

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

"My personal life," says Ayn Rand, "is a postscript to my novels; it consists of the sentence: '*And I mean it.*' I have always lived by the philosophy I present in my books—and it has worked for me, as it works for my characters. The concretes differ, the abstractions are the same.

"I decided to be a writer at the age of nine, and everything I have done was integrated to that purpose. I am an American by choice and conviction. I was born in Europe, but I came to America because this was the country based on my moral premises and the only country where one could be fully free to write. I came here alone, after graduating from a European college. I had a difficult struggle, earning my living at odd jobs, until I could make a financial success of my writing. No one helped me, nor did I think at any time that it was anyone's duty to help me.

"In college, I had taken history as my major subject, and philosophy as my special interest; the first—in order to have a factual knowledge of men's past, for my future writing; the second—in order to achieve an objective definition of my values. I found that the first could be learned, but the second had to be done by me.

"I have held the same philosophy I now hold, for as far back as I can remember. I have learned a great deal through the years and expanded my knowledge of details, of specific issues, of definitions, of applications—and I intend to continue expanding it—but I have never had to change any of my fundamentals. My philosophy, in essence, is the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute.

"The only philosophical debt I can acknowledge is to Aristotle. I most emphatically disagree with a great many parts of his philosophy—but his definition of the laws of logic and of the means of human knowledge is so great an achievement that his errors are irrelevant by comparison. You will find my tribute to him in the titles of the three parts of *ATLAS SHRUGGED*.

"My other acknowledgment is on the dedication page of this novel. I knew what values of character I wanted to find in a man. I met such a man—and we have been married for twenty-eight years. His name is Frank O'Connor.

"To all the readers who discovered *The Fountainhead* and asked me many questions about the wider application of its ideas, I want to say that I am answering these questions in the present novel and that *The Fountainhead* was only an overture to *ATLAS SHRUGGED*.

"I trust that no one will tell me that men such as I write about don't exist. That this book has been written—and published—is my proof that they do."