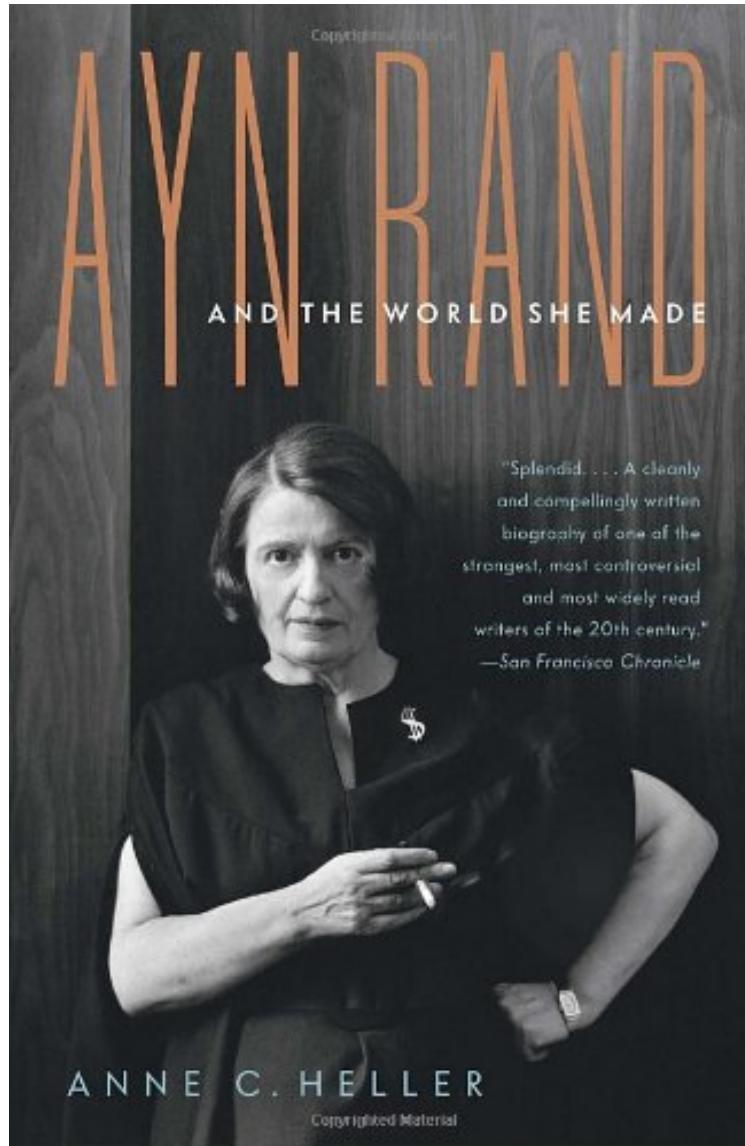


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Ayn Rand and the World She Made

Anne Conover Heller

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#595153 in Books Anne C Heller 2010-10-19 2010-10-19 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.98 x 1.20 x 5.241, 1.23 #File Name: 1400078938608 pages Ayn Rand and the World She Made | File size: 17.Mb

Anne Conover Heller : Ayn Rand and the World She Made before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ayn Rand and the World She Made:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great Read on Rand By Howard I. Schwartz I thought this was a fabulous biography. I'm not a fan of Ayn Rand's philosophy so I'll acknowledge that up front. And I knew little about Ayn Rand's life. I found this book incredibly insightful in the way that Heller wove back and forth between Rand's personal story and her characters and ideas in her fiction. Before reading this biography, I had little understanding of

Rand's Russian Jewish origin and the fact that she had lived through and witnessed her family suffering as a result of the Bolshevik revolution. That side of her story and the original research behind it is illuminating all by itself. But I also was transfixed by the sensitive look at the complicated relationships Rand had with her students, friends and husband. I'd highly recommend this book. For me, it had almost the quality of a detective story that made it hard to put down, while being very thoughtful and nuanced at the same time, and trying hard, in my view, to give a complete picture of Rand as a complex person. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Objective, Thorough Study of a Complex and Obsessed Person By Leonard Zane Very informative, and with an objective perspective. Here is Ayn Rand the human being: a person with some brilliant literary talent and philosophical insights -- coupled with monumental character flaws, contradictions, naiveté, and drastic errors of perception and judgment. Not a person one would want as a mother, and she rightly never desired to be one. Geniuses don't make small mistakes. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. focusing on a time in history and on an individual with the willingness to become great; we'll not see the likes of her again By Alain The book is a remarkable read, focusing on a time in history and on an individual with the willingness to become great; we'll not see the likes of her again.

