

The Cult of Ayn

Jack Kettler

© 2000 by Jack Kettler

A Review of *Without A Prayer: Ayn Rand And The Close Of Her System*, by John W. Robbins (Hobbs, New Mexico: The Trinity Foundation, 1997).

In the quest to provide a basis for civil liberties and freedom in general, many have attempted to set forth a philosophical foundation. Building upon the right foundation is absolutely crucial. No matter how brilliantly elucidated a philosophy purporting to be the basis for freedom may be, having a faulty foundation will cause the whole edifice to eventually collapse.

Alissa Zinovievna Rosenbaum, known later by her writer's name Ayn Rand, sought to establish the philosophical basis for freedom using man's reason as the guide. This attempt on Rand's part would prove to be no small task since "at age thirteen she decided she was an atheist" (p.109). Robbins argues persuasively in this work that Rand's atheistic philosophy known as Objectivism, does not have satisfactory starting points or presuppositions which lead to freedom. Rand was a brilliant writer, novelist and philosopher but as Robbins points out it is incredible to believe that Rand, at the age thirteen, scrupulously considered the traditional arguments for God's existence and in addition also "excogitated refutations of them" (p.111).

Robbins faults Rand not for the use of logic but for not being logical enough, and relentlessly holds Rand to the standard of logical consistency. Robbins demonstrates conclusively that many of Rand's conclusions are wrong, such as her atheism and empiricism. Those who doubt Rand's commitment to empiricism and materialism are wrong, since Rand believed "at birth, a child's mind is *tabula rasa*" (p.29, classic empiricism) and "matter is indestructible, it changes its forms, but it cannot cease to exist" (p.120 materialism). Robbins also demonstrates that where Rand happened to be right in her conclusions (without logical defense), even these ideas were set within the context of error and are thus, invalidated.

In chapter three, titled "Imagining Knowledge", Robbins takes Rand's objectivist epistemology apart. He does this by showing repeated contradictions and equivocations on the part of Rand and her disciples. After reading Robbins' critical analyses, it can be reasonably concluded, along with him, that: "Rand's Objectivism, like the logical positivism of the twentieth century, is based on the logically absurd: ostensive

definitions” (p.73). Only the religiously irrational can justify their continued devotion. Robbins ably demonstrates that Rand's deductions from her axioms result in numerous contradictions, thus invalidating them. Therefore, Rand's axioms must be rejected as false.

In addition, and of particular value, is Robbins' expose of Rand's theology. The objectivist will no doubt dispute this by saying that Rand was an atheist and not religious. Rand was intensely religious. For example, “In the fictional character of John Galt, Rand fabricated her own messiah” (p.126). This is pagan idolatry, worshipping an invention of her own mind. Robbins shows how Rand deliberately smuggled Christian ideas into her theology by “investing the creature with the attributes of the Creator” (p.127). Robbins documents in pages 130-134 where Rand claims deity for man in her novel Anthem. So much for objectivist philosophy which is supposedly based upon man's reason apart from religious superstition. Rand in the end provided nothing more than a rehashing of the empirical materialistic philosophy of Marx and Lenin. She revealed her dependence on these philosophical assumptions numerous times. Robbins shows many examples of this in pages 136-141.

In two of the appendixes Robbins demonstrates through rigorous logical analysis that Leonard Peikoff and David Kelley, two of Rand's heirs, rather than advancing and clarifying objectivism have left it in shambles as a result of their own numerous contradictions and equivocations. Not only does Robbins demonstrate in this work the failure of Rand's system, he gives us a positive statement of Christian epistemology and theology. For those tempted to mock or dismiss the Christian epistemological construction set forth in this work and Robbins' devastating critique of Rand's philosophy those individuals should put their own belief system on the table for scrutiny and meet Robbins in the arena of biblical and logical consistency. The church is indeed indebted to Mr. Robbins for this invaluable work.

In conclusion, Rand's philosophy can never provide the basis for freedom since it is built upon a philosophy (empiric-materialism) which exalts man's reason as the final arbiter. This philosophy, upon which scientific socialism is based, has been used in history to murder countless millions of people. In light of her presuppositions, shared by some of history's most notorious communist murders, Rand's philosophy cannot provide the basis for a free society and is seen as nothing more than a series of unjustified irrational contradictory assertions. Rand's followers have overlooked the contradictions of objectivism because of her brilliant literary skills as a novelist and writer. In fact, her followers have turned her into a cult figure, which is evidenced by their devotion and glowing introductions to new editions of Rand's literary works. In the end, Rand is seen to be nothing more than a bitter antagonist of Christianity. She hated Ronald Reagan's minimal expression of Christianity so much that she wished to die if he was elected president. As Robbins brings to our attention, Rand may have gotten her wish: “He was inaugurated in 1981; she died in 1982” (p.xvii).

Mr. Kettler is an elder in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and Chairman of the Waco Committee with Citizens for the Constitution. Mr. Kettler is also a member of the John Birch Society.