

AYN RAND

INSTITUTE



ANNUAL
REPORT
2020

AYN
RAND
INSTITUTE

OUR MISSION

The Ayn Rand Institute fosters a growing awareness, understanding and acceptance of Ayn Rand's philosophy, Objectivism, in order to create a culture whose guiding principles are reason, rational self-interest, individualism and laissez-faire capitalism—a culture in which individuals are free to pursue their own happiness.



Julius Shulman/Conde Nast Collection via Getty Images

“The present state of the world is not proof of philosophy’s impotence, but the proof of philosophy’s power. It is philosophy that has brought men to this state—it is only philosophy that can lead them out.”

—Ayn Rand, “For the New Intellectual,” *For the New Intellectual*

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Dear Friends,

I am delighted that you are now holding a copy of ARI's 2020 annual report. We are continually making efforts to elevate our products, services and output, and this report is no exception. I hope it will provide you with a reading experience that is both interesting and enriching.

2020 has been unprecedented. It's challenged many of us in different ways and it's also shaped the way ARI has gone about pursuing its mission this year. But it hasn't slowed that pursuit.

ARI reacted quickly and swiftly in dealing with the new reality of the government's horrendous response to the pandemic. We've regrouped, defined new goals, acquired new skills and pivoted to a plan that aligns with the new circumstances and constraints. For example, last year I wrote about our plans to increase face-to-face interactions at conferences and events around the world. Despite the logistical hurdles of taking those interactions online, we managed to gather the largest number of conference attendees we've had in any year: 2,874. Likewise, we kept our community engaged and inspired via Zoom, including monthly ARI Member Roundtables and our annual

FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Tal Tsfany

Ayn Rand Institute Gala. (If you haven't yet joined an ARI Member Roundtable, you're missing out! Learn about them on pages 50–53.)

Reflecting on 2020, I'm reminded of a quote from Ayn Rand that comes from a profound essay—worth rereading any time, but particularly this year:

There is a fundamental conviction which some people never acquire, some hold only in their youth, and a few hold to the end of their days—the conviction that ideas matter. . . . That ideas matter means that knowledge matters, that truth matters, that one's mind matters. . . .

Its consequence is the inability to believe in the power or the triumph of evil. No matter what corruption one observes in one's immediate background, one is unable to accept it as normal, permanent or metaphysically right. One feels: "This injustice (or terror or falsehood or frustration or pain or agony) is the exception in life, not the rule." One feels certain that somewhere on earth—even if not anywhere in one's surroundings or within one's reach—a proper, human way of life is possible to human beings, and justice matters.

**"The 'Inexplicable Personal Alchemy,'
Return of the Primitive: The Anti-Industrial
Revolution, 122**

We've lived through a year marked by significant challenges—the pandemic, government's response to it, the economic hardship, the cultural strife and the elections. Amid all that, what inspires me, what I see as fundamentally potent, is man's ability to *fight* hardship, and to win. To do that, man needs a philosophy rooted firmly in reality.

Today, more than ever, the world needs Ayn Rand.

From that perspective, the year has been encouraging. Without question, serious interest in Objectivism is growing: month-over-month, we are breaking records in terms of the number of hours of Ayn Rand content being consumed on

the Ayn Rand University mobile application and on ARI's YouTube channels. At our journal *New Ideal*, we've seen a 79 percent growth in readership year-over-year. Participation in the Objectivist Academic Center has never been higher, with 120 students and auditors.

Interest from newcomers is growing as quickly. We continue to have more demand for our Free Books to Teachers program than resources to fulfill requests. At our second-ever conference in Europe, most of the 523 attendees were newcomers to Ayn Rand's ideas. Last year, I happily reported our YouTube channel had grown from 30,000 to 45,000 subscribers; this year the number of subscribers has grown to more than 65,000—due largely to introductory content.

You'll find greater detail about all of this—and in particular about our long-term strategy for advancing Objectivism—in the interview I gave for this report, on pages 10–19.

I want to close by acknowledging that everything ARI does is only possible because of your support. Every victory reported in these pages is yours as much as it is ours. We hope this report inspires and encourages you, and that you'll remain committed and take pride and pleasure in your part in growing Ayn Rand's influence in our culture.

Sincerely,



Tal Tsfany
Chief Executive Officer
The Ayn Rand Institute



In last year's annual report,

I wrote about ARI's commitment to the "long game" of cultural change. As the Center for the Advancement of Objectivism, our mission is to take the philosophical system created by Rand and help foster a growing number of thinkers who will carry her new ideas into the schools, universities and wider culture, and to the next generation of students, teachers, scientists, businessmen, lawyers, policy makers, commentators and artists.

From an historical perspective, we're still at the early stages of this quest, but we're making progress. This year, I'm going to highlight one vital aspect of our progress.

Rand said that books, essays and articles are the "permanent fuel" of an intellectual movement. Since I joined ARI in 2000, we've placed emphasis on generating an increasing amount of such output.

FROM OUR CHIEF PHILOSOPHY OFFICER

Onkar Ghate

By contributing both financial grants and philosophic articles, ARI has helped scholars create a growing number of collections focused on Rand's ideas. In addition to the essay collections edited by Robert Mayhew covering all four of Rand's novels, we've contributed to *A Companion to Ayn Rand*, edited by Allan Gotthelf and Gregory Salmieri; *A New Textbook of Americanism: The Politics of Ayn Rand*, edited by Jonathan Hoenig; and the ongoing series of volumes by the Ayn Rand Society, the most recent of which is *Foundations of a Free Society: Reflections on Ayn Rand's Political Philosophy*, edited by Gregory Salmieri and Robert Mayhew.

We've also helped convert several of Leonard Peikoff's lecture courses into book form, including *Understanding Objectivism* and *Discovering Great Plays: As Literature and as Philosophy*. (For more on these, see pages 42–44.)

And we've published our own books and collections of essays, from *Free Market Revolution: How Ayn Rand's Ideas Can End Big Government* and *Equal Is Unfair: America's Misguided Fight Against Income Inequality*, both by Yaron Brook and Don Watkins, to *Defending Free Speech*, edited by Steve Simpson, to *What Justice Demands: America and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* by Elan Journo.

Members of our board of directors have also been prolific. Recent publications include *How We Know: Epistemology on an Objectivist Foundation* by Harry Binswanger and *Judicial Review in an Objective Legal System* by Tara Smith.

One consequence of this upsurge in “permanent fuel” is that ARI will be helping more and more knowledgeable Objectivists penetrate intellectual fields and professions. In that connection, I am especially pleased that Gregory Salmieri has joined the Salem Center for Policy at the University of Texas at Austin as director of the new Program for Objectivity in Thought, Action, and Enterprise and holder of the Brigham Fellowship for the Study of Objectivism. Dr. Salmieri, who received his PhD in philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh in 2008, is a valued trainer for ARI, especially in the OAC, and participates in many of our podcasts and events. Don't miss our interview with him on pages 31–37.

None of this activity would have been possible without the support of our contributors. I know that the individuals I mentioned above join me in offering you, the supporters of ARI, a heartfelt thank you! Together, we're building the road to a more prosperous future.

Sincerely,



Onkar Ghate
Chief Philosophy Officer and Senior Fellow
The Ayn Rand Institute

'20 HIGHLIGHTS

395k

HOURS OF AYN RAND UNIVERSITY / ARI CAMPUS COURSE CONSUMPTION
(4.5 TIMES 2019 CONSUMPTION)



Gregory Salmieri becomes director of the new Program for Objectivity in Thought, Action, and Enterprise and holder of the Brigham Fellowship for the Study of Objectivism at the University of Texas at Austin's Salem Center for Policy (see page 31).

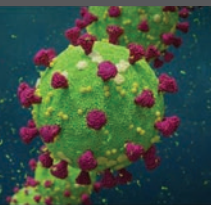


ARI secures permission to publish *The Mike Wallace Interview with Ayn Rand* on its YouTube channel; the interview has been watched more than 350,000 times in four months.

A Pro-Freedom Approach to Infectious Disease

Preparing for the Next Pandemic

Onkar Châte, Senior Fellow, Ayn Rand Institute



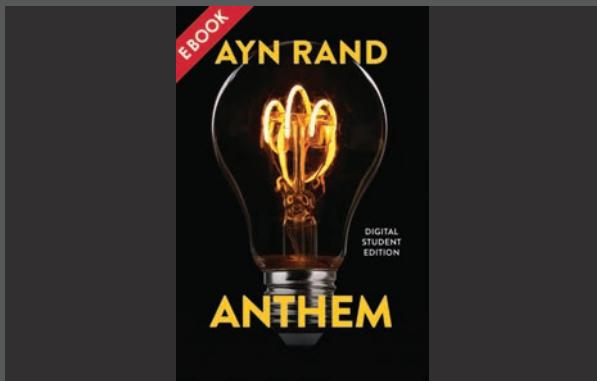
ARI responds to Covid-19: “A Pro-Freedom Approach to Infectious Disease” (see page 25).



ARI defends Ayn Rand in the *New York Times*: *Times* columnist Paul Krugman publishes an article (“How Many Americans Will Ayn Rand Kill?”) seeking to lay responsibility for Covid-19 deaths at the feet of liberty advocates, Ayn Rand chief among them. ARI reacts quickly to condemn the piece; the *Times* retracts its unjust headline and publishes ARI’s letter to the editor defending Rand and referring readers to ARI’s essay “A Pro-Freedom Approach to Infectious Disease.”



ARI completes a three-part, 20-episode series titled *Exploring Objectivism*. The series features popular Latin American author, TV personality and radio host Gloria Álvarez in discussion with Objectivist intellectuals about the essentials of Objectivism and the philosophy's relevance today.

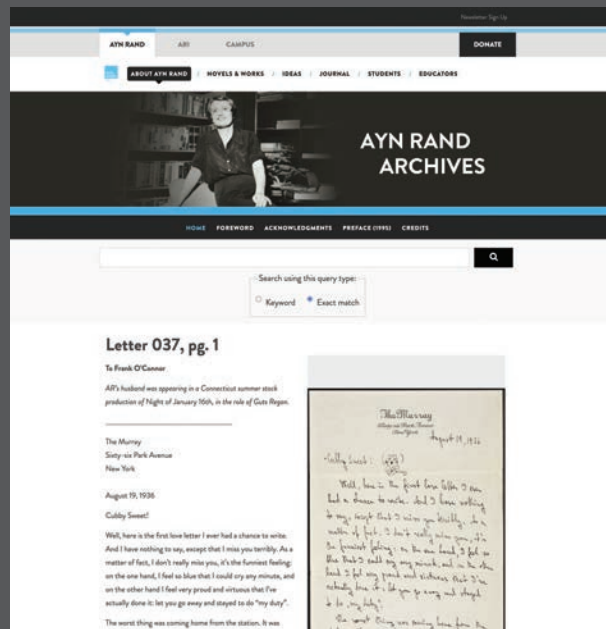


50% of the Ayn Rand novels distributed through ARI's Free Books to Teachers program this year are ebooks. ARI publishes its own digital student edition of *Anthem* (see page 17).

newideal.aynrand.org

New *Ideal* journal
readership increases
year-over-year

79%



letters.aynrandarchives.org

The Ayn Rand Archives publishes the first three chapters of an expanded second edition of *Letters of Ayn Rand*, edited by Michael S. Berliner, online (see page 28).

**ARI adapts quickly to Covid-19,
offering virtual conferences to viewers
around the world.**

4 IN-PERSON AND

4 VIRTUAL CONFERENCES

3,127 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

**A 102%
INCREASE OVER 2019**



**MORE
THAN**

400

new videos released
including **37** full courses

**MORE
THAN**

65k

channel
subscribers

An *Interview* **ARI'S 2020 VISION:**

with CEO

TAL TSFANY

Tal Tsfany is president and CEO of the Ayn Rand Institute. Before joining the Institute in 2018, he was an entrepreneur, investor and executive in the software world. He built and grew successful teams and businesses in the U.S. and Israel, where he co-founded the Ayn Rand Center Israel. In this interview, we ask Tsfany about ARI's mission, its progress during this tumultuous year—and what supporters can look forward to in the coming years.

Q: The Ayn Rand Institute has an ambitious mission: “to create a culture whose guiding principles are reason, rational self-interest, individualism and laissez-faire capitalism.” How do you go about translating that into shorter-term priorities for ARI?

A: When I joined ARI, its previous CEO, Jim Brown, told me, “Your job description is simple: Fix the world.” In a way that’s true because what we’re trying to do is fix the world’s ideas, which will ultimately fix the world. But we can’t and shouldn’t tackle every aspect of fixing the world—not within the proper scope of our organization. We should be focused and clear about the type of change we are trying to make.

The Institute’s mission is so abstract and long term that it would be easy, on a daily basis, to lose sight of what is the most important thing to do now. I often find myself rereading ARI’s founding document, its Intellectual Charter, to distill what we’re trying to achieve and how we should go about it—and, more than anything, how to delimit the scope of what we do. The Charter says that the goal of the Institute is to “promote the spread of the Objectivist philosophy by means of educational activities.” That’s very clarifying.



Q: What's most essential for achieving that goal?

A: Rand's philosophy is radical, innovative and complex, and it's crucial that we train new generations of top-notch thinkers who understand Objectivism and can teach, explain and apply it. We have to ensure her ideas are accurately transmitted from one generation to the next, if we hope to foster an intellectual culture based on them. Moreover, we have to protect the physical aspects of Rand's legacy with a state-of-the-art archives that not only organizes and preserves Rand's papers and possessions, but also exposes them to the world.

