

The Undercurrent

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was as if an underground stream flowed through the country and broke out in sudden springs that shot to the surface at random, in unpredictable places.” Ayn Rand

“YOU’RE NOT WELCOME HERE”

Why America’s Opposition to Immigration is Un-American

By most standards, Eric Balderas would be considered a model citizen. After graduating high school as class valedictorian, Balderas was admitted to Harvard on a full-ride scholarship to study molecular biology, with hopes of pursuing a career in cancer research. Yet the 19-year-old recently found himself detained and handcuffed by government agents, threatened with having his scholarships revoked and his life turned upside down.



by Noah Stahl

He had broken the law.

What sinister act had Balderas committed, and who were his victims? Was he accused of fraud, theft, or perhaps assault against a fellow citizen? No, Balderas’ crime was that he was not a citizen. Having crossed the border from Mexico with his mother at age four, he had been living in fugitive status for most of his life without realizing it. For all his hard work and achievement, he was ultimately confronted with the prospect of deportation.

Though Eric Balderas is in many ways exceptional, his case is not an unfortunate misunderstanding, an instance of a law incriminating someone it wasn’t intended to. According to the United States government, Balderas is equally as guilty as the hundreds of thousands of others deported each year for being inside the nation’s borders

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without authorization, and the millions more who haven’t yet been caught.

Thus, we’re confronted with a disconcerting reality: our government, on the premise of upholding the rule of law, finds it necessary to handcuff and threaten to upend the life of an aspiring cancer researcher who embodies

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OBJECTIVISM

The Undercurrent’s cultural commentary is based on Ayn Rand’s philosophy, Objectivism. Objectivism, which animates Ayn Rand’s fiction, is a systematic philosophy of life. It holds that the universe is orderly and comprehensible, that man survives by reason, that his life and happiness comprise his highest moral purpose, and that he flourishes only in a society that protects his individual rights. In these pages we hope to defend these values. To learn more about the ideas behind them, you can begin by reading Ayn Rand’s books, such as

The Fountainhead and *Atlas Shrugged*, or by visiting AynRand.org.

THE UNDERCURRENT

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“YOU’RE NOT WELCOME HERE”

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the American work ethic and American dream. Why?

Immigration and the controversy it inspires are nothing new. Long before America was established, immigration was contested and restrictions were enforced. As early as the mid-1600s, colonial officials took measures to prevent the settlement of Quakers, who were then considered to have “accursed” beliefs. Over the nation’s history, other groups restricted from entering the country have included Catholics, single women, Chinese, Irish, Japanese, all Asians, and even all “non-white” people. The reasons justifying such restrictions have been equally diverse: they’ve included fears of the “morally corrupting” influence of immigrants on society, a desire for social homogeneity, attitudes toward various classes of immigrants as inferior or undesirable, and a view of immigrants as economic parasites.

From this long, varied line of sentiments, arguments, and policies, a common thread emerges: an emphasis on classifying people into groups. People are narrowly viewed as Christian or non-Christian, Anglo-Saxon or “non-white”, native-born or foreign, citizen or non-citizen, “legal” or “illegal” – and their group identity becomes the standard by which their worthiness to immigrate is judged. Put explicitly, the rule is: If you’re part of the right group, you’ll be let in; if not, you’ll be kept out.

Many have come to view America’s past treatment of immigrants as marred by old prejudices that have finally been put behind us. To be sure, the kind of raw racism that a century ago motivated opponents of Chinese and other immigrants (who were often victims of violent attack and discriminatory legislation) is fortunately rare today. But in fact, the “us-versus-them” mentality that gave rise to such overt forms of racism has not disappeared; it’s merely shifted to a more general, tacit preoccupation with group identity.

Eric Balderas’ predicament bears witness to this fact: on the sole basis of his birth in Mexico, he is legally barred from living, working, or going to school in the United States without the permission of the federal government. Had he been born within U.S. borders, he would face no such scrutiny.

We ought to be asking: why? Why is it that a person must be assigned a category and be judged by his peers and the law differently on that basis? Why is it that if Balderas had lived exactly the same life, with the same mother, going to the same school, pursuing the same goals, but had been born in Texas, he would be considered an exemplary citizen both in the eyes of the law and his fellow Americans—truly, one of “us”? Why does America instead consider him one of “them,” with the suspicion—and often, the handcuffs—that this entails?

There are no good answers to such questions, no legitimate justifications. On some level, many people understand this. That’s why so many can look at a case like Eric Balderas’ and recognize that something is definitely wrong: it’s his merit as an individual that we should regard as important, not the

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INTRODUCING THIS ISSUE

The days of fall are here, and with them, a new academic term and a fresh opportunity for intellectual inquiry. In this issue, you'll find a range of articles on diverse subjects, all with one thing in common: the arguments are informed by the ideas of Ayn Rand.

Rand's philosophy, Objectivism, has implications across the intellectual spectrum. Should immigrants be shunned, or welcomed with open arms? Rand's view that individualism is the basis of a free society suggests a clear answer. (See Noah Stahl's "You're Not Welcome Here"). Is it okay to mix a little impulsiveness into your approach to academic life, or should you always act strictly according to plan—or is there a third alternative? Rand's view of the relationship between thought, life, and happiness offers a unique perspective. (See Ramandeep Girn's "To Study or Not to Study"). Is science a threat and are its technological products, like genetic engineering and nuclear power,

dangers to be avoided? Ayn Rand's ideas lend a defense to the virtue of science and technology against religious and secular critics alike. (See Daniel Casper's "Embracing the Unnatural").

