

# 8

## *Anthem* in the Context of Related Literary Works: “We are not like our brothers”

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Writers are often asked where they “get their ideas.” When Ayn Rand was asked in 1960 how she decided, “out of the blue,” to write *Anthem* in the summer of 1937, she replied that it was not exactly out of the blue, but out of her long-held convictions. “I had that idea for a long time, actually from Russia. Only then I thought of it as a play. A world of the future where they don’t have the word ‘I.’”<sup>1</sup> As she explained on another occasion: “I got the idea in my school days, in Soviet Russia, when I heard all the vicious attacks on individualism, and asked myself what the world would be like if men lost the word ‘I.’”<sup>2</sup> Her ultimate literary expression of that idea, though, was not a play, but a novella (23,484 words in the 1938 edition; 19,190 in the 1946 edition), unique in her oeuvre not only in length, but in genre.

Ayn Rand is a Romantic Realist. *Anthem*, however, is based on a premise drawn from fantasy, and thus belongs to a non-realistic genre, more so than any of Ayn Rand’s other fiction.<sup>3</sup> It invites a comparison with texts that are variously characterized as fantasy, anti-utopia, or dystopia—works whose setting is a future time that is neither a nice place to visit nor a place where anyone would choose to live. John J. Pierce distinguishes between the more general term, “dystopia,” and a specific type of dystopia, the “anti-utopia.” “A dystopia can be set in a future that is evil by neglect, rather than by intention; the anti-utopia is directed at a particular kind of evil—that of the planned society.”<sup>4</sup> *Anthem* belongs both to the general category of the dystopia (the future gone wrong, in which important values have been lost—whether by design, catastrophe, or unspecified attrition) and the sub-category of the anti-utopia (in which social institutions are *directly* responsible for decline, decay, and ruin).

Ayn Rand, by her own account, decided to write this work when she did and as she did partly because she intended it to fit into a particular publication venue. One motive for the timing, to be sure, was her need for a break from the intense effort of constructing the plot of *The Fountainhead*,<sup>5</sup> but the need for a break did not determine the nature of the project. In writing this short, non-realistic text, she took advantage of what she deemed a promising opportunity to compose and publish a work she had long had in her mind.

In this essay, I will begin by considering the story that led her to write *Anthem* in the summer of 1937. I will then look at related literary works, mostly dystopias, and mostly written earlier. My purpose is to look more closely at significant aspects of *Anthem* by comparing *and* contrasting it with works that are in some respects similar to it, works she may have considered in planning and writing it. The key points of comparison will be the literary devices and patterns; the key point of contrast will be the various answers to the question of “Why?”—the respective reasons suggested by different writers for the degradation of the world. I will conclude by stating

my best guess about the answer to the question of where she “got her ideas” for *Anthem*—and where she took these ideas after *Anthem*.

## STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

Ayn Rand recalled, more than twenty years later, her surprise at finding in the *Saturday Evening Post* “a fantastic story of the future,” “an adventure story,” with “no ideology,” “no particular plot or theme”—only “the fact that some kind of war had destroyed civilization, and the last survivor in the ruins of New York.” It was, she said, “the first time I saw a fantastic story—rather than those realistic, folks-next-door sort of serials. . . . And so I thought if they didn’t mind fantasy, . . . I would like to try *Anthem*.”<sup>6</sup>

What, specifically, surprised her? Not the publication of fantasy per se. She mentions, in passing, that she once planned a story about an airplane “caught in an interplanetary gravitational space” and pulled into orbit, but had decided not to write the lost-in-space story because she read, during her first year or two in Hollywood, a story in a “science fiction pulp magazine” that was based on a similar event. She was evidently familiar with publications that specialized in speculative fiction. But she was impressed to discover a work of fantasy in the unexpected setting of a popular mainstream magazine. The *Saturday Evening Post* could give her wide exposure and generous compensation; it was a desirable target. So in the summer of 1937, she decided to write a short piece of fiction, designed for the *Post* or a similar publication, based on the premise of a future world bereft of the word “I,” with all that that word implies.

Although Ayn Rand did not name the story she read, the only *Post* story that fits her description was in fact published just before she wrote *Anthem*: Stephen Vincent Benét’s “The Place of the Gods.”<sup>7</sup> In this story, a priest’s son named John journeys to the forbidden place across the river, to the east, where he expects to find spirits, demons, and the “ashes of the Great Burning.” From his first-person account, we see that his civilization is relatively primitive; he takes pride in the fact that his people “are not ignorant like the Forest People—our women spin wool on the wheel. . . . We do not eat grubs from the tree.” He has an inquiring mind: “my knowledge and my lack of knowledge burned in me—I wished to know more.” He recognizes that his exploration defies the law, yet is not discouraged. He specifically contrasts his mental peace with his physical discomfort. After the ritual of purification: “My body hurt but my spirit was a cool stone.” When he sets out on his journey, fasting: “My body hurt but not my heart.”

On his way to the city, he encounters names and locations that are familiar to the reader, though not to John. He crosses the river “Ou-dis-sun,” i.e., the Hudson River. He finds “the shattered image of a man or a god. It had been made of white stone and he wore his hair tied back like a woman’s. His name was ASHING, as I read on the cracked half of a stone” (i.e., George Washington). He finds the food of the gods—sweet fruits in jars and strong drink in bottles of glass—in “the ruins of a great temple in mid-city,” with a roof “painted like the sky at night with its stars” (i.e., Grand Central Station). He sees pictures on the wall of a “place of great riches”: “I remember one of a bunch of flowers in a jar—if you came close to it, you could see nothing but bits of color, but if you stood away from it, the flowers might have been picked yesterday” (an Impressionist painting). He marvels at technology, and assumes it must be magic. “There was a washing-place but no water—perhaps the gods washed in air. There was a cooking place but no wood, and though there was a machine to cook food, there was no place to put fire in it.”

At night, he awakens to a vision of “the city as it had been when the gods were alive.” He sees that “their chariots blocked the streets,” that they “turned night to day for their pleasure—they did not sleep with the sun,” that “they burrowed tunnels under the rivers—they flew in the air.”

With unbelievable tools they did giant works—no part of the earth was safe from them, for, if they wished for a thing, they summoned it from the other side of the world. And always, as they labored and rested, as they feasted and made love, there was a drum in their ears—the pulse of the giant city, beating and beating like a man’s heart.

He sees, too, “their fate come upon them.” “When gods war with gods, they use weapons we do not know.” He sees “the Great Burning and the Destruction,” the falling of the towers, the deaths upon deaths, the poison “still in the ground” after many years.

He discovers, finally, a “dead god”—sitting in a chair, in a room that is “shut, hot and dry—no doubt that had kept him the way he was.”

He was sitting looking out over the city—he was dressed in the clothes of the gods. His age was neither young nor old—I could not tell his age. But there was wisdom in his face and great sadness. You could see that he would not have run away. He had sat at his window, watching his city die—then he himself had died. But it is better to lose one’s life than one’s spirit—and you could see from his face that his spirit had not been lost. I knew that, if I touched him, he would fall into dust—and yet, there was something unconquered in the face.

Seeing the “dead god,” preserved in body as—during life—in spirit, John realizes that the gods of the past were men, and that, as a man, he too can aspire to the greatness made real in the city built by men. He promises to do so, with other men.

It is not for the metal alone we go to the Dead Places now—there are the books and the writings. They are hard to learn. And the magic tools are broken—but we can look at them and wonder. At least we make a beginning. And when I am chief priest we shall go beyond the great river. We shall go to the Place of the Gods—the place new york—not one man but a company. We shall look for the images of the gods and find the god ASHING and the others—the gods Lincoln and Biltmore and Moses. But they were men who built the city, not gods or demons. They were men. I remember the dead man’s face. They were men who were here before us. We must build again.

Ayn Rand’s *Anthem* has several elements in common with Benét’s story. Many of these derive from the basic premise: a future world that has lost the technology of our present. The cause of the loss is initially mysterious, known only in legends told of the “Old Days” and the “Great Burning” (in Benét) and hints whispered by the “Old Ones” of the “Unmentionable Times” before the “Great Rebirth” (in *Anthem*); both texts refer to fires and fierce conflict, but the cause does not emerge into full narrative clarity. Given the basic premise, both works develop on somewhat similar lines. In both, the culture forbids many activities and, in particular, constrains exploration. In both works, the first-person narrator is a young man who seeks knowledge and journeys bravely into the unknown (to the “Dead Places” and to the “Place of the

Gods” in Benét, to the “Uncharted Forest” in *Anthem*), hunting with bow and arrow. Both works conclude with hope that what was lost can be rebuilt, and that the heroes, seeking information from special, secret books, can lead the way. Both works conclude by redefining the god as human: for Benét, the gods are men; for the hero of *Anthem*, the god is the “Ego.” This redefinition is reflected in the titles: “The Place of the Gods” refers ultimately to the world as the places belonging to men, and “Ego” (the original title of Ayn Rand’s novella) refers to the spirit of man. Perhaps most striking is the fact that Benét’s John sees in the face of the last survivor “something unconquered,” and this very something is the quality the Golden One sees in the face of *Anthem*’s hero, a quality for which she names him “The Unconquered.” Although, in Benét, it is the last survivor (rather than the hero) who is described as unconquered, both works underscore a *spiritual* invincibility that is unbreached by external circumstances—and unbreachable.

The sheer number of common elements is striking. Most of these elements, however, are characteristic of the quest narrative and the bildungsroman, i.e., fiction of exploration, spiritual crisis, and self-transformation. The parallels based on the premise of fantasy, however, are worth exploring, particularly because we as readers discover the premise in the same way in both works: through the narrative voice of a young man who does not understand the significance of the details he observes, because he lives in a time when such achievements as subways and electric lights—achievements that the readers take for granted—are no longer known, are no longer used, are no longer even whole, and thus are in danger of vanishing from existence as they have already vanished from consciousness.

It is not reasonable, though, to conclude that Ayn Rand owed this premise to Benét. He himself, indeed, would have been the last to assert originality for it. In August, 1937, he replied to a letter from another writer, Margaret Widdemer, who wrote to share with him her own “Ancient Lights”:

How very interesting! I’ve very much taken with “Ancient Lights” and, God knows, I wouldn’t have thought “The Place of the Gods” had any influence on it, even if you hadn’t told me. I don’t see how that particular idea can help being at the back of a lot of our minds these days—it has suddenly come upon us that the works may blow up. I suppose Wells was the first to say it in our time—though it must go back to Macaulay’s New Zealander brooding on the ruins of London Bridge.<sup>8</sup>

Invoking Macaulay’s New Zealander, Benét is referring to an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, first published in October 1840, about Leopold von Ranke’s *History of the Popes*. Thomas Babington Macaulay expressed his belief that the Roman Catholic Church might survive British civilization itself, and “still exist in undiminished vigour, when some traveler from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul’s.”<sup>9</sup>

The prospect of a future man looking at a world in ruins, writes Benét in his letter, is one that was at least a century old, but that had become more urgent to him in his own time. He comments that the story “began as a poem—it was going to be a fourth nightmare for the *New Yorker*. Then somehow I couldn’t finish it, dropped it, picked it up again and made a short story instead.”<sup>10</sup> The three nightmare poems published before “The Place of the Gods”—“Metropolitan Nightmare,” “Nightmare with Angels,” and “Nightmare Number Three”—are visions of urban destruction due to, respectively, super-insects, gas pellets, and super-machines.<sup>11</sup>

These poems, unlike “The Place of the Gods,” are set close in time to the disaster, rather than many years after the fact. Later, Benét continued the series with “Nightmare for Future Reference” and “Nightmare at Noon.”<sup>12</sup> The first blames the cessation of human births on a virus that arises during World War III (or on women’s refusal to continue giving birth); the second, originally published in 1940, breaks the sequence by eliminating any fantasy premise and by expressing clearly a polemic purpose: to advocate the involvement of the United States in World War II.

Benét makes clear from the literary context of his related works that he is concerned with the general phenomenon of decline and destruction, not with any distinct cause. He assigns no reason, or he invokes a variety of reasons—which amounts to the same thing. One looks back at “The Place of the Gods,” seeking some sort of explanation for the disaster. Yes, we are told that it followed a war, but what caused the war? Who fought, and why? The hero does not know how or why the world was lost, or how to prevent its being lost again if it is rebuilt. The only hint of a cause is a conversation between John and his father.

I told and he listened. After that, I wished to tell the people, but he showed me otherwise. He said, “Truth is a hard deer to hunt. If you eat too much truth at once, you may die of the truth. It was not idly that our fathers forbade the Dead Places.” He was right—it is better the truth should come little by little. I have learned that, being a priest. Perhaps in the old days, they ate knowledge too fast.

Is John (and Benét, through him) implying that the excessive pursuit of knowledge ruined the world? What does it mean to eat too much truth at once, or to eat knowledge too fast? The meaning is at best merely unclear, and at worst an attack on the mind (in the tradition of works such as Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “The Birthmark,” for example, that decry scientific ambition as overweening and hence destructive). We cannot tell why the “Great Burning” came about, and the writer leaves us in a state of ominous puzzlement. Benét thus emphasizes the pain instead of the cause. When Ayn Rand commented that “The Place of the Gods” had “no ideology,” “no particular theme,” she was identifying what that story most prominently lacked, and what her own story most prominently possessed. Her own work—as I will later point out—was to make blazingly evident what ruined the world, and what must be reborn in order to rebuild that world. In examining the story that led her to write her novella in the summer of 1937, we see most obviously the key difference: Benét provides no distinct reason for the disaster he describes and deplors. But we note, too, that, in a letter about the story, he makes mention of H. G. Wells, “the first to say it in our time.” His reference calls attention to a significant author in the genre to which both “The Place of the Gods” and *Anthem* belong, an author who forms part of the literary context of Ayn Rand’s text.

## H. G. WELLS AND JOHN W. CAMPBELL

Ayn Rand was familiar with the science fiction of H. G. Wells;<sup>13</sup> it is likely that she first read his work in her youth, during her school days, when she first thought of the idea for *Anthem*. As Richard C. Borden observes: “H. G. Wells captured and held the Russian public’s imagination in a way unequaled on his native soil. While his popularity and influence at the turn of the century was enormous, it was in the 1920s, when a generation of readers raised on his stories reached maturity, that his true impact was felt.”<sup>14</sup> The science fiction of Wells was everywhere in

Russia—not only in Russian translation but in the French adventure magazines that the young Ayn Rand read. She mentions, disparagingly, *The War of the Worlds*;<sup>15</sup> she may also have read additional works by Wells, including two that feature a portrait of the future gone wrong, a future looking back on a lost past: *The Time Machine* (1895) and *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899).

*The Time Machine* contains the first-person account of the journey of an anonymous Time Traveller to the year 802,701 and to a still more distant future. He discovers a world in which the human race has become split into the grotesque, ugly Morlocks, who live below ground and are responsible for production, and the graceful, pretty Eloi, who live idly above ground, and whom the Morlocks kill and eat. It takes him some time to determine the state of affairs, and he is never in fact certain that he has completely understood. He contrasts his confusion with the clear exposition in “these visions of Utopias and the coming times which I have read” (by which he means such classic works as Thomas More’s *Utopia* of 1516 and Francis Bacon’s *The New Atlantis* of 1624, as well as more recent books, such as William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* of 1891), which typically include a “convenient cicerone” who has the job of explaining to the visitor the rules and customs of the strange world.<sup>16</sup> What the Traveller most resents about the Eloi (whom he believes at first to be the sole descendants of humankind) is their intellectual weakness, which matches their physical weakness. When he realizes they are on the intellectual level of five-year-olds: “A flow of disappointment rushed across my mind. For a moment I felt that I had built the Time Machine in vain” (*Time Machine*, 36).

He notes their “lack of interest” in him or in anything else, their passivity, their indolence, the “brown and charred rags” he sees hanging from the sides of a gallery in the Palace of Green Porcelain, rags he soon recognizes as the “decaying vestiges of books” (*Time Machine*, 39, 80). Their buildings and furniture, although still attractive, are decaying, cracked, dilapidated. At first he attributes their decline to a perverse form of natural selection (according to which “security sets a premium upon feebleness” [*Time Machine*, 43]); when he learns of the existence of the Morlocks, he speculates that the situation may be the result of class division (according to which the idle aristocrats have become accustomed to pursuing “pleasure and comfort” above ground, while the workers toil below [*Time Machine*, 61]). Whatever the cause (and however confused his thinking about the possible cause), he clearly sees the Eloi as “humanity upon the wane,” in a “slow movement of degeneration, . . . a general dwindling of size, strength, and intelligence” (*Time Machine*, 42, 62).