A New York Times Notable Book A Chicago Tribune Favorite Book of the Year A San Francisco Chronicle Best Book of the Year Ayn Rand's books have attracted three generations of readers, shaped the Libertarian movement, influenced White House economic policies throughout the Reagan years and beyond, and inspired the Tea Party movement. Yet twenty-eight years after her death, readers know very little about her life. In this seminal biography, Anne C. Heller traces the controversial author's life from her childhood in Bolshevik Russia to her years as a Hollywood screenwriter, the publication of her blockbuster novels, and the rise and fall of the cult that worshipped her in the 1950s and 1960s. Based on original research in Russia and scores of interviews with Rand's acquaintances and former acolytes, *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* is a comprehensive and eye-opening portrait of one of the most significant and improbable figures of the twentieth century.

.com A QA with Anne C. Heller Question: Many people discover Ayn Rand's novels *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* as young adults, but you read her novels and essays in your forties. What, at that time, sparked your interest in Rand? What moved you to write her biography? Anne C. Heller: It's true that I didn't read Ayn Rand's popular novels in high school or college. I read them for the first time seven or eight years ago, while I was editing a trial issue of a new financial magazine at Cond Nast Publications. Suze Orman--the personal-finance author, who was contributing an article to the magazine--sent me a copy of the well-known "money speech" from *Atlas Shrugged*. In the novel, the speech is delivered by a young copper baron to an assembled crowd of liberal bureaucrats and corporate welfare-statists. He argues that money, far from being the root of all evil, as the liberals in the novel pretend to think, is really "the root of all good," and "the barometer of a society's virtue." The speech surprised me with its passion and seemingly air-tight logic and aroused my curiosity. So I read the books. At that time, Rand and her work weren't in the news, as they are now. Once I had finished *Atlas Shrugged* for the second time, I looked around to see what had been written about her. Later, I learned that the novels were still selling in the hundreds of thousands of copies every year and that she was influential among libertarians and certain conservatives; yet no full-scale, impartial biography of this extraordinary woman had been written. Only former disciples and detractors had published books about her. The time seemed right to take a fresh approach. Question: Do you think your experience with her work, philosophy, and life was different from those who read her in their adolescence? Anne C. Heller: Yes. I appreciated Rand's insights into the nature of power and her spectacular ability to integrate plot, character, and theme more than I might have when younger. And, I was less susceptible to her romantic celebration of heroic achievement. Question: *Ayn Rand and the World She Made* is the first objective, investigative biography of Ayn Rand. What new sources did you use for your research? Did you travel for your research? Anne C. Heller: The only other biography was written in the 1980s by Barbara Branden, who was Rand's friend and disciple as well as her young lover's former wife. The book was partly in the form of a memoir and was also based on limited information; for example, Rand was born and educated in Russia, but at that time the Russian archives were closed. Thus Branden had to take Rand's word for most of the events of her childhood. I used a Russian research team to gather new details of Rand's family background, her parents' professional lives, and her schooling up to and throughout her university studies, some of which contradicted what Rand had said about herself. I used published and unpublished letters and hundreds of hours of taped, unpublished interviews to document many episodes in Rand's life that she never talked about, including influences she buried and help she later denied. I traveled all over the United States to work in relevant archives and to conduct interviews with her former friends and followers, many now in their eighties and nineties, who spoke surprisingly candidly about her capacity for cruelty as well as her genius and personal magnetism. I had three lengthy interviews with her long-time lover, Nathaniel Branden, now eighty, and spoke with most members of what used to be called the "inner circle" of her cult following. I also had access to interviews with her elderly Russian sister and with close friends from the 1920s and 1930s, all now deceased. Question: What surprised you most? Anne C. Heller: I was surprised by many things--by how deeply her hostility to liberal social programs was rooted in her Russian childhood, by her remarkable insight into

the psychology of envy and mediocrity, by her personal courage, and by her unfailing ability to spot a flaw in any opposing argument. I was also surprised to discover that many of her former followers, though personally damaged by her temper and her moral absolutism, remembered her as the most important and beneficent person in their lives. They had been wounded by her and yet loved her and were protective of her memory and legend. Question: Why does Rand remain a bestseller? Anne C. Heller: She certainly does remain popular. In a 1991 poll, sponsored by the Library of Congress and the Book of the Month Club, Americans named Atlas Shrugged the book that had most influenced their lives after the Bible. In a separate 1998 poll by Modern Library, readers chose Atlas Shrugged and The Fountainhead as number one and two on a list of the one hundred greatest novels of the twentieth century, and Rands other two novels, Anthem and We the Living, placed seventh and eighth on the list. Combined, more than twelve million copies of her two best-known novels have been sold in the U.S. alone, and sales this year have reached an all-time high. Like Holden Caulfield and Huckleberry Finn, Rands fictional heroes strike each new generation as timelessly American in their self-reliance and revolt against timidity and conformity. And her passionate, brainy arguments on behalf of limited government and unfettered individual rights strike a strong chord, especially in times of economic trouble and increased government activism. (Photo Brennan Cavanaugh) From Publishers Weekly