This year, in the Ayn Rand Archives, we have continued to do everything we can to preserve the artifacts in our care. But we've also upgraded our technology to make it easier to manage the Archives—which consists of hundreds of thousands of items. We've hired a digital archivist and begun the work of making significant portions of its contents accessible online to scholars around the world.

Q: What kinds of things are held in the Archives?

A: It's an amazing trove. The *Ayn Rand Papers*, its premier collection, includes manuscripts, notes, outlines of novels and articles; business correspondence with agents and attorneys; personal correspondence with colleagues, friends and relatives; philosophical journals; research on topics such as architecture; Rand's marginalia in books and articles in the media; and other artifacts of her life and of her thinking. Many of these items have never been accessible before, except by scholars who visit the Archives in person.

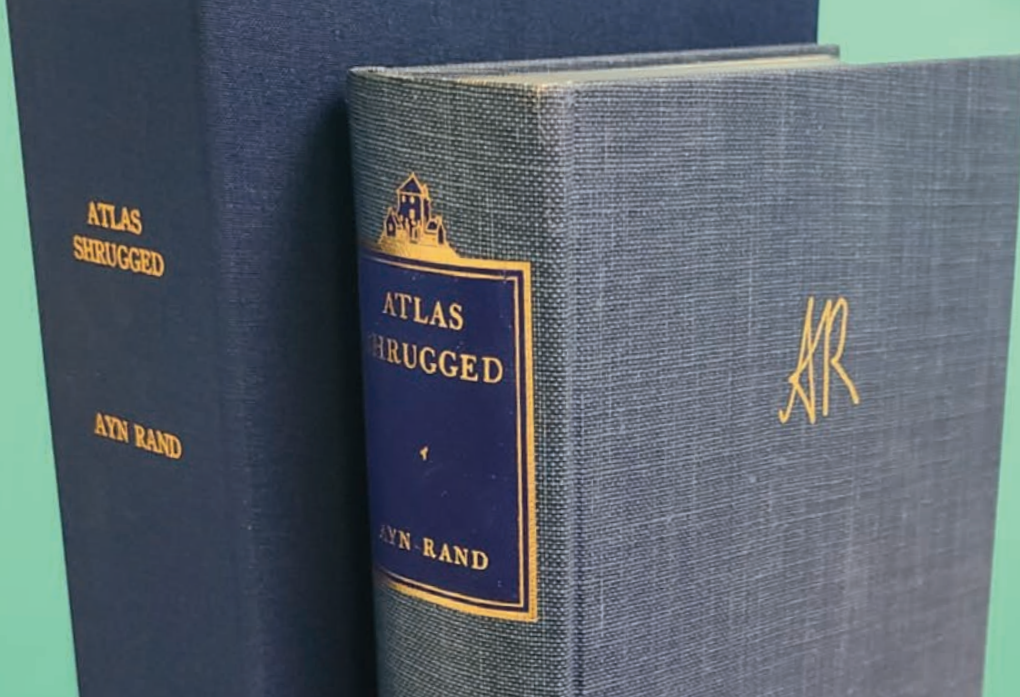
We've begun to make much of this material available online with the release of the expanded *Letters of Ayn Rand* [see pages 28–30], and we're going to continue to publish exhibits under the guidance of philosopher Michael Berliner, who was ARI's founding executive director. But it takes time to work with all of that material: scanning it, turning it into searchable text, and so on.

Q: What is ARI doing to ensure Ayn Rand's ideas are "accurately transmitted from one generation to the next"?

A: One of the most important things we do is to find the next generation of thinkers and help them to grow. These are the philosophers, the professional intellectuals, and intellectual professionals who truly and deeply understand the philosophy, who can use that understanding in their work and pass the knowledge on to others.

We do that mainly through the Objectivist Academic Center. The OAC has made huge steps forward in the last two years. We've gotten much better at identifying talent—those people who show the motivation and the ability to develop into influential Objectivist intellectuals. Once in the program, we guide them through years of rigorous study, thinking and writing—and we provide graduates with opportunities for professional development, mentorship and networking.

"One of the most important things we do is to find the next generation of thinkers and help them to grow. These are the philosophers, the professional intellectuals, and intellectual professionals who truly and deeply understand the philosophy, who can use that understanding in their work and pass the knowledge on to others."



The Ayn Rand Archives stores, catalogues and maintains hundreds of thousands of items that tell the story of Ayn Rand's life, work and influence. Materials from the Archives have been used by scholars from around the world to produce hundreds of books, articles, exhibits, documentary films and other works.

Q: And beyond the OAC program?

A: We've expanded and created new post-OAC opportunities. We recently hired several graduates as teaching assistants who will lead class discussions and give feedback on students' work. This continually challenges the teaching assistants to be better thinkers and communicators, and frees up our instructors' capacity, allowing the program to grow.

Right now, we have the largest number of Junior Fellows we've ever had. These are intellectuals in training who research, write and edit for ARI's journal *New Ideal*, who prepare to speak at ARI conferences and events, and who receive mentoring from ARI's in-house and outside scholars.

Q: What about someone who wants to deepen their grasp of Objectivism, but not embark on an intellectual career? Is there a place for them in the OAC?

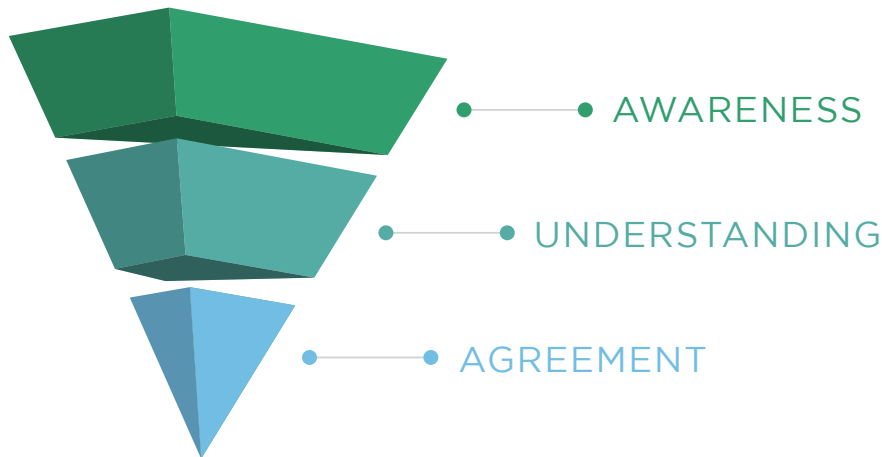
A: For sure. I've always believed the OAC was underexposed, too hidden from view. To increase its impact, we reorganized its content, expanded the faculty and opened it to auditors. Auditing the OAC allows any committed individual to derive value and enjoyment in deepening their understanding of Objectivism.

I see the value they get through the appreciation letters I receive. They say things like, "This is the best thing I can do with my time

right now." It doesn't matter if you are a thirty-, forty- or fifty-year-old in the middle of your career, or if you're a retired seventy-year-old. The OAC is a huge boost.

I've experienced the value firsthand. I am starting Year 3, and I don't want it to end. It's two and a half hours each week of condensed wisdom, of integrations of things I know, things I've forgotten, and things I've never understood at such a deep level before. The writing course is second to none for improving your ability to think and write clearly. I think if you have two and a half hours a week and you haven't audited the OAC, you're missing out.

“How can we make thousands, even millions, of people aware of Ayn Rand—and motivate them to begin to understand her ideas better? How can we support, serve and inspire a community of people who share these values? Those are the three stages that we think about: awareness, understanding and agreement.”



Q: So ARI's priority is ensuring that Rand's philosophy can be transmitted with integrity across time. What's the priority after that?

A: Once we've invested in ensuring that future intellectuals can gain a deep understanding of Ayn Rand's ideas, the next question is: How can we best promote Objectivism? How can we use our present resources and capabilities to deliver these ideas to the world? How can we make thousands, even millions, of people aware of Ayn Rand—and motivate them to begin to understand her ideas better? How can we support and inspire a community of people who share these values? Those are the three stages that we think about: awareness, understanding and agreement.

The awareness stage is our biggest challenge. Today everybody is fighting for your awareness, for your attention. Everybody is trying to sell content that they want you to consume. And breaking through to large numbers of people is something we need to become better at doing.

It remains the hardest area for us, and one we're now turning more attention to. At the understanding and agreement layers, we have become world-class. There's no better place than ARI for rigorous education in Objectivism. In the coming years, the challenge will be to drive new people, in ever-larger numbers, toward our educational resources.

Q: The Ayn Rand University mobile app has been downloaded practically everywhere around the globe. Does this reflect the kind of interest in Rand you're seeing outside North America?

A: We see a lot of enthusiasm from Europe and Latin America. To further reduce friction in the understanding phase, we've worked to overcome language barriers. We're taking advantage of the fact that we built our mobile app and Campus on a platform that allows us to offer translations. We've translated everything, and we're continuing to translate into languages for which there is high demand.

On top of that, in many online events, we're using simultaneous translation services. This year's AynRandCon-USA was translated simultaneously into Spanish and Portuguese to accommodate our audiences in Spanish-speaking Latin America as well as Brazil.

Q: What role did live events play this year, given the disruption by Covid-19?

A: We had a grand plan for 2020 to get closer to people—to host many events in the U.S., Europe and Latin America. And we started to think about growing to other parts of the world, but the pandemic interrupted our plans. We made it to Orange County, California; San Francisco; Warsaw, Poland; and

Dallas before the virus took hold. We had to quickly adapt, and the events planned for Philadelphia and Chicago were held online—as were this year's OCON, the ARI Gala and AynRandCon-USA. I'm proud of the way the team dealt with the quick shift to online.

Fortunately, we adopted Zoom almost a year before and were able to use it to host whole conferences and events, including live theatrical readings by professional actors. Scenes from *The Unconquered (We the Living)* were performed at OCON and, at the Gala, we enjoyed scenes from *Atlas Shrugged*. I got more thank-you letters about those two events than I usually get after normal events, so I think we did a good job continuing to inspire people.

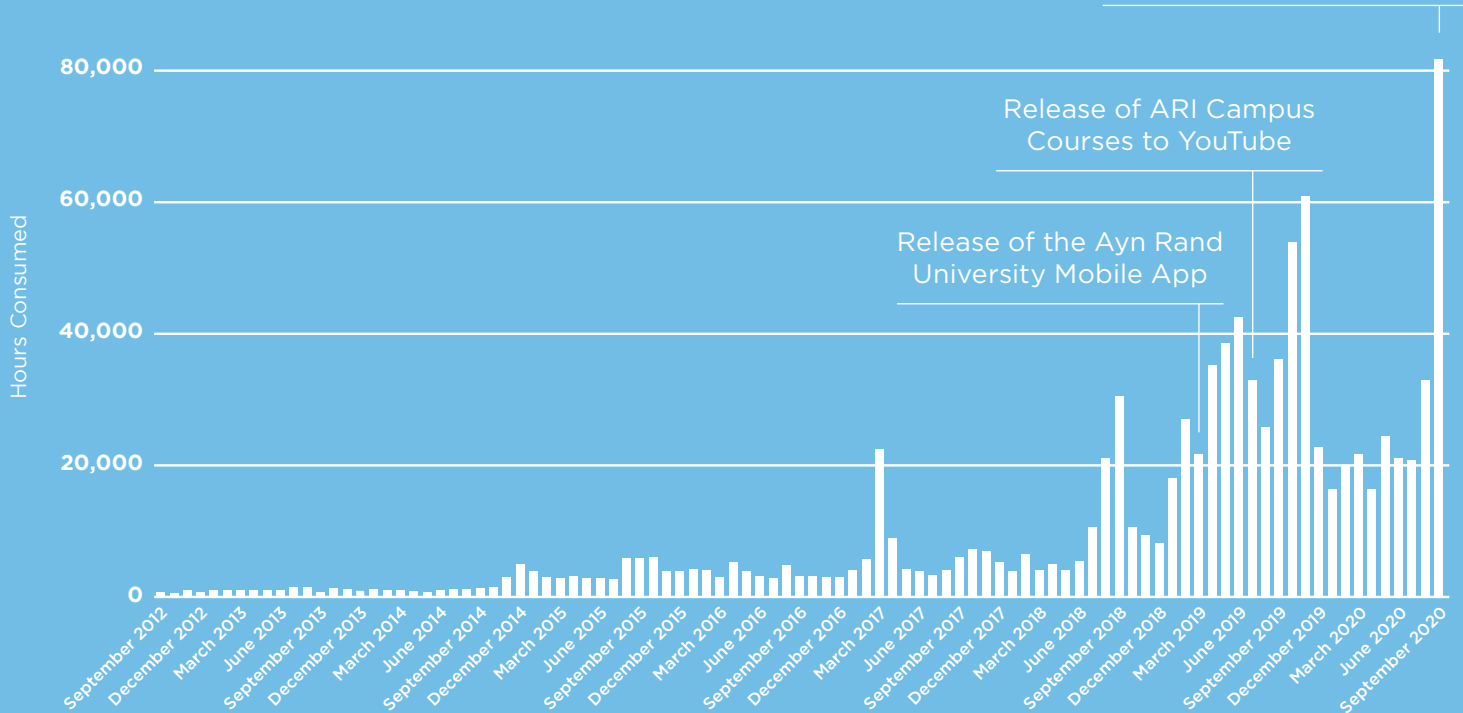
Q: Will ARI continue to host as many in-person events, given that so much can now be done online?