He eventually travels still further into the future, this time to a world of “steady twilight,” pervaded by “the sense of abominable desolation,” “bitter cold,” devoid of human life, of sheep, of birds, of any animate beings with the exception of hideous monsters. “From the edge of the sea came a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds, the world was silent. Silent? It would be hard to convey the stillness of it” (*Time Machine*, 93, 95, 97). He escapes as soon as he can.

Wells, in his first “scientific romance,” shows a future world from which the mind is vanishing, and then a further future from which all human life is gone. Ayn Rand’s novella, too, evokes a future more backward than its present, and one that—but for the hero—would continue its decline. The world in *Anthem*, as in *The Time Machine*, is dying, and she uses the image of “twilight,” as did Wells, to suggest that fact. The 1938 edition of *Anthem*, in a sentence cut for the 1946 edition, uses the image of twilight to convey the death of the mind: “When the twilight came, men wrote no longer, neither did they read.”<sup>17</sup> The people of *Anthem*’s world, moreover, are largely complacent and cowed—as are Wells’s Eloi. But if Ayn Rand read *The Time*

*Machine*, she would have rejected—among other things—the idea that all the Eloi could be small, weak, stupid, and yet beautiful. In *Anthem*, the “brothers” and “sisters”—with a few exceptions—are characteristically unattractive in both body and soul. And she would have rejected the inevitability of the cold, silent end of the world. She does so, implicitly, in the following conversation between Dagny Taggart and Hank Rearden in her 1957 novel, *Atlas Shrugged*:

“I keep thinking of what they told us in school about the sun losing energy, growing colder each year. I remember wondering, then, what it would be like in the last days of the world. I think it would be . . . like this. Growing colder and things stopping.”

“I never believed that story. I thought by the time the sun was exhausted, men would find a substitute.”

“You did? Funny, I thought that, too.”<sup>18</sup>

But, as with Benét’s “The Place of the Gods,” the most significant contrast between Wells’s vision and hers is found in the reason for the decline of the world. Benét barely offered one reason; Wells offers several, but without clarity. And if we do not know how the world was (or will be) lost, we cannot know how to save it. Whereas Benét’s John promised to “build again,” the Time Traveller offers no such hope, to the future or to the present that is on the path to that future. Whereas books help *Anthem*’s hero rediscover the “I,” the books in *The Time Machine*—and the information they may have conveyed—are “decaying vestiges,” too far gone to be of use to the Time Traveller. The Time Traveller’s friend, who defies the Traveller’s pessimism about the course of the world, serves as the frame narrator and delivers the summation: “If that is so, it remains for us to live as though it were not so” (*Time Machine*, 104). To live in defiance of knowledge is no answer, but *The Time Machine* does not clearly suggest anything better. Nonetheless, the narrative and visual qualities of this novella made it popular and influential, for its questions if not for its answers.

John W. Campbell’s “Twilight,” obviously a response to Wells, was published in 1934, a few years before “The Place of the Gods” and *Anthem*. (There is no evidence that either Benét or Ayn Rand knew it.) Its narrative structure is closer to that of Wells—with several narrators, a journey, and a return—than to those of “The Place of the Gods” or *Anthem*, but the dystopian vision is related to theirs.

Another time traveler visits a stagnant, depressing future in which a passive human race endures in ignorance, and will eventually die. What is responsible for the ongoing disaster? After some consideration of biological causes of sterility and decline, the traveler identifies what he sees as the essential cause: the loss of the mind, of the intellectual power to appreciate and pursue the achievements of the mind:

Man had lost the instinct of curiosity.

Oh, not entirely. They wondered at the machines, they wondered at the stars. But they did nothing about it. It was not wholly lost to them yet, but nearly. It was dying. . . .

Can you appreciate the crushing loneliness it brought to me? I, who love science, who see in it, or have seen in it, the salvation, the raising of mankind—to see those wondrous machines, of man’s triumphant maturity, forgotten and

misunderstood. The wondrous, perfect machines that tended, protected, and cared for those gentle, kindly people who had—forgotten.

They were lost among it. The city was a magnificent ruin to them, a thing that rose stupendous about them. Something not understood, a thing that was of the nature of the world. It was. It had not been made; it simply was. Just as the mountains and the deserts and the waters of the seas. . . .

And all those people knew was to do a certain thing to a certain lever produced certain results. Just as men in the Middle Ages knew that to take a certain material, wood, and place it in contact with other pieces of wood heated red, would cause the wood to disappear, and become heat. They did not understand that wood was being oxidized, with the release of the heat of formation of carbon dioxide and water. So those people did not understand the things that fed and clothed and carried them.<sup>19</sup>

With considerable emotional power, Campbell evokes the loss of the mind. Without it, the machines and cities built by human thought will eventually perish, and the lot of the “survivors” is tragic, a kind of living death. His visual image of the doomed cities is also powerful, and, with the mention of “twilight” (its significance underlined by the story’s title), an allusion to the “steady twilight” of Wells:

Twilight—the sun has set. The desert out beyond, in the mystic, changing colors. The great, metal city rising straight-walled to the human city above, broken by spires and towers and great trees with scented blossoms. The silvery-rose glow in the paradise of gardens above. . . .

[The little men] wander through the vast cities their ancestors built, knowing less of them than the machines themselves. . . .

I had been born in the first full light of man’s day. I did not belong in the lingering, dying glow of man’s twilight.<sup>20</sup>

The image of “twilight,” as I have noted, appears with poignant effect in *Anthem*—and later, in the opening scene of *Atlas Shrugged*, Eddie Willers thinks: “I hate the twilight.”<sup>21</sup>

Campbell, unlike Benét and Wells, suggests a reason for the disintegration of the world, and it is not a ridiculous reason. Without the active mind, there is no human world. The active mind applied to science and technology, moreover, is an honorable image of something to be cherished, something the loss of which would be poignant and pervasive. But Campbell does not even begin to explain how the mind could be lost, and his character’s idea of how to reverse the disaster is almost comic: Ares Sen Kenlin orders a machine “to make a machine which would have what man had lost. A curious machine.”<sup>22</sup> In “Night” (1935), a sequel to “Twilight,” it is clear that the attempted rescue proved impossible.

Campbell’s contribution to the genre is—from a philosophical standpoint—an advance. Instead of muddled reasons or no reason at all, he offers the beginnings of a good reason. He also makes the point—which, as we shall see, comes up in the literary context of a future gone wrong—that it is absurd to denigrate machines themselves.

Wells himself is ambiguous (and possibly ambivalent) regarding machines. Although the Morlocks’ machines are as ugly as the Morlocks themselves, he celebrates, elsewhere, the achievements of technology. A few years after *The Time Machine*, he published *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899, revised and reissued as *The Sleeper Awakes* in 1910 and again in 1921).<sup>23</sup>



Graham, a Victorian gentleman who fell asleep in 1897, awakens in 2100 to find glittering tall buildings, aqueducts, flying ships—as well as babies raised in crèches, “Babble Machines” broadcasting propaganda, and complete separation between the artificial world of the city and the “natural” world beyond the wall. He discovers that there is a split between the powerful, aristocratic tyrants (who aspire to rule by the right of their asserted superiority) and the powerless workers (who labor for their blue-canvas clothing and for all other needs, which are similarly uniform). As a wealthy man (whose investments have been drawing interest for two centuries), Graham is in fact virtually the owner of the world, and his aid is enlisted by both sides (either to rule with the tyrants, or to support the workers’ revolution against the tyrants). The dichotomy reflects, to a large extent, Wells’s socialistic ideas. The novel also reflects Wells’s reading (and possible misreading) of Nietzsche. Ostrog, who represents the tyrants, proclaims:

The hope of mankind—what is it? That some day the Over-man may come, that some day the inferior, the weak and the bestial may be subdued or eliminated. Subdued if not eliminated. The world is no place for the bad, the stupid, the enervated. Their duty—it’s a fine duty too!—is to die. The death of the failure! That is the path by which the beast rose to manhood, by which man goes on to higher things. (*Sleeper* 1899, 200; 1910, 209)

Wells drew also on classical mythology. The Sleeper meets with a group of men in what is known as the “Atlas chamber,” a room with a “gigantic white figure of Atlas, strong and strenuous” (*Sleeper* 1899, 47; 1910, 55). He is told: “you are the Atlas, Sire. The world is on your shoulders” (*Sleeper* 1899, 80; 1910, 93). He is invited, moreover, to fulfill this function by taking power: “Rule the world as it has never been ruled, for the good and happiness of men. For you might rule it—you could rule it” (*Sleeper* 1899, 192; 1910, 201). He chooses instead to side with the workers. In the final battle, though, Ostrog’s plane flies to safety, and the sleeper’s plane hurtles toward the ground, as he wishes, unrealistically, that he might wake and meet the woman he loves. In the 1899 edition of the novel, Graham reassures himself that his death is not in vain: “He was beaten but London was saved. London was saved!” (*Sleeper* 1899, 274); in the 1910 and 1921 versions, Wells removed even the hint of hope.

Although there is no evidence that Ayn Rand was familiar with this particular novel, it was, like *War of the Worlds*, one of those widely available in Russia in her youth. In 1927, not long after she arrived in Hollywood, she saw, twice, Fritz Lang’s film *Metropolis*, which H. G. Wells considered an unauthorized borrowing of the premise of *When the Sleeper Wakes*.<sup>24</sup> In Thea von Harbou’s screenplay, underground workers rebel against the idlers who reside in the glittering city above ground.<sup>25</sup>

Two features of *When the Sleeper Wakes* stand out. The first is that, as in *The Time Machine*, Wells offers some sort of explanation for the decline of the world, e.g., bad economic management over centuries, exacerbated by power-hungry, unscrupulous tyrants and enervated, passive “masses”—but that the explanation is neither clear nor stressed, nor is it unique. Years later, Wells wrote in the “Preface to the 1921 Edition”:

The present volume takes up certain ideas already very much discussed in the concluding years of the last century, the idea of the growth of the towns and the depopulation of the country-side and the degradation of labour through the higher organization of industrial production. “Suppose these forces to go on,” that is the fundamental hypothesis of the story. (*Sleeper* 1910, xiii)

Are urbanization and industrialization, then, the key problems? Or should we, perhaps, consider this novel a preview of *The Time Machine*? The workers in *When the Sleeper Wakes*, who labor underground, may be on their way to becoming Morlocks, and the idle aristocrats, who holiday in Pleasure Cities, may be on their way to becoming Eloi.<sup>26</sup> What, though, motivates the transformation? Is it in any sense inevitable? Graham never really learns why his world has become a place of misery. That the end of the novel is abrupt and unresolved (it ends with a plane crash, which presumably he does not survive) is appropriate. When he awakened from his sleep, he did not awaken to knowledge or understanding; the mystery of the end of the novel matches the mystery of its middle. (*Anthem*, of course, has no such mystery at its heart.)

The second significant point about *When the Sleeper Wakes* is that technological splendor co-exists with wretchedness—wretchedness that is spiritual and in some places material as well. H. G. Wells appears to revel in the wondrous spectacle of the new city.

[Graham's] first impression was of overwhelming architecture. The place into which he looked was an aisle of Titanic buildings, curving spaciously in either direction. Overhead mighty cantilevers sprang together across the huge width of the place, and a tracery of translucent material shut out the sky. Gigantic globes of cool white light shamed the pale sunbeams that filtered down through the girders and wires. Here and there a gossamer suspension bridge dotted with foot passengers flung across the chasm and the air was webbed with slender cables. A cliff of edifice hung above him, he perceived as he glanced upward, and the opposite façade was grey and dim and broken by great archings, circular perforations, balconies, buttresses, turret projections, myriads of vast windows, and an intricate system of architectural relief. (*Sleeper* 1899, 38; 1910, 45)

Through the amazed eyes of the Sleeper, Wells describes a vast array of new and efficient machines for transportation, communication, and agriculture. Yet he also suggests a darker side. The world of 2100 has hunger, censorship, and crèches of babies raised with no human contact.

Wells, then, not only shows technological advancement as being compatible with lack of freedom, but even seems to suggest that the progress itself may contribute to the specific misery of this world. Graham awakes to a world that is a semi-dystopia, a glass that can be viewed as half empty or half full. This is a departure from the works considered so far: *When the Sleeper Wakes* presents a future gone wrong that is better—as well as worse—than the present. Hence, if Wells were to address the question of what has gone wrong with the world and why, he might also address the corollary question of what has gone right, and why.

An additional, and seminal, work by Wells that is relevant to the literary context is *A Modern Utopia* (1905).<sup>27</sup> This work (which space does not permit me to analyze here) carries further the positive elements of the world of *When the Sleeper Wakes*, and omits or minimizes the negative elements. *A Modern Utopia*, unlike the other works so far treated, is unapologetically plotless: by “an act of imagination,” the narrator and a companion are transported to, and from, a parallel world, in which human nature is unchanged, but unlimited changes with everything man-made. We read about

a free hand with all the apparatus of existence that man has, so to speak, made for himself, with houses, roads, clothing, canals, machinery, with laws, boundaries, conventions, and traditions, with schools, with literature and religious

organizations, with creeds and customs, with everything, in fact, that it lies within man's power to alter.<sup>28</sup>

The defining qualities of this utopia, as summarized by Mark Hillegas, are as follows: "Utopia as a World State; the voluntary nobility, the *samurai*;<sup>29</sup> the important role of science and technology; and Utopia seen as kinetic, not static."<sup>30</sup> Wells, in his text, invokes other utopian literature (from Plato's *Republic* to such recent works as William Dean Howells's *A Traveler from Altruria*, 1894), as if summing it all up in order to present his own work as the ultimate utopia. His attitude is unambiguously positive: he could be writing a travel brochure or real estate advertisement. This is not a future that has lost (or is on the verge of losing) what is precious in the present. This is a future made to order. Numerous later literary texts have analyzed, questioned, and rejected that "order," i.e., the planned society of *A Modern Utopia*—with special attention to the "modern" nature of his utopia, i.e., the scientific and technological achievements that make possible glittering cities, efficient transportation—and equally efficient regulation of land and production (for there is no private property), parenthood, and health (for there is no private life). *A Modern Utopia*—with the qualities Hillegas identifies as basic to it—is not primarily a point of reference for *Anthem* itself (and there is no evidence that Ayn Rand knew it). It stands, however, as the classic utopia against which several later fictional dystopias were framed. Some of these, as we shall see, bear fruitful comparison with *Anthem*.

## E. M. FORSTER

One such work is E. M. Forster's short story "The Machine Stops" (1909), described by its author as "a reaction to one of the earlier heavens of H. G. Wells."<sup>31</sup> Best known for his realistic novels (notably *A Passage to India* and *Howards End*) and his criticism (*Aspects of the Novel*), Forster also wrote several short stories with fantasy premises, collected in *The Celestial Omnibus* (1911) and *The Eternal Moment* (1928). In "The Machine Stops," people live secluded in their apartments in underground cities, ordering food, clothing, and entertainment by pushing buttons. They do not, for the most part, meet each other in the flesh; they interact by phototelephone. The hero, Kuno, yearns to see what he has rarely seen: the surface of the earth, the "curious stars," his mother's face. When he travels secretly to the surface of the city, he encounters the physical world and takes a stand for experience that is first-hand and self-chosen. As he tells his mother:

Man is the measure. That was my first lesson. Man's feet are the measure for distance, his hands are the measure for ownership, his body is the measure for all this is lovable and desirable and strong. ("The Machine Stops," 125)<sup>32</sup>

When he climbs through levels of railway tunnels, he thinks of the workmen who built them, and climbs the ventilation shaft through which they breathed, in his quest to regain the lost world of the life above ground.

