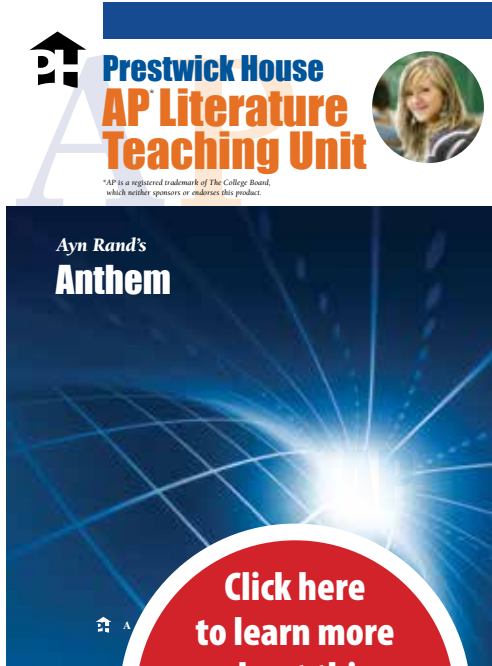




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Teaching Unit

Anthem

by Ayn Rand

Written by Rebecca Grudzina



Prestwick House

Item No. 302803

Anthem

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. analyze the use of the first-person character narrator.
2. analyze the diary format as a narrative technique.
3. identify the characteristics of the dystopian novella.
4. recognize the following plot components:
 - exposition
 - conflict
 - rising action
 - climax
 - resolution
5. trace the development of various motifs found in the novella:
 - darkness and light
 - ignorance and knowledge
 - transgression and damnation
6. trace the use and evolution of characters' names and identities in the novella.
7. distinguish between the two philosophical points of view central to this novella, collectivism and objectivism, and point to where and how each is presented.
8. analyze the novella's title and its relationship to the novella's theme.

Introductory Lecture

THE AUTHOR

Ayn Rand was born Alisa Zinov'yevna Rosenbaum in Saint Petersburg, Russia, in 1905. She was the eldest of three daughters (Alisa, Natasha, and Nora) of Zinovy Zacharovich Rosenbaum and Anna Borisovna Rosenbaum—agnostic and non-observant Jews. Rand was twelve at the time of the Russian revolution of 1917, and her family life was disrupted by the rise of the Bolshevik party.

She returned to St. Petersburg in 1921 to study at the University of Petrograd, where she encountered the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. The German philosopher's exaltation of the heroic and independent individual, who embraced egoism and rejected altruism, would have a strong impact on Rand's own philosophy.

In February 1926, at the age of 21, she immigrated to the United States, eventually making her way to Hollywood, where she met and married actor Frank O'Connor in 1929. They were married for fifty years, until O'Connor's death.

In 1931, Rand became a naturalized American citizen; she was immensely proud of the United States, saying of her adopted nation, "the United States of America is the greatest, the noblest and, in its original founding principles, the only moral country in the history of the world."

Rand died of heart failure on March 6, 1982, at her 34th Street home in New York City and was buried in the Kensico Cemetery in Valhalla, New York.

PHILOSOPHY IN RAND'S WORKS: COLLECTIVISM, INDIVIDUALISM, AND OBJECTIVISM

"Individual rights are not subject to a public vote; a majority has no right to vote away the rights of a minority; the political function of rights is precisely to protect minorities from oppression by majorities (and the smallest minority on earth is the individual)."

– Ayn Rand

"The right to the pursuit of happiness means man's right to live for himself, to choose what constitutes his own, private, personal happiness and to work for its achievement. Each individual is the sole and final judge in this choice. A man's happiness cannot be prescribed to him by another man or by any number of other men....These rights are the unconditional, personal, private, individual possession of every man, granted to him by the fact of his birth and requiring no other sanction. Such was the conception of the founders of our country, who placed individual rights above any and all collective claims."

– Ayn Rand

Collectivism is the term for any moral, political, or social viewpoint that emphasizes the importance of community and human interdependence over individual desire, effort, or need. Collectivist views treat group goals as superior to individual goals. These views are founded largely on the

Anthem

Chapter One

1. What is the mood of the beginning of the novella?

2. What is suspenseful about the opening lines of the narrative?

3. When do we first learn that the narrator is a single individual?

4. What is the immediate effect of discovering that the narrator speaks of himself in the first-person plural?

5. What is suggested by the fact that the speaker's height is considered "evil" by the Teachers and Leaders?

6. What collectivist mantras are presented in this first chapter?

Chapter Three

1. What does the society depicted in *Anthem* believe about truth and knowledge? What does the narrator's discovery prove about the nature of truth?

2. What is the discovery in nature that Equality makes?

Chapter Four

1. What name does the narrator eventually bestow on Liberty 5-3000?

2. What name does she give him? How is this name appropriate?

Chapter Six

1. How does the opening of Chapter Six contrast with the closing of Chapter Five?

2. Why does the narrator wait thirty days to escape from the Palace of Corrective Detention?

3. Describe the tone of the end of Chapter Six.

5. Why does the council reject Equality's invention?

6. How does Solidarity 8-1164's rejection of the light box reveal the absurdity of the Scholars' methods?

7. What is satirized in this episode?

8. What is the narrator's one regret at being an exile from his society?

Chapter Ten

1. What was the original purpose of the house the couple discovers?

2. What is the symbolic significance of all the windows and the light in the house?

3. List some of the things in the house that are different from the city the couple has left behind.

Chapter Twelve

1. What is the significance of the Golden One's saying, "I love you"?

2. What is the significance of the names the narrator chooses for himself and his companion?

3. What does the narrator now see as his destiny?

4. What specific plans does he have in regard to the house and the friends he left behind in the city?