Our goal in this issue is not to spell out the underlying philosophy that informs our arguments, but to make the arguments themselves. If you're interested in Rand's ideas, see our piece "The Value of *Atlas Shrugged*," in which we make our case to you regarding why you should consider reading her works.

We aim to contribute to the intellectual debates taking place on campus and in the culture at large. The world is in flux. The headlines show that in topic after topic, there is a lack of clarity and certainty. Whether immigration policy or attitudes towards science, it's hard to tell what the different sides stand for. We at *The Undercurrent* hope to offer a fresh, clarifying perspective.

Our generation has the responsibility of looking at the issues, considering the different arguments, and most importantly, determining as best we can what is true. Now that the new school year has commenced, it's time for the debate to begin!

DOESN'T IMMIGRATION OVERBURDEN WELFARE AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES?

A common objection by those otherwise sympathetic to immigrants is that their arrival represents a new drain on government services and therefore on the taxpayers already living here. The first fact to note is that, almost universally, people immigrate to America as a place to work, to earn a better living, not as a place to leech off "the system." But granting that, there is an important element of truth to this concern: under a government that taxes some people to provide services to others, an immigrant could indeed represent a new recipient of welfare or public services—and thus, a potential additional drain on your wallet and your life.

But consider: so could the American baby about to be born down the street—or your neighbor—or anyone who lives on the other side of the country. Under a government that forcibly redistributes wealth through taxation to provide public services and welfare, every person becomes a potential economic threat to every other. This creates a society-wide conflict of interest that naturally leads to the formation of groups seeking to defend themselves against the others: the rich from the poor, the workers from the businessmen,

the doctors from the patients, and the "natives" from the "foreigners." Each camp perceives a real threat—the threat of their hard-earned wealth being seized by another group using the coercive hand of government.

The solution to this problem isn't merely to root for one group as opposed to another, even if one group's arguments seem to have more merit in a given circumstance. The solution is to abolish the artificial cause of the conflict, namely, the welfare state. If there were no forced redistribution of wealth, there would be no threat. Neither a baby born down the street, nor in Mexico, would have a legal claim on your wallet. Every individual would be left free to produce and earn for himself, without the need to fear the government's power to seize those earnings for the benefit of his neighbor (immigrant or not).

Immigration presupposes an individualistic approach to government, not today's paternalistic approach. In short, this means: a system of *laissez-faire* capitalism. For more information, visit our website or read Ayn Rand's collection of essays, *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*.

TO STUDY OR NOT TO STUDY

The false alternative between achieving academic goals and having fun



by **Ramandeep
Girn**

Each September, students arrive on college campuses and prepare for the academic challenges ahead. They arm themselves with lists, schedules, and planners as they seek out classes, bookstores, and financial aid offices. The air seems alive with a sense of energy as students begin the pursuit of their chosen goal: to attain a higher education.

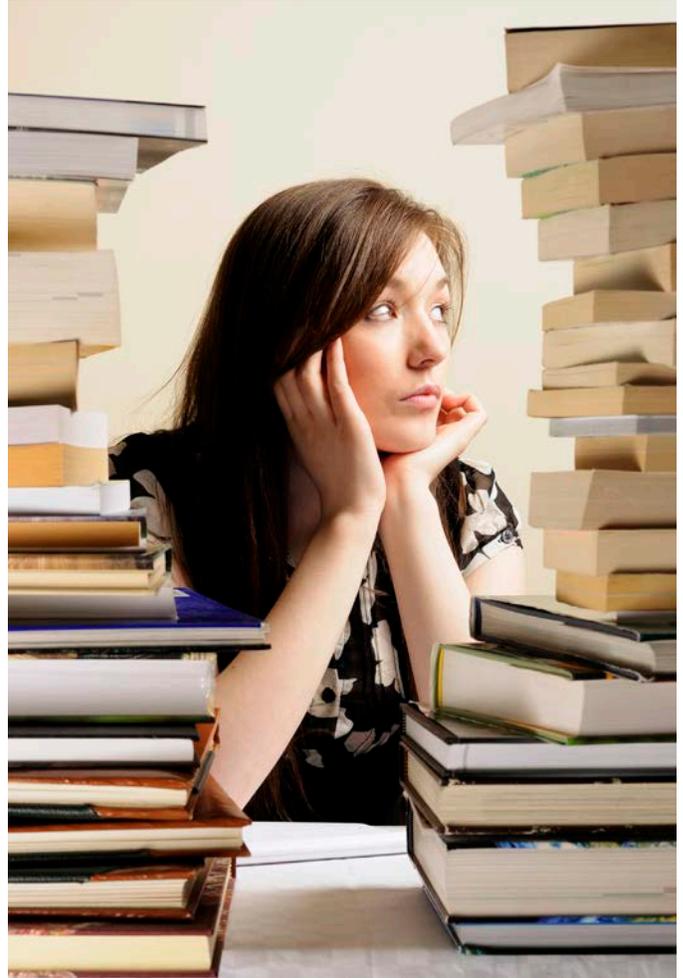
September is a fresh start, a chance to plan, prepare, and follow through on that goal. But it is also a time of excitement, when students feel alive and happy, and are eager to celebrate that feeling. The semester's beginning promises new friendships and new experiences.