Forster's world has three of the characteristics of Wells's modern utopia, as identified by Hillegas: it is world-wide; it has a designated, non-hereditary noble class; and it uses modern technology. It may have the fourth quality as well—in that the machine "moves" until it "stops"—even though the society itself appears static. But Forster, unlike Benét and Wells, presents a clear reason for what has gone wrong with the world:

We created the Machine, to do our will, but we cannot make it do our will now. It has robbed us of the sense of space and the sense of touch, it has blurred every human relation and narrowed down love to a carnal act, it has paralyzed our bodies and our wills, and now it compels us to worship it. The Machine develops—but not on our lines. The Machine proceeds—but not to our goal. . . . Oh, I have no remedy—or, at least, only one—to tell men again and again that I have seen the hills of Wessex as Aelfrid saw them when he overthrew the Danes. (“Machine Stops,” 131)

His attack is not on the technology, but on the service for which it has been engaged. The world has declined because people have sacrificed their personal goals to an allegedly greater collective goal and have done so by abandoning their first-hand experience for an allegedly superior second-hand experience.

The Machine . . . feeds us and clothes us and houses us; through it we speak to one another, through it we see one another, in it we have our being. The Machine . . . is omnipotent, eternal; blessed is the Machine. (“Machine Stops,” 137)

At story’s end, Kuno has ended the tyranny of the Machine. His life is the price. As he tells his mother, who is also dying, the world on the surface is still populated by men (those were expelled from society and presumed dead), and the Machine that has imprisoned him and his society will never be rebuilt.

“We have come back to our own. We die, but we have recaptured life, as it was in Wessex, when Aelfrid overthrew the Danes. We know what they know outside, they who dwelt in the cloud that is the colour of a pearl.”

“But, Kuno, is it true? Are there still men on the surface of the earth? Is this—this tunnel, this poisoned darkness—really not the end?”

He replied:

“I have seen them, spoken to them, loved them. They are hiding in the mist and the ferns until our civilization stops. To-day they are the Homeless—tomorrow—:

“Oh, to-morrow—some fool will start the Machine again, to-morrow.”

“Never,” said Kuno, “never. Humanity has learnt its lesson.” (“Machine Stops,” 146)

Forster’s story, framed as a response to Wells’s utopias, depicts a society in which regimentation obviates individual choice, lectures substitute for learning, and direct sensory experience is regarded as dispensable. Although Forster does not explicitly name collectivism as the essence of the Machine’s evil, the Machine society is in fact collectivist, built on enforced conformity. The narrative structure, like that of *Anthem*, follows a brave young man through his clandestine explorations to his eventual epiphany about his society’s evil, and the need to destroy it, at any and all costs, in order to restore what has been lost (and what is in fact hiding, waiting to return, just beyond his world’s borders).

The hero of “The Machine Stops,” to be sure, expects the waiting army to rise and return without him; the hero of *Anthem* plans to be himself the agent of salvation, the leader of the outpost army (and in this, as we shall see, he resembles the hero of *Atlas Shrugged*). Forster’s

story, moreover, is different from *Anthem* in another important way: its very premise posits a Machine that continues to function effectively even after enervating the minds needed to create and maintain it. Forster's Machine is there until it is destroyed—rather than decaying for lack of the mind needed to sustain it. Forster's Machine is like the technological wonders of Wells's *When the Sleeper Wakes*: glittering and glorious in contrast with spiritual suffering. Most important, though, is Forster's inadequate—though valiant—attempt to explain what has gone wrong with the world. What exactly led to the diminishment of human life? Although he comes close to identifying sensory experience as the key, does he mean to say that there is no legitimate use for anything bearing the name “idea” (which, in the story, is a pejorative term)? Are lectures never more than a substitute for learning? How did Man come to deny “the essence that is his soul, and the essence, equally divine, that is his body”? (“Machine Stops,” 145).

Although Forster ultimately, like Campbell, does not provide a full reason for the world's downfall, we see that the atmosphere, the story line, and some of the evil of his invented world have parallels in *Anthem*. Richard DeMille (son of Cecil B. DeMille, for whose production company Ayn Rand worked in her early years in Hollywood, and who will be discussed below in connection with Evgeny Zamyatin) commented, on reading *Anthem*, that it reminded him of “The Machine Stops”; he added: “But I do not confuse their meanings, which are different.”<sup>33</sup> Ayn Rand's reply of November 27, 1946, does not mention Forster.<sup>34</sup> If she had read the story, before or after writing *Anthem*, it is likely that she would have agreed with Richard DeMille that the meanings of the works are different, but she might also have appreciated the hints of the emptiness of second-hand “knowledge”; she would, to be sure, have been wary of the risk involved in singling out the Machine as the symbol of evil—and thus implying that technology itself is guilty.

## EVGENY ZAMYATIN

This very issue—implicating technology in the evil of the future gone wrong—is key to another writer of speculative fiction. If Benét's story is the closest in time and place to the composition of *Anthem*, Zamyatin is the closest in time and place to the initial conception of *Anthem*. A Russian-born engineer who became a translator, editor, essayist, playwright, and novelist, Evgeny Zamyatin “was one of the very first writers to be silenced by Stalin.”<sup>35</sup> In 1931, he left Russia for Berlin, and ultimately Paris; he died, still in exile, in 1937. Although he had initially identified himself as a Bolshevik, he “reported himself ‘not one’ shortly after the revolution.”<sup>36</sup> His writings implicitly attacked the Soviet regime.<sup>37</sup> His specific political views are nowhere systematically articulated and developed—possibly because, as Edward J. Brown observes, explicitness on such subjects was dangerous.

For our purposes, his most significant fictional works are the novels *Islanders* [Ostrovitiane] and *We* [My]. *Islanders*—which he began writing while assigned to work in England on the icebreaker ship *Alexander Nevsky* and which he completed and published on his return to Petersburg in 1917—is set in contemporary England, and its events are within the bounds of realism. Several characters, however, express ideas that are expanded and formalized in the later novel, *We*. In *Islanders*, the Vicar Dooley, for example, organizes all of his activities—walks, meals, repentance, and sex—by a schedule. Lady Campbell maintains that all people should be alike, and O'Kelley, carrying this idea further, jokes about a parliamentary bill designed to remove the one remaining difference in people, the length of their noses (henceforth, by decree, to be the same).

*We* was composed in 1920–1921. It was circulated privately in Russia, published for the first time in English translation in the United States in 1924. It was not published in Russian until 1952 (and, then, in the United States), and not published in Russia until 1988.<sup>38</sup> Zamyatin envisioned a time, a millennium after his own time, in which, as *Islanders* had suggested, all activities (including sexual relations, organized by schedules and tickets) are regulated, and everything that can be made uniform about human beings has been made uniform—to the extent that names are no longer personal; neither clothing nor occupations nor recreations are a matter of choice, and differences between people are officially insignificant. This regulated future amounted to a fresh start; it was created following a long war and the deaths of most of the world's population. Regimentation has not restrained the growth of technology, which flourishes, with rockets, aeros, and a marvelous, mechanical, glass-roofed city separated by a glass wall from the surrounding uncivilized countryside. The main character, D-503, is an engineer whose private notebooks show that he is coming to resent and to oppose the “rationality” of his society, symbolized by the use of numbers. He is tempted, and confused by his awareness of a “soul” within him that is different from the machine-like identity he has accepted as a matter of course.<sup>39</sup> His incipient revolt—associated with his secret love for a woman unsanctioned by OneState (a woman whose name is *I-330*, emphasis added)—is cut short when he is caught and “cured” by a conversation with the chief “Benefactor” [Blagodetel’] and by brain surgery.

*We*, like “The Machine Stops,” fits within the general dystopian category and the more specific category of the anti-utopia: this bad future was created *on purpose*. The purpose is revealed in a climactic scene: the protagonist is told that what began as love can be cruelty, that human beings have always longed to escape freedom, and that, therefore, the chief tyrant is known as the “Benefactor.”

And this same Christian, all-merciful God—the one who slowly roasts in the fires of Hell all those who rebel against him—is he not to be called *executioner*? And those whom the Christians burned at the stake, are they fewer in number than the Christians who were burnt? But, all of this notwithstanding, you see, this is still the God who has been worshipped for centuries as the God of love. Absurd? No, on the contrary. It is the patent, signed in blood, of man's indelible good sense. Even then, in his savage, shaggy state, he understood: A true algebraic love of mankind will inevitably be inhuman, and the inevitable sign of the truth is its cruelty. . . . What is it that people beg for, dream about, torment themselves for, from the time they leave swaddling clothes? They want someone to tell them, once and for all, what happiness is—and then to bind them to that happiness with a chain. What is it we're doing right now, if not that? The ancient dream of paradise.<sup>40</sup>

The “ancient dream of paradise,” as made real in the world of *We*, is destructive in conception; although inconsistent in execution (as is apparent in the occurrence of physical and psychological aberrations, and in the need for measures to crush discontent and rebellion), the plan has achieved near-dominion.

Zamyatin's novel has parallels with the other works we have mentioned. *We* has the narrative pattern of “The Machine Stops” and *Anthem*—the protagonist faces and fights the evil of his society. *We* shares with *The Time Machine*, “The Place of the Gods,” and *Anthem* the use of first-person narration as a guide to the contrast between the present and the past, as well as the examination of old books, old buildings, and other significant artifacts. In *We*, as in “The

Machine Stops,” “The Place of the Gods,” and *Anthem*, there is a place outside the “city” that is an alternative to the city, a place the protagonist seeks to explore. But *We* is marked most strongly by its parallels with Wells. *We* possesses all four qualities identified by Hillegas. It is world-wide; it has a class of voluntary nobles; it uses technology; it is dynamic. It is, in other words, a form of Wells’s *A Modern Utopia*,<sup>41</sup> Yet it suggests a negative attitude toward that utopia and, specifically, to its modernity. *We* shares with Wells’s own *When the Sleeper Wakes* (which Zamyatin knew well<sup>42</sup>) and “The Machine Stops” (which he probably did not<sup>43</sup>) the contrast between the glittering towers and the depths of human suffering—even though in Zamyatin’s world (as also in Forster’s) the suffering is buried in the souls of people who have learned to dismiss their spiritual lives rather than (as in Wells) in the squalid daily lives of people who work underground.

The parallels with H. G. Wells are far from accidental. Zamyatin was familiar with the works of Wells. When he worked as an editor for the World Literature Publishing House (1919–1924), he edited and supervised the Russian publication of numerous volumes by Wells.<sup>44</sup> He also lectured on Wells at a St. Petersburg artists’ union, and wrote “Herbert Wells” (published in 1922, revised in 1924), which discusses, along with Wells’s realistic novels, such works as *The Time Machine*, *When the Sleeper Wakes*, *A Modern Utopia*, *Men Like Gods*, *In the Days of the Comet*, *The War in the Air*, and *The World Set Free*. Wells’s scientific romances or “sociofantastic novels,” he says, create a new form: they combine trenchant social commentary with the projection of a future that science has made imaginable in essence and in detail.<sup>45</sup> Zamyatin’s project in *We* is—at least in part—Wellsian in inspiration.<sup>46</sup>

Yet a Wellsian “sociofantastic” novel, by its nature, draws on the time and place in which it is conceived—and Zamyatin’s book was composed at the same time and place in which Ayn Rand first thought of her play about a world without the word “I.” Is there a reason to assert a particular link between *We* and *Anthem*? Did Ayn Rand ever meet Zamyatin? The evidence is slender. No information has come to light regarding any contact between her (or any friends or family members) and his various associations: the House of the Arts, the House of Writers, or the World Literature Publishing House and its studio for translators. Her family’s situation during the early 1920s was difficult. She attended only a few of her classes because it was hard to walk, in worn-out shoes, three miles in the snow to the university. She remembered sitting on the floor of her family’s apartment, too weak and hungry to rise. In her first year at the university (1921–1922), she attended some student meetings and spoke her mind about politics; she then decided that it was dangerous to speak, and she attended no more meetings. She was very much aware that to read or write anti-Soviet ideas was to risk one’s life; she had burned her own diary before the family returned to Petersburg from the Crimea in 1921.<sup>47</sup>

Did she read *Islanders* or *We*, while in Russia or after she left? It is possible. More than thirty years after she came to the United States, she recalled her reading during her college years: “There were a couple of modern novels by Russian writers that were semi-anti-Soviet or thinly veiled anti-Soviet that I liked for that reason, but that was minor. I don’t even remember the authors’ names.”<sup>48</sup> Zamyatin’s *We* fits the general description, in that it was not openly or explicitly anti-Soviet, but merely susceptible to an anti-Soviet reading by those who wanted (or feared) such an approach. But this book, although read aloud before many audiences, was not available in published form, and it was clear that the book was considered “little short of treason” by the Soviet officials, and it had “the distinction of being the first novel banned by the Glavlit (Chief Administration for Literary Affairs), established in 1922.”<sup>49</sup> If she had made the

effort to find it or to attend a reading of it, it is likely that she would have also made note of the name of the author or the work.<sup>50</sup>

One tantalizing coincidence is that both Ayn Rand and Zamyatin left Russia hoping to work in Hollywood. Both, moreover, had the same director in mind. When Ayn Rand arrived in Hollywood, she had with her a letter of introduction to Cecil B. DeMille, and he became her first employer. Zamyatin, too, was specifically interested in working for Cecil B. DeMille, whom he had met in Moscow in August 1931. In February of 1932, DeMille in fact wrote Zamyatin a letter of reference, to aid in his application in Berlin for an American visa, and expressed his hope that Zamyatin would be able to come to the States: “We are in need of good dramatic brains more than ever.”<sup>51</sup>

Do the texts themselves suggest that Ayn Rand read Zamyatin? Salient similarities between *We* and *Anthem* include the regimentation of life, the world-wide state, the replacement of names by numbers, and the first-person narration by a secretly rebellious protagonist. But these are not unique to *We*. The regimentation of life and the world-wide state are features of Wells (as we have seen), whom both Zamyatin and Rand read. The number-names and regimentation, as noted by Elizabeth Stenbock-Fermor, can be found in Jerome K. Jerome’s “The New Utopia” (1891); Jerome’s works were popular in Russia and easily available.<sup>52</sup> And whether or not Ayn Rand read the Jerome K. Jerome story, she did not simply adopt the number system used by him (consecutive numbers) or that used by Zamyatin (a single letter plus a three-digit number). In *Anthem*, the number-names include words (“Equality,” “Liberty,” “Solidarity,” etc.) as well as numbers; as she explained in her answers to the students’ questions: “I patterned the numbering after telephone numbers, with the prefixes consisting of statist slogans”;<sup>53</sup> telephone numbers, at the time, consisted of a word—or the first two letters of that word—followed by a digit, a hyphen, and four more digits. The first-person narration by a malcontent is a staple of Russian literature, including two classics of the nineteenth century: Gogol’s “Diary of a Madman” [Zapiski sumashedshego] of 1835 and Dostoevsky’s *Notes from Underground* [Zapiski iz podpol’ia] of 1864 (to which I will return). There is nothing in *Anthem* that she could not have written without any knowledge of *We*.

The distinctions, moreover, are crucial. The prose of Zamyatin’s D-503 is elliptical and cryptic; that of Equality 7-2521, even with the handicap of the absence of singular pronouns, is clear, as if to imply that clarity itself is a goal to be pursued. The contrast in styles becomes greater as the books progress: D-503 is progressively more disoriented, and Equality 7-2521 is progressively better equipped to describe his experiences and their significance. Zamyatin’s world is one in which people build magnificent machines even when they are treated as if they were machines; in the world of *Anthem*, when people work together or not at all, the invention of the candle—by fifty men working together—is hailed as an achievement. In *We*, the tentative revolutionary actions of D-503 are alternatively encouraged and undercut by the women in his life, and he appears to be not even the hero of his own life story; in *Anthem*, the hero is dignified by his solitude, and his fate is in his hands. In *We*, D-503 ultimately loses his cause, his love, and his mind. The hero of *Anthem*, like Kuno in “The Machine Stops,” expects that the value he fights for will triumph, whatever his own fate.

Zamyatin’s title, nonetheless, is provocative, in our context. “We” is a direct contrast to Ayn Rand’s original title for *Anthem*, “Ego.” And, given that the word “we” is designated the essential “monster” in *Anthem* (96–97; 132–34 in 1938), as the symbol of the concept of collectivism, it is reasonable to speculate that, if she had heard of this work, and had known that it was in some way anti-Soviet, she might well have sought to read it. But *We* is, of course, not



the source of her opposition to collectivism—she did not need to read a book in order to despise the Soviet state and everything it stood for—and, if she read it, she would not have found in it the inspiration for her own identification of the evil of collectivism (or, indeed, anything fundamentally like her idea). *We* has nothing to do with her idea for a play about the loss of the word “I.” That a book happened to be “thinly veiled anti-Soviet” did not mean that it identified collectivism itself as evil—and in fact *We* does not do so, its title notwithstanding.

