



Original poster for *Top Hat*, featuring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, 1935 – Author, Radio-Keith/Orpheum Corp, Radio Pictures, Inc. public domain, Wikimedia



Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire in *Top Hat*, 1935 – RKO Radio Pictures, public domain, Wikimedia

I don't make love by kissing, I make love by dancing.

— Fred Astaire

Money is the barometer of a society's virtue.

— Ayn Rand

*When there is a great disparity of income, a nation
cannot create a profound democracy.*

— Céline

For months, I've been working with Gisella in the studio choreographing dances to many different types of music, classic, pop, jazz, even rock and roll. Her laughter and pranks are powerful medicine. Gisella, like Yvonne, is a caretaker and I need taking care of. It's a special kind of love, the kind of connection you have with someone of the same sex when you are my age.

Gisella was taller than me by two inches and even thinner. Her body is sublime. For the aerial work — the leaps and lifts, being light is an asset. Gisella's hips are narrow like a young boy's, her feet long and slender, which make her quite tall when dancing on point. Her sunny disposition balances my melancholy. With pale blonde hair, a fragile chin, luminous gray eyes, and a generous mouth, Gisella's smile has a healing influence on me.

Her mother and father are still quite in love. What a difference that makes in a child's life. I never tire of looking at her, never jealous of the attention her beauty awakens in others. I enjoy looking at her — her skin the color of pale alabaster, long bones, lean muscles, the gentle curve of her back, the shape of her breasts, curve of her neck, the sensuality of her arms — how she can glide like a snake. I love the way her yellow hair falls over her face. My strong feeling for her is not sexual but is sensual — a rapturous contemplation of her body — perfect in its movement and its grace.

To lift my spirits, Gisella took me dancing. We danced and danced with lots of boys, but always went home together. She has a sweetheart Isidoro in Turin. He'd been her sweetheart since she was fourteen in Bex, Switzerland. The fact that Giselle wasn't looking for a man made me feel I was in the right company. That's

what I didn't want — another man. When Gisella asked me why I didn't go out with boys, I told her I had a sweetheart in New York City. I wasn't ready to tell her the truth — I'd been ditched.

My dance instructor at Lausanne, Donati Howard, an Italian-Englishman, favors radical modernist styles like Paul Taylor and Merce Cunningham. He also teaches us the dances of Antony Tudor, an English choreographer who works with the American Ballet Theater. With ballets like *Jardin aux Lilas* and *Dark Elegies*, Tudor invented the modern psychological ballet. A keen observer of the human emotions, his ballets deeply move me. With great subtlety, Tudor explores the interior darkness of ordinary mortals. With a single step or gesture, he expresses their sorrow, anguish, and yearning.



Antony Tudor's *Dark Elegies* performed by the Boston Ballet – Author, Rosalie O'Connor, National Endowment for the Arts, Wikimedia

Dorati's approach to teaching is kinesthetic. He says that we should rely less on feedback from the mirror and more on our internal awareness of our head, neck, shoulders, torso, arms, and legs. Rather than perfecting our form first in the mirror, we must allow the feeling to come from the music. Even when studying under János Orosháza that is the way I've always danced. Out of the feeling comes the form.

After a month, Roger began calling again. He hadn't had enough punishment. I gave excuses, told him I had rehearsals on weekends. I was going through a period where I was obsessed with my dance. I never

stopped. It was my way of protecting my heart and my chastity. But while I was repelled by his desire for me, I was also intrigued by his urgent insistence. When I turned down boys at school, they ended up leaving me alone, but this older man was beating down my door.

In a rehearsal for *Le Corsaire*, I had a bad landing. On the lift, just as my partner was transferring me from his left to right arm, he lost his hold and dropped me. I fell with all my weight on my right foot. I'm not able to take class. I can only do stretching and massage until it heals.

"I know you have someone special who you write to," Gisella said. "But you're not engaged. It's unnatural not to go out now and then. Let Monsieur Rambutin take you out to the theatre, to the opera, to the ballet. You deserve it. Everyone has an injury at some point. You can't sit around being depressed. Get out and have some fun!"

Despite my ambivalence for Roger, I decided to take her advice, but only after I made it clear to him that I was mourning my sister.

"You're nearly twenty years older than me," I told him. "If you can keep it platonic, then we can be friends."

I was painfully aware of my slender finances and social standing. I also realized that if I accepted his cultural excursions, the parties and restaurants, I'd remain in a position of weakness. Despite Gisella's assurances, I feared it would come to a bad end. But my friend believed that someone as strong as I would have no trouble ending it if he didn't behave. With much doubt, I let him take me out.

Roger was a prominent socialite and for the first time I saw how the elite of Lyon spent their leisure time, bringing a startling transformation to my monastic life. While I loved to spend hours alone, Roger had the constant need to have people around. But the writer in me, found it fascinating to study the fashionable people — some pretentious and inane, others vulgar or just plain bizarre, but then there were others from the university or commerce who were stimulating conversationalists. I'd come home and fill my journal with descriptions of high society as if I were Marcel Proust gathering material for my magnum opus. Perhaps I can make something of these notes — a dance or an essay. Perhaps there is hope for me, as Proust said, "Everything great in the world comes from neurotics. They alone have founded our religions and composed our masterpieces."

While working on strengthening my injured ankle, I threw myself into these social games for several

months, driven by the hope that opening myself to new experiences would be a way of fleeing my longing for Gio. One evening at a country house by Lake Geneva, Sandrine, a beautiful woman, introduced herself. “I have another party to go to, but I wanted to meet you before I go.”

Close to forty, Sandrine had taken good care of herself, a svelte figure, her almond shaped eyes dark and lustrous, a wide and shapely mouth, her tanned face framed by auburn hair plaited in a woven coil, her silk dress the color of topaz, earrings of pendant yellow diamonds gleaming in the candle light. The sadness in Sandrine’s face reminded me of actress Jeanne Moreau in *La Notte*, a film by Michelangelo Antonioni that I’d seen in Geneva. When I go with Roger to the parties of the haute monde, I feel as if I’ve suddenly landed in an Antonioni film. Roger is like the handsome, self-absorbed Marcello Mastroianni character, Sandrine like the Jean Moreau character, her exquisite face marked by desolation and despair.



Marcello Mastroianni in *8 ½*, directed by Federico Fellini, 1963
– Author, Federico Fellini, Public domain, Wikimedia

She talked awhile about her admiration for Yvette Chauviré of the Paris Opéra Ballet, then lit a cigarette and for a moment, studied me with her lustrous eyes, a gaze so intense I became uneasy.

“I’ve heard so much about you from Roger. I can see why he’s so fond of you.” She inhaled deeply as thoughts passed through her mind which remained unspoken. “Come,” she said after a moment, “it’s a lovely night. Let’s go out on the terrace.”



Lake Geneva, Switzerland – Author, Schnaggli, Wikimedia

Sandrine picked up two glasses of champagne and led me out into the cool air. The wind was blowing silver and purple clouds across the lake, their diaphanous edges illuminated by a veiled moon. Having drunk a little too much, she spoke freely about intimate things.

“Roger has a gift of finding beautiful women. And when he finds her, he bathes her in compliments, tells her she’s the most beautiful, the most intelligent, most wonderful woman he’s ever met. He has a genius for making women feel desired.”

Wisps of her hair were dancing in the breeze. She lifted her hand to her hair and secured it with a jeweled pin. In the moonlight, I saw half concealed by her bracelet of linked topaz, slender scars on her upraised wrists.

“Making a conquest,” she said, “is Roger’s way of exercising power. Once he’s sure of a woman’s affection, he’ll begin to criticize. He’ll tell her that she’s wearing the wrong shoes or that she should have more poise. As gifted as he is with a compliment, he’s even better at demolishing a woman’s self-esteem. He’ll imply that she’s too heavy or too thin, too short or too tall, too verbose or too inarticulate.”

Struck by her candor, I wondered how she knew so much about Roger. Then, I realized. She saw the recognition in my face and said, “Yes, I was in love with him once.”

We walked closer to the lake, the surface the darkest violet, ruffled by the wind.

“Roger desires women. But he doesn’t really like them. They are a necessary accessory. Women are trophies. Like wealth, they’re proof that he’s a success. He’ll not go to a party unless he has a woman on his arm or leave without picking one up. It must be painful for him, but I suspect he feels inadequate unless he’s in control of a woman. That’s why he’s been driven up the wall by you. He can’t control you.” She turned and faced me, her almond eyes shining in the dark. “I don’t think that beyond knowing how to seduce them, Roger knows anything about women. I believe he likes dogs better than women. Everywhere he goes, he takes Jules and Jim. It’s his image — the purebred hunting dog, the country gentleman, the aristocrat.”

Sandrine took my hand, a look of compassion in her gaze. “You’re very young,” she said. “When I saw you across the room, I sensed your vulnerability. Even though I’m an absolute stranger, something inside told me I must warn you. Men who have the least respect for a woman’s intelligence are the same ones who’re obsessed by the idea of possessing a woman. It’s a paradox, but true.”

