Right establishmentarians would like to see entrusted to the federal government. At this moment conservatives, whose chief concerns are morality and military power, wanted the federal government to legislate against political
radicalism, liberals would prefer the government to ease up in these areas and concentrate instead on assuming more power to deal with social issues. There is also some indication that, economically, liberals would prefer nationalization of certain institutions rather than management of them, while conservatives prefer state-capitalist schemes like subsidies to failing corporations, licensing and franchise restrictions, import quotas, and anti-union legislation. She observed that:

The purpose of the communists in Hollywood is not the production of political movies openly advocating communism. Their purpose is to corrupt our moral premises by corrupting non political movies – by introducing small casual bits of propaganda into innocent stories – thus making people absorb the basic principles of collectivism by indirection and implication.  

With such working conditions, and ever changing political conditions, in 1926, the twenty-one-years old Russian immigrant was struggling in a new Nation with a new language. When she was struggling with her first story in English, she was barely able to speak the language. She devoted herself at first to writing scenarios for the silent screen. *The Husband I Bought* was the only writing other than scenarios. It was the first story she wrote in English. It was a beginner’s exercise. Rand did not even sign her name to it. She signed it with a pseudonym Allen Raynor. She used this name only in this one case. Throughout these early years, female protagonists dominated Ayn’s fiction. The early heroes are merely suggestive; they are not fully given the scope to evolve in their character. But the motif of the woman’s feeling for a hero is in offing. Even in the first story, she wrote eloquent scenes on this theme. Henry, in the *The Husband I Bought* was the earliest ancestor of Leo, Roark and Francisco or Rearden. The later heroes were formed with this nutshell.
On the surface, this story appears to be quite conventional. In first reading it may seem as the tragic story of a wife neglected by her husband. Henry Stafford loses his wealth; still, Irene Wilmer marries him, pays off his debts and gives him back his social ground. On social grounds, it was "buying" herself a husband. But she loves him ardently. When she realizes that Henry was in love with Claire Van Dahlen, she was very much upset. The realization that Henry is bound to her not out of love, but out of gratitude makes her very sad. This presentation of Rand reverses the situation. Irene is a passionate-valuer. She is not a meek, timid, conventional wife.

I bought my husband! So this was the mystery. He could not leave me. He will be tortured and keep silent. He cannot be happy with me and his life will be ruined......because of my money! 22

She decides to leave him. Rand presents this situation dramatically. She pretends to have an affair with another man so that Henry will be freed out of her favour. Her decision to leave Henry is not self sacrifice. It is an attempt at her self preservation and the reaffirmation of her values. She draws a tragic conclusion from her suffering even in the agony of unrequited love, her focus remains on her values. Ayn's presentation of individualistic characters heralded their way through Irene. It is surprising, Ayn always portrayed strong, intelligent woman worshipping a man who brings out the best in her.

The next story Good Copy was written in 1927. There is no philosophic content. A reporter, Laury McGee is in a small time job with a newspaper without any prospects when he comes out with a great idea. The idea was to kidnap a pretty young heiress, Jinx Winford. Laury wants to scoop this news, and wants to make himself famous. But the things go wrong. While Laury was making stories of kidnapping, a real kidnapper
takes Jinx from him, threatens her life, and forces Laury to go to the police with the whole story. As usual, the intelligent Jinx, like other future Ayn’s heroines is very quick witted. She escapes from the kidnapper and tells the world that the first kidnapping was not at all a kidnapping; it was to cover her elopement with the man she loves, Laury.

*Escort* is another short story, with O.Henry kind of tangent and twist at the end. The story presents young couple Larry Dean and his wife Sue. To earn a livelihood, Larry takes up a job of a professional escort, showing rich ladies around the town. Meanwhile, Sue remains all alone at home. To escape from her loneliness, she uses her meager savings to hire an escort for one night of dancing. All the while, both are guilty with their kind of attitudes. At the end, Sue calls the service where Larry works, and Larry was to pick up a Mrs. Dean at his own address.

*Her second career* is another short story of not much importance. It is a story of an actress, Claire Nash, who has tremendous faith in her acting abilities. She accepts the challenge to prove herself for a second time on her own merit. She soon discovers the hopeless plight of an unknown extra, working for mindless directors. The story ends with her playing a minor role in a film. Critics are cool to the actress, who had once been a star.

Any art, if it is too subjective, can not reach the audience. Ayn was in disturbed mood and could not put all her optimum ability on paper. She was unappreciated and felt insecure in those days. Still, Ayn had an undying vigour, which sprung up from inside from time to time. The eternal hope towards life always guided her. In 1932, she sold the story *Red Pawn* to universal studios.

*Red Pawn* is the story of a strong young woman, Joan, an American married to a Russian activist. Its plot, at first glance, seems merely the
story of a woman who comes, at the price of a great sacrifice, to rescue her husband from a life sentence in prison and of her worst enemy's great, unhappy love for her. The future *We the Living* is shaping in Rand's own way, as if, she is moulding the raw material to shape her sophisticated future characters. Joan is going to be Kira of *We the Living*.