A: Yes, in-person events make a significant impact on someone's grasp of Objectivism. That interaction with a knowledgeable person, a philosopher, a scholar—to not only hear a lecture but to be able to get answers to difficult questions is priceless. It's easy to get stuck in the early stages of studying Objectivism. If you don't understand a particular issue, you may need to discuss it with someone.

I remember, before I was the CEO of ARI, I went to AynRandCon-USA every year, because it was just such a joy to see young people

Hours of Video Content Consumed by Month

Release of *The Mike Wallace Interview with Ayn Rand*



grappling with the ideas. What I loved most was the Q&A, hearing questions from people who are trying to integrate an idea that goes against everything they thought they knew.

I saw that a lot in Latin America when we co-hosted conferences in Argentina and Brazil. Some people were there because a friend told them “You have to come to this event” and they

didn't know what they were going to get. What they got was like a blow to the head, as some of them described it. I remember a specific conversation with an individual in Argentina who said, “I have to ask you something, from the bottom of my heart. Can I reconcile all of this with my belief in God?” I saw that he was begging me to say yes. I said: “I understand why it's so hard for you to accept it, but the

answer is no. You might not be able to really absorb it or to deal with it right now, but you have to go read and think more about it.” And he said “I will.” For me, seeing a young person like him grappling with Ayn Rand's ideas and getting motivated to learn and think more about them is the culmination of everything we're trying to do.

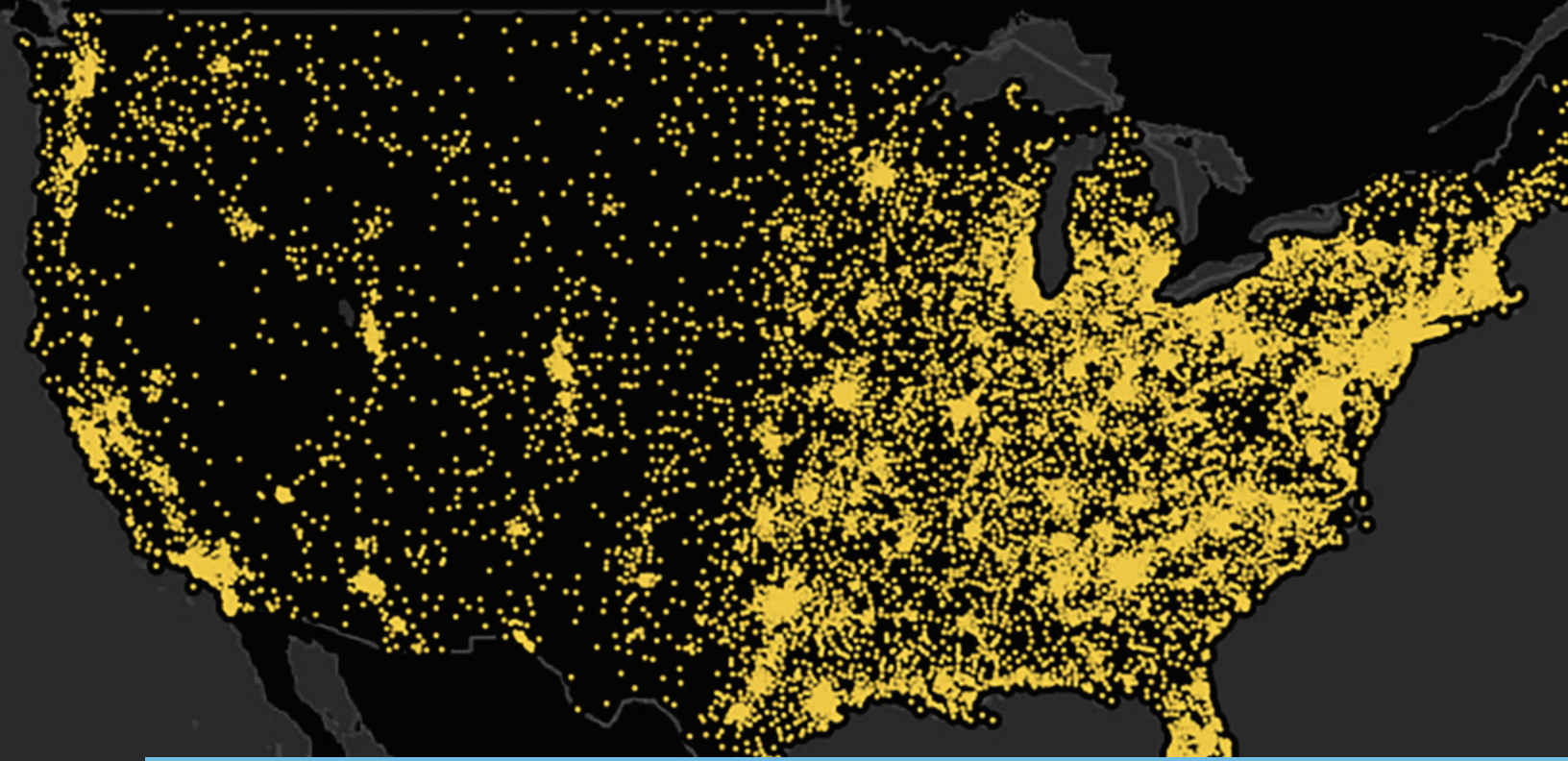
So we will continue, once it's possible, to increase our in-person events. I love seeing the conversations in the hallways, everybody circling Harry Binswanger, Yaron Brook, Gregory Salmieri, Onkar Ghate or Tara Smith and even businesspeople who participate, bombarding them with questions. That's what I think we're about. We're educators, challenging the popular philosophies today. Lives are changed at those events, and we will continue to invest in that.



Scenes from Ayn Rand's play *The Unconquered* (*We the Living*) were performed live via Zoom at Objectivist Summer Conference (OCON) 2020. Likewise, scenes from *Atlas Shrugged* were performed at this year's virtual Ayn Rand Institute Gala. (See pages 50–53.)

Q: Did the AynRandCons abroad attract the kind of interest ARI expected?

A: Yes, and more. One of the things that surprised me was the fact that 523 people showed up to ARI's conference in Warsaw, Poland. It was much bigger than I expected. It was a room packed with 75–80% first-timers and students—young people, with energy, with questions, with enthusiasm and skepticism, having loud arguments. The buzz was just deafening. It was unbelievable. People came out



ARI has distributed more than 4.5 million copies of Ayn Rand's novels to teachers in the U.S. and Canada since 2002. We estimate that each book is read, on average, by two students. Just three months into this school year, we had received requests from more than 1,100 teachers for nearly 70,000 books. More than 500 of these educators are teaching Rand for the first time.

of it so energized. Dozens of students told me “I’m going to read *Atlas Shrugged*, I’m going to read *The Fountainhead*, I’m going to read *The Virtue of Selfishness*,” and so on. Or they asked, “How can I register for OAC?” It was so much fun.

Q: Turning to what you mentioned is a big challenge—can you say more about what ARI is doing to increase awareness of Ayn Rand?

A: The Free Books to Teachers program, where we provide free copies of Ayn Rand’s novels to teachers interested in teaching them, has been among our most successful awareness programs over the years. This year, we’ve completely revamped it. We’ve rebuilt the whole advertising, ordering and fulfillment layers of the program. Now it costs us much less to deliver a physical book and, of course,

by adding the option of ebooks we’ve made it much less expensive to send novels to teachers and their students. Leonard Peikoff was so gracious to allow ARI to publish its own digital student edition of *Anthem* featuring his introduction, and he is allowing us to give it away royalty-free. So giving *Anthem* to teachers today is easier and more economical—and we’ve worked to make the teachers’ and students’ experiences the best they can be. We provide teaching aids, and the ordering and fulfillment is just a click of a button now. We’ve seen the demand skyrocket in the first weeks after launching our new Free Books to Teachers platform, and I’m confident we’re going to break records of the number of books distributed per year, because we are planning to increase marketing to English-speaking schools around the world, and to add more titles to our offerings. It is a daily joy to read the thank-you letters we receive from appreciative teachers.



Gloria Álvarez, Onkar Ghate and Harry Binswanger on the set of *Exploring Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand*

Q: What do you think it will take to do better at the awareness level?

A: I remember that right as I started reading *Atlas Shrugged*, I did a Google search for Ayn Rand's name and watched a Yaron Brook video. A talk of his on the morality of capitalism motivated me to continue my investigation of Objectivism. And so Yaron, with that lecture, was the "hook" for me to get drawn even more into learning about Objectivism. Then I found Leonard Peikoff, and the rest is history.

My view is that in order to succeed at promoting awareness of Ayn Rand and Objectivism, we need to partially reinvent ourselves.

I've consulted with probably over a hundred people at this point who have expertise in creating content that goes "viral," or that at least gets noticed by a very large number of people. We are, and will remain, a philosophical institute, but we need to gain more of the skills and tools of other kinds of organizations and of influential people. And we need to give our support to those people who have the skills and will use them to spread Ayn Rand's ideas. The idea is to work with people who are successful in creating high-quality content about different topics, who are willing to expose the fact that many of their ideas and content are based on the foundations of Objectivism—anyone causing people to ask "Who is Ayn Rand?"

and to do a Google search for her the way I did. Referrals from people who have earned the trust of their audiences happening on a large scale is one of the best things that could happen to increase awareness.

We're in the pilot stages of a new program that will identify those people and work with them to develop Objectivism-inspired content—whether that's a podcast about happiness, a video about a political issue, about psychology, architecture—anything that puts forward a valuable idea and mentions Ayn Rand as its source or inspiration. We'll help content creators in their efforts, and the only thing we'll ask in return is for a reference to Rand where credit is due.

The program will also help Objectivists who want to create content to gain the skills and learn the tools to do it well and grow their own platforms. We have a group of world-class experts willing to help us in mentoring a new generation of content creators and communicators, and I plan to experiment with something like an “influencer accelerator” that helps those creators get projects off the ground.

We’re experimenting with different approaches, and there’s a lot yet to be done, but if we can crack the code we can place many effective “hooks” out in the world.

Q: What are some highlights among the awareness-level content ARI produced this year?

A: This year we introduced the *New Ideal Live* podcast, which discusses pressing cultural issues from the perspective of Objectivism. The live weekly podcast launched shortly before Covid-19 took over the airwaves, and it helped to offer a rational viewpoint during a confusing time. The podcast is a good first stop for newcomers who are interested in a deeper perspective on the topics in the news—but it’s also suitable for long-time Objectivists.

This year we also produced a series of introductory content, called *Exploring Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand*. It features Harry Binswanger and Onkar Ghate being interviewed by Latin American author, television commentator, and radio host Gloria Álvarez.

We worked with Gloria last year to produce a series of interviews with Objectivist intellectuals, which are now available on our YouTube channel and cover a wide range of topics. But the purpose of this new series was to fill in a missing piece in our content offerings, aimed at those who are not yet ready, or motivated, to explore Objectivism more deeply.

We found Gloria’s interviewing style inquisitive, challenging, honest, thoughtful—she is really a great interviewer. She does her homework. So we asked her to interview Harry and Onkar, who are always interesting, and we did a lot of thinking about how to structure the topics and episodes. I think if somebody is interested in learning what Objectivism is about, the basic ideas and principles, this is a great starting point. For those who watch the series and are motivated to go further, Leonard Peikoff’s courses are available

in the same place—from his “Introduction to Objectivism” to his advanced seminars.

Q: Any parting thoughts about 2020?

A: From where I stand—and people might not see it because they’re not as exposed to it as I am—awareness of Ayn Rand is growing quickly. I can see it in the number of inquiries, with the number of people I talk to on a daily basis, with the international interest in her ideas. The number of hours of Objectivist content consumed is at an all-time high by far. Our YouTube channel subscribers have more than doubled in the last two years.

I think as the pressure of the world around us is starting to mount, with more authoritarianism and the bad ideas and false dichotomies that we see around us, I think smart people are going to question their beliefs more carefully—are going to look to alternatives. We need to make sure Ayn Rand is there to offer that alternative. ■

CHOOSE YOUR ISSUES

BY AYN RAND



Following the massive success of *Atlas Shrugged*,

Ayn Rand attracted a large and devoted fanbase interested in her radical new philosophy. To help admirers understand her ideas and apply them to their lives and the cultural-political issues of the day, she launched her own publication in 1962: *The Objectivist Newsletter*. As she explained in the introduction to her book *The Virtue of Selfishness*:

The Newsletter deals with the application of the philosophy of Objectivism to the issues and problems of today's culture—more specifically, with that intermediary level of intellectual concern which lies between philosophical abstractions and the journalistic concretes of day-by-day existence. Its purpose is to provide its readers with a consistent philosophical frame of reference.

In her first article for the newsletter, “Choose Your Issues,” Rand set out to distinguish Objectivism, as a movement, from more familiar political movements. “Objectivism is a philosophical movement” that advocated certain political principles, “specifically, those of laissez-faire capitalism.”

But politics, Rand argued, is downstream from philosophy—and so to establish a free society required first changing the culture’s dominant philosophic ideas. It meant challenging the ideas of mysticism, altruism

and collectivism that were driving the United States further and further toward statism (and which were embraced even by most alleged champions of capitalism).

In recommending a course of “practical action,” Rand urged her readers to focus on two issues that “involve the fundamental principles of our culture”: the threat posed by the Federal Communications Commission to intellectual freedom and the threat posed by antitrust laws to economic freedom.