Before long, however, the fun can seem to come into conflict with academic pursuits. Our focus at the beginning of the year can be quickly diminished by a series of invitations and impulses: Do I go to see a movie, or study for Friday's test? Have dinner with friends, or eat in and complete the essay due tomorrow? The will to study, so strong initially, seems to get sapped by the lure of television, parties, and text messages.

So it can seem that the only way to achieve the longer-term goals of good grades and graduation is to resist and forgo any pleasure and lock oneself in the library all weekend. This means constantly resisting the temptation to act impulsively, to slam the books shut and go downtown in defiance of looming deadlines. An internal conflict arises: distant future success through current suffering, or current pleasure at the expense of a bright future.

Does it have to be that way? We see from many counter-examples that it does not. College campuses are full of students that seem to have the knack to strike a balance—students that don't seem constantly to be undermining their future for the lures of the moment, and yet who also seem to enjoy plenty of moments while pursuing that future. What is it that these students have, but many others lack?

They have a different underlying attitude toward the relationship between short- and long-term values. The underlying attitude of the student who experiences a need



to act impulsively is that the purpose of forethought is to make sure you “do your duty”. The underlying attitude of the student who achieves harmony between the short and long term is that the purpose of forethought is to make sure you achieve your happiness.

Any conflict between impulsiveness and duty is a false alternative. Such conflicts assume that if you pause to think about it, you'll always decide that it's a mistake to have fun instead of studying, because your duty is to study. Impulsive action therefore seems the only means of really enjoying the present. When studying becomes associated with drudging duty in this way, its apparent opposite,

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TO STUDY OR NOT TO STUDY

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hedonism—thoughtless impulsiveness—seems to be the only way to enjoy life.

Pursuing hedonistic pleasure means reacting to whatever impulse you feel without considering future consequences. In contrast, students who seem to be striking a balance are pursuing genuine happiness. They are trying to live a life of pleasure, which means enjoying the present while remaining aware of long-term considerations and making thoughtful choices on that basis. Any human value—whether a Friday night movie, a college degree, a successful career, a fulfilling romance, or good health—presupposes thought-directed action. A person who characteristically fails to act thoughtfully will not even be able to stay on top of simple things like paying bills, buying groceries, remembering birthdays, and saving up to go to the movies, let alone be able to achieve profoundly rewarding goals like an enduring romance or a Ph.D.

If you've ever found that your long-term goals feel like unpleasant obligations, it's worth reflecting on the deeper reason why we take present action to prepare for the future: in order to enjoy life. For an animal, rewards automatically motivate and directly follow from successful effort—a wolf hunts, then it eats. For a human being, whose goals are long-range, rewards don't usually follow so immediately. The effort we exercise in planning and studying for a calculus test is rewarded, but that reward isn't immediately tangible (it might only come about as a better job years later). We, unlike other animals, can lose sight of the justification for putting forth the effort—we can forget that our fundamental reason for studying is our desire to achieve a more enjoyable life. This is why student counselors advise us to put aside plenty of time and money for leisure and entertainment; such relaxation helps us remember that we're working, not out of duty or obligation, but for the sake of pleasure. Rewarding ourselves for hard work, such as by treating ourselves to a good movie after acing a difficult exam, gives the purpose of our efforts an immediate emotional reality. It reminds us that happiness is the end of our efforts.

(And there is, of course, the joy of the doing itself. Just as the wolf enjoys the meal and the hunt, so you can enjoy the effort of studying. Work is effort, but it can be satisfying effort. If you seek out work that you love, the process of earning pleasure itself becomes a pleasure.)

If we accept the idea that our purpose in college is to earn a life of enjoyment, it's possible to erase the perceived conflict between working hard and having fun. This involves a conscious commitment to enjoy life today while also

IMPULSIVENESS: A PLEASURE KILLER

The main reason not to pursue fun impulsively is that it leads to less overall enjoyment. When a freshman impulsively abandons his plan to prepare for tomorrow's test by accompanying his roommate to a movie, it is easy to sympathize with him—he wants to enjoy his youth and his life. But in ignoring the future implications of his present action, he is stealing later enjoyment from himself (the enjoyment, for instance, of doing well on the exam, and later reaping the rewards of his high performance). This is not because he has consciously decided that seeing the movie is more important to him than passing the exam, but because he has failed to think through the relative importance of either alternative. By acting on impulse instead of reasoned thought, he has robbed himself of the opportunity to judge what course of action will bring him the greatest present and future enjoyment—thereby leaving it in the hands of dumb luck.

But there's a deeper reason that impulsive action is a bad idea: it undercuts the very fun being pursued. Think of the freshman going to the movie. While getting ready, he has to ignore the nagging feeling that he shouldn't be doing this. While walking to the theater, he has to suppress the worry that something bad is looming, that he may fail a test he could have otherwise passed. When he learns that another friend decided to stay and study, he has to push away the sinking feeling that he should really be doing the same thing. For him, the pleasure comes to be experienced as something temporary and stolen—lasting only as long as he's able to ignore the unreasonably high price that he risks paying. Such pleasure is always accompanied by guilt that he must continually evade.

The student who acts on impulse sets himself up for a conflict between the short and the long term. He will feel like tomorrow's test is what is keeping him from that party he wants to attend. He will then either deprive himself, forcing himself to study, or more likely, he'll see that conviction vanish in the teeth of a tempting phone ring or IM pop-up, giving in to the temptation. And the more he gives in, the more likely he'll be to give in next time. The very experience of fun then becomes a source of guilt.