*Red Pawn* presents Ayn's first serious, philosophical theme, the evil of dictatorship of Soviet Russia. Frances Volkontez assumes a new identity, Joan volunteers to be mistress to a prison island's commandant, Comrade Kareyev. Joan becomes Kareyev's mistress and arranges an escape, for a moment, for her dying husband. As time moves, she develops a liking for Kareyev. She feels that he is a good man serving an evil system. Finally Kareyev helps them to escape. When they are caught she is told that her husband must return to the island to be executed, while she and the commandant are to go on to trial for conspiracy. She identifies the commandant as the convict. The commandant does not dispute her, and she takes her husband away to trial, in a hope he will at least die on the mainland, as the commandant returns to the island to be executed. He faces his death with his head held high for the first time.

III

After providing her characters, the basic foot ground, in her early stories, Ayn was, now, in a position to prune them to be future full fledged, individualistic characters. She, now, involved herself in a project that required her whole mind, her whole attention. In 1930, she had begun outlining her first novel. Its working title was *Air Tight*. She was to change it to *We the Living*. Her initial thought had been to develop one of the story outlines she had devised while still in Russia. She wanted to tell the world
the nature of her Russian nightmare, people must know what was happening in Russia, and why it was happening, and no one was telling them. She had to fulfill her promise, ‘if they ask you in America, tell them that Russia is a huge cemetery and that we are all dying slowly.’ She decided to tell the world about Russia.

Every work of art is an act of psychological self-disclosure. An artist declares to the world: ‘this is what I think is important; important for me to project and for others to perceive.’ By the same token, an intense response to a work of art is also psychological self-disclosure. More often than not, the roots of our responses lie deep in our subconscious, but our values, philosophy, and sense of life are necessarily engaged when we encounter a work of art and fall in love.

*We the Living* was to be a protest and an introduction to her philosophy. It was about physical disease as well as about the intellectual plague of totalitarianism. It was about the Man against the state. She wanted to create the sanctity, the supreme value of human life. And most importantly she wanted to show the immorality of treating men as sacrificial animals and ruling them by physical force. Surprisingly, Ayn rejected the idea of a superior man employing physical force as means to his end. It was also an interpretation of the mystery of her first love.

When Ayn first began to work on *Airtight*, it was the first story written by a Russian who knows the living conditions of the new Russia and who has actually lived under the Soviets in the period described. The plot and characters are fictitious, but the living conditions, the atmosphere, the circumstances which make the incidents of the plot possible, are all true, to the smallest detail. There have been any number of novels dealing with modern Russia, but they have been written either by émigrés who left Russia right after the revolution and had no way of knowing the new conditions, or by Soviet authors who were under the strictest censorship.
and had no right and no way of telling the whole truth. *We the living* was the first novel by a person who knows the facts and also can tell them.

*Airtight,* is the first novel about Russia written in English by a Russian. Throughout the entire book, efforts were made to present those horrifying situations. It could be called a panorama of the whole country as it would unfold before the eyes of a person who had never heard before that such a country as Russia existed. Ayn presented Russia to her new country. It is not, primarily, a book for Russians, but a book for Americans.

Rand attempted to show, not the political struggles, theories and ideals of modern Russia, but the everyday human lives, the everyday tragedies of human beings who are not or try not to be connected with politics. It is the story of the middle class, the vast majority of Russian citizens, about whom, little had been said in fiction. It is not the usual story of revolutionary plots, of GPU spies, of secret executions and exaggerated horrors. It is the story of the drudgery of life which millions have to lead day after day, year after year. It gave a vivid picture of a country, which is slowly heading towards the fatal end.

*Airtight* is not only a novel about Russia. It is a novel about the problem of the individual versus the mass, a problem which is the latest, the most vital, the most tremendous problem of the world today, and about which very little has been said in fiction. Ayn wanted to tell the world about the suffocation of totalitarian regime.

The American reader has no knowledge of it whatsoever. He has not the slightest suspicion of it. If he had – we would not have the appalling number of parlor Bolsheviks and idealistic sympathizers with the Soviet regime, liberals who would scream with horror if they knew the truth of Soviet existence. It is for them that the book was written. 25
We the living was not only against Communism, but against all forms of collectivism, against any manner of sacrilege toward the individual. Any form of swift physical annihilation is preferable to the inconceivable horror of a living death. It was a kind of death in life situation. Individuals are divided by their spirit. Collectivism devoured the soul of people. Ayn remarked:

I believe more firmly than in any Ten Commandments that the State exists only and exclusively to serve the individual. I see no conceivable logical or ethical excuse for the opposite belief, nor any possible compromise between the two. If the role of the State as a servant, not a master, is taken as a basic, immutable sort of Constitution – then “umpiring” is safe and desirable; provided that the “umpiring” is done precisely to protect single individuals, not society as a whole or the state as a whole; provided that each act of the “umpires” is definitely motivated by and does not clash with the above sort of Constitution.26