Alissa Zinovievna Rosenbaum was born to Jewish parents in 1905 Russia. Ayn Rand left Russia in 1926 for America and founded her anticollectivist philosophy, Objectivism, a philosophy of free market capitalism and the pursuit of self-interest as a moral good. Depressive, pill-taking, chain-smoking and manipulative, Rand's life was defined by a longtime Sunset Boulevardlike affair with Nathaniel Branden, who went on to start the self-esteem movement. At the same time, the combustible Rand was married to a passive man with matinee-idol looks. Magazine editor and journalist Heller competently describes Rand's feuds with William F. Buckley and with her sister, who had remained in the U.S.S.R., and the more courtly relationship Rand had with publisher Bennett Cerf. This objective account of the Objectivist Rand will interest her still large and devoted readership. Photos. (Nov. 3) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Splendid. . . . A cleanly and compellingly written biography of one of the strangest, most controversial and most widely read writers of the 20th century. San Francisco Chronicle A thoughtful, flesh-and-blood portrait of an extremely complicated and self-contradictory woman, coupling this character study with literary analysis and plumbing the quirkiest depths of Rands prodigious imagination. The New York Times Heller does a remarkable job with a subject who was almost cripplingly complex a real woman starring in her own propaganda film. New York magazine [An] outstanding biography that reveals much about a figure who to this point has been chronicled only by biased disciples. Washington Monthly Dramatic and very timely. The New York Times Book Offer[s] ammunition for fans and skeptics alike. The Washington Post A thoroughly researched, immensely readable portrait of a sui generis thinker who was fiercely committed to her ideals yet whose life contained fascinating contradictions. The Wall Street Journal Speakeasy The champion of individuality who insisted on obedience and conformity from her followers (including Alan Greenspan), Rand emerges from Hellers superbly vivid, enlightening, and affecting biography in all her paradoxical power. Booklist (starred review) Engrossing and unsparing, an excellent introductory course on Rand written with a shrewd eye. New York Post The exploits of Ayn Rand the Sarah Palin of philosophical fiction are made more gripping by Anne Hellers refusal to treat her subject as a joke and to accept her as the force she remains in politics (tea parties) and to each successive generation of selfish undergrads. Brad Gooch, author of Flannery: A Life of Flannery O'Connor and frequent contributor to The Daily Beast A comprehensive study, in novelistic detail, of Rands personal life. Time One imagines that Rand would have approved of much of what Heller has written: the balanced tone of her book, its reasonableness, its respect for what a struggling Russian refugee accomplished and achieved. And yet having finished the biography, one can almost hear the impossible Rand railing against Hellers failure to award her the place she always believed she deserved in the pantheon of the most glorious, solitary, and self-made literary giants. Bookforum A thorough recounting of [Rands] life and the forces that shaped her philosophy. . . . Fascinating. Dallas Morning News Provides important and meaningful insight into the evolution of Rands world view. Newsweek [A] work of historical scholarship that seek[s] to illuminate Rands complexities rather than simply to support or condemn her. Harpers Magazine Heller takes a dispassionate view of Rand and, in this detailed portrait, seeks to reveal her as a whole person rather than the cardboard cutout swathed in legend created by the great lady herself. Bookreporter.com Skillful. . . . [A] detailed and engaging portrait of Rands interior life. The New Republic The picture of Rand that emerges from Ms. Hellers book is all the more damning because the biographer is obviously fair-minded and, indeed, something of an admirer of her subject. The New Criterion Worthwhile and engrossing. City-Journal [An] excellent biography. . . . A vivid yet objective portrait of this gifted, brilliant, ultimately monstrous author. . . . Brings to life not only Rand but her circle and their milieu, making the book readable if only for its glimpse into a not-so-distant past where serious literature was widely influential, the television new, the railroad a common mode of travel. Its strangely quaint to read about a world without computers or cell telephones, a world where typists were a must and people wore hats as a matter of course. Even more extraordinary is [Hellers] rendition of this wildly divided woman, who could create some of our most unique literature yet remain unable to make that most fundamental of connections: unconditional love for another. PopMatters.com