Underneath it all, he probably feels that his mistake is a lack of discipline—if I just had willpower, he thinks, I wouldn't do this. In this way, he's a hedonist because he thinks self-denial is the only alternative. But the problem is not really a question of willpower. Mere discipline is not really the source of the motivation to study. The proper (and far more motivating) source is the commitment to enjoying life—the same motivation that leads someone to go to the movies. Discipline is indeed required—but it's the discipline necessary to pursue pleasure selfishly over the long term, not the discipline to deny pleasure.

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EMBRACING THE “UNNATURAL”

The basis of today's widespread mistrust of scientific progress



by Daniel Casper

Imagine telling someone that human beings could use large flying machines to travel across oceans or use small talking machines to speak to anyone in the world as if they were standing nearby. Imagine telling someone that the universe is composed of unseen particles or that emotions ranging from joy to rage

can be influenced by minute quantities of chemicals in the brain.

Anyone hearing these facts today would understand and say, “Of course!” But six centuries ago, quite in contrast to today, you would have likely been regarded as a lunatic (or hanged) for harboring such beliefs. Over the course of human history, the seemingly impossible has been made real by science and technology, resulting in previously unimaginable improvements to human life.

The frontiers of science and technology continue to promise us even greater benefits. Quantum physics allows us to harness the energy of atoms in nuclear reactors to power our cities, hospitals, and electronics. Research into the regenerative power of stem cells has shown their capacity to fight malignant tumors, grow organs, and perhaps extend our lifespan by decades. Cybernetics has allowed amputees, the blind, and the deaf to enjoy fuller lives with artificial limbs, eyes, and hearing aids. These achievements only hint at what more is possible in the future.

But despite the success of science in improving human life, there exists a long history of opposition to scientific innovation. New discoveries have often met with resistance and resentment. In 1163, Pope Alexander III banned the study of physics, directing that those who disobeyed “be avoided by all and excommunicated.” A 19th century group known as the Luddites denounced the Industrial Revolution, physically attacking inventors and destroying efficiency-improving machines. In the

early 20th century, resistance to the new theory of evolution culminated in the Scopes Monkey Trial, which convicted a man of violating Tennessee’s Butler Act, which forbade any educator from denying the Biblical account of creation.

A mistrust of science still persists today. Groups like Greenpeace and the Nuclear Information and Resource Service advocate restricting or outlawing genetic engineering and nuclear technology, despite the many existing and potential benefits thereof. Interest in homeopathic medicine is widely popular, with adherents expressing an automatic trust of anything “natural” and regarding man-made pharmaceutical remedies with categorical skepticism or suspicion. Inventions like microwave ovens, mobile phones, and disease-preventing fluoride water treatment have all been attacked with baseless claims of their alleged dangers.

This is a curious contradiction: on the one hand, the many benefits of science seem obvious; on the other, many people harbor a level of distrust towards science and technology, some going so far as to advocate the halt of some areas of scientific inquiry altogether. Why?

Religion is one source of this view. Consider, for example, the Catholic Church’s longstanding opposition to birth control, grounded in its view that sex is for procreation and never for pleasure alone. For the same reason, the Church warns scientists “not to play God” by cloning human



embryos—because they also believe procreation should only occur through sex. Birth control and genetic cloning are seen as unnatural interventions in God’s plan.

The same attitude can be seen in other religions. From tribal Africans regarding electricity as the work of demons, to Hollywood scientologists rejecting psychiatric medicine in favor of mystic rebalancing, religion often characterizes nature as beyond our intellectual grasp and necessarily out of our control. Morally, we’re told to follow a nonscientific path—whether by drinking the potion of a shaman or following the holy edicts of Deuteronomy. Practices like genetic engineering, on this view, are presumptuous deviations of a species that should recognize its need for divine subservience.

Religion is not the only obstacle with which scientists find themselves confronted; secular ideas also contribute to the mistrust of new sciences and technologies. Consider the seemingly science-friendly environmentalists who warn that when we cut down a forest to make paper, or drill a well to extract oil for fuel, or modify the DNA of plants to make them grow more robustly, we violate the “natural order” of how things ought to be. In doing so, they argue, we destroy a natural thing and create something unnatural, placing us at war with nature. Instead, we’re told to minimize our “footprint” on our surroundings, to seek “natural” solutions for all our needs, and to view scientific marvels like plastic bags and gasoline-fueled cars as undesirable blemishes on the planet’s surface.

Both the religious and secular versions of scientific mistrust share a common premise: that human life should be subordinated to a “higher order”, despite the benefits to be gained by going beyond the naturally given and creating something that never before existed. The Church opposes the manipulation of our genetic code despite the fact that doing so could eliminate fatal hereditary diseases. The secular counterpart fares no better—many environmentalists oppose genetic engineering of crops despite the millions fed by such agricultural improvements. Both viewpoints agree that human beings’ place in the universe is to be subservient to a higher power—that we must leave the forests and the fish and nuclear particles alone because we are not equipped to understand and control the world in which we live. Any vain attempts to the contrary will result in punishment from a higher power, be it God or Mother Earth.