We the living is a story about Dictatorship, any kind of dictatorship, whether it is in Soviet Russia, Nazi Germany, or ‘a socialist America.’ It may sound very harsh to normal ears, but Ayn feared her new adopted country’s transitional changes. In 1930’s there was a crash of the stock market which had repercussions on the lives of all Americans. National Recovery administration was launched. Nation’s industry, agriculture, and manufacturing became subject to centralized economic planning. Importantly, the worst that happened was the break with the laissez faire free market which was gathering momentum. The rush to collectivism, soon made 1930’s ‘the Red Decade.’ It seemed, as if, collectivism would haunt Ayn, wherever she went. People from all walks of life embraced the doctrines of totalitarian communism. At this crucial time, Ayn launched her novel. It was very alarming to notice most of the people in America believing that the communist methods were evil, while communist ideals were noble. Rand decided to oppose it through We the Living. The very
thought of collectivism made her panic. For Rand, to transcribe every intense, powerful feeling, and thought into words is very much inevitable. So, she had done it, her cry, her pain, her agony, her anguish, her suffering, and her contempt for unwanted circumstances above all, love for life got vent in this novel. Kira Argounova, in *We the Living*, is an embodiment of all these feelings. Like Ayn, Kira lived in a society which had no developed concept of the individual. Sciabarra observes, ‘The Russian language does not even have a word for privacy.’\(^{27}\) It was very hard to accept those conditions to an individualist like Ayn. The story of *We the Living* focuses on three main characters, Andrei Taganov, Leo Kovalensky and Kira Argounova, each of whom are existing under the suffocating grip of the Communist party. Kira and Leo, the children of powerful families who acquired great wealth through hard work and dedication under imperial rule, are struggling to free themselves of the oppressive regime.

Andrei on the other hand, is a high ranking party member with a glorious combat record who is just beginning to realize the high cost of his sacrifices. They hope to find salvation, be it from within or without.

The setting of the story is Communist Russia in the city of Petrograd in the early 1900s. Rand gives a realistic look into Russia, using believable characters and accurate descriptions of life under socialism. Kira, who Rand says embodies her own philosophical and moral views, is faced with many difficult decisions. Her comfortable childhood was snatched by war and revolution. Kira entered the university to become an engineer, to build the bridges, aluminium bridges. It was so unconventional on the part of girls to think of a profession like a builder. The profession of a male, opted by a girl never made the family happy. Moreover, Kira had to serve under communists, whom she despised from the core of her heart. Life is in a
mazy motion. Still, individualistic Kira learned about the life, was the joy of being alone. She always got her away to her own path.

It seemed that the words she said were ruled by the will of her body and that her sharp movements were the unconscious reflection of a dancing, laughing soul. So that her spirit seemed physical and her body spiritual.

These inherent, inborn qualities made Kira a perfect individualist.

She believed that all progress and achievement come from the independent mind, the altruism, the doctrine that self-surrender in service to others is the highest ideal, is a device for controlling and ultimately enslaving productive men and women; that a human being is not a sacrificial animal, but has a right to exist for his or her own sake; that society depends on the work of creators and has a right to that work only on the creator’s terms. Amidst all those uncertain political advantages and uncertainties, the only pleasure Kira used to get was when she went to the theater. Her favourite moment was the one, when the lights went out and the curtain shivered before rising.

In Technical Institute she met Andrei Taganov, comrade Andrei Taganov. Ideologically they belonged to two distinct halves. He – the reddest communist, a perfect proletariat. She- bourgeoisie by birth, anti-communist by thought. But a vein of unknown liking bound them together. It is the firm belief of their convictions that made them alike, and which made them like each other.

Moreover, they both liked life. They liked to live for themselves. She was very confident that their Red Paradise would end in the most unspeakable hell. She never could accept the point that the few can be sacrificed for the benefit of millions. Her friendship with a communist was not approved by her family. Kira liked Andrei for those, yet un-penned
words of Ayn, for values, for ideas, and for his integrity as an individual. Ayn portrayed Kira as far more rational, far more psychologically healthy, as a young woman of purposefulness. She had contempt for the inconsequential. She was committed to work, love and personal freedom.

She meets Leo Kovalansky, accidentally on a deserted road and instantly likes him. They share same kind of back ground. His father was in military, who served the Czar. The surroundings and situations made him skeptic. He says,

Effort. Creation. Your glass skyscraper. It might have been worth while a hundred years ago. It may be worthwhile again a hundred years from now, though I doubt it. But if I were given a choice of all the centuries I'd select last the curse of being born in this one. And perhaps, if I weren't curious, I'd choose never to be born at all.29

He gave himself to drinking and debauchery instead of facing the situations boldly. He hated himself, he hated the world. It is surprising to note that Ayn did not put much effort in the portrayal of Leo, even though critics presume that he was the portrayal of her first love. Perhaps, she wanted him in the way she presented him, just like a man yielded to the uncontrolling conditions. It was hard for kira to learn about his tuberculosis. He needed rest, fresh air, good food, and the natural rights of man. They are deprived of these things. They cannot afford a sanitarium. Kira approached all state hospitals. She begged Trade Unions. Leo could not be admitted to a Sanitarium because he is not a registered worker. They do not mind if one aristocrat dies, because for the sake of Union of Socialist Soviet Republic, hundred thousand workers died in the civil war. Kira could not see any reason behind this equation. She could not understand how a life of common citizen be equaled to those killed in war. She resented the system, where all morality is social. She decided to fight
her battle alone she decided to send Leo to Sanitarium. She used the money of Andrei for Leo.