Zamyatin, who had little to say in public about this novel, did not identify any source for his title. Christopher Collins suggests that the title may have come from the manifesto of the “Smithy,” a proletarian culture movement: “*Kuznica*’s Nikolaj Ljashko (1884–1953) and others, in rejoicing that ‘We’ had driven out ‘I,’ may have furnished Zamyatin the title for the novel.”<sup>54</sup>

One of these “others” who rejoiced in the defeat of the “I,” according to Edward J. Brown, was Aleksandr Bezymensky:

“The collective ‘We’ has driven out the personal ‘I,’” shouted the youthful Bezymensky, and among the proletarian poets and novelists there developed a mystical belief in the collective as an entity in which the individual finds happiness by losing himself, like a Buddhist saint in nirvana.<sup>55</sup>

The alleged triumph of the “We” was accompanied, in proletarian art, by a vision of a “regimented paradise,” described as follows by another “proletarian poet,” Aleksei Gastaev:

The mechanization, not only of gestures, not only of production methods, but of everyday thinking, coupled with extreme rationality, normalizes in a striking degree the psychology of the proletariat. . . . It is this that lends proletarian psychology such surprising anonymity, which permits the qualification of separate proletarian units as A, B, C, or as 325,075, or as O and the like. . . . In this psychology, from one end of the world to the other, flow potent massive streams, making for one world head in place of millions of heads. This tendency will next imperceptibly render individual thinking impossible, and thought will become the objective psychic process of a whole class, with systems of psychological switches and locks.<sup>56</sup>

This vision—the mechanization of thinking, the substitution of numbers for names, the impossibility of individual thought—finds literary form in *We*, but without the sort of enthusiastic endorsement Gastaev brings to his evocation of “regimented paradise.”

For writers who did not follow the path of proletarian culture, the abolition of the “I” was a target of ridicule. Vladimir Mayakovsky, mocking the proletarian poets, specifically called attention to their replacement of “I” by “We”:

The Proletcultists never speak / of “I” / or of the personality.  
They consider / the pronoun “I” / a kind of rascality. . . .  
But in my opinion / if you write petty stuff, you /  
will never crawl out of your lyrical slough /  
even if you substitute We for I.<sup>57</sup>

All of these references, whether or not they had any impact on Zamyatin’s choice of title, fit well with what Ayn Rand said about hearing, in her school days in Russia, “all the vicious attacks on individualism, and [asking herself] what the world would be like if men lost the word

‘I.’” After hearing poets and other propagandists saying that “we” can and must drive out “I,” she planned a play, and ultimately a novella, that was an answer to that demand.

What brought it to pass? What disaster took their reason away from men? What whip lashed them to their knees in shame and submission? The worship of the word “We.” (102)

Zamyatin, too, considers the conflict between the “we” and the “I.” His protagonist denies that the “I” could have any rights:

So, take some scales and put on one side a gram, on the other a ton; on one side “I” and on the other “We,” OneState. It’s clear, isn’t it?—to assert that “I” has certain “rights” with respect to the State is exactly the same as asserting that a gram weighs the same as a ton. That explains the way things are divided up: To the ton go the rights, to the gram the duties. And the natural path from nullity to greatness is this: Forget that you’re a gram and feel yourself a millionth part of a ton.” (*We*, 111)<sup>58</sup>

He cannot do so. He senses that he has a soul, and therefore concludes that he must be ill.

D-503 agrees with what “was understood by the Christians, our only (if very imperfect) predecessors: Humility is a virtue, pride a vice; *We* comes from God, *I* from the devil”; he holds his “self-consciousness” (his awareness of his separate identity, his “I”) to be “a disease” and possibly “an epidemic” (*We*, 124, 88).

But although Zamyatin gives prominence to the word “we,” he does not give the fact of collectivism an analogous prominence in his fictional world. He may have wanted to be clearer than he was about his target; to do so, though, would have meant taking even more of a chance. As one of his Soviet critics pointed out, the novel’s polemic is a sort of package deal: “To oppose *grass*, human *willfulness*, and people covered with hair to communism means not to understand the essence of the question.”<sup>59</sup> The reader knows which package is supposed to be preferred, but Zamyatin does not explain what ties the package together. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay goes so far as to say that the novel “does not represent freedom at all.”<sup>60</sup> Collectivism is a feature of the world, but not the fundamental feature. Years after he wrote the novel, he remarked, in an interview, that this novel was based on “the relationship between the person and the collective . . . set within the framework of a utopian parody constructed out of a *reductio ad absurdum* of one possible solution.”<sup>61</sup> It is, of course, true that his world nearly obliterates privacy and considers self-consciousness an illness. But the problem with the world he evokes is not only (or even primarily) the emphasis on “we” as opposed to “I,” not collectivism *per se*, but the fact that the collectivist society is “mechanical,” in that the use of machines has obliterated significant differences between men and machines. This aspect of his intention is evident in his statement in 1932: “This novel is a warning against the twofold danger which threatens humanity: the hypertrophic power of the machines and the hypertrophic power of the State.”<sup>62</sup>

The phrase “twofold danger” places powerful machines on a level with the powerful State, as if the two are commensurate as threats. What is responsible for the decline of the world? The State—plus the machine. Part of the reason—it is implied—is reason itself. The character D-503, in effect, blames rationality, science, and technology—and holds these to be incompatible with what he takes to be genuine values: individuality and creative imagination.<sup>63</sup> His conception of reason, to be sure, is distorted: “The highest thing in Man is his reason, and what the work of

reason comes down to is the continual limitation of infinity, dividing infinity into convenient, easily digestible portions” (*We*, 64). And he wrongly associates reason with the State, as if the two were the same thing (rather than—as in *Anthem*—bitter opponents). On the opening page, he writes of “the beneficial yoke of reason” (*We*, 3), and a sign refers to “the beneficent yoke of the State” (*We*, 36). In the final sentence of his notes, written after he has undergone an amputation of the imagination and has witnessed with indifference the torture of the woman he once loved, he states that the Numbers outside the wall have “betrayed reason,” and that “we’ll win. Because reason has to win” (*We*, 225). In context, this character’s allegiance to reason amounts to an attack on reason—and thus invokes another major influence on Zamyatin: Dostoevsky.

## FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

Zamyatin’s *We*, as many critics have noted, is in part a response to Dostoevsky’s *Notes from Underground*. Zamyatin’s crystalline city—which expresses “this life of ours, this extremely transparent and permanent crystal” (*We*, 115)—is an imaginative projection of the Crystal Palace (itself a response to London’s Exhibition of 1851 and Chernyshevsky’s 1863 vision in *What Is to Be Done?* [Chto delat’?], at which Dostoevsky’s Underground Man wanted to throw stones. The underground caves of Zamyatin’s rebels are the counterpart of Dostoevsky’s psychological underground. The regimentation of Zamyatin’s society makes real the speculation of the Underground Man for a “mathematical table” to regulate all desires. The glorification of numbers in *We* stands as polar opposite to the attitude of the Underground Man, who proposes to assert his freedom, his *self*, by rebelling against the equation “two times two is four.”<sup>64</sup>

These familiar points carry weight. Whether or not the Underground Man speaks for Dostoevsky, and whether or not D-503 (or, for that matter, I-330) speaks for Zamyatin, both texts, as they stand, explore similar issues: freedom and the self—versus mathematics or reason. The Underground Man states that reason is the enemy of free will—and therefore assumes that only by defying reason can he assert his volition. The defiance of D-503 is parallel. Both characters consider opting out of the “rational” world that is supposed—but not by them—to be the epitome of human happiness. Both D-503 and the Underground Man associate selfhood with pain—and choose it nonetheless.

The Underground Man affirms his personal identity through toothache<sup>65</sup>: his discomfort makes him real, and he cherishes it for that reason. (He similarly enjoys his liver complaint, his psychological pain, and his social humiliation.) D-503 considers a parallel phenomenon, albeit with mixed emotions:

I feel myself. But it’s only the eye with a lash in it, the swollen finger, the infected tooth that feels itself, is conscious of its own individual being. The healthy eye or finger or tooth doesn’t seem to exist. (*We*, 124)

To be an “I” is to feel pain, presented as the paradigm of the individual experience—and on this both characters agree.

Zamyatin’s *We* has connections as well with several other works by Dostoevsky. The notion of an epidemic of self-consciousness, in *We*, recalls Raskolnikov’s dream in Siberia, in the Epilogue of *Crime and Punishment* [Prestuplenie i nakazanie]:

People who absorbed the [plague germs] became immediately like men wild and mad. But never, never did people consider themselves so wise and so unshakable

in the truth as did those who were infected. Never had they considered their judgments, their scientific deductions, or their moral convictions and beliefs more unshakable. Whole villages, whole cities and peoples, were infected and went mad.<sup>66</sup>

Zamyatin, of course, does not mean to endorse the view (held by the society, and at times by D-503 himself) that the “soul” is a disease; he appears, however, to imply that the true plague is the certainty—or science—to which the future society (like the society in Raskolnikov’s dream) adheres.<sup>67</sup>

The novel’s title, moreover, may have Dostoevsky as one of its sources. In *Demons* (“Besy” in Russian, also translated as *The Possessed*), the villainous Verkhovensky tells Stavrogin, whom he is intending to recruit to help achieve a kind of socialist utopia:

the whole showhouse will collapse, and then we’ll see how to build up an edifice of stone. For the first time! *We* will do the building, we, we alone!<sup>68</sup>

The socialist utopia in question was also, perhaps, an inspiration to Zamyatin. A teacher summarizes as follows the system advocated by Shigalyov:

One tenth is granted freedom of person and unlimited rights over the remaining nine tenths. These must lose their person and become something like a herd, and in unlimited obedience, through a series of regenerations, attain to primeval innocence, something like the primeval paradise. . . . The measures proposed by the author [Shigalyov] for removing the will from nine tenths of mankind and remaking them into a herd, by means of a re-educating of entire generations—are quite remarkable, based on natural facts, and extremely logical.<sup>69</sup>

Dostoevsky, to be sure, does not endorse this vision.

But he does not entirely repudiate it, either. Another striking parallel between Dostoevsky and *We* grows out of Shigalyov’s vision of paradise at the expense of free will. The Benefactor’s defense of the society, as Shane and others have noted, is reminiscent of Ivan’s story about the Grand Inquisitor’s confrontation with Jesus Christ in *The Brothers Karamazov* [Brat’ia Karamazovy]. The Inquisitor accuses Christ of burdening human beings with unbearable freedom, which they plead to exchange for passive security:

No science will give them bread as long as they remain free, but in the end they will lay their freedom at our feet and say to us: “Better that you enslave us, but feed us.” They will finally understand that freedom and earthly bread in plenty for everyone are inconceivable together, for never, never will they be able to share among themselves.<sup>70</sup>

He promises happiness:

With us everyone will be happy, and they will no longer rebel or destroy each other, as in your freedom, everywhere.<sup>71</sup>

The Benefactor presents—as the same answer to a timeless prayer—happiness instead of freedom, the “ancient dream of paradise” (*We*, 207).

Dostoevsky and Zamyatin, as the numerous parallels show, ask some of the same questions, even if their answers are not necessarily the same (and even if it is not always possible to see clearly what their answers are). Both writers present characters who attack reason (and such related areas as science, knowledge, logic, and mathematics) as destroyers of the soul, as enemies of freedom—yet freedom (with such related entities as the soul and the self) is far from being an unequivocal good. Zamyatin’s novel, in effect, makes real the implications of ideas expressed in Dostoevsky: Zamyatin describes—in physical detail—the Crystal Palace the Underground Man imagined, the plague Raskolnikov dreamed of, the socialist utopia Shigalyov projected and Verkhovensky hoped to build, the end result pursued by the Grand Inquisitor.

Ayn Rand, too, was a reader of Dostoevsky. She read his major works in Russia. She named him repeatedly as a great writer, one she admired.<sup>72</sup> She knew the background of his work well enough to refer to his notes for the characterization of Stavrogin in *The Possessed* (or *Demons*).<sup>73</sup> While writing *Atlas Shrugged*, she purchased a Russian-language copy of that novel.<sup>74</sup> She planned—without “apology to Dostoevsky”—to use the title “Notes from the Underground” for one section of her introduction to the 1968 publication of *The Fountainhead*.<sup>75</sup> She considered, at one point, including in *Atlas Shrugged* a character she described as in the mode of Dostoevsky: “a man going insane in the attempt to live by the idea of charity, which he has accepted as a basic premise and axiom, accepted intelligently and consistently, i.e. with all its implications. That would be a kind of Dostoyevsky.”<sup>76</sup>

Her literary response to Dostoevsky (a full account of which is beyond the scope of this article<sup>77</sup>) entailed considering the questions that concerned him. Ellsworth Toohey, for example, is in part a Dostoevskian character. He is—as Stavrogin said of Verkhovensky—a power-hungry criminal in the guise of a humanitarian socialist. Verkhovensky aims for a society of equality, with no room for ability, knowledge, or values:

Each belongs to all, and all to each. They’re all equal in their slavery. First the level of education, science, and talents is lowered. . . .

Listen, Stavrogin, to level the mountains is a good idea, not a ridiculous one. I’m for Shigalyov! No need for education, enough of science! . . . The thirst for education is already an aristocratic thirst. As soon as there’s just a tiny bit of family or love, there’s a desire for property. We’ll extinguish desire; . . . we’ll stifle every genius in infancy. Everything reduced to a common denominator, complete equality. . . . Slaves must have rulers.<sup>78</sup>

Ellsworth Toohey, who seeks to rule, intends to kill aspiration, integrity, the “capacity to recognize greatness or to achieve it. Great men can’t be ruled. We don’t want any great men” (*Fountainhead*, 635).<sup>79</sup> He intends to kill happiness.

Happiness is self-contained and self-sufficient. Happy men have no time and no use for you. Happy men are free men. So kill their joy in living. Take away from them whatever is dear or important to them. Never let them have what they want. Make them feel that the mere fact of a personal desire is evil. Bring them to a state where saying ‘*I want*’ is no longer a natural right, but a shameful admission. (*Fountainhead*, 636)

He expects people to be “glad to obey” (*Fountainhead*, 635)—as did Dostoevsky’s Grand Inquisitor. His conclusion:

I want power. I want my world of the future. Let all live for all. Let all sacrifice and none profit. Let all suffer and none enjoy. Let progress stop. Let all stagnate. There's equality in stagnation. All subjugated to the will of all. Universal slavery—without even the dignity of a master. Slavery to slavery. A great circle—and total equality. The world of the future. (*Fountainhead*, 639)

And so—in anti-utopian fiction—it comes to pass. For all the talk of happiness in *We* and *Anthem*, authentic joy is fleeting and rare, among the “equal” slaves. Much of what Verkhovensky desired and what Toohey plotted is presented as achieved, in the joyless future worlds of *We* and *Anthem*. A key element of Toohey's vision illuminates a key difference between Ayn Rand's thinking and that implicit (and sometimes explicit) in Dostoevsky: Toohey expects progress to stop under conditions of equality—and it is clear that the novel would not want him to win. Dostoevsky's characters, by contrast, do not address the issue of progress—or see it as part of the problem; they do not, at any rate, consider material well-being to be incompatible with the projected “equality.” Even Verkhovensky, who wants to “level the mountain,” thinks that “there is sufficient material even without science for a thousand years to come.”<sup>80</sup> In Zamyatin's world of the future, set approximately a millennium from his own time, the material has indeed “lasted”; in *Anthem*, deterioration is oppressively pervasive.

The Underground Man, of course, sees progress as symptomatic of the rational against which he wishes to exercise his freedom. Zamyatin's D-503 apparently agrees that freedom and selfhood are opposed to reason (the disorientation of his notes makes it hard to know exactly what he believes). The Underground Man singles out mathematics—as does Zamyatin—as the fundamental quality of the crystalline world (which the Underground Man wants to smash and which D-503 perhaps wants to flee). Ayn Rand utterly rejects the attack on reason and science: reason is an individual act, a volitional act, and is thus anything but the enemy of freedom. The hero of *Anthem*—who rebels against his society in the very act of engaging in scientific discovery—acts as an individual self for the free exercise of his mind. In *Atlas Shrugged*, where (contra the Underground Man's saying that twice-two can be five if he likes) Galt says “the noblest act you have ever performed is the act of your mind in the process of grasping that two and two make four.”<sup>81</sup>

The Underground Man views his isolation as an illness (much as D-503 believes that having a soul is a disease). In his self-imposed psychological underground, he expresses his resentment of the solitude to which his social exclusion dooms him. Ayn Rand utterly rejects the idea that the self is a disease. In a *literalized* underground tunnel, *Anthem*'s hero cherishes his secret solitude.