Rand’s analysis continues to be relevant today. For example, the FCC not only continues to police speech on broadcast television and radio, but in recent years it has sought to violate the economic freedom of Internet Service Providers with so-called net neutrality laws. Antitrust, meanwhile, is being used to threaten both the intellectual and economic freedom of tech companies—and of all of us who rely on their achievements to promote our own goals and ideas.

What should be a person’s proper response to these threats, in Rand’s view? “[S]tudy these issues, watch their developments and make himself heard in public, on any scale open to him.”

We are pleased to reprint, with permission, the entirety of Ayn Rand’s essay “Choose Your Issues,” which first appeared in *The Objectivist Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 1, January 1962.

Objectivism is a philosophical movement; since politics is a branch of philosophy, Objectivism advocates certain political principles—specifically, those of laissez-faire capitalism—as the consequence and the ultimate practical application of its fundamental philosophical principles. It does not regard politics as a separate or primary goal, that is: as a goal that can be achieved without a wider ideological context.

Politics is based on three other philosophical disciplines: metaphysics, epistemology and ethics—on a theory of man’s nature and of man’s relationship to existence. It is only on such a base that one can formulate a consistent political theory and achieve it in practice. When, however, men attempt to rush into politics without such a base, the result is that embarrassing conglomeration of impotence, futility, inconsistency and superficiality which is loosely designated today as “conservatism.” Objectivists are *not* “conservatives.” We are *radicals for capitalism*; we are fighting for that philosophical base which capitalism did not have and without which it was doomed to perish.

A change in a country’s political ideas has to be preceded by a change in its cultural trends; a *cultural* movement is the necessary precondition of a *political* movement. Today’s culture is dominated by the philosophy of mysticism (irrationalism)—altruism—collectivism, the base from which only *statism* can be derived; the statist (of any brand: communist, fascist or welfare) are merely cashing in on it—while the “conservatives” are scurrying to ride on the enemy’s premises and, somehow, to achieve political freedom by stealth. It can’t be done.

“A change in a country’s political ideas has to be preceded by a change in its cultural trends; a cultural movement is the necessary precondition of a political movement.”

Neither a man nor a nation can have a practical policy without any basic principles to integrate it, to set its goals and guide its course. Just as the United States, having abandoned its own principles, is floundering aimlessly in international affairs, is unable to act and is merely *reacting* to the issues chosen and raised by Soviet Russia—so, in domestic affairs, the “conservatives” are unable to act and are merely *reacting* to the issues chosen and raised by the statist, thus accepting and helping to propagate the statist’s premises.

When the statist proclaims that their slave system will achieve material prosperity, the “conservatives” concede it and rush to urge people to sacrifice their “materialistic” concerns in order to preserve freedom—thus helping the statist (and their own audiences) to evade the fact that only freedom makes it possible for men to achieve material prosperity. When the statist announces that our first duty is to support the entire population of the globe—the “conservatives” rush into debates on whether Asia, Africa or South America should be the first recipient of our handouts. When the statist sets up a “Peace Corps” to send young Americans into unpaid (though tax supported) servitude to foreign nations—“conservative” youth rush to propose an “*effective* Peace Corps.” When



certain statist groups, counting, apparently, on a total collapse of American self-esteem, dare go so far as to urge America's surrender into slavery without a fight, under the slogan "*Better Red Than Dead*"—the "conservatives" rush to proclaim that they prefer to be dead, thus helping to spread the idea that our only alternative is communism or destruction, forgetting that the only proper answer to an ultimatum of that kind is: "*Better See The Reds Dead.*"

While public attention is distracted by headlines about the latest whim of Khrushchev or of some other tribal chief, while the "conservatives" gallop obediently down any sidetrack set up by their enemies, two enormously dangerous issues are sneaking up on us, undiscussed, unopposed and unfought. They seem to be a double move planned by the statists, one to destroy intellectual freedom, the other to destroy economic freedom. The chief means to the first is the Federal Communications Commission, to the second—the Anti-Trust laws.

When a government official—Mr. Newton N. Minow, Chairman of the F.C.C.—cynically threatens "those few of you who really believe that the public interest is merely what interests the public," the principle (and precedent) he seeks to establish is clear: that the public is not the judge of its own interest, but he is; that the people's vote of approval, freely and *individually* cast in the form of preference for certain television programs, is to be superseded by *his* edict; that television stations are not to be guided by their viewers' wishes (he calls them "the

nation's whims") nor by their own wishes, but by *his*—under penalty of having their licenses revoked for unspecified and unspecifiable offenses (which action, somehow, is not to be regarded as a whim).

One can easily see what would happen to our entire communications industry (including the press) if such a precedent were accepted in one of its branches—and one would expect the intellectuals of a free country to raise their voices in such a protest that it would sweep Mr. Minow out of Washington. Instead, most of the press congratulated him on his “courage”—the courage of an armed bureaucrat who threatens the livelihood, property and professions of legally disarmed victims.

The Anti-Trust laws—an unenforceable, uncompliant, unjudicable mess of contradictions—have for decades kept American businessmen under a silent, growing reign of terror. Yet these laws were created and, to this day, are upheld by the “conservatives,” as a grim monument to their lack of political philosophy, of economic knowledge and of any concern with principles. Under the Anti-Trust laws, a man becomes a criminal from the moment he goes into business, no matter what he does. For instance, if he charges prices which some bureaucrats judge as too high, he can be prosecuted for monopoly or for a successful “intent to monopolize”; if he charges prices lower than those of his competitors, he can be prosecuted for “unfair competition” or “restraint of trade”; and if he charges the same prices as his competitors, he can be prosecuted for “collusion” or “conspiracy.” There is only one difference in the legal treatment accorded to a criminal or to a businessman: the criminal's rights are protected much more securely and objectively than the businessman's.

“Neither a man nor a nation can have a practical policy without any basic principles to integrate it, to set its goals and guide its course.”

The full, brutal injustice of that legislation has now come into the open: seven distinguished businessmen (in the so-called “Electrical Conspiracy” case) were sentenced to jail for breaking a law which they could not avoid breaking without breaking a number of other laws. To my knowledge, no public voices were raised to defend them. Instead, the headlines screamed abuse at helpless, legally throttled, martyred victims who were deprived even of the opportunity of self-defense (by the threat of treble damages).

In subsequent columns, I shall discuss these two issues at greater length. For the present, I will merely point out that in the F.C.C. and in the Anti-Trust Division the government possesses the legal weapons it needs to transform this country into a totalitarian state—and if the “conservatives” do not know it, the present administration seems to know it. The “trial balloons” are being sent up with growing frequency.

Any person who claims to be an advocate of freedom and who wonders what practical action he can take, should choose *these* two issues as his first concern: they involve the fundamental principles of our culture. He should study these issues, watch their developments and make himself heard in public, on any scale open to him, great or modest, from private discussions to national forums. It is with these two issues that the “practical” fight for freedom should begin. ■

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WE CAN PROTECT LIBERTY WHILE COMBATING PANDEMICS

BY BEN BAYER

This article was originally published by the Southern California News Group.
It appeared in *New Ideal* on June 29, 2020.

America is allegedly the land of the free. But since March, millions have lived under statewide mandatory lockdowns. As the lockdowns are being lifted, we should reflect on how to approach any resurgence of cases—and the next pandemic. Must we resign ourselves to renewed lockdowns that treat liberty as a dispensable luxury?

America can do better, but only if we understand what it means for the ideal of freedom to serve as a beacon guiding government's actions. It does not mean trivializing the threat of infectious disease or inaction in the face of it.

To be guided by the ideal of freedom is to recognize government's indispensable function in the face of infectious diseases—a function it has to date fallen far short of fulfilling. The nature and scope of that government function is at the core of a new paper by my colleague Onkar Ghate of the Ayn Rand Institute, "A Pro-Freedom Approach to Infectious Disease: Preparing for the Next Pandemic." Key ideas from that paper, if implemented, would save lives and protect individual liberties.

To be guided by liberty does not mean allowing individuals to recklessly endanger others. The freedom that matters is the individual's right to be free from the physical interference of others. This means freedom from murder, robbery, battery, and the threat of infection from another's disease. So a government dedicated to protecting liberty rightly has the power to quarantine

To protect liberty during a pandemic, government's powers to contain infectious disease need to be "carefully specified and circumscribed by law."

individuals who threaten to infect others with a dangerous disease. Taiwan is an exemplar of this approach. After the 2003 SARS-CoV-1 outbreak, the Taiwanese government began actively monitoring for new infectious threats. Having begun investigating the 2019 SARS-CoV-2 outbreak weeks before the WHO, Taiwan moved rapidly to screen travelers from mainland China. The results are telling: "As of June 18, Taiwan reports 446 coronavirus cases and 7 deaths. Restaurants and shops are open, and schools were closed for only two weeks in February." But to protect liberty during a pandemic, government's powers to contain infectious disease need to be "carefully specified and circumscribed by law"—yet no existing U.S. laws adequately do so. This means specifying the power to impose quarantines only when "an infectious disease rises to a certain level of severity" and there is evidence that someone might be a carrier. This rules out indiscriminate, whole-population lockdowns that really do violate personal liberties.

We need laws, argues Ghate, that specify the level of infectious threat that warrants coercive containment. Some infectious diseases, like the common cold, pose little threat and don't warrant intervention. But diseases like Ebola and Covid-19 do. Degree of contagiousness, severity of symptoms, level of immunity in the population, and ease of detection and prevention should all factor into whether and when mandatory testing, isolation, and case tracking are appropriate.

But the proper goal of the government of a free people is not to save every life whatever the cost. It is to leave individuals free to choose or avoid risky behaviors according to their own priorities in life. Unknown threats to health will always exist, and free individuals have to be the ones to bear responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. This is true whether it concerns the choice to drive a car or the choice to operate or frequent a business.

Objective infectious disease laws would put individuals on notice that they are free to act as long as they do nothing known to threaten the freedom of others to live without dangerous infection. Most will take reasonable voluntary precautions against such threats. Those who don't can be legally sanctioned for their recklessness, especially if they provably cause someone's serious illness or death.

The value of liberty should serve as a beacon to guide government, even in the fog of a crisis. But to know how to follow this beacon, government needs the tool of objective law.

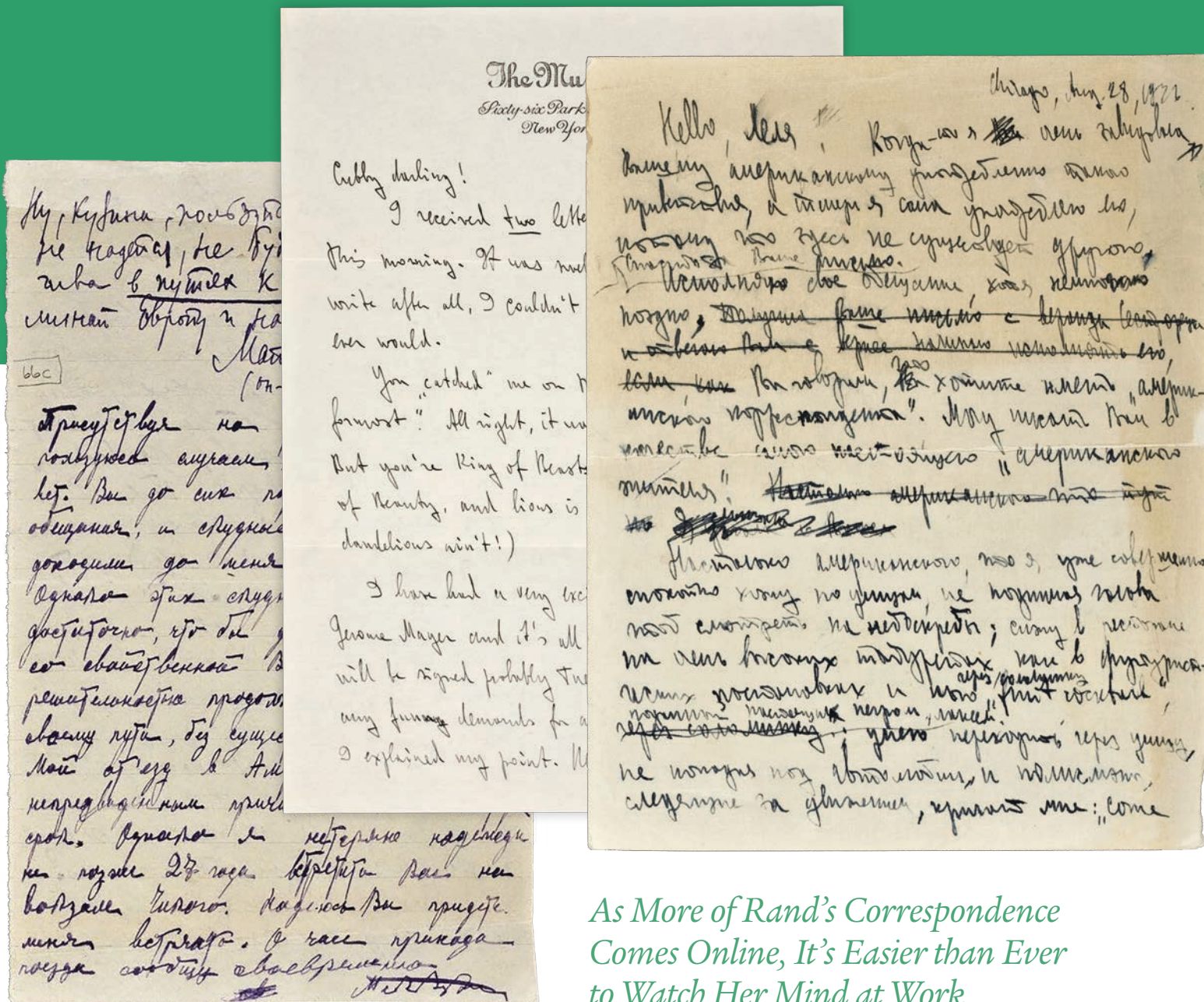
The lockdowns are symptoms of the urgent need for proper infectious disease laws. Having underprioritized preparedness and monitoring of disease, government officials panicked when they realized they were behind the curve. Without objective laws to guide or restrain them, they reached for the bluntest weapon they could find: the sweeping lockdowns.