For Andrei, it was love for Kira. He struggled against this feeling, not to yield to it, but finally he surrendered himself to love. This love kindled humanity in him. The tender feelings are not the choice of red people. Still, he yielded to the human urge, human love, which made him different from other comrades. Ayn’s concentration on individual characters is worth observing. She and Kira despised communism. Still, she presented Andrei, the communist, with all individualistic qualities which made him humane and made Kira feel for him, though not love him. Most of the times, feeling rules the matter. Ayn’s hate of the social system did not stop her from the portrayal of a positive character in opposition group. Her intense interest in individual sketches gave birth first to Andrei, then to Gail and Rearden and Dominique though they are found in negative conditions. She developed the character of Andrei with the effect of reversal. She makes him to know the horrified situations around him. He bursts out to his party men, in an anguished cry,

Are we sure we know what we are doing? No one can tell men what they must live for...........Man’s mind and his values.......Every honest man lives for himself. Every man worth calling a man lives for himself. The one who doesn’t doesn’t live at all. You can not change it because that’s the way man is born, alone, complete, an end in himself. No laws, no party, no G.P.U. will ever kill that thing in man which knows how to say ‘I.’ you can not enslave man’s mind. You can only destroy it. You have tried it.30

Leo, even after his return from sanitarium could not cope up with the prevailing conditions. He begins to hate his new life, which Kira has given him. He sticks to the present which is futile, she hopes for the future which may be hopeful. But the future was fatal. While looking for Leo's
apartment, Andrei comes to know about the love of Leo and Kira. He receives it with all his dignity and integrity. By this time, he had developed the same mental wave length with Kira. It is the sign of culmination of love. He had learned to respect individual and human life. He says to Kira,

And it can't be explained to those in whom that word life doesn't awaken the kind of feeling that a temple does, or a military march, or the statue of a perfect army. It is for that feeling that I joined a party which at the time, could lead me only to Siberia. It is for that feeling I wanted to fight against the most senseless and useless of monsters, standing in the way of human life and that something we call now humanity's politics. And so my own existence was only the fight and the future. You taught me the present.

He finally realizes the atrocious consequences under the party rule. He helps Leo to escape, playing on the loopholes of the faulty party system, advises Leo and Kira to take up some good jobs and shoots himself. The death of Andrei was the death of system. Through his death he paid his homage to those millions of people who lost their lives without specific reason of their own.

Leo, very timidly surrenders to situations, leaving Kira, on the pretext of her affair with Andrei. He moves out with a rich widow.

Kira, the sole fighter of life, remains all alone in the arena of life, face to face with life. She smiles at it. When the alternatives are slavery or freedom, it is in the interest of every one to get on with the struggle. She decides to go to the other world, across the border. She is very hopeful of a life awaiting her to which she had been faithful with her every living hour. But to a common citizen Ivan Ivanov, she is an object crossing the border. He is there to shoot the trespassers. So, he shoots her. Kira fights for life,
and finally at her last breath concludes, "Life, undefeated, existed and could exist." 32

It makes no real difference in the life of the individual whether the total state is of the left- or right-wing variety. Whether the regime in power recognized as Communist nationalizing every conceivable area of human intercourse; or whether it is Fascist with state planners at the helm regulating the economic, social, spiritual, and cultural life of the people. The effect on the individual is the same, either way. There is a lack of options, a lack of alternatives, and lack of basic freedoms - freedom to speak one's mind openly, to write and publish openly, to associate voluntarily with others, to trade without interference in a fluid market place, to own material goods, to direct the course of one's own life.

Under communism the economic, social, cultural, and spiritual life of the people, if acknowledged at all, is nationalized; all institutions belong to the state - theoretically to everyone, consequently to no one except those in command. Individual freedom is not recognized and, in fact, the entire concept of individual rights is regarded as counter-revolutionary and detrimental to the life of the state. The individual, his goals, his aspirations, his freedoms, are crushed under the absolute authority of the Communist state.

This belief that life could exist is the triumph of individual. Kira had to face the colossal consequences, but had undaunted belief in life that it did not get one scratch. She firmly believed and proved that single individual can exist against the harsh system.

There are some negating characters like Victor and Pavel Syerov, but they are not groomed. The whole callousness was concentrated not on the characters but on the system and situations.
Ayn Rand, having established herself as a radical individualist, an uncompromising muckraker and freethinker, then proceeded to erect a tight system of logic embracing every conceivable area of human endeavor. Economics, politics, psychology, literature, Rand had written about them all, issuing her pronouncements on each subject in turn. Curiously enough, for a woman who started out as a champion of the independent mind, she began to consider her own ideas as natural corollaries of truth and objectivity. Morality was conformity to the ethic of Ayn. Rationality was synonymous with her thinking.

