Ayn Rand: The Philosophy Of Freedom Is The Basis Of Society For Equal Opportunities

In her dystopian fiction novella Anthem, Ayn Rand presents the philosophy of individuality. After reading this literary work, each reader can share the point of view of the author or, on the contrary, challenge it. According to my personal opinion, the concept of individuality, personality and ego was shown absolutely accurately, which explains my full agreement with Ayn Rand and, perhaps, with the main character, Equality 7-2521.

To begin with, Ayn Rand conceived Anthem as a play which “casually” criticizes her period of living in Soviet Russia or, using other terms, in communist Russia. In her opinion, communism is the basis of self-destruction and elimination or even eradication of thoughts related with the manifestation of someone’s feature. This idea is presented at the very beginning of the novel, when Equality talks about the “words cut in the marble”, which he is required to repeat to himself whenever he is tempted: “We are one in all and all in one. There are no men but only the great WE, One invisible and forever.” Such could be not only the “holy words” of the Equality’s society, but also of the Soviet Union, which is a suitable analogue of the world represented in Anthem. Therefore, it is the Soviet Union that is the first historical evidence (in this essay) against the theory of absolute socialist equality.

Throughout the plot, readers observe dramatic changes in behavior and generally in understanding of the world of the protagonist and his lover. It is from the title and first words of the eleventh chapter that the hero is represented by the cardinal opposite of himself at the beginning. From the words “I am. I think. I will.” begins a “new page” of Equality’s life. Besides, chapter 11 is also the beginning of the Rand’s philosophy. From this chapter readers may misunderstand what Ayn Rand wanted to say because of such strong affirmations of Equality: “It is my mind which thinks, and the judgment of my mind is the only searchlight that can find the truth. It is my will which chooses, and the choice of my will is the only edict I must respect.”; “I am not a tool for their use. I am not a servant of their needs. I am not a bandage for their wounds. I am not a sacrifice on their altars”; “I owe nothing to my brothers, nor do I gather debts from them. I ask none to live for me, nor do I live for many others. I covet no man’s soul, nor is my soul theirs to covet.” Of course, all of these ideas are not a direct statement of a person or individual, but of an egoist who does not care for anything. Not reading this novel to the end, there is a feeling that the Rand’s philosophy is to be useful only to yourself and to “abstract” from society. But the truth is not so. After all egoistic thoughts, Equality says: “I honor men with my love. But honor is a thing to be earned.”; “And we shall join our hands when we wish, or walk alone when we so desire. For in the temple of his spirit, each man is alone. Let each men keep his temple untouched and undefiled. Then let him join hands with others if he wishes, but only beyond his holy threshold.” And the most important one from the twelfth chapter: “I shall call to me all the men and the women whose spirit has not been killed within them and who suffer under the yoke of their brothers. They will follow me and I shall lead them to my fortress. And here, in this uncharted wilderness, I and they, my chosen friends, my fellow-builders, shall write the first chapter in the new history of man.” All of these quotations confirm the idea that Ayn Rand presents the philosophy of freedom, freedom in everything: in choice, in religion and most importantly – freedom of speech. This kind (of freedom) is the main component of any democratic society and state.

In addition, this concept of freedom and individuality may be seen in our century. The Occupy movement, an international progressive, socio-political movement, expressed opposition to social and economic inequality and to the lack of 'real democracy' around the world, it aimed primarily to advance social and economic justice and new forms of democracy [1] and the Revolution of dignity in Ukraine are vivid examples of this. In both cases, people, as citizens, were dissatisfied with violations of their rights and freedoms by the state. Freedom is what each of us has and must have, it can change absolutely everything. Our duty is not to forget about it (freedom) and use it if it is necessary, as, for instant, activists and participants of previously bristled movements did.

Taking into consideration all mentioned above, the philosophy that Ayn Rand presents in Anthem is the concept of freedom and individuality. Credibility of this philosophy can be explained by the Occupy movement and the Revolution of dignity. As to the Soviet Union, it is a vivid historical example of the fact that in the case if this philosophy is removed from society, then sooner or later this society will make all efforts in order to return it. The philosophy of freedom is the basis of society for equal opportunities!

Works (Sources) Cited

1. “Occupy movement”. Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia. Web. 20 January, 2019.