America should not abandon its title as the land of the free, not even in the face of a pandemic. The value of liberty should serve as a beacon to guide government, even in the fog of a crisis. But to know how to follow this beacon, government needs the tool of objective law. Our new challenge is to codify this law, to make sure reckless panic-driven lockdowns never happen again. But it's a challenge we should be willing to face, if we are the land of the brave. ■

Enclosed with this annual report is a copy of the essay discussed in this article: **"A Pro-Freedom Approach to Infectious Disease: Preparing for the Next Pandemic"** by Onkar Ghate. For a digital copy that you may freely distribute, visit newideal.aynrand.org/pandemic-response.

AYN RAND'S LIFE AND WORK:

WHAT HER LETTERS REVEAL



As More of Rand's Correspondence Comes Online, It's Easier than Ever to Watch Her Mind at Work

Previously Unpublished Ayn Rand Letters Are Now Online

For anyone curious to learn what Ayn Rand was really like, one invaluable resource is her personal correspondence. For decades, the Ayn Rand Archives has preserved Rand's letters as part of its larger mission to document her intellectual development and cultural impact.

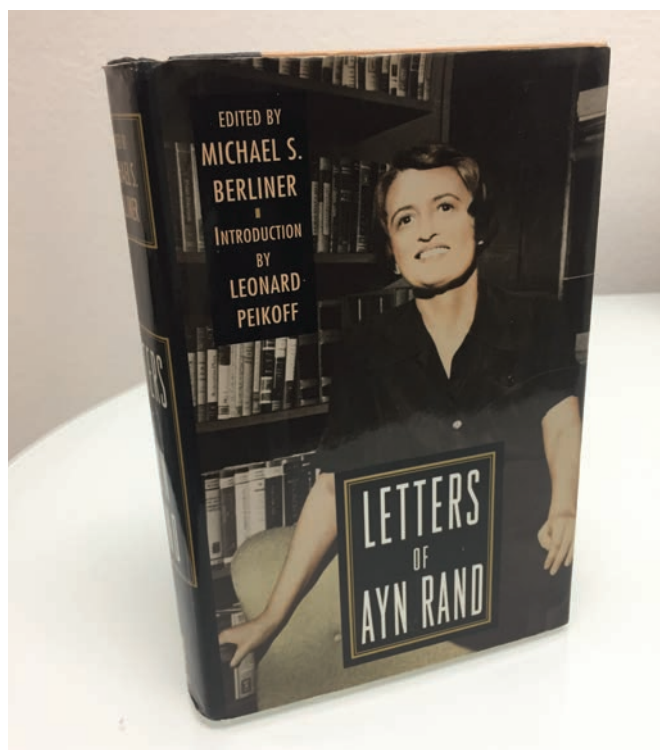
Beginning with the publication of *Letters of Ayn Rand* in 1995, readers have had an opportunity to see how Rand pursued her values day to day.

"These letters do not merely tell you about Ayn Rand's life," says her longtime friend and associate, philosopher Leonard Peikoff. "In effect, they let you watch her live it, as though you were an invisible presence who could follow her around and even read her mind."

On June 1, 2020, to celebrate the book's 25th publication anniversary, the Archives began releasing *Letters of Ayn Rand Online* at **letters.aynrandarchives.org**. This project improves on the original book in four important ways:

- The online version includes high-quality images of the actual letters.
- The online version's text is searchable.
- The online content is free of charge.
- The online version will include fifty-one letters not included in the book's 539, plus considerably more background and follow-up information by editor Michael S. Berliner.

The first installment of the new edition is Chapter 1: "Arrival in America to *We the Living* (1926–1936)." Chapters 2 and 3 are also online, leaving five chapters for future publication. The online edition is formatted with a split screen. On the right appears an image of each letter, whether typed or handwritten, that can be zoomed in for detail. On the left is a fully searchable transcript. According to Berliner, "In providing commentary, I tried to anticipate questions from readers, such as 'Who was that person?' or 'What ever happened with that issue?' For example, Rand wrote many letters to her publishers with suggestions on cover art, promotion



The first edition of *Letters of Ayn Rand* (Penguin, 1995), edited by Michael S. Berliner. The book's contents have been significantly expanded online—with more than 50 additional letters by Ayn Rand and extensive new commentary added. Visit letters.aynrandarchives.org.

and ad copy. The follow-up material will give the reader an idea whether they ever took her advice."

The very first letter is a missive to Lev Bekkerman, Rand's first love and the inspiration for the character Leo Kovalensky in *We the Living*. "In 1995, we didn't know very much about him," Berliner explains, "but since then we've learned more, from research in official Soviet files and from previously untranslated letters to Rand from her family. There was even a short letter from Lev among those nine hundred letters."

Readers are invited to email Berliner with questions at **mberliner@aynrand.org**. "I'll do my best to answer them or find someone who can," he says. "I really look forward to those questions because I enjoy digging into historical puzzles."

As a preview, forty of the previously unpublished letters were posted earlier this year on the ARI Campus website. Selected by Berliner, the letters cover forty-five years, the earliest written in 1935, the latest in 1980. This correspondence reflects Rand's professional work as a screenwriter, novelist and essayist, as well as her political activism and personal relationships.

Ayn Rand's letters are full of delightful passages that provide glimpses of her professional and private lives. Here are a few to whet your appetite for exploring her correspondence in depth.

Rand's correspondence with English novelist Lady Ethel Boileau began in 1936 after Boileau read *We the Living*. In this 1938 letter, written five years before *The Fountainhead* was published, Rand talks about her planning process for the book:

At present, I am working on my next novel—the very big one about American architects. For the last few months I have been wracking my brain and nerves upon the preliminary outline. It is always the hardest part of the work for me—and my particular kind of torture. Now it is done, finished, every chapter outlined—and there are eighty of them at present! The actual writing of it is now before me, but I would rather write ten chapters than plan one. So the worst of it is over. (June 21, 1938)

In 1944, Rand wrote to her lawyer in New York City, shortly after she had moved to California to write the screenplay for *The Fountainhead* under contract with Warner Bros.:

In the only two weeks I had off since I'm here, I went and bought a house. Or rather, an estate, 13½ acres, in Chatsworth, twenty miles from Hollywood. The house is ultra-modern, by Richard Neutra, all glass, steel and concrete. The house is a small palace, too wonderful to describe. We have ten acres of alfalfa, an orchard, chickens, rabbits, two ponds that go around the house, and a tennis court. Can you see me as a capitalist? And here I thought I was the poorest (financially) defender capitalism ever had. (September 24, 1944)

In 1950, Rand hoped that Archibald Ogden, the editor who earned her gratitude by recommending *The Fountainhead* to Bobbs-Merrill, might become editor of her novel-in-progress, *Atlas Shrugged*. Here, Rand humorously applies to join Ogden's "harem" of authors, adding her own unique twist on the prospect of competing with other writers:

Let me know the name of the novel which is your own choice on your fall list—I would like to read it. No, do not send me a free copy—I want to have the privilege of buying and supporting any novel which is your choice. If I were a collectivist, I would be jealous of any writer you select, but since I am an individualist who believes that there is no clash of interest among people and that any talent is a help, not a threat, to another talent, I will wish you to discover a whole list of your own writers, all of them good. In fact, I wish you a whole harem of them. But, of course, being selfish, I want to be the wife No. 1. And being conceited, I am not afraid of competition for that title.

In the same letter to Ogden, Rand wrote:

I hope that you won't be let down by hearing that I am only at the end of Part I. As you know, my speed of writing always accelerates as I approach the climax of a story, so I don't think that it will be too long now before I finish the whole book—but I won't even make a guess at the date, in order not to disappoint you later. Part I, however, is about two-thirds of the whole book in length. I can't tell you how much I wish I could show you what I have written since I saw you last. I know you would be pleased. Be patient with me for taking such a long time—it is really going to be worth the waiting. As for me, I am simply crazy about the story and I am very happy with it. (August 25, 1950)

READ MORE AT
letters.aynrandarchives.org.

Interview

OBJECTIVISM IN ACADEMIA

Gregory Salmieri on how philosophy influences
a culture and on his new position at UT-Austin

by Don Watkins

Gregory Salmieri is co-editor of *A Companion to Ayn Rand* (2016) and *Foundations of a Free Society: Reflections on Ayn Rand's Political Philosophy* (2019), which brought together leading scholars to discuss Rand's thought and its relationship to contemporary intellectual debates.

Dr. Salmieri is one of the most prominent scholars of Objectivism in academia today. He has been a frequent speaker at ARI's Objectivist summer conferences and Ayn Rand Conferences, as well as a part-time instructor in the Objectivist Academic Center.

This year he joined the Salem Center for Policy at University of Texas at Austin as director of the new Program for Objectivity in Thought, Action, and Enterprise and holder of the Brigham Fellowship for the Study of Objectivism. The program and fellowship are supported by Bud Brigham and the Anthem Foundation for Objectivist Scholarship (anthemfoundation.org).

Don Watkins: How did you become interested in Ayn Rand?

Gregory Salmieri: It came in two waves. Back in seventh grade, I was really interested in politics, and was reading many of the classics in the field, when a family member gave me a copy of [Ayn Rand's] *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*.

The essay that stood out to me most was "Extremism,' or The Art of Smearing." It gave me the idea that part of what you need to think about and evaluate is the very language you're using—that words could have assumptions built into them. That started me thinking in a new way.

So the book made a big impact on me, but I didn't read much more by Rand at the time, and I wouldn't have considered myself an Objectivist. I just thought of her as one of the authors I'd read who I got a lot out of. In retrospect, I think I got more than I'd realized at the time.

Eventually I became more interested in philosophy than in politics, and in my first term at The College of New Jersey, I became an active participant in the philosophy club—this is before taking philosophy classes. A lot of the other students there kept telling me that I had a lot of interests in common with one of the professors—Allan Gotthelf. But, they warned, "He always wants to talk about Ayn Rand." And I thought, "Well, I like her too!"

The next semester I started taking all philosophy classes, both from Allan and from other faculty, and it's at that time that I read everything by Rand, starting with her novels. I went on to get my PhD in philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh. Since then, I've taught at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Boston University, and most recently at Rutgers—and written on topics in ancient philosophy and related to Rand.



DW: Now you've joined the Salem Center in the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas at Austin. What do you do there?

GS: I'm the director of a new program on objectivity, and (for now) the program is just me. I have funding to support my research and to organize academic conferences and some public-facing events. For example, we just had a panel about Free Speech with Tara Smith, Steve Simpson, and me. Starting in the spring, I'll also be teaching in the philosophy department, and at the College of Undergraduate Studies (which runs a series of interdisciplinary seminars for incoming freshmen). Until then, I've been interfacing with students a little by running a discussion group about the 2020 elections.

Finally, I'll have the opportunity to work on some other projects aimed at the public, starting with a book project that you, Onkar Ghatge [ARI's chief philosophy officer], and I are collaborating on.

DW: Definitely say more about the book project, because I think it's super-exciting.