IV

After *We the Living* came *Night of January 16th* the original title of this play was *Penthouse Legend*, then, *woman on Trail*, finally *Night of January 16th*. The play was produced at the Hollywood Playhouse in the fall of 1934, under the title *Woman on Trail*.

For Rand, it is a sense-of-life play. It represents not Romantic Realism, but Romantic Symbolism. If this play’s sense of life were to be verbalized, it would say, in effect:

Your life, your achievement, your happiness, your person are of Paramount importance. Live up to your highest vision of yourself no matter what the circumstances you might encounter. An exalted view of self-esteem is a man’s most admirable quality. 33

Nathaniel Branden simplifies the concept of self-esteem. According to him, it is not an exercise in solipsism, or in its less virulent relative, narcissism. Rather, it is grounded in the relation one has to one’s self as that self stands in relation to the world. The dynamic is necessarily
reciprocal and interdependent. Only in that way can there be meaning in the terms of objective and subjective. To understand the unorthodox characters of *Night of January 16th* one has to relate these two views, an exalted view of one’s own self with the relation of the world. A man with self-esteem may not be a misanthropist. He concentrated on his own self with the awareness of the world.

The main inspiration for the drama was, news on March 12, 1932, Ivar Krenger, the Swedish ‘Match King’ committed suicide. His death was followed by the crash of the vast financial empire he had created, and by the revelation that the empire was a gigantic fraud. He had been a mysterious figure, celebrated as a man of genius, of unwavering determination and spectacular audacity. But Ayn’s interest laid in the denunciations of this man by people. The mediocrities talked about his ability, his self-confidence, and about the glamorous aura of his life; nobody talked about his shady methods, his ruthlessness, and his dishonesty. His ambition was much talked-over matter. “It was a spree of gloating malice. Its leitmotif was not: ‘How did he fall? but ‘How did he dare to rise?’” The scandal of Ivar Kreuger had its own line of Proceedings with government at the backdrop. For Ayn, the nature of mass was intriguing, not its political aspects. She wanted to defend the man, whom, the mob denounced.

This was her assignment in *Night of January 16th*. To dramatize the sense of life that was very vaguely symbolized by Ivar Kreuger, and to set it against the sense of life blatantly revealed by his attacks. Ayn wanted sense of life with the tinge of self esteem. The self-confident, a little self-centered Bjorn Faulkner was penned. The character, the hero who never appears physically in the play, but his presence is there throughout. Ayn, in her own style made her main characters very individualistic,
unconventional, and uncompromising. Bjorn Faulkner must have exemplifying qualities to bear the resemblance to Ivar Krenger. Ayn made Karen Andre in the nutshell of Kira. She maintains her own morality. The play opens with a murder trial. Karen Andre is accused of killing wealthy business tycoon Bjorn Faulkner, with whom she had an affair. This is the premise for Rand's *Night of January 16th*, a play that tests each character's sense of morality and altruistic duty. But in Ayn's hands it shaped as per her morals. The trial escalates into a sweeping dramatic forum in which all witnesses become suspects and the truth becomes obscured. The deeper the investigation goes, the more seemingly guilty, greedy, and self-interested parties step forward.

The trial begins with the testimonies of several witnesses, including Karen Andre herself and Faulkner's widow, Nancy Lee. The acting throughout these courtroom scenes is heartfelt and the dramatic continuity and suspense is maintained throughout.

The gradual progression of witnesses reveals a growing web of deceit and decadence. Faulkner's widow, as well as her father, Mr. Whitfield appear to be the virtuous victims of a jealous mistress's rage. But as more and more information comes to light, their initial saintliness begins to fade. They too appear to be driven by greed, and their relations with the late Bjorn Faulkner seem just as suspect as those of Karen and her gangster associates. Even Bjorn himself is described by all as a playboy who seeks only to please himself.

Soon, it seems as if no character is capable of interacting with anyone else for non-selfish reasons. As each witness brings more evidence out into the open, the truth becomes increasingly elusive. Also, the audience soon begins to realize that many, if not all, of the witnesses are
telling lies. Initially, as Mrs. Faulkner and her father argue against Bjorn's possible suicide, they attempt to portray their own lifestyle as happy, virtuous, and family-oriented. Yet, they soon reveal themselves to be equally susceptible to self-interest, and motivated by greed and the promise of material wealth.

In the closing arguments of the trial, both the district attorney and the defense attorney agree that this trial is really a forum in which the jury is to decide between two versions of humanity: one with a potential for altruistic action; and the other dominated by egotism, ambition and greed. What they differ on is which characters represent which side. After all the swirling deceit and intrigue the trial exposes, it seems that no character can truly be seen as virtuous or free from self-satisfying motives.

The play is intriguing, and its constant, complex developments provide a suspenseful and intriguing drama. A notable humorous high point was the religious housekeeper Miss Svenson's reluctant yet vivid description of the 'sinful' sexual exploits of Mr. Faulkner and his mistress.