But the fact is that human life demands certain things for survival and healthy, happy lives. Unlike other animals which rely on their instincts to find food and shelter, we as human beings require something much greater: knowledge. Everything that we need to make life possible comes from something we know, whether it is how to plant a seed and cook a meal, or how to build a hospital and perform a surgery. Neither God nor nature provides for our biological needs, like reliable sources of food, energy, and shelter, or uniquely human needs like communication infrastructure,

education, and entertainment. It is only through science and technology that we create these values to address our needs, both material and spiritual.

Human life demands these values be produced, making our nature that of a creative being. Our invention of technology—our rearranging of the world to suit the purposes of our lives—is as natural and good for us as a dam is to a beaver, or a nest is to a bird. We are rational animals, capable of using our minds to find solutions to the problems facing us, to engage in the task of discovering the workings of the world and use that knowledge in service of our needs—whether that means building a skyscraper or creating entirely new organisms in the lab. Through scientific study, we acquire the knowledge necessary to create; through technological productivity, we apply that knowledge to the needs of life. Every product of scientific discovery or practical innovation is evidence of the fact that we are creative beings whose basic nature is to apply our minds, invent technology, and further our lives beyond our alleged “natural limits.”

Contrary to those who mistrust science and its products, human beings are not incapable of the sometimes daunting task of knowing and then manipulating nature. The human mind is capable of independently achieving success—health, wealth, convenience, peace, happiness. We are not passively dependent on a supernatural God or the planet to provide us with the guidance to solve our problems, nor should we limit ourselves to follow the arbitrary laws derived from them.

Fundamentally, the conflicted feelings many have about scientific and technological progress come down, not to a conflict between the scientific and the unscientific, but to a conflict between two views of human progress: either we should act and innovate in pursuit of our material well-being and happiness, or we should subvert that ability in an attempt to live meekly in service to a nonexistent higher power or purpose. Either we seek to create a new, previously unknown world with our knowledge, or we submissively accept the world in front of us as one where no improvement is necessary or possible.

Science and technology have demonstrated their value to human life on earth, here and now. If our goal as human beings is to flourish, we should be eager to enrich our lives as much as we possibly can. To this end, we should celebrate the process of scientific discovery and technological innovation, and pursue them confidently. This doesn’t mean assuming every scientific or technological innovation comes free of risk or unintended consequences, but we must reject the superstition that technology as such is a threat, and realize the irrational nature of such opposition. To those who insist that we should restrict ourselves to the given, to the “natural,” let us answer: embrace the “unnatural.”

Daniel Casper is a fiction and nonfiction writer living in Dallas, Texas.

THE VALUE OF *ATLAS SHRUGGED*

Originally published in 1957, *Atlas Shrugged*, one of the most controversial novels in American fiction, recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. Annual sales have been growing for years and may grow even faster when the film adaptation is released.

Atlas Shrugged is routinely included on “favorite books” surveys. It is not uncommon to hear a businessman, a teacher, a truck driver, or a musician say, “*Atlas* changed my life.” How is it that a fifty-year-old, 1200-page novel about industrialists and inventors can have such an effect on so many people?

Written by Ayn Rand, the Russian-born philosopher who escaped communism early in the 20th century, *Atlas Shrugged* is a compelling novel about a cast of business executives struggling to achieve their interests in an inimical world. Set in New York City, it tells the story of Dagny Taggart, an underappreciated railroad VP, who fights to save her company from the incompetence and envy of her brother, the company’s President. It is the story of Henry Rearden, creator of a new metal alloy, who defends his invention against government bureaucrats who first mistrust then covet the valuable metal. It is the story of Francisco D’Anconia, heir to a lucrative copper mining firm, who pursues his own mysterious agenda while seemingly wasting away his wealth on frivolities. And it is the story of several other protagonists, each struggling in their own way to achieve and articulate their personal values.

What makes *Atlas* different is its philosophic depth. Underneath the suspenseful action, the story is fundamentally an intellectual mystery. Why do characters make the choices they do? What ideas animate them? The answers penetrate to the very core of Western Civilization’s traditions and values: Is man his brother’s keeper? Is the love of money the root of all evil? Is sexual pleasure base? Is happiness possible? What does it mean to be moral?

Atlas Shrugged, like all classics of literature, dramatizes a particular worldview, a way of approaching life that readers can judge, learn from, and incorporate into their



own perspective. Unlike other classics, however, *Atlas* dramatizes values that are normally opposed in our culture—the justice of unfettered capitalism, the morality of principled egoism, the absolute efficacy of human reason. The heroes of *Atlas* are idealized expressions of values normally attacked in America’s college classrooms, churches and political platforms: commercialism, selfishness, and rational certainty.

If college is a time to survey the intellectual landscape in order to discover one’s own identity, if it is a time to read the great works of literature and philosophy, then it is eminently a time to read *Atlas Shrugged*. *Atlas* is a novel about what it means to be moral—and the answer, presented in an intense, page-turning, emotionally moving, intellectually challenging form, is one that will otherwise not be given a fair hearing. And it will be unlike anything you’ve ever encountered before.

To learn more about *Atlas Shrugged*, visit AtlasShrugged.com.

FIND THE IDEAS EXPRESSED IN THIS ISSUE THOUGHT-PROVOKING?

Visit our blog at the-undercurrent.com, where you'll find much more commentary from *The Undercurrent* authors.

“YOU’RE NOT WELCOME HERE”

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place he happened to come from 15 years ago.