And here is the heart of the matter: the “idea” of *Anthem* is individualism. The hero who exemplifies that idea is a man of reason in a society that has—to its manifest detriment—abandoned both reason and individualism. Dostoevsky's Underground Man disparages reason—in the name of his version of individualism. Zamyatin's D-503 does the same—in a society that has not been materially damaged by its abandonment of individualism. In *Anthem*, to be an individual is to think; in Dostoevsky's Underground and in *We*, to be an individual is (frequently) to rave. The world of *We* can in fact get along, apparently, well enough without the “I”—as such Dostoevskian characters as Verkhovensky, Shigalyov, and Grand Inquisitor would expect.

Dostoevsky, speaking in his own voice, goes so far as to identify the “I” as the enemy of (Christian) love itself. At the time of the death of his first wife, not long before he ghost-wrote the notes of his Underground Man, he wrote in his own notebook:

To love a person, *as oneself*, according to the commandment of Christ, is impossible. The law of the ego is binding on earth. *I* stands in the way. (emphasis in original)<sup>82</sup>

Dostoevsky, then, stands as the opposite of *Anthem*'s idea that the "I" is good—even if the "I" Dostoevsky attacks is not necessarily the same as the "I" the Underground Man asserts. Would Zamyatin agree? His D-503, as noted, dutifully points out that Christians connect the "I" with the devil, the "we" with God (*We*, 124)—but he does not appear tempted to regard his "soul" or self as an impediment to love. Hence, even when he fears that his awareness of self is a disease, he does not go so far as to condemn self entirely. But even though his novel does not clearly explain what he is for or against, his OneState suggests that he is presenting for contemplation the Crystal Palace against which the Underground Man railed—and implying that it might be time to gather some stones. He does not ask if machine-like slaves would be capable, after centuries of mandated collective life, of constructing the INTEGRAL rocket.

As a reader of Dostoevsky, Ayn Rand recognizes the fundamental difference between her idea and those expressed by his characters (and those expressed by himself). She rejects some of the elements that appear to have appealed to Zamyatin. Whereas Zamyatin and Dostoevsky present reason and science as the enemies of genuinely human life, *Anthem* shows what becomes of human life without them, and what becomes of science itself without the "I."

## ALDOUS HUXLEY

Another famous work in the anti-utopian genre is Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* of 1932. It was, to begin with, an anti-Wellsian response to Wells's *Men Like Gods*, *When the Sleeper Wakes*, and *A Modern Utopia*.<sup>83</sup> He wrote it, he said, with no knowledge of Zamyatin's *We*<sup>84</sup>—but it is nonetheless a kind of imaginative sequel to it. Alexandra Aldridge sums up the situation as follows:

*Brave New World* literally takes up where *We* left off—with the assumption that the creature must be altered in order to create a stable society. In *We*, worship of scientific rationalism had engendered a machine-like state inhabited by robotic human beings who nonetheless could be moved to rebel. Ten years later, after Pavlov and J. B. Watson, Huxley utilizes the behaviorist notion that mind and body are reducible to something like a machine, a hypothesis which in turn justifies the gene manipulation and conditioning that will insure smooth, continuous running of the human machine.<sup>85</sup>

The novel is not only a dystopia but an anti-utopia: it arrived by design at its present condition of mechanized misery. With the exception of the residents of what is known as the "Reservation," all inhabitants have been genetically engineered to possess various physical and intellectual attributes and "conditioned" (through recordings played while they are asleep) to be content with their assigned social roles, including their identities as Alphas, Betas, and so on, and the insistence that—sexually and in every other way as well—"everyone belongs to everyone else." *Brave New World* has three of the four criteria of the modern utopia, as listed by Hillegas: its scope is world-wide, it has an aristocracy, and it relies on technology. Huxley's world lacks the fourth criterion: it is static rather than dynamic. The inhabitants believe what they are told: that "stability" (i.e., the deliberate design of the human organism with minimal variation and virtually

no decisions of consequence) is the prerequisite of “happiness.” Only in the “Reservation” can one find such sources of instability as religion, Shakespeare, family ties, sexual exclusivity—and dirt and disease.

The story line reveals the discontent concealed by the routine proclamations of contentment. For example: Bernard Marx, attracted to Lenina Crowne, resents the very idea of her sexual involvement with others; meanwhile she herself is rebuked for the social indiscretion of seeing Henry Foster exclusively for four straight months. Helmholtz, a poet who has not been challenged by his official assignments, feels drawn to write “rhymes of Solitude,” a kind of poetry he has never yet written: “I feel . . . as though I were just beginning to have something to write about. As though I were beginning to be able to use that power I feel I’ve got inside me—that extra, latent power. Something seems to be coming to me” (*Brave New World*, 123).<sup>86</sup> John the Savage, who travels from the “Reservation” to the “modern” world, is unwilling to embrace the new world, but unable to escape it. In the end, he is responsible for the death of the one woman he cared for, and he takes his own life.

“Huxley’s chief strategy,” as Hillegas points out, “was to show that the conditioned happiness of *Brave New World* cuts men off from deep experience, keeps them from being fully human.”<sup>87</sup> One of the best-known scenes in the novel is a dramatic confrontation: a sage but sinister spokesperson (Mustapha Mond, the Controller) explains the principles behind the world to a resistant listener (John the Savage). It is similar to the scenes that feature Zamyatin’s Benefactor and Dostoevsky’s Verkhovensky and Grand Inquisitor.

“It would upset the whole social order if men started doing things on their own. . . .”

“You can’t have a lasting civilization without plenty of pleasant vices. . . .”

“My dear young friend,” said Mustapha Mond, “civilization has absolutely no need of nobility or heroism. These things are symptoms of political inefficiency. In a properly organized society like ours, nobody has any opportunities for being noble. . . . The greatest care is taken to prevent you from loving anybody too much. There’s no such thing as a divided allegiance; you’re so conditioned that you can’t help doing what you ought to do. . . . And if ever, by some unlucky chance, anything unpleasant should somehow happen, why, there’s always [the drug] *soma* to give you a holiday from the facts.”

“But I don’t want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin. . . .”

“In fact,” said Mustapha Mond, “you’re claiming the right to be unhappy. . . . Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat. . . .”

“I claim them all,” said the Savage at last.

Mustapha Mond shrugged his shoulders. “You’re welcome,” he said. (*Brave New World*, 161–63)

The reference to pain makes this text parallel with the depictions of the Underground Man and D-503—as if feeling pain is the only way to experience the self.<sup>88</sup>

The universe of this novel is repugnant—and not only in the ways Huxley intended. Most literary works in the dystopian tradition—such as “The Place of the Gods,” *The Time Machine*, “The Machine Stops,” “Twilight,” *We*, and *Anthem*—project another time or another place that is



positively good. But there is no good in *Brave New World*, not in anything resembling reality. Reading Shakespeare (whose language stands for what the “modern” world lacks) does not improve John the Savage’s life. The portrayal of sexuality is particularly unpleasant. Everything is tainted and ugly—physically, morally, and often both.

There is no evidence that Ayn Rand read this work.<sup>89</sup> She would have agreed with designating totalitarian control as a target: life without freedom is not human life. She would have agreed with the Savage that freedom is desirable whatever the price. An exchange in the play *Think Twice* (written in 1939, unproduced in her lifetime) expresses a sentiment similar to that of John the Savage, above, speaking to the Controller.

ADRIENNE. Let me go, Walter. Give me my freedom.

BRECKENRIDGE. Freedom—for what? Freedom to hurt yourself.

ADRIENNE. Yes!—if necessary. To make mistakes. To fail. To be alone. To be rotten. To be selfish. But to be free.<sup>90</sup>

She would have disagreed with much else, including the dismal outlook on life. She would have detected at once the false alternative Huxley ultimately came to realize as “the most serious defect in the story, which is this. The Savage is offered only two alternatives, an insane life in Utopia, or the life of a primitive in an Indian village, a life more human in some respects, but in others hardly less queer and abnormal.”<sup>91</sup> She would have observed that Huxley, like Zamyatin, sees technological advancement as compatible with political slavery, as if the mind could work just as well, if not better, without being free. She would not have seen in *Brave New World*—any more than in *When the Sleeper Wakes* or *We* or “The Place of the Gods”—the most important element in *Anthem*: her idea.

At one point, Bernard appears to be groping for his “I.” He tells Lenina that he wants to look at the ocean without the “beastly noise” of the radio. When he does, he says: “It makes me feel as though . . . I were more *me*, if you see what I mean. More on my own, not so completely a part of something else. Not just a cell in the social body.” He wishes to be “happy in some other way,” i.e., “not in everybody else’s way” (*Brave New World*, 60–61). But he never comes close to grasping what it would mean to think for himself and to live for his own sake; he craves the esteem of others, and relies on their judgment. Although he is “unstable” enough to be exiled to the islands for nonconformists, he is never intellectually independent. His quasi-rebellion, like the Savage’s withdrawal to a lighthouse, is futile.

Huxley’s world is like Wells’s London of 2100 and Zamyatin’s OneState: all have technological progress, political totalitarianism, and spiritual emptiness. His resolution has the gray drabness of resignation. Any rebellion is doomed. Any escape is temporary. Huxley implicitly blames—on equal terms—Vladimir Lenin and Henry Ford for the conditions (and conditioning) in his despicable “new” world—much as Zamyatin applied the word “yoke” to both reason and the State. Ayn Rand, as the Dark Ages of her collectivist future make clear, disagrees. And she is not alone.

## GEORGE ORWELL

George Orwell set out to write fiction in the mode of Zamyatin. Orwell was interested in reading *We* as soon as he heard of it; he commented that he himself was thinking of writing a dystopian novel, and that he was on the lookout for books of this type.<sup>92</sup> He read it in French translation

somewhere between June 1944 and the end of 1945.<sup>93</sup> In 1946, when he reviewed *We* for the left-socialist *Tribune*, he remarked that “Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* must be partly derived from it. Both books deal with the rebellion of the primitive human spirit against a rationalised, mechanised, painless world, and both stories are supposed to take place about six hundred years hence.”<sup>94</sup> Orwell describes not only the devices of *We*—the number-names, houses, uniforms, food, recreation, and sex arrangements—but the principle: “The Single State is ruled over by a personage known as The Benefactor, who is annually re-elected by the entire population, the vote being always unanimous. The guiding principle of the State is that happiness and freedom are incompatible. In the Garden of Eden man was happy, but in his folly he demanded freedom and was driven out into the wilderness. Now the Single State has restored his happiness by removing his freedom.”<sup>95</sup>

Of the two books, Orwell prefers Zamyatin’s. In *We*, there are unhappy dissenters tormented by “imagination,” as well as those who plot rebellion and indulge in tobacco and alcohol. Huxley, by contrast, assumes that people will no longer have a “desire for liberty” or any other troublesome emotions or disturbing thoughts, because all troublesome aspects of the organism are controlled by drugs, pre-natal treatment, and hypnosis. He also notes, with favor, the implicit cruelty of Zamyatin’s world. The machine of the Benefactor is the guillotine, an improved model. “The execution is, in fact, a human sacrifice, and the scene describing it is given deliberately the colour of the sinister slave civilisations of the ancient world. It is this intuitive grasp of irrational side of totalitarianism—human sacrifice, cruelty as an end in itself—the worship of a leader who is credited with divine attributes—that makes Zamyatin’s book superior to Huxley’s.”<sup>96</sup>

Orwell, finally, speculates that Zamyatin’s target may not be restricted to Soviet Russia. He observes that “conditions in Russia in 1923 were not such that anyone would revolt against them on the ground that life was becoming too safe and comfortable. What Zamyatin seems to be aiming at is not any particular country but the implied aims of industrial civilisation.”<sup>97</sup>

Orwell’s novel has features in common with *We*, notably the regimentation of human life and the secret rebellion against that regimentation.<sup>98</sup> But the two are also very different, as William Steinhoff points out:

There is too much in *1984* that does not appear in *We*—the superstates, the direct attack on totalitarianism, permanent warfare, the dreary squalor, such novelties as doublethink and Newspeak, the disappearance of belief in objective reality, the substitution of “love” for law, the disaffected and defeated intellectual, the importance of history, tradition, and memory—and the ruling intellectuals of the Inner Party—to leave much ground for the claim that Orwell took *We* as his model.

To sharpen the contrast, one might say that *We* exhibits in the Hour Tables the mathematical perfection of human reason and conduct—objectivity carried to its utmost limits—and it is against the dominance of rationality that Zamyatin, like Dostoevsky, protests. But in *1984* human reason has turned into its opposite—pure subjectivity. What the Inner Party wants to create is a “collective solipsism” which destroys objective reality, including the reality of mathematics and the reality of common sense. Zamyatin revolts against the ideal of the machine; Orwell revolts against the ideal of ideology. In both books humanity is victimized, for in *We* the crime is to turn human beings into machines, and in *1984* the crime is to turn human beings into lunatics.<sup>99</sup>

Most of the features found in *1984* and not in *We* are (with the exception of constant war) found in some form in *Anthem*. Orwell's *1984*, in these areas, is much closer to Ayn Rand's *Anthem* than it is to Zamyatin's *We*.

Of the many other authors identified as important to Orwell (among them Swift, Kipling, Jack London, Cyril Connolly, G. K. Chesterton, and Arthur Koestler<sup>100</sup>) the most important in our context is Dostoevsky. Orwell knew Dostoevsky's fiction well.<sup>101</sup>

But Orwell has a quarrel with Dostoevsky, as he does with Zamyatin. Winston Smith's confrontation with O'Brien is, within the narrative structure, parallel to Christ's encounter with Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor, whose argument, as I have noted, is parallel with those of Huxley's Mustapha Mond and Zamyatin's Benefactor: all three say that freedom is the price of happiness, and that it is right for people to pay it. In the world of *1984*, by contrast, human happiness was never part of the plan. Winston Smith, assuming that O'Brien intends to use the same justification as the Grand Inquisitor, expects him to say that people cannot "endure liberty or face the truth . . . the choice for mankind lay between freedom and happiness . . . the Party was the eternal guardian of the weak" (*1984*, 216).<sup>102</sup> O'Brien stuns Winston with a simple statement of an unbearable fact: "Power is not a means; it is an end. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. . . . Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing" (*1984*, 217, 220). As George Woodcock observes, "what distinguishes it [*1984*] even more strikingly from previous Utopias and even anti-Utopias is that the pretense of providing happiness as a compensation for the loss of freedom is not maintained. Even the synthetic pleasures and comforts promised by Zamyatin and Huxley no longer exist."<sup>103</sup>

The quarrel with Dostoevsky extends as well to the issue of reason. Mathematics, which stood for Dostoevsky and Zamyatin (and, implicitly, for Huxley as well) as the enemy, is the last bulwark of rationality in Orwell.

The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command. . . . The solid world exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall toward the earth's center. .

. . .  
*Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows.* (*1984*, 69)

Such statements are in the spirit of *Anthem*—and contrary to the implications of *We*.

Orwell's hero not only attempts to uphold reason and reality, but identifies his independence as inviolable—in a way that would not be possible for Dostoevsky's Underground Man or Zamyatin's D-503. He agrees with what Julia tells him: "It's the one thing they can't do. They can make you say anything—*anything*—but they can't make you believe it. They can't get inside you" (*1984*, 137).

And whereas in *We* the engineers work well in harness for the building of the INTEGRAL rocket ship—and science is a bad thing—Orwell states, through the secret book of Goldstein, that progress (with minor exceptions) is not possible without freedom. The technological brilliance envisioned by Zamyatin, we are told, could never have come to be.