The three acts of the play all begin with the quiet entry of all the characters into the courtroom, absorbed in their own little conversations until they are drawn to order by the bailiff. The repetition of this trope heightens the tension of each scene's opening, adding to the suspenseful atmosphere.

As per the prosecution side, Bjorn was a man reformed by the love of a good woman, Nancy Lee, his wife, who was being blackmailed by his ex-mistress, Karen Andre and her gangster lover, 'Guts' Regan. The defense contends that Bjorn Faulkner never changed. Graham Whitefield and he planned a ten million dollar loan, and his marriage to Nancy was in ruins. Bjorn Faulkner is strong and audacious. He makes his own rules.
Ayn projected him with the qualities of self-esteem. He is committed to his financial empire. He is flambouyant in gesture. His gift, a platinum mesh gown, to Karen Andre is a highlight of the play, which also throws some light on the character of Faulkner. He is a man of unyielding nature. The audience is asked to judge if such a man could change his ways and settle down with a socialite wife, Nancy, or, he would remain a man of self-esteem, of such overweening spirit, that he would not be conquered except by death.

Karen Andre is a capable, trust worthy, loyal and above all the woman passionately in love with Bjorn Faulkner. She is so dedicated to her love and can do everything for him. They are lovers and business associates. The prosecution presents her as a shameless woman, having an extramarital affair with her boss. She preferred to kill him rather than give him up to his wife. Audience, through the trial's process vindicated her as non-guilty.

Larry 'Gut's Regan is a notorious outlaw. His love for Karen made him take part in fake suicide of Bjorn Faulkner. He is accused of helping Karen in murder. He claims that Whitefield is the real culprit who paid him to keep quiet. John Graham Whitefield is a wealthy man of distinguished look when he came to know that Faulkner extorted his money and planned a fake suicide, so that he can run away with Karen; he killed Faulkner.

Nancy Lee is a socialite. Young and beautiful, she is presented as head strongwoman who bought Bjorn Faulkner.

Mere introduction of these characters, one by one, makes it clear that Ayn was grooming herself up so as to portray her ideal man in future. This is her transitional phase. She was adjusting and 'lifting the face' of her
works so as to suit American. It is, mainly, Karen’s story. It portrays ‘a woman’s feeling for her ideal man.’ It comes under the series of female protagonists.

Another important feature, in characterization of this play, is to contrast the characters. It is a major feature in her future novels that her ‘prime movers’ and ‘second handers’ are also shaping up. She projected Faulkner and Karen on one side and John Graham and Nancy on the other. Two of the first set is so individualistic and independent and the other set represented lust for power, in the guise of conventionality. Though, Rand writing in her own way had a doubt from the beginning that the audience would mistake her message of symbolic play, her precious sense of life play and may take it as murder mystery. She felt very embarrassed and tense. Barbara mentions that Ayn for the first and last time had a hot drink to escape the tension of the staging the play. In order to build a foundation for a career it was inevitable on her part to write the play adaptations of this kind also. She gulped her disappointment and started to work hard for the Portrayal of future Howard Roark. Meanwhile, she gave final touches to *Anthem.*

V

K.K. Shukla observes:

It is interesting to speculate that the explosive years of 1938-1946, when mankind was caught in the strange hold of the anti-democratic forces might have been singularly propitious for the ideas propounded in the novel and that is provocative story of a fearful society that one man dares to defy might well have compelled attention of many thinking persons in both sides of the Atlantic.
Ayn conceived the initial idea of *Anthem* in the early 1920s as a play. At that time she was a teenager in Soviet Russia. Some forty years later, she discussed the work’s development with an interviewer:

> It was to be a play about a collectivist society of the future in which they lost they lost the word ‘I’. They were all calling each other ‘WE’ and it was worked out as much more of a story. I related this struggle (of *Anthem* of We and I) to my own, not in political terms, but in psychological terms — the struggle, so acute in adolescence, to carve out a sense of identity and a view of life un surrendered to the options and values of others.36

Rand’s typical polarizations begin with the important assumption that we and I are mutually exclusive — in fact, her very metaphors deny the possibility of considering the categories simultaneously. Rather than acknowledge that whatever affects I affects we, and vice versa. Rand proposes that there is an island of good — or wisdom, individuality, ego, or some other pure substance—which if touched by impurity remains indelibly tainted.

Philip Gordon, in his *The Extroflective Hero*, observes that:

> In any compromise between food and poison, it is only death that can win. In any compromise between good and evil, it is only evil that can profit. isolation emphasizes separation, whilst contact emphasizes the approach, aiming at undoing the isolation either by withdrawing hostility, and replacing the ‘I’ and ‘You’ by ‘We,’ or by making the whole complex ‘mine’ or, by surrender, ‘yours’.37

Rand remains oblivious to the concept that it is the very act of absolutist separation of one position from another which fuels, and feeds on, the hostile confrontation. After thirteen years she revived it during the gap of *The Fountainhead* days, to relax herself. Ayn Rand wrote this book to voice her disapproval of collectivism, but *Anthem* is also her declaration.
of the human spirit because it highlights the people who break free. She described the book as ‘dramatic fantasy’. At first reading, the brevity and parable like quality of *Anthem* appeals to the readers.