I remembered the first time I’d met Roger, his handmade boots, tweed jacket, suede gloves, and hunting dog. With his photographic memory, he projected omniscience when speaking on literature, art, architecture, wine, and the culinary arts. But I wondered if he was only reciting knowledge that he’d memorized and yet was unable to have an original thought. As we were leaving a restaurant, Roger flew into a rage when the valet had trouble finding the car. I remembered his curt dismissal of the waiter in the bar who in error had served him a Martini instead of a Manhattan. Sandrine’s words were running through my mind. Was she trying to turn me against Roger? She’d spoken without malice, as if she were a writer dispassionately describing a character in a novel. “He knows how to make women feel desired,” she said. “Making a conquest is Roger’s way of exercising power.”

In restaurants, Roger gazes at other women even in my presence. He’s compelled to capture their admiration. That was something Gio had never done. Gio made me feel that he had eyes only for me. I was the center of his world.

When Yvonne decided to leave Emile, I remembered her quoting Simone de Beauvoir, “No one is more arrogant toward women, more aggressive or scornful than the man who is anxious about his virility.” There’s a special aura around a man enamored with himself. But in Roger, it masks something deeper. Although I’d spent a lot of time with him, I don’t really know Roger. He rarely talked about his feelings or his past. One night, after praising the platform of the ultra-conservative Catholic party and after I’d side stepped his advances,

he began drinking a great deal and talked about his father who had died of a brain hemorrhage when he was five. His mother never remarried. In essence, Roger never had a father. When I tried to get him to talk about losing his father when he was sober, he replied, “What’s important is the future, not the past.” Beneath his velvet charm was a wall of concrete, an unsolvable puzzle, a man who could never let down his guard, who could never admit fault. He was unknowable because he refused to know himself.

Roger invited me to Geneva to see an exhibition of Italian sculptor Marino Marini and Italian-Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti, a friend of Joan Miro and Max Ernst. Marino Marini’s sculptures were a series of equestrian statues, a man with outstretched arms riding a horse, simple abstractions which have a nobility reminding me of ancient Etruscan art. I especially liked his “The Thinker.”



Marino Marini in his studio, 1963 – Author, Paolo Monti, Biblioteca Europea di Informazione e Cultura, Milan, Italy, Wikimedia

Giocometti was a founding member of the surrealists, then was kicked out. Influenced by African art, Giocometti said he wasn't sculpting the human figure, but the shadow they cast — a shadow which Jean-Paul Sartre called the “void surrounding human existence.”



Alberto Giacometti at the 31° Venice Biennale, 1962 – Author, Paolo Monti, Biblioteca Europea di Informazione e Cultura, Milan, Italy, Wikimedia

After the exhibition, I was dying to see *A Bout de Souffle*, a film by Jean-Luc Godard that everyone at school has been talking about with Jean-Paul Belmondo playing a car thief, a swaggering skirt chaser who kills a policeman and tries to convince his girlfriend to escape with him to Italy. Gisella said the American actress Jean Seberg plays a young girl with chopped off hair selling the Herald Tribune in the street.



A bout de souffle, Breathless, with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo, 1961 – Author, Raymond Cauchetier, Société Nouvelle de Cinématographie, Fair use, Wikimedia



Alberto Giacometti – Photograph by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Fair use, Wikimedia

At the end, she betrays him to the police. He is shot and dies at her feet. The critics have been debating Godard's style, the verve with which he edited the story. *A Bout de Souffle*, that's *Breathless* in English, departs from many practices of traditional cinema. Instead of shooting on sets built on a sound stage, they shot on location. Tracking shots were taken from a wheelchair. The cinematographer, Raul Coutard said they shot it one way and then Godard completely changed it in the editing, using jump cuts that broke conventional editing rules. Even before it was released, the press was calling it the worst movie of the year. They had no inkling that Godard was creating a vibrant new *cinéma vérité*. Nor did they imagine how electrifying Jean-Paul Belmondo was going to be.

Roger, in a biting tone, said, "If Brigitte Bardot isn't in it, I don't want to see it." Not to give up, I suggested that we see Indian filmmaker, Satyajit Ray's *Apu Trilogy* at a special screening on campus of his complete trilogy, *Pather Panchali*, *Aparjito*, and *Apur Sansar* that have won awards at the Cannes and Berlin festivals, and the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival. The three films are Satyajit Ray's cinematic reincarnation of a classic Indian coming of age story of Apu as he grows from childhood to manhood in a Bengali village and Calcutta, India.



Film director Satyajit Ray as child, 1930 – Unknown author, The Society for the Preservation of Satyajit Ray Archives, Public domain, Wikimedia. Satyajit Ray's trilogy, *Pather Panchali*, *Song of the Little Road*, *Aparajito*, *The Unvanquished*, and *Apur Sansar*, *The World of Apu* is the coming of age story of Apu in early 20th century India, set in a rural Bengal village and the great city of Kolkata, chronicling Apu's extreme poverty and struggle to become a writer. A cinematic bildungsroman, Satyajit Ray's Apu Trilogy is one of the most renowned films of world cinema.



Satyajit Ray with Ravi Shankar while recording the music for *Pather Panchali*, 1955 – Unknown author, Sandip Ray's book *Satyajit Ray's Ravi Shankar, An Unfilmed Visual Script*, Public domain, Wikimedia



Poster for film by Jean Renoir, 1951 – Author, United Artists, fair use, Wikimedia

Dominique Girard, our lecturer in cinema, told us that Apu has had a revolutionary effect on filmmaking with cinematographer Subrata Mitra’s technique of bouncing light off a sheet to create a natural feeling of daylight. Dominique said that Ray had never made a film before, but when Jean Renoir and production designer Eugene Lourié were in India to film *The River*, Renoir encouraged Ray to make the film he’d long dreamed about. After seeing Italian director Vittorio de Sica’s and screenwriter Cesare Zabbatini’s powerful neo-realist film, *Bicycle Thieves*, Ray was hit by a thunderbolt — he had to make the film of Apu. Struggling to round up the money to shoot with mainly non-professional actors, like Robert Bresson’s films, he was forced to stop filming a number of times for lack of funds. When John Huston was in India scouting locations, Ray showed him a silent rough cut which, even without any dialogue or music, inspired Huston to commend it to the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, where *Pather Panchali* would later have its world premiere. Despite film critic Bosley Crowther’s unreceptive review in the *New York Times*, most critics acclaimed it as a masterpiece of pure cinema. Japanese director Akira Kurosawa said, “It is the kind of cinema that flows with the serenity and nobility of a big river. Never having seen a Satyajit Ray film is like never having seen the sun or the moon.”



Ladri di Biciclette, The Bicycle Thief, a film by Vittorio de Sica. 1949. Actors Lamberto Maggiorani, the father, and Enzo Staiola, his son – Author, Johnny Freak, Public domain, Wikimedia. Written for the screen by Cesare Zavattini from a novel by Luigi Bartolini, the *Bicycle Thief* was awarded a Motion Picture Academy Oscar for most outstanding foreign language film in 1950. In 1952, *Sight & Sound* magazine's poll of critics and auteurs called *The Bicycle Thief* the greatest film of all time.



Actors Lamberto Maggiorani and Enzo Staiola searching for the stolen bicycle in Vittorio de Sica's film *The Bicycle Thief*, 1949 – Unknown author, source, *Eco Del Cinema*, Public domain. Indian director Satyajit Ray was inspired by *The Bicycle Thief* to make the *Apu Trilogy*.

To my keen disappointment, Roger insisted in going to dinner instead, so I didn't see either film. I've received a lesson in life — the one with the money makes the decisions. I'm dying to see *Apu Trilogy* and hear Ravi Shankar's music. If it's screened next week, I'll see it by myself. That's the best way to see a film — alone. No one can interrupt your thoughts.

On the drive back from the exhibition, Roger began talking about a book he'd just finished reading, *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand. "Rand shows," he said, "how individualism will triumph over collectivism. In the last century, when capitalism was pure and powerful, it created vast amounts of wealth. I would have loved to live in a time when there were no governmental restrictions on entrepreneurs. In the Golden Age, there was no limitation on how much money a risk-taking capitalist could make. I follow the economist Ludwig von Mises of the Austrian School of Economics who advocates an absolute laissez-faire policy. Von Mises believes that unrestricted laissez-faire is the only viable form of economic system. The only way to ensure prosperity is through a rule of law that keeps the bureaucrat's hands off the economy. The government should never intervene anywhere in the economy.



Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises – Author,
Ludwig von Mises Institute, Wikimedia

“The only role of the government’s is to preserve the right of private property. Von Mises believes that the masses owe a debt to the financiers who create wealth — entrepreneurs like me. The Greek philosopher Plato acknowledged that those with superior talent should rule the earth. The great majority of men owe their lives to men who are better than they.”

Roger decided to drive over the frontier to an auberge in Talloires, a town in Haute-Savoie overlooking the still waters of Lac d’Annecy. Dark clouds hovered after a rain over the mountains of the Rhône-Alpes, the dark shadows of the conifers framing the light in the east, the silvery-green water of the lake untroubled by wind. Over *filets de poisson pochés au vin blanc*, sole poached in white wine and vermouth, and a Pinot Chardonnay, Corton-Charlemagne, Roger continued his economic dissertation. He assumed that my rapt attention guaranteed agreement with his views.