As Americans, we’re in a unique position to understand this point. In seeking to establish this country, America’s Founders rejected the long-entrenched attitude that a man ought to be viewed as a faceless, insignificant member of society dutifully toiling for the benefit of the king or nation. Rather, they eloquently argued that every person ought to be able to pursue his own life and seek his own happiness, and to interact with one another voluntarily on that basis. This represented a new outlook on human nature, one that demanded men be judged and treated as individuals and not simply as part of a tribe, nation, or other collective. In America, for the first time in history, the individual was able to exist on his own terms and merits—regardless of society’s desires to the contrary.

To a large extent, that notion of individualism is still alive in America and still inspires the immigrants coming here, but it’s an idea increasingly under attack. Just consider: in the recent census, the government was equally as (if not more) concerned with our racial category as with our age or place of residence. In the media and elsewhere, commentators often speak in terms like “Black America,” “the Hispanic vote,” “the interests of the middle class,” effectively lumping disparate people together as if their individual differences, opinions, and judgments were of little consequence. Politicians argue about the “rights” of the uninsured, of business owners, of consumers, of the poor or middle class, as if a person’s rights were not the inalienable individual rights that the Founders advocated, but special privileges conferred through group association.

The result is tragic. Many immigrants set out for an America known as the birthplace of individualism, as a place where a man is judged by his work and the content of his character—only to be met with a startling reaction: “you’re not welcome here.” They encounter an America that first asks where they were born, and then proceeds to grant or deny, by collective consensus, permission to live, work, or seek an education within its borders. Consequently, we continue to keep hard-working, motivated people from achieving their full potential here either by keeping them out altogether, or by treating them like fugitive criminals when they attempt to come here anyway.

It’s true that Eric Balderas wasn’t born here, but who cares? Why should that determine whether he is allowed to live here? A truly American immigration system would be an individualistic one, in which anyone would be free to come here to live, to work, and to be happy, barring only those known criminals or carriers of infectious diseases who represent a clear threat to those around them. There would be no years-long waits for special permission to enter, no arbitrary quotas, no deportation of people who have committed no legitimate crime—only a system designed to assist newcomers in properly participating in the country

they’ve sought out for good reason.

Such a system would not only be morally proper, but also eminently practical. Immigrants are able to express and realize their productive and creative capacity here in a way that is only possible in a free country. One need only peruse a list of famous immigrants—from Andrew Carnegie, Alexander Graham Bell, Albert Einstein, to the founding members of Google and Intel—to realize how much the country, and the world, has benefited from immigration. Whether one looks at science, arts, technology, entertainment, or any of the less glamorous areas of economic activity, the immense contribution of immigrants is clear.

Before we can effectively address any of the practical challenges of fixing the immigration system, we must first confront the growing trend toward collective judgment that clouds our thinking on the issue. Only once the nature of individualism is understood and its value reaffirmed will we be able to implement an approach to immigration in which upholding the law and doing the right thing are one in the same, and in which productive, energetic immigrants are welcomed and celebrated as fully American.

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TO STUDY OR NOT TO STUDY

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preparing to enjoy the future, and to use this commitment truly to guide our choices. When unexpected opportunities arise, for example—we win free tickets to a concert, say—we should neither cling militantly to our work plan nor abandon it, but instead try to revise our schedule to fit it in. This is the approach of the many students who live it up on the weekends while keeping up with jobs and coursework. The rewards they pursue—food, games, novels, movies, parties, road trips, sex—are healthy and desirable values because they are pursued thoughtfully. It's only the false alternative between hedonism and duty that produces the frustrating

“If we accept the idea that our purpose in college is to earn a life of enjoyment, it’s possible to erase the perceived conflict between working hard and having fun.”

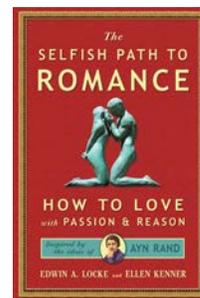
conclusion that enjoying student life precludes being a good student.

Acting thoughtfully and planning long-range does not mean long years of misery while we wait for eventual pleasurable rewards. To the contrary, only the student who acts in accordance with a plan is truly capable of appreciating the pleasures big and small, future and present, that life has to offer. Such a student fills his long-term plan with short-term pleasure, and then he enjoys today, knowing that he has not forgotten that tomorrow really will come.

Thought and planning allow us both to earn good grades in service of our future enjoyment and to enjoy our life in the present. If we can create in ourselves the discipline to study tonight and go out tomorrow to celebrate (or if we thoughtfully decide that it actually makes more sense to go out tonight and study tomorrow, and then we follow through on studying tomorrow), the rewards of this policy are both happiness and success. We should recognize that recreation is very often the right choice and see that going straight from one academic effort to the next, without any enjoyment in the doing and without any pause for fun and celebration, will result in as much misery as simply acting on one's impulses. As a result, there is no clash and no guilt in the pleasure—only the clean feeling of a unity of achievement and enjoyment.

Pleasure is the result of action—and action, for a human being, properly means thought-guided action. To the extent that we fail to grasp the importance of long-range planning as a means to enjoying life in the short term, our approach

will be not action but reaction. We will constantly react to things that seem worth having or doing now, without due consideration of what is actually good for our life and happiness in light of both our short- and long-range needs. If we find ourselves tempted to abandon thoughtful planning for the sake of momentary pleasure, we should remind ourselves that it is pleasure that we're actually abandoning. We should work to view indulging in transient impulses not as throwing off an unchosen duty, but rather as giving up, to some degree, on our pursuit of happiness. Instead, we have a powerful alternative: consciously to assess all the relevant factors and thoughtfully choose, in every instance, the course of action that we know is best for us, applying our minds to the task of squeezing every ounce of pleasure we can into life—today, tomorrow, and into the future.



