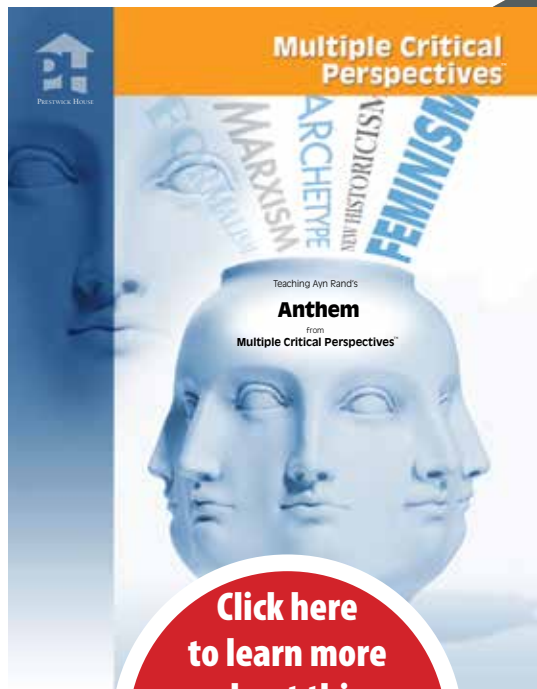




Prestwick House
Multiple Critical
Perspectives™

Sample



Click here
to learn more
about this
Multiple Critical
Perspectives!



Click here
to find more
Classroom Resources
for this title!



 **Prestwick House**

More from Prestwick House

Literature

Literary Touchstone Classics
Literature Teaching Units

Grammar and Writing

College and Career Readiness: Writing
Grammar for Writing

Vocabulary

Vocabulary Power Plus
Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots

Reading

Reading Informational Texts
Reading Literature



Multiple Critical Perspectives™

Teaching Ayn Rand's

Anthem

from

Multiple Critical Perspectives™

by

Rebecca Grudzina



Prestwick House

General Introduction to the Work

Plot Summary

Chapters I-VI

CHAPTER I

REFERRING TO HIMSELF in the first-person plural, “we,” the narrator/protagonist, Equality 7-2521, writes in a journal, which he acknowledges is a “sin” to write.

He is underground in some sort of tunnel, which is completely dark, except for a candle he stole. He begins his narrative by relating what he remembers of the Home of the Infants, where he lived with all the other boys his age. At the age of five, he was moved to the Home of the Students, where he lived until he was fifteen. He was often in trouble for fighting with the other boys. His teachers disliked him because he was curious, and he was considered to have an “evil in his bones” because he was taller than the others.

At fifteen, the boys are assigned their Life Mandates by the Council of Vocations. The narrator wants to be assigned to the Home of the Scholars, but is forbidden to *desire* an occupation. According to the Collectivist principles of the society, each man and woman is assigned to where he or she will best be able to serve his/her brothers and sisters. The narrator is assigned the Life Mandate of Street Sweeper. While the narrator accepts this sentence with grace and sees it as a means of repenting for his Transgression of Preference, the reader cannot help but feel that this assignment has more to do with punishing the narrator for his minor non-conformities than serving society.

The narrator had lived at the Home of the Street Sweepers for four years, leading the highly structured life of a Street Sweeper when he discovered the tunnel and began writing his journal.

He and another Street Sweeper, International 4-8818, discovered the tunnel while they were working near the edge of the City. He realizes that the tunnel must have been built by men during the Unmentionable Times, and it, therefore, must be an evil place. International 4-8818 had shown signs of a talent for comedy and drawing, but, when the Life Mandates were assigned, he too was assigned to the Home of the Street Sweepers. The narrator makes International 4-8818 promise not to tell anyone about their discovery.

After he finds the tunnel, the narrator returns to it each night. He has stolen candles from the Home of the Street Sweepers and manuscripts from the Home of the Scholars as well as an assortment of bottles, vials, and tools he has found in the refuse of the Home of the Scholars. He writes and thinks alone in the tunnel. Even though being alone is evil, and he believes the desire to be alone may be a part of his curse, he feels no shame or regret about it. Still, he knows that if he is discovered he will be punished harshly.

The Mythological/Archetypal Approach Applied to *Anthem*

Notes on the Mythological/Archetypal Approach

MYTHOLOGICAL, ARCHETYPAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CRITICISM are all very closely interrelated. This is because Freud formulated many theories around the idea of the social archetype, and his pupil, Carl Jung, expanded and refined Freud's theories into a more cross-cultural philosophy.

Critics who read texts with the mythological/archetypal approach are looking for symbols. Jung said that an archetype is "a figure... that repeats itself in the course of history wherever creative fantasy is fully manifested" ("The Problem of Types in Poetry" 1923). He believed that human beings were born innately knowing certain archetypes. The evidence of this, Jung claimed, lies in the fact that some myths are repeated throughout history in cultures and eras that could not possibly have had any contact with one another. Many stories in Greek and Roman mythology have counterparts in Chinese and Celtic mythology (long before the Greek and Roman Empires spread to Asia and northern Europe). Most of the myths and symbols represent ideas that human beings could not otherwise explain (the origins of life, what happens after death, etc.) Every culture has a creation story, a life after death belief, and a reason for human failings, and these stories—when studied comparatively—are far more similar than different.

When reading a work looking for archetypes or myths, critics look for very general recurring themes, characters, and situations. In modern times, the same types of archetypes are used in film, which is why it has been so easy for filmmakers to take a work like Jane Austen's *Emma* and adapt it into the typical Hollywood film *Clueless*. By drawing on those feelings, thoughts, concerns, and issues that have been a part of the human condition in every generation, modern authors allow readers to know the characters in a work with little or no explanation. Imagine how cluttered stories would be if the author had to give every detail about every single minor character that entered the work!