Lake Annecy, with the mountains Dents de Lanfon, Lanfonnet, and Tournette – Author, Raphaelhui, Wikimedia

“Lately,” Roger said, “I’ve been reading articles by American economist, Alan Greenspan in *The Objectivist*. Greenspan believes that the creation of wealth can only occur under a system where entrepreneurs have the liberty to run their enterprises without interference. They must be free to run their business as they see fit. The parasites who have no purpose in life will perish.

“Ayn Rand says civilization must reject the morality of altruism. Her philosophy of Objectivism dictates that we must pursue in life our own rational selfishness. Rand believes we must live entirely for our own interest. Altruism is incompatible with happiness. The great individual must lead. That has been my perspective all my life. My reliance on myself has been the secret of my success.”

It was all I could do to not burst out laughing. Roger didn't create something out of nothing. He was born into wealth with every advantage money can buy, elite schools, the inheritance of his architectural construction firm through the lineage of his paternal grandfather. To live as Ayn Rand believed, to consider only one's self interest, was Roger's *modus operandi*. But I'll admit, despite his ideology, this man has shown me a lot about the world. When you're nineteen, you're curious. You soak up experiences on all sides. While I reject Roger's reactionary political views, we agree on architecture — the work of Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies van der Rohe, Pier Luigi Nervi, Marcel Breuer, Erich Mendelsohn, Alvar Aalto, Eero Saarinen, Oscar Niemeyer, Louis I. Kahn, Luis Barragán, and Antoni Gaudí. The first half of the 20th century has been a time of great innovation in architecture.



Antoni Gaudí's ceramic mosaic salamander at the entrance to Parc Güel, called *el drac, the dragon*, made of salvaged pieces of ceramic, has become a symbol of Gaudí's creations – Author, Baikonor, Wikimedia.



Ceiling mosaic in the hypostyle room, Park Güell – Author, Godmeister, Wikimedia

The architect I love above all is Antoni Gaudí, whose first job was designing lampposts. A master of organic architecture, Gaudí integrated ceramics, stained glass, wrought ironwork, concrete, carpentry, and masonry. A lyrical artist who understood the structural engineering of nature, Antoni Gaudí defied classification, synthesizing Egyptian, Persian, Indian, Chinese, Moorish, and Islamic-Christian Mudejar architecture.



Pavilion at the entrance of Park Güell – Author, Imelenchon, Public domain, Wikimedia



Columns supporting the vault carry the weight of the roadway viaduct in Parc Güell – Author, Usuario Rapomon, Wikimedia



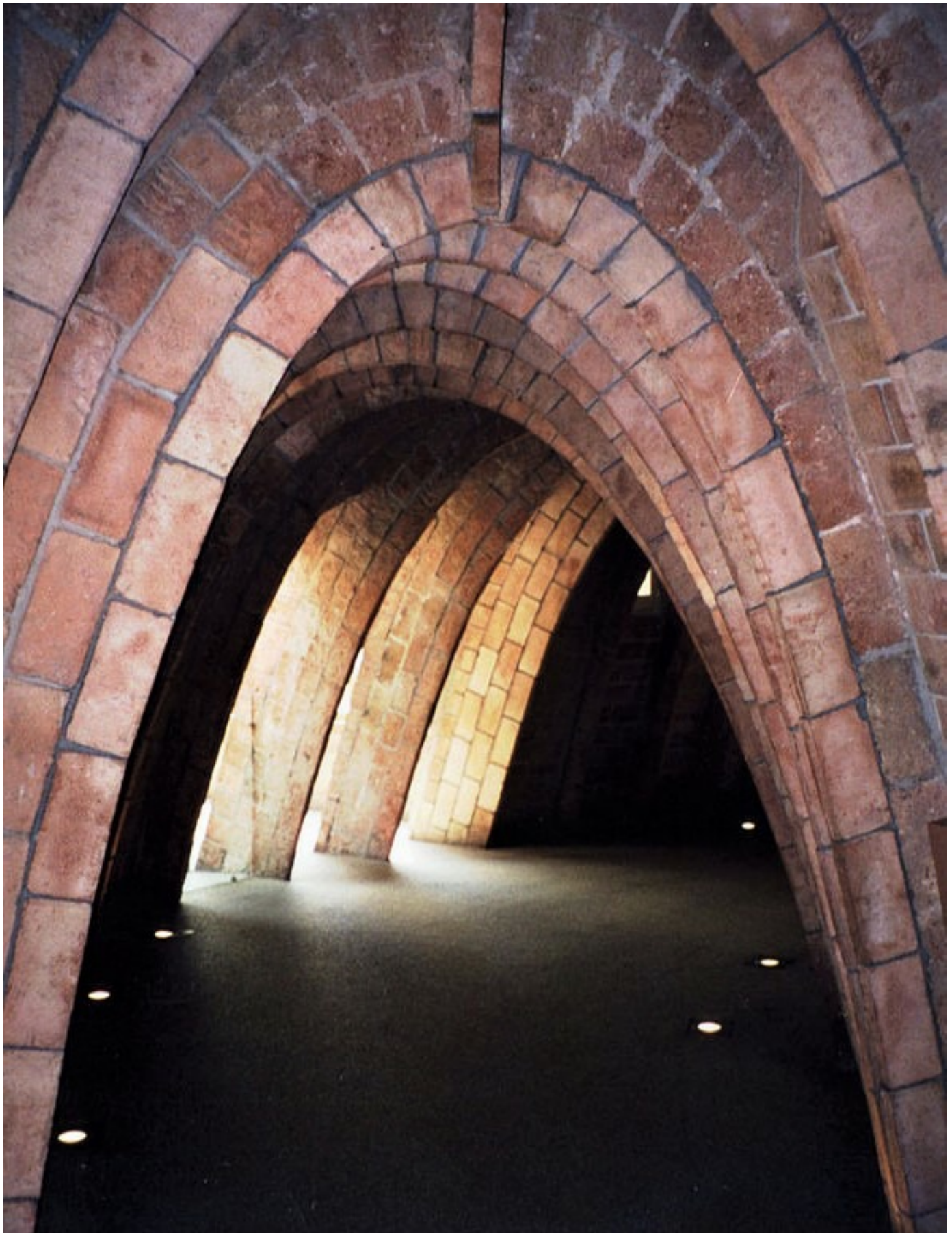
The colonnade *La Ola* in Parc Güell by Antoni Gaudí – Author, Dennis Nehrener, Public domain, Wikimedia



Casa Milà – Author Marco Almbauer, Public domain, Wikimedia

Like many unique architectural designs, Gaudí's Casa Milà, a residence and apartment house in Barcelona, was hated by many. Cartoons appeared in satirical magazines calling it a monstrosity, a rock quarry, or an Easter cake, the residents of the quarter refusing to speak to the owners Roser Seginon and her husband Pere Mila who they accused of ruining the neighborhood. Casa Milà, was a break-through in engineering for its stone façade of large blocks of limestone was self-supporting, allowing the interior apartments to be free of load bearing walls and thereby, permitting the inhabitants to change configurations of rooms at will. One of the most remarkable design elements of Casa Milà are the catenary arches forming the ribs of the attic ceiling that support the roof terraces.