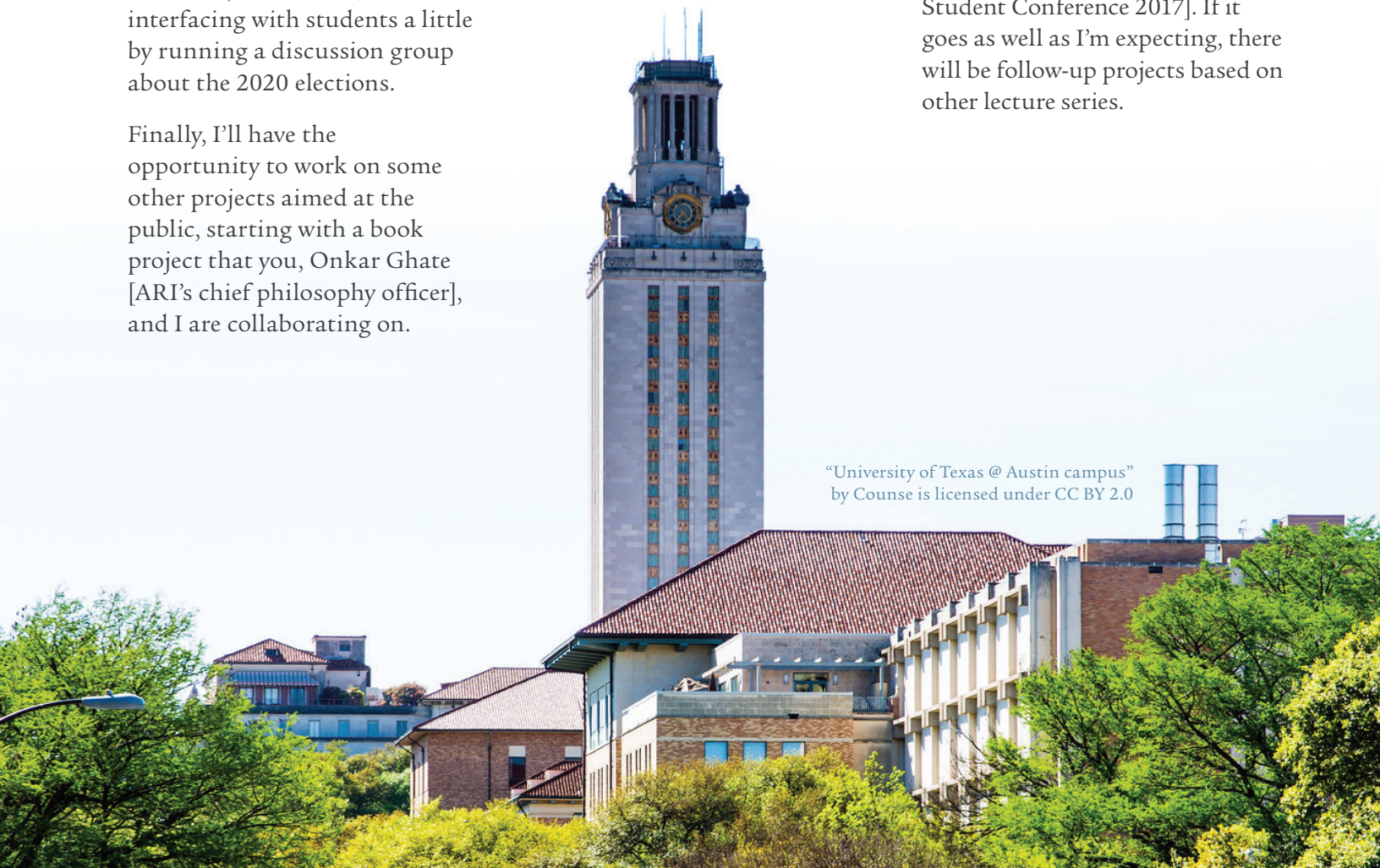
GS: This is the project I'm most immediately enthusiastic about. I've been talking to Onkar for a year or more about the possibility of making books based on some of the lectures we've given at the student conferences ARI has held (or co-sponsored) over the past five years. This is some of the best material I think we've produced. It's at once accessible and intellectually high-powered.

But it's a big job to convert this material into books, and it's a type of writing—for a popular audience—that neither of us has

done much of. So there was a missing piece to the project. I'd been thinking about whether there was a way to use some of the Salem Center funds to hire someone to help us, but as I thought about it, it became clear that we'd need someone with a rare skill set as a writer and a thinker.

I remember thinking, "I wish we could find someone like Don Watkins"—knowing that there wasn't anyone like you in the relevant respects, and assuming you wouldn't be available, because I knew you had a lot on your plate. So, when you mentioned you were looking for projects, I was thrilled. We're starting with a book based on the 2017 lecture series Onkar and I gave on political philosophy [What Does It Mean to Be for Liberty? from the Ayn Rand Student Conference 2017]. If it goes as well as I'm expecting, there will be follow-up projects based on other lecture series.

"University of Texas @ Austin campus"
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DW: I'm looking forward to working on the project because I had a similar thought. Namely, that those lectures were so amazing I wish I could help turn them into books. Circling back to the Salem Center opportunity, though, how did it come about?

GS: For years, Yaron Brook [ARI's chairman of the board and a board member of the Anthem Foundation for Objectivist Scholarship] thought it would be wonderful—and possible—for a second Objectivist scholar to find a home at UT Austin in addition to Tara Smith, who has been doing excellent work there for many years. [Dr. Smith, the author of numerous books in philosophy, is the BB&T Chair for the Study of Objectivism and holds the Anthem Foundation Fellowship.] So

Objectivism is well known at the university, and there's an existing relationship between UT and the Anthem Foundation that has supported Tara's work, and then a long-time donor to the Institute, Bud Brigham, is also an alumnus of UT and a big supporter of activities there.

So Yaron has had the idea of something at Austin in mind for quite a while. Not long ago, when giving a talk there he met Carlos Carvalho, the professor who was ramping up what would become the Salem Center, and Carlos told Yaron he was interested in adding an Objectivist perspective to the Center. That led to the Anthem Foundation and Bud making a gift to establish the objectivity program and the Brigham Fellowship for the Study of Objectivism, and to Carlos and me hitting it off and my coming on board.

DW: What's Carlos's background?

GS: Carlos is an economist and a statistician. One of the things I think we agreed on is the need for discussions of policy to be more rational and less tribal. And both of us agreed that, for many policy issues, there's a real case for freedom that's not being made.

Now, Carlos's approach to policy is much more quantitative and statistical than mine. Part of what we discussed is that you can take a broader perspective on what it is to support a policy rationally.

DW: I'd like you to expand on that, because people, especially in academia, tend to equate being rational and objective with being data driven. What does philosophy bring to the table in terms of thinking through policy issues rationally?

GS: Quantitative science can help you answer questions like “What will the effects of this policy be?” You’re trying to get at the truth, and so your goal should be to follow the data wherever they lead you.

But often when people claim they’re using data, what they’re actually trying to do is find a way to use the data to rationalize, or sell to other people, or make seem respectable, opinions they have on other grounds.

Philosophy tells you why that’s wrong—why objectivity and truth matter. And it also helps you identify the actual reasons for your ideological orientation and assess whether those are good reasons. In particular, it articulates and justifies the value choices behind your ideological orientation

So, if you support freedom, why? Why do individual rights matter? Well, they don’t matter because of something you’re going to prove with graphs about the tax curve or something like that. They matter because of more broad and general facts about human life and what human beings need to survive and flourish. These broader facts and value choices are what philosophy deals with.

Knowing these enables you to defend freedom for the reasons you actually support freedom, rather than counterfeiting your reasons. And it also makes you more sensitive to certain categories of facts that other people, who don’t know these reasons, might not be as sensitive to.

Why do individual rights matter? Well, they don’t matter because of something you’re going to prove with graphs about the tax curve or something like that. They matter because of more broad and general facts about human life and what human beings need to survive and flourish. These broader facts and value choices are what philosophy deals with.

For example, it will make you more sensitive to the destruction that forcible government intrusion into the economy creates, and on the positive side, it will make you more sensitive to where production and values are coming from in society.

These categories of facts are easy to overlook by people with different ideological orientations, and so when they jump to using data, there are harms of anti-freedom policies they’ll fail to examine and solutions that won’t occur to them to study.

Ideally what you have is philosophy giving you a broad perspective on value choices and the reasons behind the different value choices people make. And then what economists and policy experts can do is study and measure and predict the impact of different policies in detail.

DW: So, I can see why both roles are important, but what you’re doing at the Salem Center sounds like an

actual collaboration between philosophers and economists and policy experts. What does that look like?

GS: When it comes to policy, you often see both philosophers and more policy-oriented people making similar errors. Philosophers sometimes think they can read off from broad abstractions what specific policies should be. In particular, free-market-oriented philosophers think they can deduce the right policy steps to take us from where we are today to a free society.

And that kind of thinking can be detached from reality. It doesn’t take into account facts that experts in the field are aware of (even if they don’t know the relevant principles) and that they rightly see as relevant to determining how to act in the here and now. Sometimes this sort of philosophical thinking can be interesting as a concretization of principles, but unless it’s more empirically informed, it’s insufficient to guide action.

On the other hand, the people who are really in the weeds of a given discussion—the policy wonks on a given issue, or the people who are advisers to an administration or a congressperson—are very acutely aware of the particular problems that people in the field are trying to solve, and of many of the pertinent facts. But they tend not to be that philosophical, and they tend not to have real clarity on the values and principles involved or on how the specific steps they're advocating relate to the large scale shifts they'd like to see in society.

I think to actually know in concrete terms what the right next policy steps are, you need to integrate both kinds of knowledge: the big-picture perspective philosophy gives you and the “boots on the ground” knowledge policy experts have.

Even apart from my own program, by being at the Center I'll be interacting with the quantitative scientists and subject-matter experts on various policy issues, and I think these will be mutually beneficial intellectual relationships. In addition, as part of my program, I will organize events that bring together Objectivist philosophers with people who have a background in Objectivism and also have deep expertise in specific industries, so that we can work together to understand just how government force is paralyzing the mind in the industry, what the right first steps would be in the process of liberating the industry, and how we can fight for these steps.

DW: What would be an example of a field you'd like to tackle?

GS: One that I've been interested in for quite a while—and prior to this pandemic—is medicine and public health.

My friend Amesh Adalja [a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security, specializing in infectious disease] has been talking to me a lot about what he does. He's long been in my mind the paradigm of an expert. He's so knowledgeable about what the problems are in public health—things you would never think about from your armchair as a philosopher. And there are a number of other people I've met through the Objectivist community who are experts in different aspects of the medical industry.

Getting these people together with philosophers in the right way could yield real insights on specific steps needed to free the minds of doctors and of everyone in the industry. What are the most important issues? What would be policy goals we should be advocating in the near term that would bring us in the direction of the changes we want to see in the long term? And how can we understand and articulate those short-term goals in light of those longer-term goals?

DW: This is so important. When I was studying the history of the American welfare state, one of the things that jumped out was

how the early Progressives had this big-picture view of the kind of society they wanted to create. But they also had dozens and dozens of specific policy proposals they used to inspire activists and influence policymakers. And they would start winning these small victories that fueled larger victories and soon their opponents were compromising in their direction. Whereas if they had just said, “Oh, we're for a welfare state,” they would have never succeeded—certainly not as quickly as they did.

GS: Right, and today the only ideas you get as an alternative to socialized medicine in America are lame: they amount to “move to socialized medicine a little bit slower.”

Nearly two decades passed between Hillary Clinton's attempt to socialize our medical system in 1993 and Obamacare. And even though “Hillarycare” was defeated roundly at the time, everyone agreed there were problems in the health care system that had to be addressed.

So what solutions did the Clintons' opponents propose in those decades? The Heritage Foundation essentially concocted what became Obamacare, and President Bush dramatically expanded Medicare.

There was no serious talk about how to privatize health care. The debate was framed as “we don't have socialized medicine now, and we don't want to get it.” It



should have been framed in a way that acknowledged the fact that American health care has been mostly socialized since Medicare and that demanded that we figure out how to liberate it from government control.

DW: I can think of a few proposals along those lines, but not many.

GS: Right. And that's a massive failure. And I think it's primarily because of that that we're moving toward socialized medicine. There's no real alternative, except in kind of vague generalities and abstractions. There's little talk about the actual steps toward freeing health care in America.

Now, I'm not a policy wonk, and it's not a problem I can solve by myself. But I think that I am someone who can identify and get some of the best people together within the network of people

who are knowledgeable about Objectivism, knowledgeable about medicine, and who are pro-liberty, and will help facilitate the cross-pollination that I think is needed to get the best answers. And that's something I'm eager to do in the field of health care—and in other fields as well.

DW: So let's end with this. How do you think about the role of academia in influencing a culture with better ideas?

GS: There are a few routes through which it happens. One—and the main one—is that it's in college that people are taking the time to form the ideas that are going to guide them through the rest of their lives. And so, as an academic, you're teaching people in this time period.

You're not standing up on a pulpit and putting forth your ideas and expecting the students will

become your acolytes. Instead, you're treating them as people who are shopping for ideas in a situation where there are a lot of competing products. As a teacher, you're helping equip students for life intellectually by helping them understand the options, including the ones you favor, and helping them reflect on those options.

The other route is that you're interacting with the other people who are or will be influencing students. You will have less influence on professors than you'll have on students, since they have more formed and settled worldviews. But you can reach mutual clarity with them on points of agreement and disagreement. Among other benefits, that helps you do a better job teaching your own students. ■

Don Watkins, a former fellow at ARI and co-author of Equal Is Unfair, is a freelance writer and communications coach.

AYN RAND

ON RACISM, TRIBALISM AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Ayn Rand frequently commented on the issues of her day. She illuminated those issues with timeless principles that can help us make sense of the issues of our day. As the subjects of racism, tribalism and civil disobedience again make headlines, it pays to revisit how Rand thought about these subjects.

Racism is the lowest, most crudely primitive form of collectivism. It is the notion of ascribing moral, social or political significance to a man's genetic lineage—the notion that a man's intellectual and characterological traits are produced and transmitted by his internal body chemistry. Which means, in practice, that a man is to be judged, not by his own character and actions, but by the characters and actions of a collective of ancestors.

Racism claims that the content of a man's mind (not his cognitive apparatus, but its content) is inherited; that a man's convictions, values and character are determined before he is born, by physical factors beyond his control. This is the caveman's version of the doctrine of innate ideas—or of inherited knowledge—which has been thoroughly refuted by philosophy and science. Racism is a doctrine of, by and for brutes. It is a barnyard or stock-farm version of collectivism, appropriate to a mentality that differentiates between various breeds of animals, but not between animals and men.

Like every form of determinism, racism invalidates the specific attribute which distinguishes man from all other living species: his rational faculty. Racism negates two aspects of man's life: reason and choice, or mind and morality, replacing them with chemical predestination.

“Racism,”
The Virtue of Selfishness, 126





Q: Do you think America is a white racist country?