Activity One

Examining the Narrator's Experiences as the Quest

1. Copy and distribute the handouts: *Anthem*: Archetypal Activity One: Information Sheet and *Anthem*: Archetypal Activity One: Graphic.
2. Have students, either individually or in pairs, consider the narrator's story and complete the graphic to indicate which events and characters might correspond to elements of the hero's quest.
3. As a class, discuss how students have compared the narrator's experiences to the quest, and then discuss the following questions:
 - What is the narrator's motivation? Does this motivation change or evolve? If so, how and why?
 - What key elements in the Quest story seem to be missing in the narrator's story? Why might Rand have chosen to eliminate them?
 - Why are so many events of the narrator's story internal, psychological, and emotional?
 - What is the prediction of the future at the end of the novel? Has the narrator attained the goal of his Quest? If he has not yet attained it, can he see the goal of his quest.

The Feminist Theory Applied to *Anthem*



Notes on the Feminist Theory

FEMINISM IS AN EVOLVING PHILOSOPHY, and its application in literature is a relatively new area of study. The basis of the movement, both in literature and society, is that the Western world is fundamentally patriarchal (i.e., created by men, ruled by men, viewed through the eyes of men, and judged by men).

The feminist movement in society found its approach to literature in the 1960s. Of course, women had already been writing and publishing for centuries, but the 1960s saw the rise of a feminist literary theory. Until then, the works of female writers (or works about females) were examined by the same standards as those by male writers (and about men). Women were thought to be unintelligent (at least in part because they were generally less formally educated than men), and many women accepted that judgment. It was not until the feminist movement was well under way that women began examining old texts, reevaluating their portrayal of women and writing new works to fit the developing concept of the “modern woman.”

The feminist approach is based on finding suggestions of misogyny (negative attitudes toward women) within pieces of literature and exposing them. Feminists are interested in exposing the undervaluing of women in literature that has been accepted as the norm by both men and women. Feminist critics have even dissected many words in Western languages that they believe to be rooted in masculinity. Feminists argue that since the past millennia in the West have been dominated by men—whether they be the politicians in power or the historians recording it all—Western literature reflects a masculine bias, and consequently, represents an inaccurate and potentially harmful image of women. In order to fix this image and create a balanced canon, works by females and works about females need to be added and read from a feminist perspective.



Activity One

Examining the Novel for Evidence of the Society's Value of Women

1. Divide the class into four groups or a number of groups divisible by four.
2. Assign each (or allow each to choose) one of the following questions:
 - What are childhood and early education like for women in the society? How are the women in the society assigned to their Life Mandates?
 - What occupations are available to women?
 - Who holds the power in the relationship between the narrator and the Golden One? How did he/she attain this power?
 - What evidence is there of equality between the genders in the new world envisioned by the narrator?
3. Have each group peruse the book and answer its question. Have groups note all specific evidence in the novel to support its answer.
4. Reconvene the full class and discuss.



New Historicism Applied to *Anthem*

Notes on New Historicism

A COMMON TENDENCY IN THE STUDY of literature written in, and/or set in, a past or foreign culture is to assume a direct comparison between the culture as presented in the text and as it really was/is. New Historicism asserts that such a comparison is impossible for two basic reasons.

First, the “truth” of a foreign or past culture can never be known as established and unchangeable. At best, any understanding of the “truth” is a matter of interpretation on the parts of both the writer and the reader. This is most blatantly evident in the fact that the “losers” of history hardly ever get heard. The culture that is dominated by another is often lost to history because it is the powerful who have the resources to record that history. Even in recent past events, who really knows both sides of the story? Who really knows the whole of the Nazi story? Or the Iraqi story? New Historicists argue that these unknown histories are just as significant as the histories of the dominant culture of power and should be included in any worldview. Since they often contradict “traditional” (i.e., the winner’s) history, there is no way to really know the absolute truth.

Second, while the text under consideration does indeed reflect the culture in which it was written (and to some degree in which it is set), it also *participates* in the culture in which it is written. In other words, its very existence changes the culture it “reflects.” To New Historicists, literature and culture are born of one another. For example, although Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* certainly reflected the culture of the South during the mid-20th century, it also became a tool to raise awareness of, and change certain elements of, that culture.



Activity One

Examining the Social and the Political Background of the Novel

1. Copy and distribute the handout: *Anthem*: New Historicism Timeline and Ayn Rand Fact Sheet.
2. If you have not already done so, copy and distribute the Collectivism, Individualism, and Objectivism pages from the introduction to the unit.
3. In full class discussion, create a list of those behaviors, values, etc., of contemporary society that Rand would probably protest as potentially Collectivist.
 - How might these behaviors, values, etc., come about? What problem(s) or dissatisfaction(s) were they intended to solve?
4. Divide the class into pairs or small groups and have students peruse the handout, highlighting events and trends that were probably things Rand was protesting in *Anthem*.
 - What was occurring economically that was threatening Rand's ideal of *laissez-faire* capitalism?
 - How did the Labor Movement probably contribute to Rand's concerns?
 - What aspects of (programs established as part of) FDR's New Deal might Rand have felt were moving the United States ever closer to Collectivism?
 - What was happening in the field of education that may have contributed to Rand's envisioning her Collectivist society as primitive and technologically ignorant?
5. Reconvene the class and discuss.