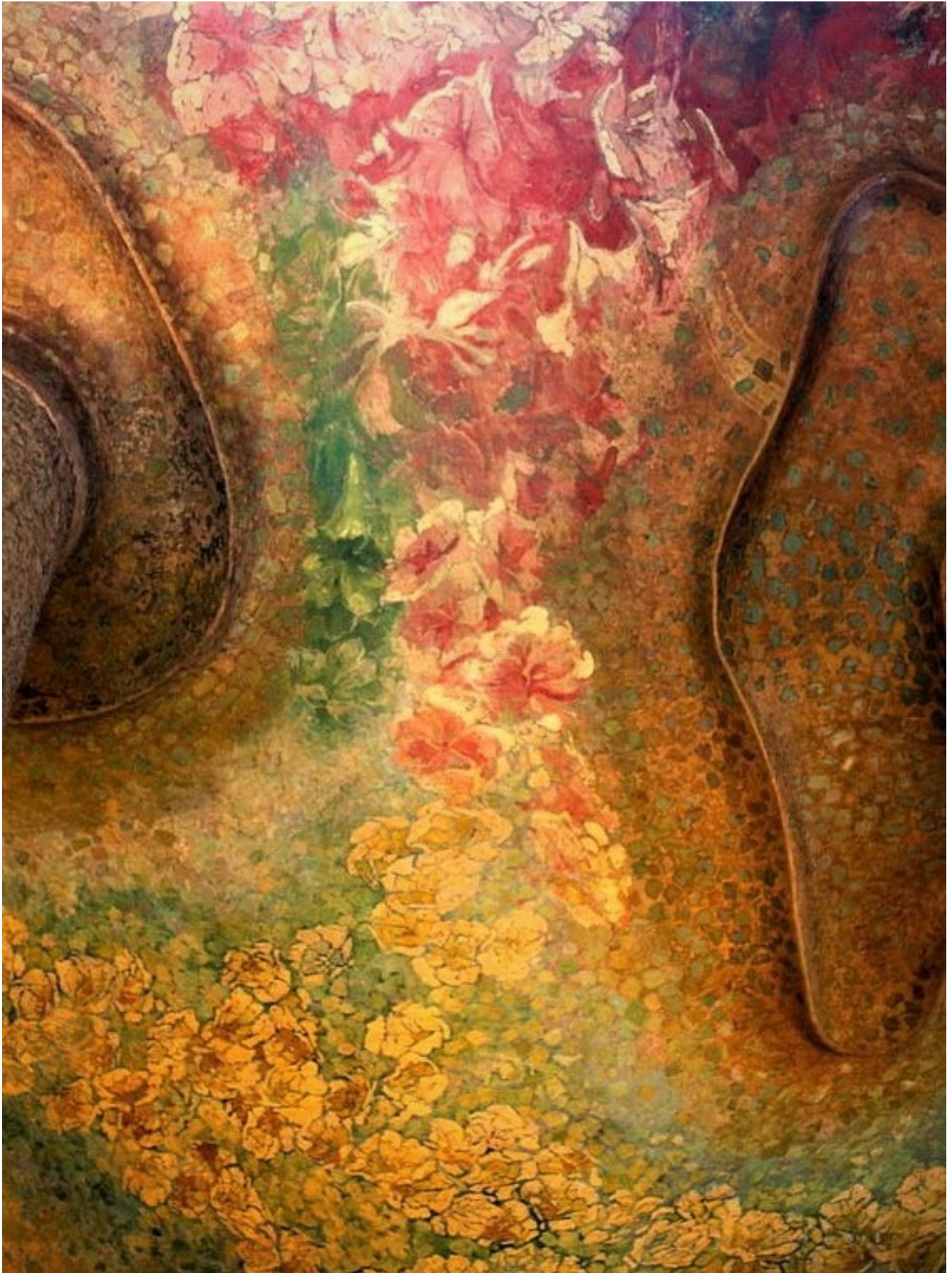
I looked up the catenary arch in the Larousse Encyclopedia and learned that in the 16th century, scientist, architect, and engineer Robert Hooke discovered that the catenary arch is the ideal curve for constructing an arch of uniform density and thickness. Hooke wrote, "As hangs a flexible cable so, inverted, stand the touching pieces of an arch." When that curve is inverted — that is, an upside-down catenary curve, it sustains nearly pure compression.



Catenary arches of the attic supporting the rooftop terrace of Casa Milà – Fotografia analògica de Error, Wikimedia



16th century scientist, architect, engineer Robert Hooke holds a chain to make a catenary arch. After the Great Fire of 1666, Hooke helped to survey and rebuild the City of London – Painting by Rita Greer. Wikimedia



Casa Milà painted ceiling – Author, Kyle Taylor, Wikimedia



Casa Milà chimney ventilators that Barcelonians call *espanta bruixes*, witch scarers – Author, Bernard Gagnon, Wikimedia



Casa Milà roof top terrace with chimney ventilators – Author, Kyle Taylor, Wikimedia

I would love to choreograph a dance on Gaudí's rooftop — a magnificent stage for a ballet. Just looking at these sculptural chimneys gives me ideas and schemes for costumes, an exciting mosaic of colors. Who would have thought that twenty-eight chimneys of brick covered with lime, broken bits of marble and glass could have such an imposing presence, chimneys that look like creatures from another planet frozen in time.



Dragon's spine roof arch and chimneys on roof of Casa Batlló – Author, John Fader, Wikimedia

Casa Batlló, another masterpiece of Gaudí's, was originally an older building which Joseph Batlló intended to demolish and rebuild, but Gaudí convinced him in 1904 that he could transform the building by creating a façade covered with a mosaic of fragmented ceramic tiles in shades of gold and orange, melding into greenish blues, and constructing a roof arched with a spine like a dragon. The attic under the dragon's spine, a service area for the building's occupants, was formed by a series of sixty catenary arches, suggesting the ribs of an animal.



Catenary arches in the attic of Casa Batlló – Author, Sara Terrones, Wikimedia



Principle salon of Casa Batlló – Author, Sara Terrones, Wikimedia

Gaudí is the only architect who creates buildings so tasty you want to eat them.



Roof of Casa Batlló, designed by Antonio Gaudi – Author, Chongming 76, Wikimedia



Stairs of Casa Batlló – Author, Chongming76, Wikimedia



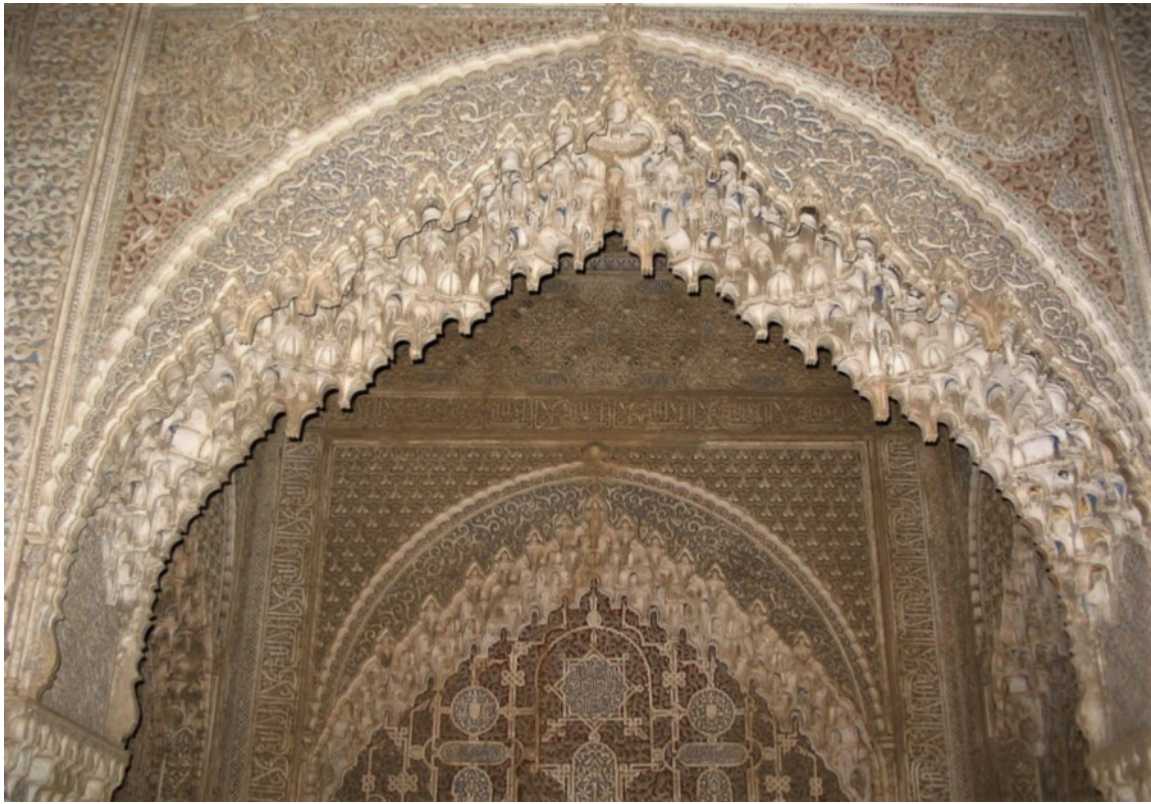
Façade of Casa Batlló – Author, ChristianSchd, Wikimedia

After I've finished my paper on Ayn Rand, I'm going to use my research on Antoni Gaudí to write an essay for Walter Steurman, my cultural anthropology professor. Gaudí identified with *Renaixença*, the revival of Catalan culture in the middle of the 19th century, a movement to restore the Catalan language and culture that had been repressed in the Nueva Planta decrees after the War of the Spanish Succession. On the National Day of Catalonia, Gaudí was clubbed and arrested by the Civil Guard at a demonstration against dictator Primo de Rivera's banning of the Catalan language. Due to poor health in his childhood, Gaudí adopted vegetarianism and developed studious quests, not only in architecture and design, and in his 20s frequented the theatre and opera in a horse drawn carriage, a striking figure with blond hair and blue eyes, dressed to the nines in custom suits, impeccably groomed, expressing his exotic inclinations. Erratic in his course work, he preferred to pursue his own investigations, performing so poorly in his school work that upon graduation from the Barcelona Architecture School, the director proclaimed, "We have given an academic title to either a fool or a genius."

The one woman he was attracted to didn't return his affection, which may have been the reason he dedicated his life to celebrating God in his feverish creations — Gaudí's refuge from the world. Gaudí was inspired by many sources. After following the Gothic Revival of French architect Eugene Viollet-le-Duc, who restored the medieval walled city of Carcassone that T. E. Lawrence had admired, (and created the flèche on the roof of Notre Dame,) Gaudi was inspired by Oriental art, the Moorish architecture of Spain in English architect Owen Jones' book, *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra*.



