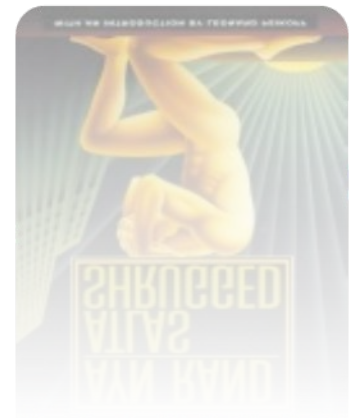
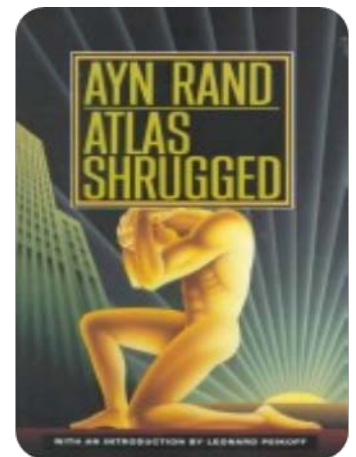
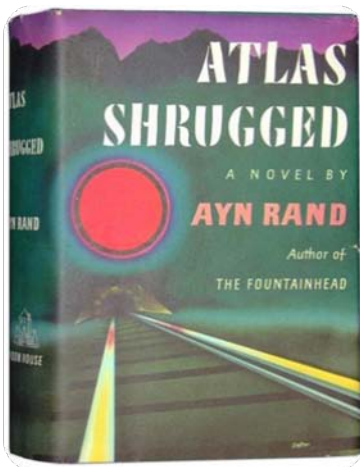


THE JOHN GALT EFFECT

by Dr. Arthur Robinson



February 19, 2009

SPPI Commentary and Essay Series

THE JOHN GALT EFFECT

by Dr. Arthur Robinson ~ February 19, 2009

A hidden effect of the November 4 elections and the national events that preceded them during this past year is perhaps best called the “John Galt Effect” in honor of Ayn Rand’s famous character in Atlas Shrugged. It is occurring to a very significant extent.

Our technological civilization stands upon the shoulders of many generations of free Americans and the great accomplishments that they bequeathed to us. Among those Americans and their counterparts in other countries have been a small special group of people whose unusual genius, work ethic, and love for their specialties were especially outstanding. These men, by their examples, their creations, and their leadership of free enterprises, have led our civilization upward. One of the greatest privileges of my life has been to know a few such people.



Our technological civilization stands upon the shoulders of many generations of free Americans and the great accomplishments that they bequeathed to us.

Without this small group of people, the technological attainments of their generations would not have taken place. We know the names of a few of them, but there were many more—constituting perhaps one person in a thousand. Ayn Rand called these people the “men of the mind.” In Atlas Shrugged, under the leadership of John Galt, they withdrew their services. They would only work in freedom. They would not work under tyranny.



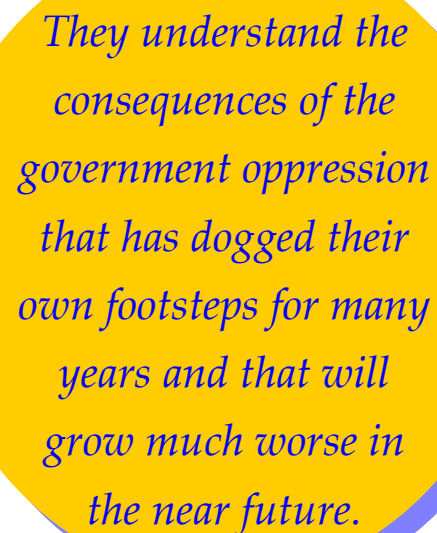
Without these people, even the small technological advances required by Marxist and Socialist societies would not occur.

In reality, most men of the mind never withdraw. They love their work too much to stop and—most of

them—love their fellow men too much to desert them. The forces of tyranny depend upon this. Without these people, even the small technological advances required by Marxist and Socialist societies would not occur. Yet, while the men of the mind do not fully withdraw, they have families and other loved ones for whom they are responsible and to whom they are more devoted than to the state.

As the pendulum of politics now swings toward tyranny in the United States and dangers to those whom they love increase, these men and women partially turn their talents more toward their personal responsibilities. Part of their thoughts, efforts, and ingenuity are lost to society—and this loss cannot be recovered by either negative or positive incentives.

Throughout our country today, the men of the mind (women, too) are watching the awful scene in Washington and its reflection in state and local capitals throughout the United States. They understand the consequences of the government oppression that has dogged their own footsteps for many years and that will grow much worse in the near future. So, they are taking actions to protect themselves and their families. We have no way to measure the societal effects of this distraction of the men of the mind. There are immediate effects upon our well being and long term effects from the things that they are no longer working full time to create.



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What is the cost of the distraction of our real leaders—of the men of the mind—of the John Galts among us? I estimate that it is greater than the trillions of dollars being lost on government printing presses. Call this Y2009K—and this time it is very real.

Our existing power plants are still operating; our petrochemical plants are still producing; our military defense is still performing; our food supplies are still flowing; and the rest of the technological infrastructure upon which our lives depend is largely still in place. But the key people—not those we see but those we do not see because they are constantly engaged in real work—are seriously distracted and now partially engaged in personal survival.

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Of one thing we can be certain. When the essentials of our civilization begin to seriously falter and this causes real harm, those who would be our masters and their fellow travelers in the media, academia, business, and politics will cast blame upon some of these men of the mind—and drag them before us for punishment. Our John Galts know this, too, and it is a further distraction for them.

Some of these people are leading great enterprises. Others are in the basements of our power plants and other heavy industries. Some are closeted away in universities quietly at work on the next generations of possible advances in science and engineering. They are easily recognized—by their genius and by the love of their work that permeates their whole beings.

One way to recognize them is that they constantly talk about their work to anyone who will listen.

Now they are distracted.

What are they talking about today?

Original Source:

<http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=30506>.

Atlas Shrugged Resources:

- Book Chapter Summaries:
<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/atlasshugged/>.
- An Audio Study of John Galt's Speech:
<http://atlasshugged.com/book/a-study-of-galts-speech.html>.
- The Book and its Ideas:
<http://atlasshugged.com/book/>.