The world of today is a bare, hungry, dilapidated place compared with the world that existed before 1914, and still more so if compared with the imaginary future to which the people of that period looked forward. In the early twentieth century,

the vision of a future society unbelievably rich, leisured, orderly and efficient—a glittering antiseptic world of glass and steel and snow-white concrete—was part of the consciousness of nearly every literate person. Science and technology were developing at prodigious speed, and it seemed natural to assume that they would go on developing. This failed to happen, partly because of an impoverishment caused by a long series of wars and revolutions, partly because scientific and technical progress depended on the empirical habit of drought, which could not survive in a strictly regimented society. As a whole the world is more primitive today than it was fifty years ago. (1984, 155–56)

From the broken clock to the broken lift (both on the first page), the world is falling apart, and, we are told, is going backwards. *Anthem* shows a further regression to the primitive, and for a similar reason.

Orwell's *1984*—unlike *We*—shares with *Anthem* the observation that a decline in the quality of human life is accompanied by a decline in language. Although the word “I” has not (yet?) disappeared, the language of this world is being drained of dangerous words in order to eliminate the corresponding ideas. The principles of “Newspeak” will lead eventually to the obliteration of the first person, which will be deemed inessential. Perhaps the world of *1984* is similar to the “graceless years of transition” mentioned in *Anthem* (103), which would make Orwell's novel a sort of prequel to Ayn Rand's.

A full account of Orwell's politics is beyond my scope here. He was exceptionally concerned with the role of ideas in history and contemporary political life. He wrote—implicitly in *1984* and explicitly elsewhere—about the harm done by intellectuals (Catholics, Stalinists, and pacifist/Fascists) who sought or supported power and told lies.<sup>104</sup> He blames them for “the amputation of the soul.”<sup>105</sup> He said, regarding his purpose in writing *1984*: “I believe also that totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences.”<sup>106</sup>

Of all the books so far discussed, *1984* is the one that comes closest to the idea of *Anthem*—and to the related ideas of *The Fountainhead* as well. Although there is no evidence in his letters or published writings that Orwell read either, the same is true for other books that he is known to have read. He did not always credit his sources.<sup>107</sup> It is possible and likely that he read *Anthem*. Because he was on the lookout for books like *We*, he might have been interested in reading *Anthem* if he had run across it. Malcolm Muggeridge, his friend, reviewed *Anthem* favorably in 1938, when it was published in England.<sup>108</sup> And, if he read *Anthem* and recognized its merit, he might have read *The Fountainhead* as well when it was published in 1947 (while he was working on *1984*). O'Brien's speeches, in which all becomes clear, differ from Dostoevsky (and Zamyatin) on exactly the point that is the center of Toohey's speech. The purpose of power—as O'Brien says, chillingly—is power. Zamyatin's Benefactor would never have said that—but Ellsworth Toohey, who intends to rule, would and did. O'Brien tells Winston that “power is power over human beings. Over the body—but, above all, over the mind” (1984, 218). Toohey knows that “only mental control over others is true control.”<sup>109</sup> Orwell's *1984* concretizes the future according to Ellsworth Toohey: “A world where the thought of each man will not be his own, but an attempt to guess the thought of the brain of his neighbor. . . . Since all must agree with all” (*Fountainhead*, 637).

Orwell's overall philosophy, of course, is not identical with Ayn Rand's—as both would have recognized. When she read his *Animal Farm* in 1946, it made her “sick”; she thought it was not anti-Communist (as it was alleged to be), but rather “the mushiest and most maudlin

preachment of Communism . . . I have seen in a long time.”<sup>110</sup> As for *1984*, she was familiar with it, and, according to her friend Edward Hunter, believed that it had been influenced by *Anthem*.<sup>111</sup>

Although Orwell’s novel shows considerable understanding of the way totalitarian government and its fundamental principles threaten the mind, his conclusion speaks of despair: he believes that evil can win. As in *We* and Wells’s *When the Sleeper Wakes*, the rebellion is doomed: Winston learns and struggles only to lose, and to lose in a sickening way. Winston (like D-503) betrays the woman he loves and ends by capitulating to his destroyer. “He loved Big Brother” (245). No matter what is done to the hero of *Anthem*, he would never succumb in spirit. Hence Orwell’s narrative line shows that the “I” is not in fact powerful enough to prevail.

Winston had said:” There is something in the universe—I don’t know, some spirit, some principle—that you will never overcome. The spirit of Man.” O’Brien replied: “If you are a man, Winston, you are the last man” (*1984*, 222). Orwell, ultimately, agrees with O’Brien. Orwell’s original title for *1984* was “The Last Man in Europe”—which implies that the “I” could be killed. In his own last novel, written at the end of his life, Orwell viewed evil as metaphysically greater than even a man who has learned what it is to be a man.

In Ayn Rand’s novels, by contrast, even a tragic ending shows that struggle is inspiring and makes life valuable, even if death is the end.<sup>112</sup> If Orwell’s novel ends with the love of Big Brother, *Anthem* ends with the knowledge that the world of the “brothers” will never defeat him. The Spirit of Man that Orwell sees as doomed, is in *Anthem* the “word which will not die, should we all perish in battle. The word which can never die on this earth, for it is the heart of it and the meaning and the glory” (104–5). It is the “sacred word: Ego”—the idea of *Anthem*.

## **ANTHEM AND AYN RAND’S OTHER FICTION**

The uniqueness of *Anthem*—as distinct from such anti-utopias as *We* or such dystopias as “The Place of the Gods”—is the identification of the cause of the disaster. The idea of *Anthem*, the idea that Ayn Rand had from her youth in Soviet Russia, is the loss of the word “I,” with all that that entails. The disappearance of the word “I”—the first-person singular—meant that the word “we”—the first-person plural—took its place (as, in contemporary English, “you” is both singular and plural). The significance of this disappearance is that it obliterates human life. For a man, life as a man means life as a single, individual man with a unique consciousness. If human beings are deemed interchangeable, so that any differences between one and the other are deemed trivial, then there is no human life. The “monster We” takes with it, when it destroys the “I,” the “steel towers, the flying ships, the power wires” (102). No other work in the genre posited such a cause.

The key event, the climax, is an intellectual event: the hero’s discovery of the word “I”; he recognizes that the concept it names is in fact what has disappeared from his world, and he resolves to fight to bring that concept back to the world. The heroes of “The Place of the Gods” and “The Machine Stops” make important discoveries about past or present circumstances, but their discoveries concern facts, not ideas. The intellectual event is entirely private. The hero discovers the word through his reading: he does not record the specific moment of his discovery, and he does not share his discovery with the woman he loves until he has taken several days to experience it on his own. None of the other works discussed presents an intellectual event as its key event.

The first-person narration, to be sure, may have been suggested to Ayn Rand by Benét's John (and by Zamyatin's D-503, Dostoevsky's Underground Man, and Wells's Time Traveller before him). It is not her usual choice. She had chosen first-person narration when she was learning to write in English, for the early short story "The Husband I Bought," but uses it only rarely in her full-length fiction (e.g., Jeff Allen's account of Starnesville in *Atlas Shrugged* and John Galt's first-person version of the start of the strike). Why would she choose it here? Perhaps because the use of the first-person-plural—where the first-person-singular is needed—shocks and annoys the reader into a state of anger with the world here presented. Because (perhaps) it allowed her to adapt to her own purposes the Russian literary device of the *skaz*, in which marked language conveys the point of view of a narrator who knows less than the author and thus functions simultaneously as narration and characterization. But most of all because the first person is exactly what she needs for a book about the discovery of individualism, of personhood itself.

*Anthem* is different from Ayn Rand's full-length novels in focusing on the intellectual event of the *discovery* of individualism. But, as she wrote in her open letter "To the Readers of *The Fountainhead*,"<sup>113</sup> she formed the intention to write about individualism at the same day and hour when she decided to become a writer. The very writing of this piece showed the importance for her of the first-person singular. Her assignment was to produce a short biographical sketch. "After many tries, I found it impossible to do it in the third person, as an article about me written by somebody else."<sup>114</sup> Because all of her work deals with the theme of individualism itself, it is therefore right to see crucial links between this text and others, especially her novels. *Anthem*—in essence and even in details—is more like Ayn Rand's other fiction than it is like anything else in world literature.

In *We the Living*, Andrei's speech to the Party Club makes explicit this theme:

Every man worth calling a man lives for himself. The one who doesn't—doesn't live at all. You cannot change it. You cannot 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 cannot enslave man's mind, you can only destroy it. (408)<sup>115</sup>

The world we see in *Anthem* demonstrates the truth of Andrei's statement. The We-world has not enslaved the mind, only destroyed it, but a hero recovers the Unspeakable Word and expects to make it count again, because that which the earlier heroes thought was lost can never be lost. Andrei's formulation, drawn from the 1959 edition, is more explicit than the 1936 version, especially in referring to the knowledge of how to say "I"—the very subject of *Anthem*.

The idea, though, is present in Kira's speech to Andre: the idea that the distinct, individual consciousness is what makes one a living being:

I was born and I knew I was alive and I knew what I wanted. What do you think is alive in me? Why do you think I'm alive? Because I have a stomach and eat and digest the food? Because I breathe and work and produce more food to digest? Or because I know what I want, and that something which knows how to want—isn't that life itself? (*We the Living*, 404)

*Anthem* is an extrapolation, in fantasy, of the ultimate purpose and nature of the collectivist state of Soviet Russia, in its denial of the value of the individual. The two are, of

course, far apart regarding a primary literary attribute: *We the Living* is Ayn Rand's most tightly plotted novel, and *Anthem*, she comments, is plotless. But *Anthem*, in addition to sharing with *We the Living* an individualist theme and the specific reference to the "I," has some other parallels (not surprising, given that the two were written close in time).

One is that characters are described as understanding without words. Kira "had known something which no human words could ever tell and she knew it now" (*We the Living*, 464). When Liberty says, "You are not one of our brothers, Equality 7-2751, for we do not wish you to be," he thinks: "We can not say what they meant, for there are no words for their meaning, but we know it without words and we knew it then" (43). In both cases, there are in fact words for the experiences—for the sanctity of life and for the glory of love—but it is also true that the characters reach their understanding without words, and are described as being conscious of that understanding at a particular moment.

Another is the description of the heroines' eyes. Liberty's eyes "were dark and hard and glowing" (39)—and in the manuscript, "as a storm cloud" (36A). Kira's are the "gray of storm clouds" (*We the Living*, 44); the description suggests intensity and barely controlled passion. The heroines, moreover, have in common the willingness to forsake all else, to leave everything they know, in order to follow the heroes immediately and without question (in Liberty's case, without even being asked). *We the Living*, moreover, has a parallel to Liberty's yielding control of her actions and future to the hero's wishes, her begging him not to send her away—a submission and entreaty more explicit and extreme, especially in the 1938 edition, than in any other romantic relationship in Ayn Rand's fiction. The story of "Kira's Viking" (cut from the manuscript) ends with the queen-priestess of the sacred city at the feet of the conquering Viking, her hair sweeping the steps of the tower, her breasts touching the ground, her hands "still and helpless on the steps, the palms turned up, hungry in silent entreaty. But it was not mercy they were begging of him."<sup>116</sup> In the 1938 version of *Anthem*, Liberty is described as follows: "Then they knelt, and their golden head was bowed before us, and their hands lay at our feet, palms up, limp and pleading."<sup>117</sup> In both cases, the submitting women are shown elsewhere as strong and defiant.

"Kira's Viking" also includes another sentence that looks forward to *Anthem*: "And the earth lay still, tense in reverent waiting, as if its very heart and meaning were rising to the morning sky; and the morning was like a slow, triumphant overture for the song to come."<sup>118</sup>

In the 1938 version of *Anthem*, we see the motif of the "waiting" of the earth:

Beyond the window, the moon is dripping silver upon the leaves, upon the peaks of mountains far away. The earth is still and blue and white. The earth seems waiting, waiting for some order which is to come from us. This earth is new, this world is ours to rule. We cannot know what word we are to give, nor what great deed this world expects of us. But it is waiting. We know that it is telling us it has great gifts to lay before us, but it wishes a greater gift from us. We are to bring the miracle that shall awaken life and give its heart, its aim, its highest meaning to all this silent beauty sleeping beyond the valley, beneath a cloudless sky.<sup>119</sup>

The passages just quoted, of course, also look forward to *The Fountainhead*, which Ayn Rand was planning during the summer when she wrote *Anthem*. In the opening scene of the novel, Roark looks at nature, as did *Anthem*'s hero, expecting to rule it.

He looked at the granite. To be cut, he thought, and made into walls. He looked at a tree. To be split and made into rafters. He looked at a streak of rust on

the stone and thought of iron ore under the ground. To be melted and to emerge as girders against the sky.

These rocks, he thought, are here for me; waiting for the drill, the dynamite and my voice; waiting to be split, ripped, pounded, reborn; waiting for the shape my hands will give them. (16)

And the post-*Fountainhead* version of *Anthem*, not surprisingly, names—more clearly than did the 1938 version—the human function of shaping nature to our needs:

And now we look upon the earth and sky. This spread of naked rock and peaks and moonlight is like a world ready to be born, a world that waits. It seems to us it asks a sign from us, a spark, a first commandment. We cannot know what word we are to give, nor what great deed this earth expects to witness. We know it waits. It seems to say it has great gifts to lay before us, but it wishes a greater gift from us. We are to speak. We are to give its goal, its highest meaning to all this glowing space of rock and sky. (92–93)

*Anthem*, like *The Fountainhead*, celebrates man’s control of nature. The “meaning of life,” as Roark says, is one’s work: “The material the earth offers you and what you make of it” (*Fountainhead*, 551).

The connections between *Anthem* and *The Fountainhead* are intimate and fundamental. Ayn Rand frequently described these texts as alike, with *Anthem* as an “ancestor” of *The Fountainhead*, with the “same theme, though in an entirely different form and on a much smaller scale.”<sup>120</sup> In 1944, she told her agent that *Anthem* was “too short a book, on the same theme” to be published right after *The Fountainhead*.<sup>121</sup> Roark’s speech, surveying history as the record of the creators martyred for their discoveries, specifically names Prometheus “chained to a rock and torn by vultures—because he had stolen the fire of the gods” (*Fountainhead*, 678). “Prometheus” is the name chosen by the hero of *Anthem* when he names his nature.

Both heroes look back on the price paid by the martyrs. The hero of *Anthem* pays tribute to the discoverers (“every beam had come from the thought of some one man, each in his day down the ages” [102]), to those who fought the Councils of Scholars, to those who “perished with their banners smeared by their own blood” (103). He wishes he could tell them that “that which they died to save can never perish” (104). The hero of *The Fountainhead* pays tribute to the “self-sufficient, self-motivated, self-generated” creators who achieved “the things which are the glory of mankind,” to their battle, to their suffering. He is willing to spend ten years in prison as an “act of loyalty” to “every creator who ever lived and was made to suffer”—but he expects to win, as he believes that all “men of unborrowed vision” have fought, suffered, paid—and won (*Fountainhead*, 678–79, 685, 678).

The enemy principle, too, is the same in both. The world we see in *Anthem* is the material form of Ellsworth Toohey’s dream, which I quoted earlier: “Let progress stop. Let all stagnate. There’s equality in stagnation. All subjugated to the will of all. Universal slavery—without even the dignity of a master. Slavery to slavery. A great circle—and a total equality. The world of the future” (*Fountainhead*, 639).

*The Fountainhead* also contains verbal parallels with *Anthem* and its central device: the word “I” as an expression of the concept of individualism. We hear it in Roark’s reply to Dominique when she says that, if he asked, she would live only as his wife or property:



If you married me now, I would become your whole existence. But I would not want you then. You would not want yourself—and so you would not love me long. To say “I love you” one must know first how to say the “I.” (*Fountainhead*, 376)

We hear it again when Dominique allows Peter Keating to understand what is missing in their marriage, and in him, i.e., the “thing that thinks and values and makes decisions” (*Fountainhead*, 425). He tells her:

“You’re not here. You’ve never been here. If you’d tell me that the curtains in this room are ghastly and if you’d rip them off and put up some you like—something of you would be real, here, in this room. But you never have. You’ve never told the cook what dessert you liked for dinner. You’re not here, Dominique. You’re not alive. Where’s your I?”

“Where’s yours, Peter?” she asked quietly. (*Fountainhead*, 425)

She continues:

“My real soul, Peter? It’s real only when it’s independent—you’ve discovered that, haven’t you? It’s real only when it chooses curtains and desserts—you’re right about that—curtains, desserts and religions, Peter, and the shapes of buildings.” (*Fountainhead*, 426)

Dominique, in speaking of the “I,” refers to what amount to the Virtues of Preference, on whatever scale.