A Court in The Alhambra in the Time of the Moors – Painting, Edwin Lord Weeks, Public domain, Wikimedia



Moqárabe arch, Alhambra Palace, Granada – Author, Javier Carro, Wikimedia



Moqárabe or "stalactite vaulting," Hall of the Abencerrajes, Alhambra Palace – Author, Vaughan Williams, Wikimedia



Portrait of Antoni Gaudí, 1878 – Author, Pau Audouard, Public domain, Wikimedia

What made Gaudí unique among architects of his era, was his affinity to nature, stimulated by the organic forms he found in trees, plants, and the human skeleton. In his chef d'oeuvre the Sagrada Família, Gaudí designed the nave like a forest of trees with the radiating branches supporting a structure of intertwined hyperboloid vaults, eliminating the Gothic flying buttresses. His houses and apartment buildings reflected his fascination with earthen forms, and his explorations of the caves of [Collbató](#) and [Mallorca](#). Having an organic approach to design, he preferred to work with scale models and plaster casts rather than two dimensional drawings, often improvising shapes and materials on the job site.



Cuevas del Drach, Mallorca, Spain – Author, Rastrojo, Recursos destacados, Spanish Wikimedia



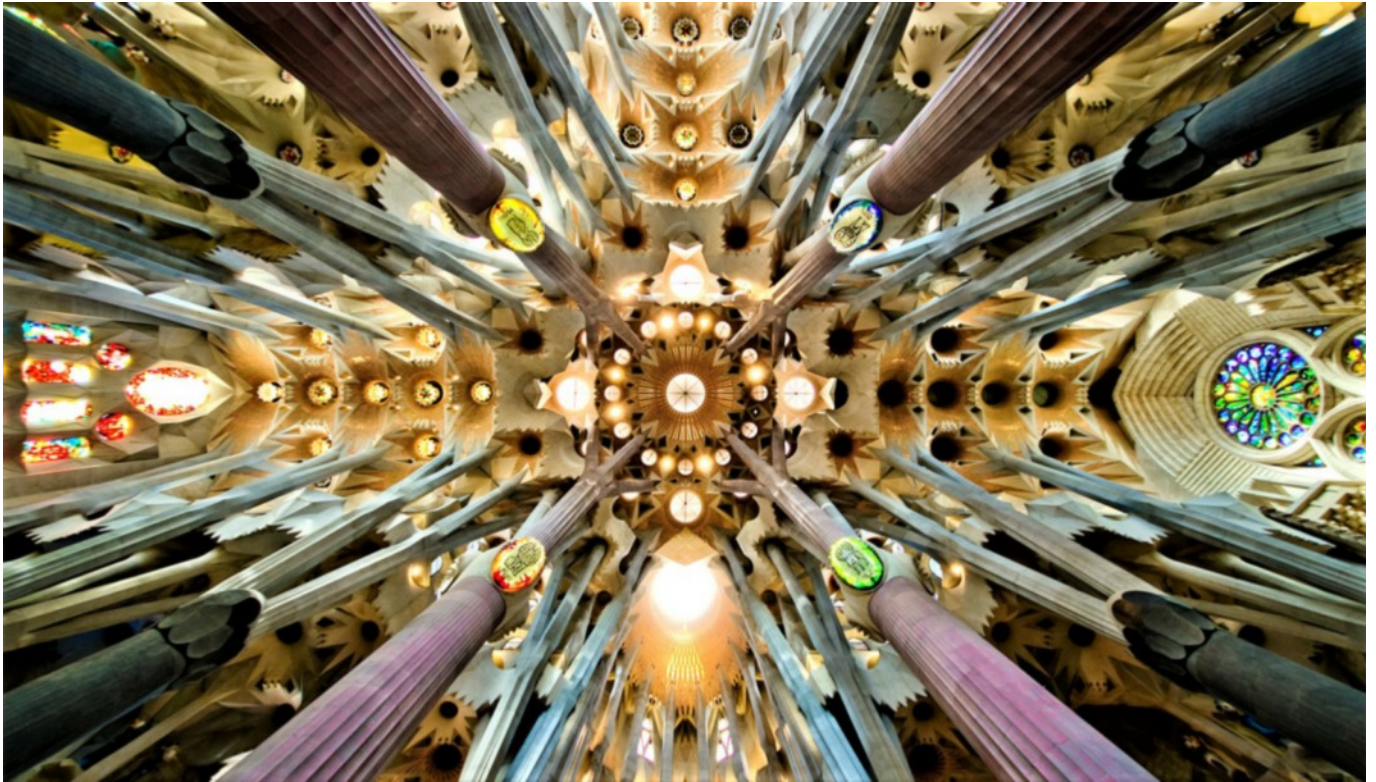
Antoni Gaudí's Sagrada Família basilica – Author, C Messier, Wikimedia



Sagrada Família under construction, 1905 – Author, Baldomer Gili i Roig, Museu d'Art Jaume Morera, Public domain, Wikimedia



Gaudí, right of center, shows the basilica of Sagrada Família to the Papal nuncio, Cardinal Francesco Ragonese, 1915 – Author, Josep Branguli, Public domain, Wikimedia



The nave of the Sagrada Família basilica- Author, Sabadell, Catalunya, Tot conflueix - All's connected, Wikimedia



Columns of Antoni Gaudí's Sagrada Família basilica – Author, Robert Gombos, Wikimedia



The Nativity façade of Sagrada Família basilica – Author, Brianza 2008, Wikimedia

As he aged, Gaudí left behind his *boulevardier* days, becoming more and more obsessed with his design of Sagrada Família. After his niece and many of his friends died, he said, “My good friends are dead. Now I can dedicate myself entirely to the Church.” Deeply religious, Gaudí walked each day to the Sant Felip Neri church for prayer and confession, but being as absent minded as Albert Einstein, while crossing the street, he was stuck by a tram. Due to his unkempt appearance, worn-out clothing, and absence of identity papers, he was considered a bum and lay in the street before he was at last carried to the hospital where he lay untreated for a day until a chaplain finally recognized him — too late to save his life.

After his death, Gaudí’s reputation was neglected because of the rise of Bauhaus modernism and Gaudí had never taught or created a school and left few written documents. And yet, in the later 20th century many architectural masters have admired his work — Le Corbusier, Pierre Luigi Nervi, Oscar Niemeyer, Felix Candela, Santiago Calatrava, and Frei Otto, the German master of tensile and membrane structures.

While we have similar interest in architecture, Roger and I don't agree about film for he prefers Hollywood entertainment filmed in Cinemascope and Technicolor while I love the German expressionist films of F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* and *Sunrise*, Georg Wilhelm Pabst's *Pandora's Box* and Fritz Lang's *M* with Peter Lorre as the child killer and Lang's futuristic *Metropolis*.



Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau shooting a film, 1920 – Unknown author, Public domain, Wikimedia



Janet Gaynor won the first Oscar for leading actress in F. W. Murnau's film *Sunrise - A Song of Two Humans*, 1927 – Author, Max Munn Autrey, Public domain, Wikimedia

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, directed by Robert Wiene in 1920 was based on a man who used a somnambulist named Cesare to commit murders. Although the film was made before Hitler's rise to power, the authors created a character who is master of deception with the ability to brainwash others.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, directed by Robert Wiene in 1920 was based on a man who used a somnambulist named Cesare to commit murders. Although the film was made before Hitler's rise to power, the authors created a character who is master of deception with the ability to brainwash others.



FILMSCHAUSPIEL in 6 Akten. REGIE: ROBERT WIENE • HAUPTR: WERNER KRAUS • CONRAD VEIDT • FRITZ FEHÉR • LIL DAGOVER •

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Theatrical release poster – Author, Atelier Ledl Bernhard, Public domain, Wikimedia



The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari. directed by Robert Wiene and written by Hans Janowitz and Carl Mayer. Doctors examine the hypnotist Dr. Caligari's somnambulist, Cesare – Author, Goldwyn Distributing Company, Public domain, Wikimedia

The production design of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* is twisted, dark, and disorienting, with distortion of perspective, twisting streets and landscapes made up of jagged angles, shadows, slashes of light painted on canvas, the stylized German Expressionist style manifesting an acute anxiety and terror, a deranged nightmare of evil, the twisted memories of an insane narrator, drawing the viewer inside the mind of a madman. Made shortly after the horrors of World War I, critics believe that Dr. Caligari represents the German government during the war, and the somnambulist Cesare is symbolic of the common man trained like soldiers to kill. One interpretation would be that the writers were insinuating that the German masses of the Weimar Republic were yearning for a mad dictator, which would come true with Hitler's Third Reich thirteen years later.