Certainly not. Do not hold against American society the crimes of a bad and backward part of the country—namely, the South. The South was never an example of capitalism; it was an agrarian, feudal society. It was the part of the country that established slavery, and had the nerve to secede and fight a war for the purpose of maintaining slavery. (This is an example of when people do not have the right to secede.) America fought a civil war to liberate the slaves. The principles of the Declaration of Independence, for the first time in human history, gave individual rights to every human being, regardless of race.

Q&A for “Global Balkanization,” Ford Hall Forum, 1977

Ayn Rand Answers (edited by Robert Mayhew)

Today, racism is regarded as a crime if practiced by a majority—but as an inalienable right if practiced by a minority. The notion that one’s culture is superior to all others solely because it represents the traditions of one’s ancestors, is regarded as chauvinism if claimed by a majority—but as “ethnic” pride if claimed by a minority. Resistance to change and progress is regarded as reactionary if demonstrated by a majority—but retrogression to a Balkan village, to an Indian tepee or to the jungle is hailed if demonstrated by a minority.

“The Age of Envy,”

Return of the Primitive: The Anti-Industrial Revolution, 142

Nobody can pretend any longer that the goal of such policies [those privileging minorities] is the elimination of racism—particularly when one observes that the real victims are the better members of these privileged minorities. The self-respecting small home owners and shop owners are the unprotected and undefended victims of every race riot. The minority's members are expected by their egalitarian leaders to remain a passive herd crying for help (which is a precondition of the power to control a pressure group). Those who ignore the threats and struggle to rise through individual effort and achievement are denounced as traitors. Traitors—to what? To a physiological (racial) collective—to the incompetence or unwillingness or lethargy or malingering of others.

“The Age of Envy,”

Return of the Primitive:

The Anti-Industrial Revolution, 142–3

If one is not a racist, one should not support reverse discrimination quotas. Racial quotas are vicious in any form, at any time, in any place, for any purpose whatsoever. Affirmative action is vicious; it isn't profiting anybody; it isn't improving the lot of the minorities. It's giving jobs and patronage and pull to the leaders of minority groups, and observe that only the races that got themselves organized get anything out of it (if you could call it an advantage). It's as un-American and unjust as any current movement, and I hope to God the Supreme Court is brave enough to forbid it once and for all. We are supposed to be color-blind, and that's what we should be.

Q&A for “Cultural Update,”

Ford Hall Forum, 1978

Ayn Rand Answers

(edited by Robert Mayhew)



There is no justification, in a civilized society, for the kind of mass civil disobedience that involves the violation of the rights of others—regardless of whether the demonstrators' goal is good or evil.

What are the nature and the causes of modern tribalism? Philosophically, tribalism is the product of irrationalism and collectivism. It is a logical consequence of modern philosophy. If men accept the notion that reason is not valid, what is to guide them and how are they to live?

Obviously, they will seek to join some group—any group—which claims the ability to lead them and to provide some sort of knowledge acquired by some sort of unspecified means. If men accept the notion that the individual is helpless, intellectually and morally, that he has no mind and no rights, that he is nothing, but the group is all, and his only moral significance lies in selfless service to the group—they will be pulled obediently to join a group. But which group? Well, if you believe that you have no mind and no moral value, you cannot have the confidence to make choices—so the only thing for you to do is to join an unchosen group, the group into which you were born, the group to which you were predestined to belong by the sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient power of your body chemistry.

This, of course, is racism. But if your group is small enough, it will not be called “racism”: it will be called “ethnicity.”

“Global Balkanization,”
The Voice of Reason, 117

Civil disobedience may be justifiable, in some cases, when and if an individual disobeys a law in order to bring an issue to court, as a test case. Such an action involves respect for legality and a protest directed only at a particular law which the individual seeks an opportunity to prove to be unjust. The same is true of a group of individuals when and if the risks involved are their own.

But there is no justification, in a civilized society, for the kind of mass civil disobedience that involves the violation of the rights of others—regardless of whether the demonstrators' goal is good or evil. The end does not justify the means. No one's rights can be secured by the violation of the rights of others. Mass disobedience is an assault on the concept of rights: it is a mob's defiance of legality as such.

The forcible occupation of another man's property or the obstruction of a public thoroughfare is so blatant a violation of rights that an attempt to justify it becomes an abrogation of morality. An individual has no right to do a “sit-in” in the home or office of a person he disagrees with—and he does not acquire such a right by joining a gang. Rights are not a matter of numbers—and there can be no such thing, in law or in morality, as actions forbidden to an individual, but permitted to a mob.

The only power of a mob, as against an individual, is greater muscular strength—i.e., plain, brute physical force. The attempt to solve social problems by means of physical force is what a civilized society is established to prevent. The advocates of mass civil disobedience admit that their purpose is intimidation. A society that tolerates intimidation as a means of settling disputes—the physical intimidation of some men or groups by others—loses its moral right to exist as a social system, and its collapse does not take long to follow.

Politically, mass civil disobedience is appropriate only as a prelude to civil war—as the declaration of a total break with a country's political institutions.

“The Cashing-In: The Student ‘Rebellion,’”
Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal, 256



Freedom in America
RD PEIKOFF
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LEONARD PEIKOFF
ism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand
BARRY WOOD



LEONARD PEIKOFF: AN INTELLECTUAL LEGACY

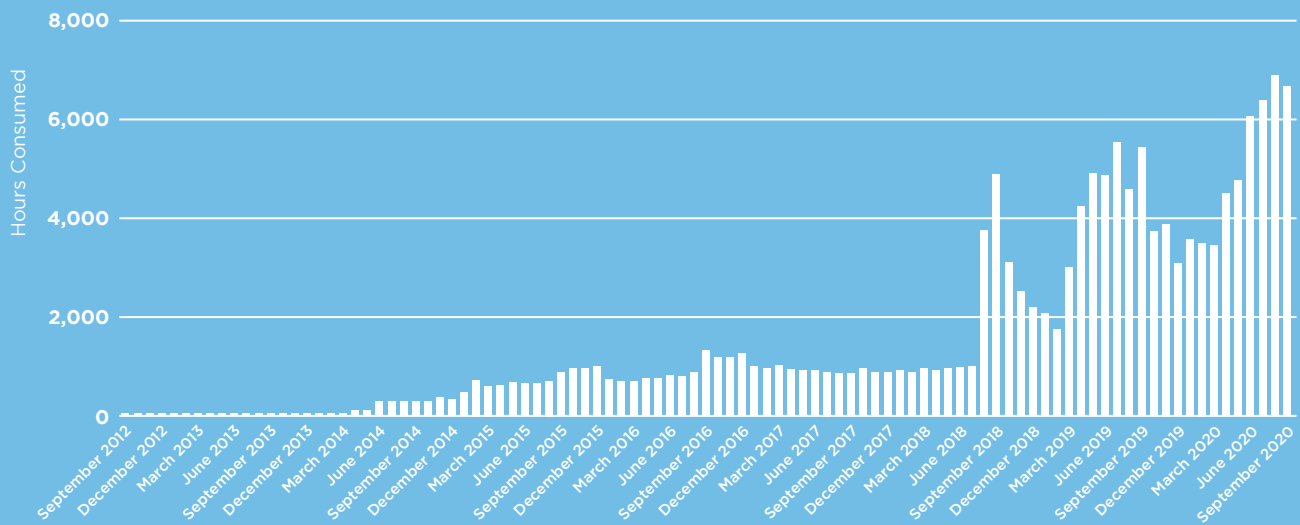
The Objectivist movement has a rich oral tradition. It is well known that Ayn Rand spent long hours in private conversation discussing her philosophy with friends and students, especially with Leonard Peikoff, whom she ultimately designated as her heir.

Peikoff, in turn, has spent decades teaching Objectivism. His lecture courses on various aspects of the philosophy and its applications are the best (and on some topics, the only) source of education on key aspects of Objectivism.

Peikoff's masterwork, *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand*, presents Rand's entire philosophy in one essentialized volume, thereby giving students of Objectivism an invaluable resource in learning the philosophy. Yet Peikoff's audio lecture courses remain indispensable tools for honing one's understanding.

For years, these courses were expensive and difficult to obtain. But over the last decade, ARI has made it a priority to increase their viewership by making them freely available on our ARI Campus website, our Ayn Rand University app and on YouTube.

Hours of Leonard Peikoff Video Content Consumed by Month



Since ARI began making Peikoff’s courses available online in 2012, users have consumed more than 150,000 hours of this material—a number that is increasing rapidly.

More recently, several individuals have taken on the challenge of editing some of Peikoff’s transcribed lectures into book form (with some support from ARI). As Peikoff wrote for the introduction to this series: “written lectures are much more accessible to the student.” To date, four books in this series have been published.

1. *Understanding Objectivism: A Guide to Learning Ayn Rand’s Philosophy* outlines a methodology for approaching the study of Objectivism and applying its principles to one’s own life.
2. *Objective Communication: Writing, Speaking, and Arguing* explains how to use Objectivist principles to communicate ideas with conviction, logic and reason.
3. *Teaching Johnny to Think: A Philosophy of Education Based on the Principles of Ayn Rand’s Objectivism* makes a compelling case for a rational system of education, and defines a proper methodology and curriculum for producing thinking high school graduates confident of their ability to achieve.
4. *Discovering Great Plays: As Literature and as Philosophy* explores eight classic plays in depth while showing how to get the most out of a literary work.

A fifth book in the series, *Principles of Grammar*, is expected to be released this month. For anyone who wishes to understand Ayn Rand’s ideas—and make those ideas part of their life—these books, and the recordings they’re based on, are an indispensable treasure trove.

OCON 2021 WILL CELEBRATE 30 YEARS
OF LEONARD PEIKOFF'S MASTERWORK

Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand



ARI's annual Objectivist summer conference (OCON) is a not-to-be-missed event that brings together leading experts in Objectivism and hundreds of people whose lives have been touched by Ayn Rand's ideas.

Whether your goal is to learn more about Objectivism, apply it to your life, or gain the emotional fuel that comes from celebrating great ideas and art with like-minded people, you won't want to miss this six-day event featuring more than 30 talks and panels.

This year's OCON will be particularly special. We'll be celebrating the 30th anniversary of Leonard Peikoff's landmark book *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand (OPAR)*.

For serious students of Ayn Rand's philosophy and for longtime fans of her writings, the experience of reading *OPAR* for the first time—and seeing the entire system of Objectivism in one integrated, nonfiction presentation—was, and continues to be, eye-opening. We look forward to honoring Peikoff's masterwork and the profound impact of his teaching and writing.

If you've never attended a summer conference before, our podcast *ARI Live!* contains some of the best of our past OCON presentations, including "How to Fill Your Life With Art" by Yaron Brook and Onkar Gbate, "Aristotle and *The Romantic Manifesto*" by Robert Mayhew, and "Free Speech, Free Minds, Free Markets" by Tara Smith. You can find it on iTunes or wherever you get your podcasts.

This year's conference is planned as an in-person event in Washington, DC, June 29–July 5, 2021, at the Renaissance Washington, DC Downtown Hotel.

To learn more and receive updates, visit aynrand.org/ocon2021.



NEW IDEAL

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UNSUNG HEROES OF THE PANDEMIC:

SCIENTISTS

BY ELAN JOURNO

NEW IDEAL APPLIES OBJECTIVISM TO CURRENT CONTROVERSIES

At the height of the pandemic panic in April and May, a short series of articles appeared in New Ideal, the Institute's journal, spotlighting unsung heroes. The article that's republished here in full focused on scientists, while others drew attention to underappreciated health care professionals and the creators of the digital age whose innovations allowed so many of us to keep working despite geographical separation. These were only three among dozens of articles addressing the scientific, economic, policy and moral ramifications of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the journal's launch in 2018, more than three hundred articles have been published concerning Objectivism and Ayn Rand, religion and morality, culture and politics, science and progress, and foreign policy. Subscriptions are free and bring new articles to your email inbox twice a week. Visit newideal.aynrand.org.



Which teams played in the last Super Bowl? Can you name one character from the Star Wars movies? Who is Kim

Kardashian's husband? Likely you answered at least one of those questions correctly. But the following may well stump you: Who developed the X-ray? Who performed the first organ transplant? Who developed the vaccine for smallpox? or whooping cough? or measles?

It's a curious fact that most of us know way more about sports and pop culture, than about the pioneers of scientific research. But the benefits we've all reaped from their work is incalculable, and it's clear that our way out of this global pandemic will depend crucially on scientists working to understand, track, and combat the novel coronavirus.

One inspiring story, from the pandemic's early days, has stuck with me. The story of Dr. Helen Chu and her colleagues in Seattle is the stuff of a Hollywood thriller, except it actually happened. They are among the unsung heroes in our midst.

Chu and her colleagues were in the middle of a flu study in the Seattle area, when they learned about the first confirmed American case of coronavirus infection, in Washington State. They quickly realized that they could help assess the spread of the virus. For their

flu research, they had been collecting nasal swabs from patients in the Puget Sound area. By running a new test on those samples, they could figure out how widely the novel coronavirus had spread.

With incredible speed, they managed to devise a new test. Because of government regulations, however, they were not approved to run it. So, they petitioned federal regulators to get approval. Days, weeks went by. When they did get an answer it was No.

But they decided to run the test anyway. Turns out the virus had established itself on American soil, undetected. In Dr. Chu's words: "It's just everywhere already."

Chu and her colleagues were caught in a potentially career-ending dilemma: if they disclosed their findings, they would run afoul of regulators, but if they withheld their findings, people might well die. "What we were allowed to do was to keep it to ourselves," Dr. Chu told the *New York Times*. "But what we felt like we needed to do was to tell public health."