Another—and subtler—allusion to the “I” appears in the characterization of Gail Wynand. When he reads in Ellsworth Toohey’s post-Cortlandt column an attack on Roark’s “antisocial individualism,” he hastens to his desk.

He had to write the editorial that would explain and counteract. He had to hurry. He felt no right to any minute that passed with the thing unwritten.

The pressure disappeared with the *first word* he put on paper. He thought—while his hand moved rapidly—what a power there was in words; later, for those who heard them, but first for *the one* who found them; a healing power, a solution, like the breaking of a barrier. He thought, perhaps the basic secret the scientists have never discovered, the first fount of life, is that which happens when *a thought takes shape in words*. (*Fountainhead*, 642, emphasis added)

This passage (which was further developed in the manuscript of the novel) underlines the significance of language.<sup>122</sup> Finding the words—even the first word—is a victory for Wynand, as losing the words—especially the Unspeakable Word—was, for the society in *Anthem*, a defeat.

But there is more. In his writing here, in his passion to express for the first time his own values in the pages of *The Banner*, the newspaper he had called his: “He had dropped his usual editorial ‘we’” (*Fountainhead*, 642). To disown Toohey and to defend Roark, he needs a word—and a soul—that he has not had occasion to use before: he needs the “I.”

But after he yields to the *Banner*’s board of directors, after he tragically abandons his crusade, he buys a copy of the newspaper to read its editorial. “He thought: it is right that I should be the last to learn what I have said” (*Fountainhead*, 661). And, when he does, he reads

an editorial signed “Gail Wynand”—beginning with the editorial “we.” The “we” he tried to free himself from, is restored, and replaces his own voice. Literally and spiritually, Wynand has lost his “I.”

Has he lost it permanently? After the trial, Roark writes in a letter: “What you think you’ve lost can neither be lost nor found” (*Fountainhead*, 664). The letter is returned unopened. Roark’s statement may reflect the passage from Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil* that stood at the head of the manuscript of *The Fountainhead*:

it is some fundamental certainty which a noble soul has about itself, something which is not to be sought, is not to be found, and perhaps, also, is not to be lost.—  
*The noble soul has reverence for itself.* (*Fountainhead*, x)

The hero of *Anthem*, in a similar spirit, contemplates the heroes who, as we recall, died with their banners smeared with their own blood; he wishes he could tell them that the battle they lost can never be lost.

And Roark—speaking for the last time to the man he loved best in the world, and speaking also of the world itself—tells Wynand the same thing:

“Mankind will never destroy itself, Mr. Wynand. Nor should it think of itself as destroyed. Not so long as it does things such as this.”

“As what?”

“As the Wynand Building.” (*Fountainhead*, 691)

Wynand, in fact, has devoted some thought to himself as an entity, to his *self*. He imagines saying, to a “supreme judge”:

I am Gail Wynand, the man who has committed every crime except the foremost one: that of ascribing futility to the wonderful fact of existence and seeking justification beyond myself. This is my pride: that now, thinking of the end, I do not cry like all the men of my age: but what was the use and the meaning? *I* [emphasis his] was the use and meaning. I, Gail Wynand. That I lived and that I acted. (*Fountainhead*, 550)

His explicitness here recalls the discovery of the self on the part of the hero of *Anthem*.

I wished to know the meaning of things. I am the meaning. I wished to find a warrant for being. I need no warrant for being, and no word of sanction upon my being. I am the warrant and the sanction. (94)

The 1938 version of this passage refers to “sanction,” but not to “meaning.” By the time she revised *Anthem* after writing *The Fountainhead*, she had found more of the words she needed, including the one she used for Wynand.

In the 1938 version of the following paragraph in the eleventh chapter of *Anthem*, the hero states:

All things come to my judgment, and I weigh all things, and I seal upon them my “Yes” or my “No.” (128)

This phrasing (which, as Robert Mayhew notes, has a parallel in Nietzsche) has a counterpart in *The Fountainhead*, where it is clearer than in the original *Anthem*. Roark tells Wynand:

What you feel in the presence of the thing you admire is just one word—"Yes." . . . But the ability to say "Yes" or "No" is the essence of all ownership. It's your ownership of your own ego. Your soul, if you wish. Your soul has a single basic function—the act of valuing. "Yes" or "No," "I wish" or "I do not wish." You can't say "yes" without saying "I." (*Fountainhead*, 539)

The choice of "Yes" or "No," then, is tantamount—in *The Fountainhead* as in *Anthem*—to the "I." The same language appears, moreover, in Ayn Rand's notes of April 26, 1946, for *Atlas Shrugged*, written very close in time to the revision work on *Anthem*. Ayn Rand commented that the parasites, her villains, "will never say 'yes' nor 'no'—on anything."<sup>123</sup>

A further indication that *Anthem* is part of Ayn Rand's ongoing intellectual work appears in her journal during the earliest planning of *The Fountainhead*. In her notes of December 4, 1935, she writes:

Returning to the immediate purpose of the book: A new set of values is needed to combat this modern dreariness, whether it be communism (which I may not include in the book), or the sterile, hopeless cynicism of the modern age. That new faith is *Individualism* in all its deepest meaning and implications, such as has never been preached before: individualism of the spirit, of ethics, or philosophy, not merely the good old "rugged individualism" of small shopkeepers. Individualism as a religion and a code, not merely as an economic practice. . . . A revival (or perhaps the first birth) of the word "*I*" as the holiest of holies and the reason of reasons.

. . . We have developed technically—oh yes!—but spiritually we are far below Renaissance Italy. In fact, we *have no* spiritual life in the grand manner, in the sense it used to be understood.

Is it the fault of machines? Is the twentieth century incapable and unfit for my spiritual exaltation? *Or*—is it only that little word "I," which, after twenty centuries of Christianity's efforts, has been erased from human consciousness, and along with it took everything that *was* human consciousness?<sup>124</sup>

Ayn Rand, at this point, did not state the incompatibility between collectivism and continued technological development. She did, however, underline the word "I" itself as a symbol, and as something that could be lost. She identified worship of the ego as the proper kind of reverence. She disagreed with the idea that machines (as Zamyatin or Huxley maintained) were responsible for the spiritual debasement of the modern age. Less than two years later, she took a "writer's vacation" from planning *The Fountainhead* to write about the loss of the "I," in an anthem to the sacredness of that word.

And, although Ayn Rand said that *Anthem* did not have a plot,<sup>125</sup> it is worth noting that the story contains a narrative element significant in the plots of the novels to follow, i.e., the double creative achievement. In all three works, the heroes begin by accomplishing feats of genius in the material world: the light bulb in *Anthem*, the buildings in *The Fountainhead*, the motor in *Atlas Shrugged*. They go on to identify life-or-death principles in the spiritual realm: the

word “I,” the principle of first-handedness, the morality of life. The principles are necessary to protect the feats of genius.

All three books, too, share an emphasis articulated in the description of Monadnock Valley, from the perspective of Steven Mallory:

There is no glory in war, and no beauty in crusades of men. But this was a battle, this was an army and a war—and the highest experience in the life of every man who took part in it. Why? What was the root of the difference and the law to explain it? . . . The hills rose to the sky around them, as a wall of protection. And they had another protection—the architect who walked among them, down the snow or the grass of the hillsides, over the boulders and the piled planks, to the drafting tables, to the derricks, to the tops of rising walls—the man who had made this possible—the thought in the mind of that man—and not the content of that thought, nor the result, not the vision that had created Monadnock Valley, nor the will that had made it real—but the method of his thought, the rule of its function—the method and rule which were not like those of the world beyond the hills. That stood on guard over the valley and over the crusaders within it.

(*Fountainhead*, 508)

The reference to a battle, an army, a war, and a crusade suggest the conclusion of *Anthem*. Although the hero’s fort is located on a mountain rather than in a valley, other elements are the same: he plans to lead a crusade of men, he is prepared to fight, and he expects to win because of the power of his mind: “For they have nothing to fight me with, save the brute forces of their numbers. I have my mind” (100).

Monadnock Valley and the mountaintop, though, are significantly parallel to Atlantis, the valley of *Atlas Shrugged*. There too a group of chosen (and choosing) men are engaged in a war with everything on the outside, and again they are protected by “the method of [a man’s] thought, the rule of its function.” The hero of *Anthem* plans to “build a barrier of wires around my home, and across the paths which lead to my home; a barrier light as a cobweb, more impassable than granite; a barrier my brothers will never be able to cross” (100). Galt’s Gulch was protected by the ray screen, a similarly light but impassable barrier.

There are additional parallels. John Galt, Francisco tells Dagny, is “Prometheus who changed his mind. After centuries of being torn by vultures in payment for having brought to men the fire of the gods, he broke his chains and he withdrew his fire—until the day when men withdraw their vultures.”<sup>126</sup> The hero of *Anthem* takes the name of Prometheus, and pays tribute to the way the spirit of man broke through chains (101–2). Galt, like the hero of *Anthem*, undergoes torture, without surrender. The Prometheus of *Atlas Shrugged* does by design what the Prometheus of *Anthem* did under force: he works at a menial job, the equivalent of the position of street-sweeper in *Anthem*. The hero of *Anthem*—in saying “I ask none to live for me, nor do I live for any others” (96)—speaks virtually the words of Galt’s oath: “I swear—by my life and my love of it—that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine.”<sup>127</sup>

From the perspective of the utopian, dystopian, and anti-utopian novels, *Atlas Shrugged* includes elements of all three. Starnesville is the anti-utopia: a planned community gone wrong. The world at large is a dystopia (but *not* an anti-utopia); it has disintegrated, but not by design, because of bad ideas—and because of the “Prometheus who changed his mind.” And Atlantis is a genuine utopia, as a small-scale model, of proper human life based on a proper philosophy: the

title for the second chapter of Part 3, accordingly, is “The Utopia of Greed.” The chapters in which Dagny visits Atlantis are, in narrative approach, somewhat like the “tours” by which foreigners are introduced to utopian societies in such works as Thomas More’s *Utopia*, Francis Bacon’s *The New Atlantis*, and Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*.

*Anthem*, although uncharacteristic of Ayn Rand’s fiction in both length and type, is nonetheless uniquely hers, and part of her ongoing progress toward her goal as a writer. She conceived of *Anthem* in Russia, before she wrote any of her novels. She wrote *Anthem* in 1937, while she was planning *The Fountainhead*; she revised *Anthem* for American publication in 1946, while she was planning *Atlas Shrugged*. Small in size, it is nonetheless large in scope. *Anthem* could have been written by no one but the author of *We the Living*, *The Fountainhead*, and *Atlas Shrugged*.

Ayn Rand, in between *We the Living* and *The Fountainhead*, wrote quickly for serial publication a novella she hoped to publish in the sort of magazine that had published Stephen Vincent Benét’s “The Place of the Gods.”<sup>128</sup> But *Anthem*, in essence, was no more like its literary brothers than Equality 7-2751 was like his. Ayn Rand knew, from her youth in Soviet Russia, that the collective as such was evil, that the individual as such was sacred, and that the former was out to destroy the latter, to control the individual—body and soul. In all of her writing, she made that point, and accordingly *Anthem* resembles her other fiction much more than it does the writings of anyone else. Not only that, but it is more different from several of its analogues than may at first appear. It is not only different, but opposite—specifically regarding the relation between the progress of scientific knowledge and the society’s respect for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Rather than associating science with the means of enslavement, she presents a world in which the loss of knowledge accompanies the loss of freedom, and in which the rediscovery of the “I” is made by a scientist who first rediscovers electricity.

Within the genre of the dystopia, the future gone wrong, *Anthem* stands not as prophecy but as warning. In her novella as in her longest novel, Ayn Rand’s purpose in writing the book was “to prevent itself from becoming prophetic.”<sup>129</sup> As she wrote to Linda Jenkins, a high school senior:

In regard to *Anthem*, I did not imply that future generations will necessarily collapse into collectivism. There is no pre-determined historical necessity. The course of history is determined by men’s philosophical convictions. If men hold an altruist-collectivist philosophy, then they will reach a society on the order of the one presented in *Anthem*. If they choose a philosophy of reason-individualism-capitalism, then they will achieve a cultural renaissance.<sup>130</sup>

She added: “My novel *Atlas Shrugged* deals with these issues at much greater length.” And so it does.

But *Anthem* also stands alone, uniquely valuable in its own right. As she wrote to Newman Flower, *Anthem*’s first publisher: “this story [is] more precious to me than anything I have ever considered writing. It is so very personally mine, it is, in a way, my manifesto, my profession of faith, the essence of my entire philosophy.”<sup>131</sup>

## NOTES

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1. Biographical interviews (Ayn Rand Archives).
  2. "Questions and Answers on *Anthem*," in *The Ayn Rand Column*, second edition, ed. Peter Schwartz (New Milford, CT: Second Renaissance, 1998), 123.
  3. For her comments on fantasy, see Ayn Rand, *The Art of Fiction: A Guide for Writers and Readers*, ed. Tore Boeckmann (New York: Plume, 2000), 169–72.
  4. John J. Pierce, *Foundations of Science Fiction: A Study in Imagination and Evolution* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1987), 168.
  5. Biographical interviews (Ayn Rand Archives).
  6. Biographical interviews (Ayn Rand Archives).
  7. July 31, 1937, CCX, 10–11, 59–60, reprinted as "By the Waters of Babylon" in Stephen Vincent Benét, *Thirteen O'Clock: Stories of Several Worlds* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1937), 3–20. John J. Pierce, a science-fiction scholar, has independently identified this story as the one Ayn Rand read. After researching "The Place of the Gods" for my essay, I read his personal communication about this story to the Ayn Rand Institute, and contacted him. I have learned from his books and from wide-ranging conversations.
  8. *Selected Letters of Stephen Vincent Benét*, ed. Charles A. Fenton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), 301.
  9. Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Essays and Lays of Ancient Rome* (London: Longman, 1909), 548. Regarding the cultural pervasiveness of this image, see Robert Dingley, "The Ruins of the Future: Macaulay's New Zealander and the Spirit of the Age." *Histories of the Future: Studies in Fact, Fantasy and Science Fiction*, eds. Alan Sandison and Robert Dingley (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2000), 17. The full article is 15–33.
  10. Fenton, *Selected Letters*, 301–2. John J. Pierce pointed out, in a personal communication, that Benét's story, unlike Macaulay's prototype, is a post-holocaust quest story, a distinct sub-genre.
  11. *Selected Works of Stephen Vincent Benét* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1942), vol. 1, 448–54.
  12. *Selected Works*, vol. 1, 457–61, 464–68.
  13. Ayn Rand, *The Romantic Manifesto: A Philosophy of Literature*, revised edition (New York: Signet, 1975), 109.
  14. Richard C. Borden, "H. G. Wells' 'Door in the Wall' in Russian Literature." *Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 36, no. 3 (Fall 1992), 334. The full article is 323–38.
  15. Rand, *Art of Fiction*, 170–71.
  16. H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine. The War of the Worlds: Critical Edition*, edited by Frank D. McConnell (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 52, 62.
  17. Ayn Rand, *Anthem* (London: Cassell and Co., 1938), 142.
  18. Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* (New York: Random House, 1957; Signet thirty-fifth anniversary paperback edition, 1992), 162. John J. Pierce brought to my attention this passage, which he describes as "Wellsian." See his *When World Views Collide: A Study in Imagination and Evolution* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1989), 162.
  19. John W. Campbell, "Twilight" in *Science Fiction Hall of Fame*, vol. 1, ed. Robert Silverberg (New York: Avon, 1971), 56–57. The full story is 39–61. The story was originally published in *Astounding Science Fiction*, November 1934, under the pseudonym "Don A. Stuart."
  20. Campbell, "Twilight," 60–61.
  21. Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, 12.
  22. Campbell, "Twilight," 61.
  23. The versions of the novel differ in some details and episodes, but in few of the aspects discussed here. Gareth Davies-Morris analyzes the changes in "Afterword," *The Sleeper Awakes* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990). Hereafter this edition will be designated "*Sleeper* 1910."

For the text of the 1899 version (to be designated “*Sleeper* 1899”), I refer to *When the Sleeper Wakes* (New York: Random, 2003).