THE SELFISH PATH TO ROMANCE

HOW TO LOVE with
PASSION and REASON

by Dr. Edwin A. Locke and
Dr. Ellen Kenner

is now available for pre-order.

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Just about everything most of us have learned about how to find love is wrong — That's the premise of *The Selfish Path to Romance*.

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Authors Dr. Edwin Locke and Dr. Ellen Kenner are inspired by the work of philosopher and novelist Ayn Rand. Their book explores Ayn Rand's belief that the assertion of your own needs and values is the foundation of love.

The book offers a no-nonsense, rational alternative for those who are serious about finding and sustaining a lifetime romance.

CAMPUS CLUBS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

These organizations hold regular meetings and events discussing and debating Objectivism and its applications.

ALABAMA

University of Alabama Objectivist Club
E-mail: irmorales@bama.ua.edu

ARIZONA

Fountain Hills Objectivist Club
E-mail: graffhyrum@gmail.com

ARKANSAS

University of Arkansas Objectivist Association
E-mail: jpanders@uark.edu

CALIFORNIA

Golden Gate Objectivists (San Francisco Bay Area)
E-mail: goldengateobjectivists@yahoo.com
Web: <http://goldengateobjectivists.com/>

Stanford University Objectivists
E-mail: dakinsloss@gmail.com

University of Southern California Objectivist Club
E-mail: info@uscobjectivists.com

UCLA: LOGIC
E-mail: arthur@clublogic.org
Web: <http://www.clublogic.org/>

UC Berkeley Objectivist Club
E-mail: berkeleyobjectivists@gmail.com

UC Irvine Objectivist Club
E-mail: shovelcharge88@yahoo.com

UC Santa Barbara Objectivist Club
E-mail: emiliano.noriegapetti@hotmail.com

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Objectivism Discussion Group (Southbury)
E-mail: aaron.n.turner@gmail.com

Yale University Objectivist Club
E-mail: helen.rittelmeyer@yale.edu

COLORADO

Front Range Objectivism (Denver)
Contact: fro@frontrangeobjectivism.com
Web: www.frontrangeobjectivism.com

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DC Objectivist Salon (DCOS)
E-mail: contact@dcobjectivistsalon.org
Web: <http://www.meetup.com/DC-Objectivist-Salon/>

American University Objectivist Society
E-mail: auobjectivists@gmail.com

FLORIDA

Canterbury School Objectivist Society (Fort Myers)
E-mail: seanja@autoinstore.com

Students of Objectivism of FGCU
E-mail: bwasicsko@gmail.com

Florida International University Objectivist Club
E-mail: objectivism2010@aol.com

Objectivist Society at Florida State University - Tallahassee
E-mail: william.mcada@gmail.com

South West Florida Objectivists (SWFO), Sarasota to Marco Island, FL
E-mail: jswfo@h-mmm.com

GEORGIA

Georgia Institute of Technology Students of Objectivism
E-mail: gtaynrandclub@gmail.com
Web: <http://cyberbuzz.gatech.edu/aynrand/>

Georgia State University Objectivists
E-mail: mckinleyav@gmail.com

Kennesaw State University Objectivists
E-mail: randianz@msn.com

Morehouse College Objectivist Think Tank
E-mail: charles@aquatiqdesign.com

New South Objectivists (SC, NC, and Georgia)
E-mail: contact@newsouthobjectivists.org
Web: <http://www.newsouthobjectivists.org/>

University of Georgia Objectivist Club
E-mail: mckinleyav@gmail.com

HAWAII

Reason Club at Hawaii Pacific University
E-mail: radical_individualist@hotmail.com

IDAHO

Idaho State University Objectivist Club
E-mail: inaway@gmail.com

ILLINOIS

Chicago Objectivists
E-mail: contact@chicagoobjectivists.org
<http://www.chicagoobjectivists.org/>

Columbia College Objectivist Club
E-mail: kaithlynator@columbia.edu

Naperville North High School Society for Objectivist Studies
E-mail: obdura@gmail.com

Northwestern University Objectivist Club
E-mail: haileyjpr500@aol.com

University of Chicago Objectivist Club
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Objectivists at Indiana University, Indianapolis
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University of Kansas, Lawrence University Objectivist Club
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University of Maryland Objectivist Club
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MASSACHUSETTS

Emmanuel College Objectivist Club
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Wheaton College Objectivist Club
E-mail: ohara_steven@wheatonma.edu

MICHIGAN

Great Lakes Objectivists (Detroit, MI)
E-mail: amynasir@aol.com
Web: <http://www.greatlakesobjectivists.com>

Michigan State University Objectivists
E-mail: morri136@msu.edu
Web: <http://www.msuoc.com/>

University of Michigan Objectivist Club
E-mail: gaglio@umiche.edu
Web: <http://umso.org/>

MINNESOTA

Minnesota Objectivist Association (Twin Cities, MN)
E-mail: info@mnoobjectivists.com
Web: <http://www.mnoobjectivists.com/>

MISSOURI

Kansas City Objectivists (KS and MO)
E-mail: darren@cathon.com
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UCM Objectivist Club
E-mail: amunozmusic@gmail.com

University of Central Missouri Objectivist Club
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University of Montana Objectivist Club
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Omaha Area Objectivists Omaha
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NEVADA