One of the most unique films I've seen is Jean Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite*, the zero referring to the mark for a bad behavior. The punishment for a mark of zero is the boy not being allowed to leave his room on Sunday. Rebellious against the harsh discipline, four boys stage a revolt and take over the school. The film's style is crazy surrealism, a joyful rebellion of kids against a despotic minority of adults. *Zéro pour Conduite*

influenced *nouvelle vague* créateurs, Truffaut and Godard. When *Zero* first appeared, many critics hated it. Jacques Prevert and I adore it. The French ministry saw Vigo's film as an attack on the maintenance of order and banned it. A Catholic journal called it the scatological dream of a maniac.

Gisella and I are film fanatics. We go every week to the art house cinema to see films like Roberto Rossellini's devastating *Roma Città Aperta* with Anna Magnani, a film that marked the beginning of Italian neorealism in film.



Poster for *Rome, Open City*, *Roma città aperta*, Italian neorealist film directed by Roberto Rossellini, 1945 – Author unknown, fair use, Wikimedia



Rome, Open City. Roma citta aperta, directed by Roberto Rossellini, 1945 – Author, Roberto Rossellini, Public domain, Wikimedia

Set in occupied Rome in 1944, German SS troops are searching for Giorgio Manfredi, a communist and leader of the Resistance against the Italian Fascists and German Nazis. With the aid of the Italian police, a large detachment of Gestapo and SS troops raid his friend Francesco's apartment, arresting Giorgio and Francesco. Seeing her lover Francesco being taken away, Pina, played by Anna Magnani, runs to him and is shot dead. Giorgio escapes and Don Pietro, a Catholic priest in league with the Resistance, offers to hide Giorgio in a monastery. Promised drugs and a fur coat, his former lover Marina betrays him to the Gestapo and the two are captured. The Gestapo forces Don Pietro to watch the torture of Giorgio, who despite their brutality refuses to give up his comrades and dies as Don Pietro watches. After blessing Giorgio's body and commending him to God's mercy, the priest is interrogated and tortured by the Gestapo. Refusing to betray the Resistance, Don Pietro is condemned to be executed the next morning before his parish can hear of his arrest. Learning of the execution, the parish altar boys appear at the site and whistle a tune which the priest recognizes. Unable to kill a priest, the Italian firing squad deliberately miss him. The German officer in charge, walks over with his pistol and executes Don Pietro as the children watch. *Roma Città Aperta* haunts me. I can't forget the execution of Don Pietro and Anna Magnani shot dead in the street.



Silvana Mangano in the film *This Angry Age*, 1956 –
Unknown author, Public domain, Wikimedia

Like French director Robert Bresson, Rossellini prefers to work with non-professional actors, often incorporating their histories and feelings into the story. Although he wasn't religious, Rossellini loved the ethical teaching of the Church, which is so apparent in *Rome, Open City*. Rossellini's realism had a great influence on André Bazin, a critic for *Cahiers du Cinema*, and influenced our ground-breaking cinema artists Francois Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard. Today, Rossellini is viewed by many as the father of the French New Wave.

I'm taking a course in film criticism this session and reading Andre Bazin's *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* Bazin feels a film director should remain invisible. At the same time, the film should represent his deeply felt personal vision. He favored wide shots in deep focus like Jean Renoir in *Rules of the Game*. Bazin believed in *mise-en-scène* with a strong narrative, long held shots rather than the quick cutting montage of Jewish-Russian director Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*,



Movie poster for *Battleship Potemkin* directed by Sergei Eisenstein, 1925 – Author, Goskino Films, Public domain

But, I think that not all stories should be told with slow, extended shots. Sergei Eisenstein’s powerful film *Battleship Potemkin* illustrates my point. Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels called *Potemkin*, “a film without equal in the cinema.” Goebbels wanted to make a film like *Potemkin*, for “everyone would become a Nazi by seeing a film like that.” In one of the most revolutionary of all films, Eisenstein created a powerful film of the Soviet Revolution by dramatized the 1905 mutiny when the Russian battleship *Potemkin* rebelled against its commanders after refusing to eat rotten meat covered with worms.

Those that refused to eat the meat are lined up before a firing squad to be executed. Vakulinchuk, the leader of the revolt, pleads for them not to shoot and the soldiers spare the condemned, setting off a mass uprising with the sailors throwing their officers overboard and the people of Odessa sailing out to support the mutinous sailors, a crowd of townspeople gathering on the Odessa steps to cheer the rebels. Cossack cavalry dismount and advance down the steps in a line, shooting at will, slaughtering the men, women, and children, marching down the steps, halting to fire another volley, like a robotic machine marching down the steps. At the bottom of the massive steps, a squadron of Cossack cavalry charges the mass of survivors, killing those who had survived.



Battleship Potemkin. Boots of the Tsarist troops marching down the Odessa Steps firing on the people – Author, Mosfilms Films, Public domain, Wikimedia

Like visual music, Eisenstein's montage intercuts the dying people with a baby carriage rolling down the steps, the Cossacks' boots marching in rhythm down the steps, a woman shot in the face, the Cossacks' boots marching down the steps, a rhythmical, inexorable movement like a wave breaking on shore.



Battleship Potemkin. The baby carriage rolling down the Odessa Steps – Author, Mosfilms, Public domain



Actress, N. Poltaseva, *Battleship Potemkin* – Author, Mosfilms, Public domain, Wikimedia



Tsarist troops march down the Odessa Steps firing on the townspeople – Author, Mosfilms, Public domain, Wikimedia

Out to sea, the rebel sailors turn the guns of *Potemkin* on the city. A squadron of the Tsar's warships approach with orders to smash the rebellion, but as they approach within range, the Tsar's sailors refuse to fire on the rebels, cheering on their revolutionary brothers, flying the red flag of revolution.

My favorite French directors are Jean Renoir, Robert Bresson, François Truffaut, and Eric Rohmer, and the Italians, Roberto Rossellini, Federico Fellini, Luchino Visconti, and Michelangelo Antonioni. Even though it has a fanciful story, I adore American director William Wyler's *Roman Holiday* because of Audrey Hepburn's luminous performance.



Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck fly through Rome on a Vespa scooter, *Roman Holiday*, directed by William Wyler, 1953 – Author, Paramount, Public domain, Wikimedia

I have chosen Audrey as my role model, not just because she was trained as a dancer, but because of her sensitivity to the plight of others due to her childhood experiences during the Nazi invasion. Due to her papa's traveling in the Dutch East Indies and Europe, at an early age, Audrey learned five languages, English, Dutch, French, Spanish, and Italian, which proves dancers have brains.



**Audrey Hepburn, screenshot from *Roman Holiday*, 1953 –
Author, Paramount Pictures, Public domain, Wikimedia**

When her papa dumped the family to work in London, Audrey was abandoned at the age of six-years-old. Losing her papa at a tender age, I believe, was responsible for the bad choices she later made in men. After Hitler invaded France, her mama, Baroness Ella van Heemstra, moved them to the Netherlands, hoping that it would remain neutral and they'd be spared from the Nazi atrocities. At the age of eleven, she began studying ballet at the Arnhem Conservatory under Winja Marova. But no one was safe from Hitler. Rotterdam was bombed to oblivion and Audrey assumed a fake Dutch name. Her uncle was executed in retaliation for a Resistance sabotage and her half-brother was deported to Germany for slave labor. At the age of twelve, she was performing in underground dances to raise money for the Dutch Resistance, smuggling food to stranded Allied pilots hiding in the forest, and became distraught when she saw trainloads of Jews at the train station being sent to their death. After D-Day, things got even worse as Arnhem was bombed and the Germans blocked all food and fuel as retaliation against the resistance. During the Dutch famine in the winter of 1944, on the border of starvation, her mama was making flour out of tulip bulbs. I don't know how Audrey could dance after developing anemia caused by malnutrition, which is probably why she has always been so thin.



Audrey Hepburn, 1956 – Author, Paramount photo by Bud Fraker, Public domain

After the war ended, with the family fortune wiped out, her mama, a Dutch noblewoman, supported the family by working as a housekeeper and cook, and three years later, Audrey struck out on her own, accepting a ballet scholarship with Ballet Rambert in London, working as a model, a chorus girl in West End musicals, minor film roles, and scored a supporting film role as a ballerina. A life-changing moment happened while she was playing a small role in *Monte Carlo*. Collette, another one of my role models, spotted Audrey at the Hôtel de Paris, and said, “*Voilà*, there's your *Gigi*,” perfect casting for Audrey for it brought her before the public eye. When film director William Wyler was casting *Roman Holiday*, the producers wanted Elizabeth Taylor, but Wyler was so impressed by Audrey's screen test that he insisted on casting her instead. “She had everything I was looking for,” he said, “charm, innocence, and talent, absolutely enchanting.” Wyler was prescient, for Audrey won the Motion Picture Academy Award for *Roman Holiday* in the same year that she won the Tony for a leading actress playing a water nymph who falls in love with a human in Jean Giraudoux's *Ondine* on Broadway, one of my favorite plays (along with Giraudoux's *The Mad Woman of Chaillet*.) When Austrian