24. “The Silliest Film: Will Machinery Make Robots of Men?” (1929), reprinted in *Authors on Film*, ed. Harry M. Geduld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 59–67.

25. Ayn Rand rated the film as a whole 5+ (her highest rating, and one consistent with her view that Lang was a great artist—cf. *Romantic Manifesto*, 72). Her low rating of the story (specifically, 0–) may reflect the fact that, in 1927, the only prints available for screening displayed a shortened version of the film, with a plot line reshaped by Channing Pollock, whom she was later to know as a co-crusader for individualism in the 1940s. See Ayn Rand, *Russian Writings on Hollywood*, ed. Michael S. Berliner (Marina del Rey, CA: Ayn Rand Institute Press, 1999), 207–9; Enno Patalas, *Making of Metropolis*, included in *Metropolis: Restored, Authorized Version*, King Video, 2002; Channing Pollock, *Harvest of My Years* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943), 232–33.

26. See Mark Hillegas, *The Future as Nightmare: H. G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians*, 1967, reprint edition (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1974), 47 and *passim*. Hillegas also discusses two short stories by Wells that are part of the same imagined future history: “A Story of Days to Come” (1897) and “A Dream of Armageddon” (1901).

27. See Hillegas, *Future as Nightmare*, 63–81, for a thoughtful consideration of this book and a related text, *Men Like Gods* (New York: Macmillan, 1923).

28. H. G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 8.

29. I.e., a designated, non-hereditary group of leaders, explicitly derived from Plato’s Guardians, in the *Republic*.

30. Hillegas, *Future as Nightmare*, 70.

31. “Introduction” to *Collected Short Stories* (New York: Penguin, 1976). There are several candidates for this “earlier heaven.” Hillegas suggests *A Modern Utopia* (*Future as Nightmare*, 86–87). Wilfred Stone nominates *The Time Machine* (*The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E. M. Forster* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966], 152). Pierce proposes “The Man of the Year Million” (Pierce, 1987, 98).

32. Pagination refers to E. M. Forster, *Collected Short Stories*. The full story is 109–46.

33. Richard DeMille to Ayn Rand, 22 November 1946 (Ayn Rand Archives).

34. Michael S. Berliner, ed., *Letters of Ayn Rand* (New York: Dutton, 1995), 350.

35. Christopher Collins, *Evgenij Zamjatin: An Interpretive Study* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1973), 9. The name of the author can be transliterated as “Zamjatin,” “Zamiatin,” and “Zamyatin.” Collins renders the writer’s name “Zamjatin,” according to a transliteration style that allows exact equivalents for Russian letters. For personal names in the text, I have used the most common English equivalents; for bibliographic identifications and for words as words, I have used the Library of Congress system for transliteration of modern Russian with the diacritical marks omitted. I have left unchanged the alternative transliterations used by other scholars.

36. Edward J. Brown, *The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature 1928–1932* (New York: Octagon, 1971), 251.

37. For contemporary reminiscences of Zamyatin and information about Tsarist and Soviet literary cultures, see Iurii Annenkov, “Evgenii Zamiatin,” reprinted in *Dnevnik moikh vstrech*, Iurii Annenkov (New York: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1966), 246–86.

38. See Clarence Brown’s introduction to his translation of Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We* (New York: Penguin, 1993), xi–xiv.

39. Although the novel associates mathematics with the basic values of the world of “We,” Zamyatin—who surely knew better than to attack mathematics as such—is not unequivocally anti-math. As Brett Cooke observes: “For all the lip service it pays to mathematical concepts and great mathematicians, the Single State is mathematically naive and often ignorant.” See his *Human Nature in Utopia: Zamyatin’s We* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002), 67.

40. Zamyatin, *We*, trans. Brown, 206–7. Clarence Brown’s translation has been checked with the first full Russian edition, *My* (New York: Izdatel’svo imeni Chekhova, 1952).

41. See Christopher Collins, “Zamyatin, Wells and the Utopian Literary Tradition,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 44:103 (July 1966), 351–60.
42. Hillegas, *Future as Nightmare*, 106.
43. Hillegas, *Future as Nightmare*, 109.
44. Alex M. Shane, *The Life and Works of Evgenij Zamjatin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 31, 247–48.
45. The article “H. G. Wells” is available in Russian in *Litsa* (New York: Izdatel’stvo imeni Chekhova, 1955), 103–38 and, in English, in *A Soviet Heretic: Essays by Yevgeny Zamyatin*, ed. and trans. Mirra Ginsburg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 259–90.
46. Among the many treatments of *We* and Wells, the most useful are Hillegas, *Future as Nightmare*, Collins, “Zamyatin, Wells and the Utopian Literary Tradition,” and Patrick Parrinder, “Imagining the Future: Zamyatin and Wells,” *Science Fiction Studies* 1, 1 (1973), 17–26.
47. Biographical interviews (Ayn Rand Archives).
48. Biographical interviews (Ayn Rand Archives).
49. Gary Kern, “Introduction: The Ultimate Anti-Utopia,” in *Zamyatin’s We: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Gary Kern (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1988), 9. The full article is 9–21.
50. Discovering relevant information about any contact between the writers would require historical study—of Zamyatin’s writing and teaching, of the Soviet literary milieu, and of the lives of both writers in Petersburg in the early 1920s. One might, for example, investigate the possibility that she might have attended Zamyatin’s speech in late October, 1921, at an evening meeting of the House of Writers dedicated to the memory of Blok, her favorite poet (Shane, *Life and Works of Evgenij Zamjatin*, 35, 214). Such an inquiry would require Russian sources.
51. Shane, *Life and Works of Evgenij Zamjatin*, 83.
52. Elizabeth Stenbock-Fermor, “A Neglected Source of Zamyatin’s *We*” and “Addendum: ‘The New Utopia’” by Jerome K. Jerome, 171–85, in Kern, *Zamyatin’s We*. This source had not in fact been entirely “neglected”; Viktor Shklovsky, as indicated in Kern, *Zamyatin’s We*, 49, had, as early as 1927, been reminded of Jerome K. Jerome’s story.
53. Schwartz, *Ayn Rand Column*, 122.
54. Collins, *Zamjatin: An Interpretive Study*, 42. The original Russian text—“‘my’ v proletarskoi literature vytesniaet ‘ia’” [“we” in proletarian literature squeezes out “I”]—appears in *Osnovnye otlichitel’nye priznaki proletarskoi literatury*, in *Literaturnye manifesty*, edited by N. L. Brodskii (Munich: Fink, 1969), vol. 1, 155. See also Kathleen Lewis and Harry Weber, “Zamyatin’s *We*, the Proletarian Poets and Bogdanov’s *Red Star*,” in Kern, *Zamyatin’s We*, 186–208; see especially 206 for references to additional poems featuring the Russian word “my” (we).
55. Edward J. Brown, *Russian Literature since the Revolution*, revised and enlarged edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 54.
56. Quoted in English translation in Brown 1982, 54. The Russian text is in “O tendentsiakh proletarskoi kul’tury” in *Literaturnye manifesty*, I, 132–133.
57. I am quoting from Edward J. Brown’s translation in his *BRAVE NEW WORLD, 1984, and WE: An Essay on Anti-Utopia* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1976), 42. The Russian text appears in Vladimir Maiakovskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaja literatura, 1957), Vol. IV, 122.
58. References are to the Clarence Brown’s Penguin translation.
59. Alexander Voronsky, “Evgeny Zamyatin,” in Kern, *Zamyatin’s We*, 45. The full article is 25–48.
60. “Zamyatin and the Strugatskys: The Representation of Freedom in *We* and *The Snail on the Slope*” in Kern, *Zamyatin’s We*, 241. The full article is 236–59.
61. “Evgeny Zamyatin’s Auto-Interview,” in Kern, *Zamyatin’s We*, 297. The full article is 295–99.
62. Quoted in Shane, *Life and Works of Evgenij Zamjatin*, 145, from F. Lefèvre, “Une heure avec Zamiatine,” *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, no. 497 (April 23, 1932), 1. I have not been able to examine this text.



63. Cooke, *Human Nature in Utopia*, points out that the novel is not consistently anti-reason or anti-math, in that I-330 and her comrades make use of math (69).

64. For discussions of *We* in relation to Dostoevsky, see especially Richard A. Gregg, “Two Adams and Eve in the Crystal Palace: Dostoevsky, the Bible, and *We*” (1965), reprinted in Kern, *Zamyatin’s We*, 61–69. Of the many other discussions of Dostoevsky and Zamyatin, see especially Shane, *Life and Works of Evgenij Zamjatin*, 142–43; Robert Louis Jackson, “Zamiatin’s *We*” in *Dostoevskij’s Underground Man in Russian Literature* (The Hague: Mouton, 1958), 150–57. Gary Saul Morson, *The Boundaries of Genre: Dostoevsky’s Diary of a Writer and the Traditions of Literary Utopia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), especially 122–35.

65. *Notes from the Underground*, trans. David Magarshack, part I, chapter 4, in *Great Short Works of Fyodor Dostoevsky* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 273–75.

66. F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1973), vol. 6, 419. Translation mine.

67. Shane, *Life and Works of Evgenij Zamjatin*, 143, notes the parallel.

68. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Demons*, translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Knopf, 1994), 422. For the Russian text, see Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 10, 326. All passages from *Demons* have been compared with this Russian text. Gregg, 62–63 in Kern, *Zamyatin’s We*, identified the possible connection between Zamyatin’s title and Dostoevsky’s text.

69. Dostoevsky, *Demons*, 403–4.

70. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Vintage, 1991), 253. For the Russian text, see F. M. Dostoevskii, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1968), vol. 10, 325.

71. Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, 258.

72. Rand, *Romantic Manifesto*, 43, 86–88, 107, 114–15; *Art of Fiction*, 103, 175, 176.

73. Rand, *Romantic Manifesto*, 114–15.

74. Letters to John Loos, October 20 and November 11, 1949 (Ayn Rand Archives).

75. David Harriman, ed. *Journals of Ayn Rand* (New York: Dutton, 1997), 693.

76. Harriman, *Journals*, 437.

77. The single article dealing with the two writers is Aleksei Tsvetkov, “Dostoevskii i Ein Rand,” *Oktiabr* 3 (March 2002), 159–63. The article, which allots a few paragraphs to Ayn Rand, does not address her fiction in any detail.

78. Dostoevsky, *Demons*, 417–18.

79. Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943; Signet fiftieth anniversary paperback edition, 1993).

80. Dostoevsky, *Demons*, 418.

81. Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, 973.

82. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 20, 172. Translation mine.

83. Hillegas, *Future as Nightmare*, 110–20.

84. Shane, *Life and Works of Evgenij Zamjatin*, 140.

85. Alexandra Aldridge, *The Scientific World View in Dystopia* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), 53.

86. Pagination refers to Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (New York: Perennial, 1969).

87. Hillegas, *Future as Nightmare*, 118.

88. For more on Huxley and Dostoevsky, see Andrew Hacker, “Dostoevsky’s Disciples: Man and Sheep in Political Theory,” *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 17, issue 4 (1955), 590–613.

89. Several people mentioned it to her, including Hugh MacLennan (letter, March 26, 1944) and Richard Mealand (letter, February 11, 1947) (Ayn Rand Archives). She did not respond in writing to their comments.

90. Leonard Peikoff, ed., *The Early Ayn Rand: A Selection from Her Unpublished Fiction* (New York: New American Library, 1984; paperback edition, Signet, 1986), 316.

91. “Foreword,” Huxley, *Brave New World*, vii.

92. *Collected Essays: Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World 1968), vol. 3: *As I Please: 1943–1945*, 95. His letter to Gleb Struve is dated Feb. 17, 1944.

93. William Steinhoff, *George Orwell and the Origins of 1984* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973), 226–27.

94. Orwell, *Collected Essays*, vol. 4: *In Front of Your Nose 1945–1950*, 72. The review, which occupies pp. 72–75 in this volume, was originally published in January 4, 1946.

95. Orwell, *Collected Essays*, vol. 4, 73.

96. Orwell, *Collected Essays*, vol. 4, 74–75.

97. Orwell, *Collected Essays*, vol. 4, 75.

98. For a vehement claim that Orwell was deeply indebted to Zamyatin, see Isaac Deutscher, “1984—The Mysticism of Cruelty” (1954), reprinted in *George Orwell: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Raymond Williams (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 119–32. Orwell, according to Deutscher, borrowed the main elements—plot, characters, symbol, climate—from Zamyatin.

99. Steinhoff, *Orwell and the Origins of 1984*, 29.

100. For discussions of literary influences, see Steinhoff, *Orwell and the Origins of 1984*, and Jeffrey Meyers, *A Reader’s Guide to George Orwell* (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, 1977).

101. See Philip Rahv, “The Unfuture of Utopia” (1949) reprinted in *Modern Critical Views: George Orwell*, edited by Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea, 1987), 13–20. Rahv says that O’Brien “simultaneously recalls and refutes the ideas of Dostoyevski’s Grand Inquisitor” (17). See also Steinhoff, *Orwell and the Origins of 1984*, 137; Meyers, *Reader’s Guide to George Orwell*, 88; Adrian Wanner, “The Underground Man as Big Brother: Dostoevsky’s and Orwell’s Anti-Utopia,” *Utopian Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1997), 77–88.

102. References are to George Orwell, *1984* (New York: New American Library, 1981).

103. George Woodcock, *The Crystal Spirit: A Study of George Orwell* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), 215–16.

104. Steinhoff, 57–71, 231–33.

105. “Notes on the Way,” 1940, reprinted in Orwell, *The Collected Essays*, vol. 2: *My Country, Right or Left: 1940–1943*, 16.

106. Orwell, *Collected Essays*, vol. 4, 502.

107. Personal communication, Daphne Patai, July 13, 2002.

108. Review in *Daily Telegraph*, May 10, 1938, discussed in the present volume by Michael Berliner.

109. Harriman, *Journals*, 103. See also Rand, *Fountainhead*, 635.

110. Berliner, *Letters*, 310.

111. Edward Hunter, July 8, 1953 (Ayn Rand Archives).

112. Rand, *Art of Fiction*, 174.

113. 1946, reprinted in Berliner, *Letters*, 669–73.

114. Berliner, *Letters*, 233.

115. Ayn Rand, *We the Living*, sixtieth anniversary paperback edition (New York: Signet, 1996). The 1936 edition includes the same key statement: “No laws, no books, no G.P.U. will ever grow an extra nose on a human face. No Party will ever kill that thing in men which knows how to say ‘I’” (New York: Macmillan, 1936), 501.

116. Peikoff, *Early Ayn Rand*, 203.

117. Rand, *Anthem*, 110.

118. Peikoff, *Early Ayn Rand*, 203.

119. Rand, *Anthem* (1938), 125.

120. Berliner, *Letters*, 315.

121. Letter to Margot Johnson, February 1, 1944 (Ayn Rand Archives).

122. For a discussion of the passage as it appears in the manuscript, see my “Artist at Work: Ayn Rand’s Drafts for *The Fountainhead*,” *The Intellectual Activist*, vol. 15, no. 9 (Sept. 2001), 30.

123. Harriman, *Journals*, 454.

124. Harriman, *Journals*, 80–81.

125. Rand, *Art of Fiction*, 37–38.

126. Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, 480.

127. Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, 984.

128. In a 1944 letter, Ayn Rand told Gerald Loeb: “I would never set out to write a story for *Harper’s* or for *Click* or for anything. You don’t write stories that way. . . . First you write, then you decide where to submit it. Never, never, never vice versa” (Berliner, *Letters*, 158). Her actions do not contradict that advice. In her letter to Loeb, she is expressing disagreement with his assumption that the intended audience determines the nature of the literary work, and she is doing so in very strong terms. She does not, after all, write in order to be published—any more than Roark builds in order to have clients. The fundamental “story”—in *Anthem* as everywhere in her work—is hers. The idea was hers. The fantasy premise was hers. The venue was relevant only with regard to the projected length and the timing of the composition.

129. “Is Atlas Shrugging?” in Ayn Rand, *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* (New York: New American Library, 1966; expanded Signet paperback edition, 1967), 150.

130. May 2, 1964 (Ayn Rand Archives).

131. January 2, 1938 (Ayn Rand Archives). I acknowledge the helpful comments and suggestions of Onkar Ghate, Robert Mayhew, and Gregory Salmieri, my fellow participants in a colloquium sponsored by the Ayn Rand Institute.