*Anthem* is a dystopia; set in a world where world has lost its civilization and went back to its primitive stage, where human beings use their energies in unsuccessful efforts to get shelter and meager food. All scientific and industrial knowledge is lost and the masses appear to be living in a Dark Ages type feudal society where there are no freedoms or rights. In this world people do not have names but labels such as Equality 7-2521 or Union 5-3992 engraved on their metal ID bracelets they have to wear at all times.

The novelette opens with the sentence ‘It is a sin to write this.’ The story is written in the form of a journal by a 21 year old Equality 7-2521, because it is not advised to have personal names in a collectivist society. So Equality 7-2521 gives whole narration of the novel through the plural pronoun ‘we’. They existed only to serve the state. From the cradle to grave they knew only one word – we. “We are one in all and all in one. There are no men but only the great we, one indivisible and forever.”

They were conceived in controlled places of Mating. The home of infants takes care of the children up to five years. These children were sent to home of the students for ten years of learning, when they are fifteen year old they should go to the work in the home of the students. They were made to repeat the sentences like “We are nothing. Mankind is all. By the grace of our brothers are we allowed our lives. We exist through, by and for our brothers who are the state. Amen.”

The State takes complete control of all children from the time they are born till the day they die. Individualism of any kind is strictly
prohibited and punished. At age 15 their schooling is over and they are then assigned to their lifetime job by the state;

The council of Vocations decided their professions like ‘Doctor’, ‘Carpenter’, ‘Cook’ or ‘Leader’. ‘The will of our brothers be done’, was the expected attitude from the people. At the age of forty, it was thought that people are worn out. So they were sent to the home of useless. If they live after they are forty five, they are called the ‘ancient ones’. Only the commoners are "retired" at the age of forty. The people in power survive longer and work the whole time, so they must be leading a more comfortable life than the average job. This is almost exactly what happened in Communist Russia. The more power you had the better you were treated. Despite the fact that everyone was supposed to be equal, the elite had VIP lounges, better groceries, and special hospitals. The only way to explain why the leaders wouldn’t want the universal standard of living improved is if there standard of living was already higher than the norm.

Such is the pattern of life given by Equality 7-2521 in his journal. Instead of placing people where they will do the most good to society, they place people where they will do the least harm to society. Although these may seem like identical goals, they are not. Long term good can often bring short term problems, and the council uses this as an excuse to keep the society from advancing. The only way for this to work is if the council doesn’t believe in true collectivism and so is rewarded for maintaining the status quo. The extra years of learning is probably spent undoing the years of programming that everything should be done for the good of others. Then the council is given money for making sure that free thinking individuals don’t get into positions of power and that only the most ruthless and least generous people are elevated to positions of power and influence, thus making sure that there will be no humanitarians who can and will be
willing to give up his own interest for the well-being of his fellow man, and that there will be no geniuses who will force the state to advance in technology. This system works remarkably well, considering the number of years that this society has been in existence. Although this does put the extraordinary in a place where they can have the least effect on society, it also puts them all in one place. Eventually, this large number of overly intelligent, free-thinking individuals would have realized their own power, making the likelihood of a revolt rather too high for the comfort of the leaders. Other than this, the Council of Vocations has a system for keeping the people under the thumb of the privileged.

In this set patterned, strict totalitarian society, Equality 7-2521 rediscovers the lost and holy world - 'I'. It is a beautiful saga of this adventurous young man. He knows that there is no transgression blacker than to do or think alone. It made him very fearful, that he has always driven with thoughts which are forbidden. He is aware of this evil, but he cannot resist it. He knew as a boy that 'it is a great sin, to be born with a head which is too quick. It is not good to be different from our brothers, but it is evil to be superior to them.'

Children in Home of the students were always advised by their teachers not to dare to choose their professions, because council of vocations finally chooses their services according to need of society and fellow brothers. And if anybody is not needed by brothers there is no reason for them to burden the earth with their bodies. The prime aim of the people is to serve the society.

Equality 7-2521, against the rules preferred science of things. He wanted to know about the mysteries of Nature. This will and preference made him inquisitive in nature. It is not common for the labeled persons to
think and to decide the things. They are born to obey, they must die accordingly. He is punished for not conforming in the Home of the Students by being smarter, taller, and more inquisitive than his brothers by the Council of Vocations by assigning him a lifetime job as a street sweeper.

Once again his zeal for learning and knowledge created in Equality 7-2521 a unrest towards his surroundings. This unrest compels him to enquire about his own inner-self. 'There is some error, one frightful error in the thinking of men. What is that error? We don't know, but the knowledge struggles within us, struggles to be born.'

The supposed scholars in this society respect the inventors. Their latest invention was some hundred years ago and that invention was a candle. One day while performing his duties Equality 7-2521 came across an old manhole and decides to climb down despite a warning for one of his fellow street sweepers. It leads down to an old subway tunnel that was left over from the "Unmentionable Times", a term for the history before the "Great Rebirth" of the present world. So he returns night after night and eventually, by theft and scavenging objects during his cleanup duties, he builds a scientific laboratory and library and educates himself. When Equality 7-2521 invents electricity he is put in prison for the guilt of trespassing the limits. But, they can not suppress a real rational genius for a long time.