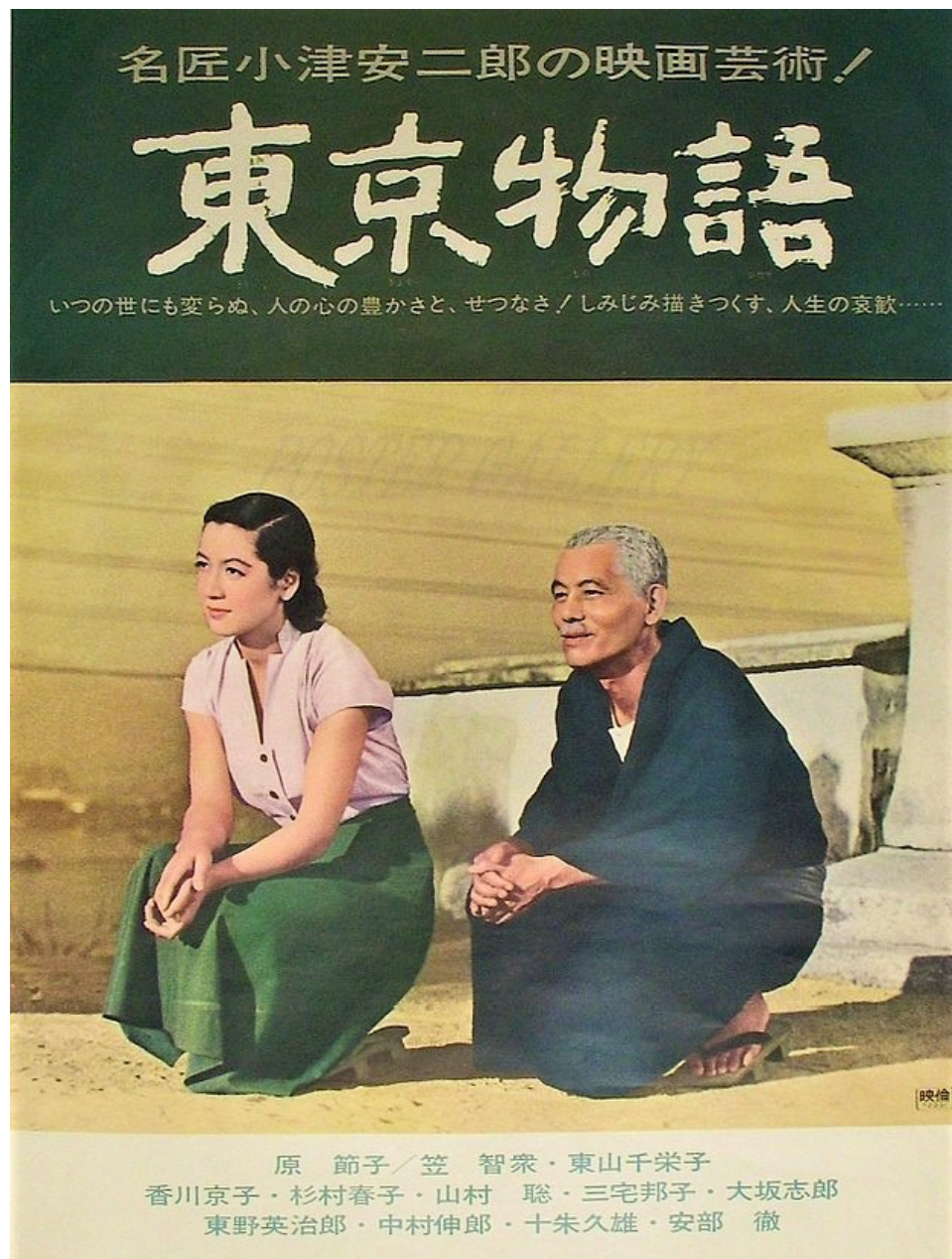
American director, Billy Wilder interviewed Audrey for the role of Sabrina, he said, “This girl may make bosoms go out of style.” While her radiant charm beguiles everyone, Audrey Hepburn’s secret weapon is the ravishing splendor of her voice.

Last month in Geneva, I was stunned by the power of Polish director Andrzej Wajda’s *Ashes and Diamonds*, based on the novel by Jerzy Andrzejewski — astonished by the charismatic performance of Zbigniew Cybulski as a young man ordered to assassinate a communist on the day the Nazis surrendered in Poland. For Japanese films I admire director, Kenji Mizoguchi’s *The Life of Oharu* — a young woman is forced into prostitution by her father and condemned to live her whole life as a sex object for men.



Hisako Yamane as Lady Matsudaira in Kenji Mizoguchi’s *The Life of Oharu*, 1952 – Author, Kenji Mizoguchi and [Shintōhō](#) distribution, Public domain, Wikimedia

In Yasujirô Ozu's *Tokyo Story*, an elderly couple travel to Tokyo to visit their children where they are treated with indifference and selfishness. Rather than moving the camera as in conventional cinema, Ozo keeps the camera motionless with minimal cutting which allows his characters time to speak their lines with no cutaways or overlapping dialogue. Instead of over the shoulder shots, he sets up his shots, head on which gives the illusion that the characters are speaking directly to us. Like Antonioni, Ozo likes evocative images from everyday life, the images of trains, clouds, and drifting smoke, empty streets, boats sailing by, transitory moments of life, his characters speaking little but implying far more.



Film poster for Japanese director Yasujirô Ozu's, *Tokyo Story*, 1953
– Author, Shochiku Company, Limited, Public domain, Wikimedia

In Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, the mercurial Toshiro Mifune electrified European audiences as the bandit. Based on Ryunosuke Akutagawa's short story *In a Grove*, it is set in the 8th century at Rashomon, the gateway to Kyoto, told from four points of view — a bandit, a samurai, his wife, and a woodcutter, each one giving a different version of a rape and murder. Since each character has different motives, it is impossible to know who is lying and who is telling the truth. Some critics see *Rashomon* as an allegory about the subjectivity of truth and the enigma of Japan's rise to power and its crushing demise in World War II. Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* recreated William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in medieval Japan using stylized features of Japanese Noh dance-drama from the 14th century, the wicked Lady Macbeth played by the maniacal Isuzu Yamada.



Film poster for Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, 1957, based on Shakespeare's *MacBeth* – Author, Tojo, Fair use, Wikimedia

Several years ago, I went with Yvonne and Gio to see Robert Bresson's *Journal d'un curé de campagne* — *Diary of a Country Priest*, based on Georges Bernanos 1936 novel, which was awarded the Grand prix du roman de l'Académie française. An idealistic and naïve young priest arrives at Ambricourt, his first parish where they laugh at his eccentricities and ascetic diet of bread and wine. Critic Andre Bazin called it a master piece because it moves the heart rather than the head. I remember Gio's somber mood afterward. I could see in his eyes how deeply he was moved by the dying young priest.



Film poster for Robert Bresson's *Diary of a Country Priest* – Fair use, Wikimedia

Yvonne told us that because Bresson didn't want his characters to appear to be acting, he used inexperienced actors or nonprofessionals and had them repeat the scenes over and over until their performance came without thought. In my film course, we screened Bresson's films and discussed his views of metaphysical transcendence and salvation. The power of his films comes from his naturalistic way of portraying his characters. Because his actors are not acting, we are able to supply the emotions. "The thing that matters," Bresson said, "is not what the actors show me but what they hide from me and, above all, what they do not suspect is inside of them." Bresson puts the big emotional events "off stage," for he's interested not in the event itself, but in the emotional aftermath of the event. Bresson said, "Painting taught me to make not beautiful images but necessary ones."

Although Ingmar Bergman, unlike Bresson, used professional actors, they both focus on characters suffering a spiritual crisis — a struggle to reconcile God with a hostile world. In Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly*, Karin, a young woman passionately played by Harriet Andersson, is suffering from schizophrenia. My film professor notes that Bergman's women characters are stronger than the men. Bergman had an eye for beauty — his first two wives were dancers. Cinematographer Sven Nykvist photographed *Through a Glass Darkly* in black and white in the Faro Islands between Norway and Iceland, creating a mournful mood, a chiaroscuro of land and sea.



Faro Islands – Author, Erik Christensen, Wikimedia

Karin is being closely observed by her father, a writer who is using her disintegration as a subject for his next novel. During a schizophrenic attack, Karin hears voices coming from the walls, enters her father's room and discovers his diary that reveals his desire to record her mental deterioration. As a dark storm clouds gather, Karin flees in fear to a wrecked ship on the seashore.



Harriet Andersson played Karin in *Through a Glass Darkly* – Author, Sydsvenskan, Public domain, Wikimedia. Andersson appeared in Ingmar Bergman's *Summer with Monika*, *Smiles of a Summer Night*, *Through a Glass Darkly*, *Cries and Whispers*, and *Fanny and Alexander*. She appeared in Lars von Trier's *Dogville* and Sidney Lumet's *The Deadly Affair*.



Bibi Andersson, 1961 – Author, Harry Pot, Dutch National Archives and Spaarnestad Photo, Wikimedia. Andersson appeared in Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, *Wild Strawberries*, *The Magician*, and *Persona*. Her American films were John Huston's *The Kremlin Letter*, and co-starred with Paul Newman in Robert Altman's *Quintet*. Andersson co-starred with Steve McQueen in a film of Arthur Miller's stage adaption of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*.