The morally right thing to do, they concluded, was to share their discovery with local authorities, and they did so. The next morning, public health officials were able to identify an infected teenager, with mild symptoms, just as he was walking in to school.

Despite having brought to light such critical information, Chu and her colleagues were told by regulators to stop testing. Keep in mind that all this unfolded even as the federal government's own tests were found to be defective and testing generally was severely constrained, greatly delaying the rollout of wide-scale testing necessary for tackling the virus.

What I admire about Dr. Chu and her colleagues is not only their ingenuity in creating their own test, but also their courageous willingness to defy irrational man-made obstacles. The ordeal they went through, simply to share essential information about the virus, is a damning indictment of regulators. It's much to the credit of Chu and her colleagues that they put facts and truth above all else, in the name of protecting human life and advancing our knowledge of this virus.

They're not alone. Scientists around the world have pushed aside other projects to focus on this virus. On an unprecedented scale, they're collaborating across borders and time zones to identify this virus's characteristics, its behavior within the body, its spread within communities, its Achilles' heel—so that it can be stopped.

The global race to develop a vaccine for this coronavirus is itself inspiring. Some projects are running multiple trials in parallel, rather than one after the other, to accelerate the process.

From the one hundred or so vaccine projects underway, the one based at the Jenner Institute at Oxford University stands out for its size. That effort grew out of the research of Dr. Adrian Hill, who directs the Jenner Institute. Thanks in part to an emergency approval from the UK government, the project will begin scheduling a trial with more than six thousand people in May.

It remains to be seen whether this approach (or one of the many others in development) will prove effective, and if so, for what patient profile. Developing vaccines is a slow process, with a low success rate, at the best of times. But it's heartening to see so many bright minds focusing with such vigor on tackling the coronavirus.

When it is finally overcome, how will we look upon the scientists who contributed to that victory?

In the last century, after developing a vaccine for polio, Dr. Jonas Salk became a household name. New York offered to hold a ticker tape parade in his honor. But in gaining that widespread recognition for his scientific accomplishment, Salk has been something of an outlier.

Let's change that. It will be a sign of moral progress when—instead of overlooking or taking them for granted—we fully appreciate the many unsung scientific heroes of this pandemic.

If you're not a subscriber to *New Ideal*, here are some of the articles from 2020 that you may have missed:

[“The Dishonesty of ‘Real Socialism Has Never Been Tried,’” by Ben Bayer \(August 19\)](#)

[“Ayn Rand’s Philosophic Achievement,” by Harry Binswanger \(in four parts starting July 1\)](#)

[“When Tribal Journalists Try to ‘Cancel’ Ayn Rand,” by Elan Journo \(in two parts starting June 10\)](#)

[“The Dangerous Thinking Behind Pandemic Partisanship,” by Ben Bayer \(May 6\)](#)

[“The Curious Attacks on Bill Gates,” by Elan Journo \(May 28\)](#)

[“Arguments for Lockdowns Misrepresent Economic Evidence,” by Ben Bayer \(April 17\)](#)



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On *New Ideal Live*, our weekly podcast, ARI scholars tackle pressing cultural issues from the perspective of Rand's philosophy of Objectivism. Episodes are available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher and other podcast platforms.

"The Fuel on the Fire of 'Cancel Culture,'" Ben Bayer, Elan Journo (July 27)

"Thinking about the U.S. Presidential Elections," Onkar Ghatge, Robert Mayhew, Yaron Brook (September 28)

"Building and Toppling Public Statues," Onkar Ghatge, Gregory Salmieri, Ben Bayer (August 3)

"Recent Antitrust Attacks on 'Big Tech,'" Onkar Ghatge, Aaron Smith (August 17)

"A Pro-Freedom Approach to Infectious Disease," Onkar Ghatge (June 20)

"Condemning Lawless Violence—by the Police and the Rioters," Onkar Ghatge, Gregory Salmieri, Ben Bayer (June 3)

"Is It Moral to Accept Government Money During Covid-19?" Onkar Ghatge, Elan Journo (April 27)

A BENEFIT OF ARI MEMBERSHIP:

EXCLUSIVE MONTHLY ROUNDTABLES

*Guests Demonstrate the Power of Objectivism in Shaping Careers,
Generating Progress and Understanding Current Events*



AYN RAND'S SCREEN ADAPTATION OF *ATLAS SHRUGGED*

An ARI Member Roundtable with Dr. Shoshana Milgram

All previous efforts to make a feature film of her novel *Atlas Shrugged* having foundered, Ayn Rand was inspired in 1981 to begin writing the script for a nine-hour television miniseries. Although the miniseries was never produced—Rand died the next year—she managed to write nearly one-third of the teleplay, which now resides in the Ayn Rand Archives.

For the first time ever, scenes from Rand's unfinished teleplay were performed live (via Zoom) at ARI's annual fundraising gala. A week before the gala, a special preview event was offered to ARI supporters whose commitment to monthly donations earned them membership privileges. Members were treated to an exclusive behind-the-scenes interview with Shoshana Milgram, an expert on Rand's life and a contributor to the performance script—along with audio excerpts from the rehearsal.

The Milgram event, "Ayn Rand's Screen Adaptation of *Atlas Shrugged*," was part of the ARI Member Roundtable series, inaugurated in 2020 as a new approach to inspiring donors with Objectivism's relevance and power. "This series has succeeded beyond our initial hopes," said CEO Tal Tsfany. "More than a hundred donors typically attend and then socialize after the event. It's a unique opportunity for us to connect with our supporters and express our thanks for their generous support."

Milgram, an associate professor of English at Virginia Tech, spoke with ARI's Elan Journo about the events leading up to Ayn Rand's decision to produce a TV miniseries. Drawing on her many years of research in the Ayn Rand Archives, Milgram deftly described how Rand approached the writing task, changing the novel's structure, combining minor characters, and looking to other TV adaptations for inspiration. Milgram also shed light on Rand's thinking about what such a screen adaptation could accomplish, and what Rand's own role might be in the production.

Of course, one question people ask on hearing about a screen production of *Atlas Shrugged* is: How will it adapt the novel's climactic three-hour radio speech? Milgram recounted a conversation between Rand and a film producer who had once expressed the same concern. Rand reportedly volunteered to assist the screenwriter: "As far as the speech, I'll do that—I'll do that. I'll get it down to three to seven minutes."

Setting the stage for the gala, Milgram discussed how she selected scenes from Rand's teleplay to be performed, and how Milgram herself created additional scenes entirely from *Atlas Shrugged* dialogue. The event included an audience Q&A, followed by breakout rooms for discussion and socializing. These breakouts are a popular

feature of the Roundtables, noted Journo, because they're "a great opportunity to chat with ARI board members and scholars, connect with other like-minded individuals, and enjoy a community of values."

Intrigued? You can watch "Ayn Rand's Screen Adaptation of *Atlas Shrugged*" even if you're not yet a member. Write to donorservices@aynrand.org, and we will send you a link to the video.

And this is just one example of the exclusive content ARI offers as a benefit of membership. Past Roundtables have dealt with a variety of topics, some focused directly on Objectivism and its application, others examining important cultural trends and events with the help of experts in specialized fields. In each case, the speakers answer questions from attendees and share stories about the influence of Ayn Rand's ideas on their own life and success.

OTHER RECENT ARI MEMBER ROUNDTABLES

April 25, 2020:

"Navigating Your Emotional Life in the Pandemic."

In the pandemic's early days, philosopher Tara Smith talked about Objectivism's relevance for navigating one's emotional life during a time of upheaval and isolation, and for dealing with such emotions as anger and fear.

May 30, 2020:

"Maintaining a Value Orientation." Gena Gorlin, a

clinical psychologist and assistant professor at Yeshiva University, dispensed advice on being productive and pursuing one's goals in the face of shutdowns, economic upheaval, uncertainty and widespread anxiety.

July 25, 2020:

"The Future of Education." Amid the educational disruption caused by the global pandemic, educational entrepreneur Ray Girn spoke about the pandemic's impact, his company's work to mainstream Montessori education, current trends in education and the path toward a better future.

September 26, 2020:

"Ayn Rand's Screen Adaptation of Atlas Shrugged" with Shoshana Milgram

October 31, 2020:

"A Rebirth of Supersonic Air Travel." Seventeen years after the Concorde made its last supersonic flight, Boom Supersonic CEO Blake Scholl discussed the future promise of supersonic flight, the challenges of designing and building a new aircraft, and the impact of Ayn Rand's ideas on his life and work.

May 9, 2020:

"The Scientific Race to Combat Covid-19." With scientists around the globe working to understand and combat Covid-19, pharmaceutical CEO Michael Kauffman explained what goes into developing a vaccine or other treatment and discussed then-current prospects for success against the coronavirus.

June 27, 2020:

"How New Medicines Emerge—from Lab to Market." Jared Seehafer, CEO of a startup helping companies navigate the FDA approval process, discussed the challenges involved in bringing life-science products to market, the problem of "red tape" and fast-tracking of Covid-19-related treatments, and the pandemic's potential effects on the regulatory process.

August 29, 2020:

"Deepen Your Understanding of Objectivism." Two members of the Objectivist Academic Center's faculty—Onkar Ghate and Aaron Smith—talked about the in-depth, rigorous education in Rand's philosophy offered by the Center. Besides discussing what goes into developing new intellectuals, they described how becoming an OAC auditor can supercharge one's own personal growth by deepening one's understanding of Rand's philosophy for living on earth.

To attend future Roundtables, make sure you're an ARI Member (aynrand.org/membership) and look for the emails announcing each event and providing Zoom sign-in credentials.



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—Ayn Rand

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and associate of the
late Ayn Rand



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and Managing Director,
HSA Commercial Real
Estate, Chicago, IL



Jim Brown

Financier, Businessman,
U.S. Air Force pilot and
former CEO of ARI



Onkar Ghate

Chief Philosophy Officer
and Senior Fellow at
ARI. He is the Institute's
resident expert on
Objectivism.



Robert Mayhew

Professor of
philosophy at Seton
Hall University



Larry Salzman

Litigation Director,
Pacific Legal
Foundation



Tara Smith

Professor of philosophy
at University of Texas
at Austin



Tal Tsfany

President and
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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

(in thousands)

Assets

Current Assets	8,917
Long-Term Assets	822
Total Assets	9,739

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities	4,255
Long-Term Liabilities	2,007
Net Assets	3,477
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	9,739



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

YEAR-END SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

(in thousands)

Revenues

Contributions	7,771	96.0%
Program Revenues	274	3.0%
Investment Returns and Other Revenues	7	1.0%
Total Revenues	8,052	

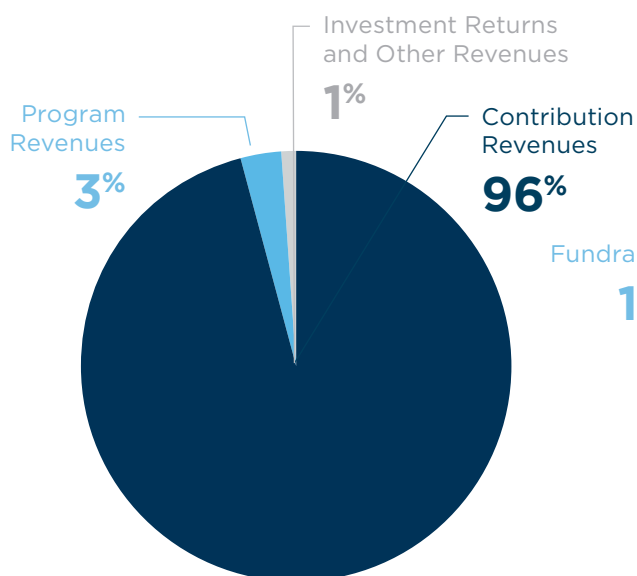
Expenses

Education Programs	2,115	31.0%
Outreach	2,449	35.0%
Other	381	6.0%
Total Program Services	4,945	
Fundraising	1,106	16.0%
Management and General	849	12.0%
Total Expenses	6,900	

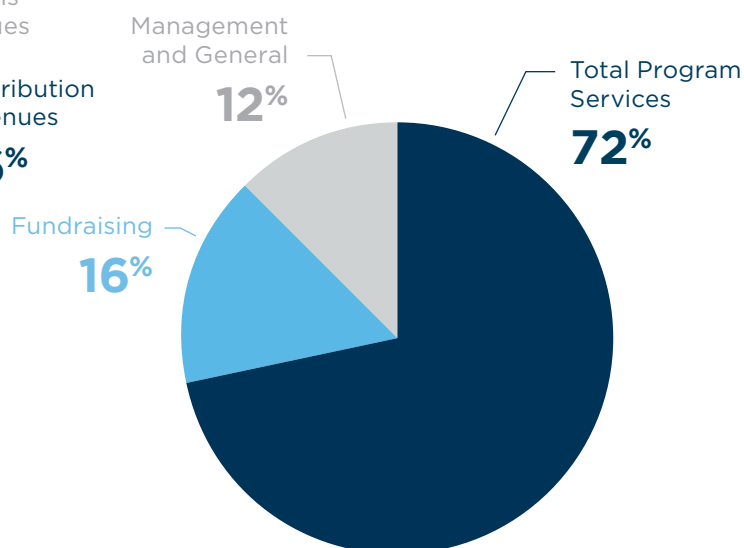
Change in Net Assets

1,152

REVENUES



EXPENSES





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