Rose Wilder observes:

Since every individual is self-controlling, he acts in accordance with the standard of values in which he believes. Very few men have ever known that men are free. Among this earth's population now, few know that fact. Nevertheless, during some six thousand years of old world history a majority of men have believed that some
authority control them. This is true, whether his God is the God of Abraham and Christ, or Reason or Destiny or History or Astrology or Economic Determinism or the survival of the fittest, or any other God by any other name.42

Finally, this innate struggle for knowledge shapes up Ayn Rand’s hero as an individualistic hero. This zeal for knowledge makes him different from his other brothers. Union—5-3992 is with the half brain, and prone to convulsions. Fraternity—2-5503, all of sudden, cries without any explicit reason. Solidarity 9-6347 screams in his sleep for help and so frightened during the day. The oppression of the system is given implicit expression, through these characters. Equality 7-2521 finds out International. 48818. They cannot be friendly with each other. The first transgression of Equality 7-2521 starts with this friendship without word. They discover a place to carry out their experiments. There he learns things on his own. He solved the secrets of knowledge. After his experiment, there is no sense of shame or regret in Equality-72521 for this treachery. Instead, he could sense a sort of tranquility in his mind.

Another transgression is that of noticing and naming a woman. He meets the woman, female gender of his dreams working on a collective farm. He wanted to call Liberty 5-3000 a golden one. It is a sin to give a name to a human being. Against the state rules, he had wanted to have the possession of an ancient place and now a woman; both made him happy. He sensed the peace and dignity of the open sky. He remembers that transgressor of the unspeakable word. He knew very well he is alone in his presentation. Ayn always wanted individuals at the height of their possibilities. Equality 7-2521 escaped with his invention and life into the Uncharted Forest, a great dark wilderness outside of the city where no man ever returned. He was dammed by society and he soon finds that being dammed is not so bad. He can do what he wants when he wants and take
care of only his needs. Liberty 5-3000 had followed him. Together they discovered the freedom of individualism and independent resourcefulness of survival.

Ayn remarked in an interview, “I worship individuals for their highest possibilities as individuals, and I loathe humanity, for its failure to live up to these possibilities...”

Ayn wants each and every individual to live for his own and to value his life first. She loves the rational world too much and she wants to mould the right world that would lead to happy, harmonious living. She recognizes this existence of man. The individual is given prime importance as he is, and always must be, in the helm of affairs; when a man chooses a set of values then it must guide his living and must engage in purposeful pursuit and action to achieve his aim. This, perhaps, is the old literary canon. Rand strives to show the best in man.

Equality and Liberty name themselves Prometheus and Gaea. They choose their place to live in. They discover the sacred word ‘I’.

And now I see the face of God, and I raise his god over the Earth, this god whom men have sought since men came into being, this god will grant them joy, and peace and pride..... This god, this one word: 1

Ayn stressed this point in her own way. She never discussed God or religion. Instead, she praises the glory of man and gives importance to his valour. But, it in itself, it is religious in the most profound way, as it lays stress on the quality in the person. The belief in self is an act of affirmation, of their personality, of individuality, of self. The quest is not philosophic.

Ayn never planned *Anthem* to be a philosophic work. It is not that they are going into wilderness to know of their personality. It is not that
they do not know who they are. It is exactly opposite. They know who they are and they know of their value and valour. It is because of this rightfully staunch and positive notion that they derecognize the world which is based on false premises. They do not want to be counted as one with the mob. They do not believe in the sacrifice. They believe in benevolent, self-righteous, rational selfishness. Their egoistical attitude is, basically, individualistic. *Anthem* enunciates "a powerful theme.....it endeavors to celebrate the triumphant rebirth of I-ness in man, the non-entity."\(^4\)

Over the centuries the institutions of religion and government have somehow become inseparable. There has never been a true separation of these institutions, on a practical level. Men have merely transferred their devotion from God and religion to the institution of government. Communism and God were synonyms. There have been few patriots who did not believe in – and who were not willing to risk their lives to defend – the concept that God was on the side of their particular nation-state. No man has ever died for his country alone, and very few men have ever died to defend their freedom. Most men who go willingly to war have believed, very strongly, that they were fighting God's cause.

She held that there is no reason to believe in God, there is no proof of the belief. That the concept of God is insulting and degrading to man, it implies that the highest possible is not to be reached by man, that he is an inferior being who can only worship an ideal he will never achieve. Objectivists are uncompromising atheists; but atheism as such is not the central principle of the philosophy. The central philosophy is the advocacy of the reason, the rejection of any form of mysticism, incanting theism, as a consequence to this principle.
Basically, these three works deal with the collective and individual dichotomy. Now, Ayn is heading towards her conception of ideal man, her life-time creation. The next chapter deals with *The Fountainhead*, her supreme creation.
REFERENCES
Chapter II


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19. Ibid., P. 10.

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39. Ibid., P. 16.

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