University of Nevada, Las Vegas Objectivist Club
E-mail: stp@worldzone.com

NEW JERSEY

Central Jersey Objectivists (Union County)
E-mail: zigory@comcast.net

Tenafly High School Objectivist Club
E-mail: THSOobjectivists@gmail.com

Rutgers University Objectivist Club
E-mail: nmcg@eden.rutgers.edu

NEW YORK

Objectivist Club at Baruch College
E-mail: aynrand.baruch@gmail.com

Columbia Objectivist Society: Radicals for the Mind
E-mail: kmh2159@columbia.edu

Fordham University Objectivist Club
E-mail: jcolon2@fordham.edu

NYU Objectivist Club
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West Islip High School Objectivist Club
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CAMPUS CLUBS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS, CONT'D

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SUNY Albany Objectivist Club
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RIT Objectivist Society
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NORTH CAROLINA

New South Objectivists (SC, NC, and Georgia)
E-mail: contact@newsouthobjectivists.org
Web: <http://www.newsouthobjectivists.org/>

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill Objectivist Forum
E-mail: jwadwor@E-mail.unc.edu

Students of Ayn Rand at UNC Charlotte
E-mail: dgabrie1@unc.edu

OHIO

Baldwin-Wallace Objectivist Club
E-mail: bvincent790@gmail.com

University of Cincinnati
Applicable Objectivism
E-mail: zohar36@gmail.com

Miami University Objectivist Club
E-mail: bodnermm@muohio.edu

Ohio State University Objectivist Club
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OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma State University Objectivist Club
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OU Objectivist Club
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Rogers State University Objectivist Club
E-mail: reneelm3@yahoo.com
Web: <http://www.rsobjclub.com/>

OREGON

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Web: <http://aristotleadventure.com/pao/index.html>

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Carnegie Mellon University Objectivists
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PSU-Altoona Objectivist Club
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Penn Ayn Rand Club
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Philadelphia Region Objectivists
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RHODE ISLAND

Ayn Rand Admirers (RI and surrounding area)
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SOUTH CAROLINA

Clemson Objectivists
E-mail: objclub@clemson.edu

New South Objectivists (SC, NC, and Georgia)
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Web: <http://www.newsouthobjectivists.org/>

TEXAS

Houston Objectivism Society, Houston, TX
E-mail: JanetLWestphal@aol.com
Web: <http://www.houstonobjectivism.com/>

Rice University Objectivism Club
E-mail: rice.objectivism@hotmail.com

South Texas Ayn Rand Society
E-mail: keenan@absolutereason.com
Web: <http://www.meetup.com/HoustonSTARS/>

Texas A&M University Aggie Objectivist Club
College Station, TX
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UT Austin Objectivist Society
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UTAH

University of Utah Objectivists
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Web: <http://utahobjectivists.wordpress.com/>

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Virginia Tech Objectivist Club
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Washington State University Objectivist Club
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Reason – University of Wisconsin, Whitewater
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Toronto Objectivist Association
E-mail: kate@klwilliams.com
Web: <http://www.stevensnet.net/event&articlelist.html>

University of Calgary Objectivist Club
E-mail: tymills@shaw.ca

University of Toronto Objectivist Society
E-mail: uoftobjectivistsociety@gmail.com

OTHER

ORGANIZATIONS

OF INTEREST

Ayn Rand Institute (ARI)
Purpose: To advance Objectivism in the culture
Website: www.aynrand.org

Ayn Rand Center (ARC)
Purpose: To conduct Objectivism-based media and political outreach
Website: www.aynrandcenter.org

Ayn Rand Lexicon
Purpose: Free online mini-encyclopedia of Ayn Rand's thought
Website: <http://aynrandlexicon.com/>

Americans for Free Choice in Medicine (AFCM)
Purpose: To advocate for free market health care
Website: <http://www.afcm.org>

Anthem Foundation for Objectivist Scholarship
Purpose: To provide grants to academic professionals engaged in serious, scholarly study of the philosophy and writings of Ayn Rand
Website: <http://www.anthemfoundation.org>

Capitalism Magazine
Purpose: Online political magazine
Website: <http://www.capmag.com>

Coalition for Secular Government
Purpose: To advocate for the full separation of Church and State
Website: <http://www.seculargovernment.us>

Clemson Institute for the Study of Capitalism
Purpose: To encourage scholarship exploring the moral, legal, constitutional, political, and economic foundations of capitalism.
Website: <http://business.clemson.edu/bbtcenter/cii>

Free Agriculture/Restore Markets (FA/RM)
Purpose: To advocate for agricultural and health policies based on individual rights
Website: <http://fa-rm.org>

Freedom and Individual Rights in Medicine (FIRM)
Purpose: To advocate for freedom and individual rights in medicine
Website: <http://www.westandfirm.org>

Objectivist Clubs Network
Purpose: To help Objectivist Club leaders be maximally effective
Website: www.oclubs.org

The Association for Objective Law (TAFOL)
Purpose: To advocate for Objectivism as the proper basis for the U.S. legal system
Website: <http://www.tafol.org/index.html>

The Lucidus Project
Purpose: To encourage those entering the medical profession to examine the moral foundations of capitalism
Website: <http://lucidus.org>

The Objective Standard
Purpose: A journal of culture and politics that publishes essays informed by Objectivism
Website: www.theobjectivestandard.com