After a failed suicide attempt, her younger brother Minus discovers Karin hiding in the shipwreck and makes love to his sister in the decaying ship. Karin envisions God as a spider sexually assaulting her. The virulent image of God as a spider reoccurs again in Bergman's *Winter Light* when the priest confronts God and cries out, "the spider-God!" At the end of *Through a Glass Darkly*, Karin loses her mind. On that night, I was in an anguished state over losing Gio, so shattered by Karin's disintegration I couldn't speak for two days.



Ingmar Bergman with actress Ingrid Thulin during the filming of *The Silence* – Author unknown, Svensk Filmindustri press photo, Public domain, Wikimedia

Compared to films made in Hollywood, Bergman has a minimalist way of working with actors, avoiding intellectual analyses, using few words of direction rather than too many, communicating with the actor with a subtle intonation, a look or a smile, relying on silence, quiet understanding, while bringing the camera to bear on the actor's face. Bergman agrees with critic Andre Bazin, that the camera should not be the focus, but rather an objective observer. A director who is focused on movement, montage, and fast cutting, destroys the intimacy of the actor's moment. The camera movement must be simple, in tune with the actor's expression in the close-up, the most compelling way of capturing the soul of the actor.



Ingmar Bergman and Victor Sjöström while filming *Wild Strawberries*, 1957 – Author, Åke Blomquist, Public domain



Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman and cinematographer Sven Nykvist, shooting *Through a Glass Darkly* on Fårö island – Author, unknown, Svensk Filmindustri, Public domain, Wikimedia



Bengt Ekerot as Death, and Max von Sydow as the knight in *The Seventh Seal*, 1957 – Author Svensk Filmindustri and Ingmar Bergman, Fair use, Wikimedia

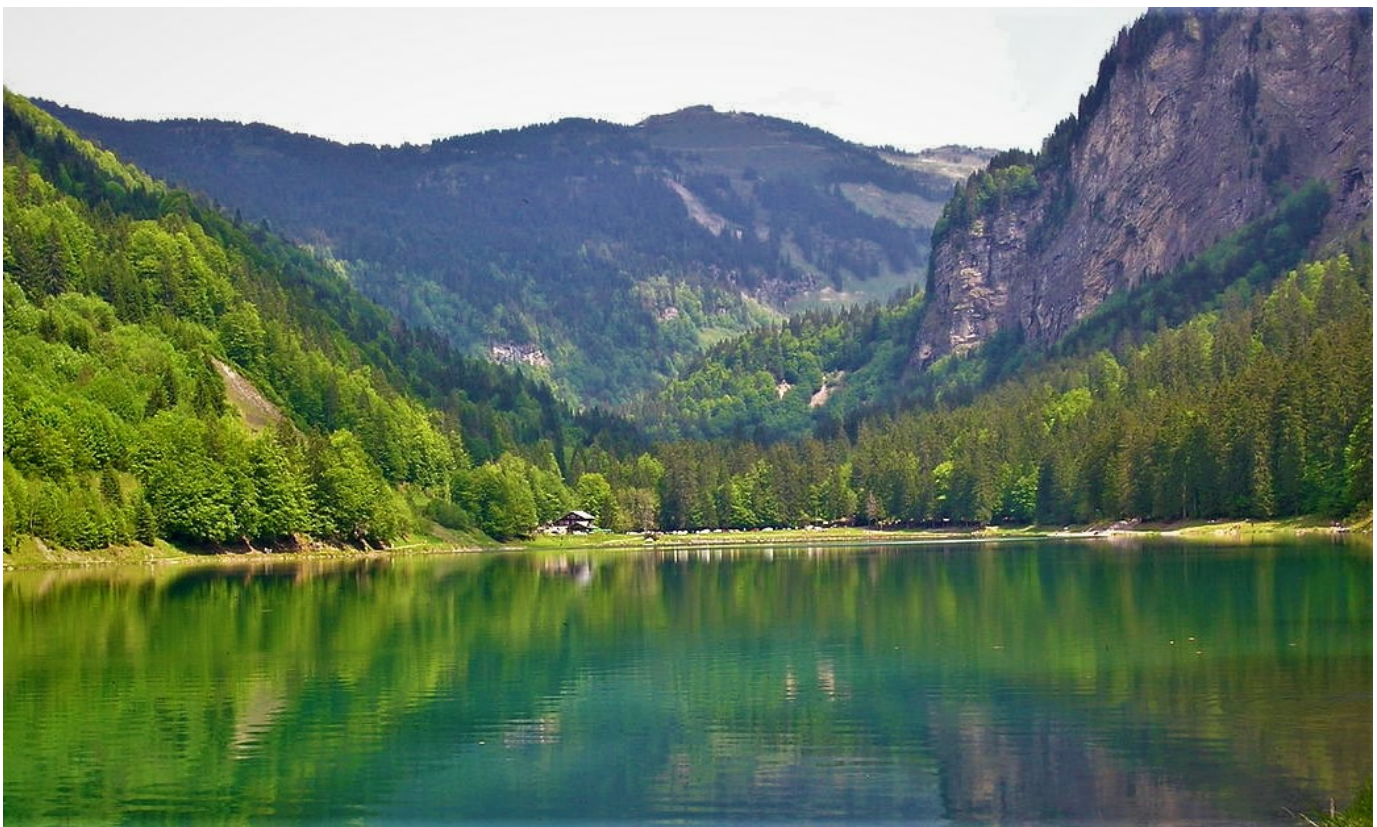
The Seventh Seal established Bergman as a renowned director, the symbolism of his images shadowing death and the meaning of life. A medieval knight Antonius Block played by Max von Sydow, disillusioned by the carnage of the Crusades, returns to Sweden ravaged by the plague — the Black Death that killed 50 million people in the 14th century. Antonius encounters Death, played by Bengt Ekerot, and challenges him to a chess match, believing he can survive as long as the game continues.



Filming of Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, 1957 – Author Louis Huch, Svensk Filmindustri, Public domain, Wikimedia

There is a rationale to Bergman setting *The Seventh Seal* in the 14th century. In the 12th century, there had been a renaissance of knowledge and creativity that had not existed since the fall of the Roman Empire. But in the 13th and 14th centuries there was a reverse of progress with the massive deaths of the bubonic plague, continual warfare, ravaging mercenaries, the severe winters of the Little Ice Age, collapsing economies and famine. With the failure of the Crusade and the massive deaths of the Black Death, Antonius had good reason to be disheartened. After millions of deaths in two shattering World Wars, the disillusionment of the 14th century mirrors the existential angst of the 20th century.

While Roger prefers the painters Gustave Courbet, Gustave Caillebotte and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, I love the German expressionist painters, Egon Schiele, Max Beckmann, Kokoschka and the abstract expressionism of Franz Kline, Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Willem de Kooning. We're living in a vibrant era. Like today's film directors, contemporary artists are pushing the boundaries of art.



Lake of Montriond, Haute-Savoie Alps – Author, Semnoz, Wikimedia

As we took the long way home through the verdant mountains of Haute Savoie, I decided to read Ayn Rand who is selling millions of books proclaiming the immorality of altruism. Yvonne told me that you can't understand the Russian revolution without an analysis of the economic forces which determine the distribution

of income and the potential for upward mobility of the classes. If you wish to understand the cultural life of a civilization, whether the Minoans of ancient Crete, the nomadic Tuareg's of the Sahara, or the Sioux of North Dakota, you cannot do it without a thorough study of their *economic system* which preserves their way of life.

Yvonne was influenced by the Annales School of history founded by Lucien Febvre, Henri Hauser and Marc Bloch who formed a new kind of historiography that examined the factors shaping all levels of society including the working class, and rural peasants based on the records of agriculture, commerce, technology, transportation, and the mindsets of social groups.



Marc Bloch, medieval historian, founding member of the Annales School of French history – Author, unknown, Public domain

After hearing Roger's dissertation on Ayn Rand, I wanted to look deeper into her economic and ethical philosophy and checked out of the university library, *We the Living*, Rand's semi-autobiographical novel set in Soviet Russia. From American magazine articles, I learned that Rand was only twelve when the Russian Revolution erupted in 1917. After the Bolshevik Party under Vladimir Lenin rose to power, her father's pharmacy was confiscated and they fled to the Crimea where Kerensky's White Russian government struggled for survival until they were crushed by the communists. Upon returning to Saint Petersburg, which was renamed Petrograd, her family was reduced to poverty as dire as Raskolnikov's poverty in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. Although Rand despised the new communist government, she benefited by being one of the first women to be accepted to Petrograd State University where she majored in history.

Her life changed in 1925 when Rand got a visa to visit relatives in the United States. The moment she saw the skyscrapers of New York, she was filled with joy. Rand recognized the triumph of capitalism.



Woolworth Building, New York City, 1913 – Author, The Pictorial News Co., Public domain, U.S. Library of Congress. Designed by architect Cass Gilbert, the 792 foot high 60 story Woolworth building was the tallest building in the world from 1913 to 1930 and remains one of the 100 tallest buildings in the United States.



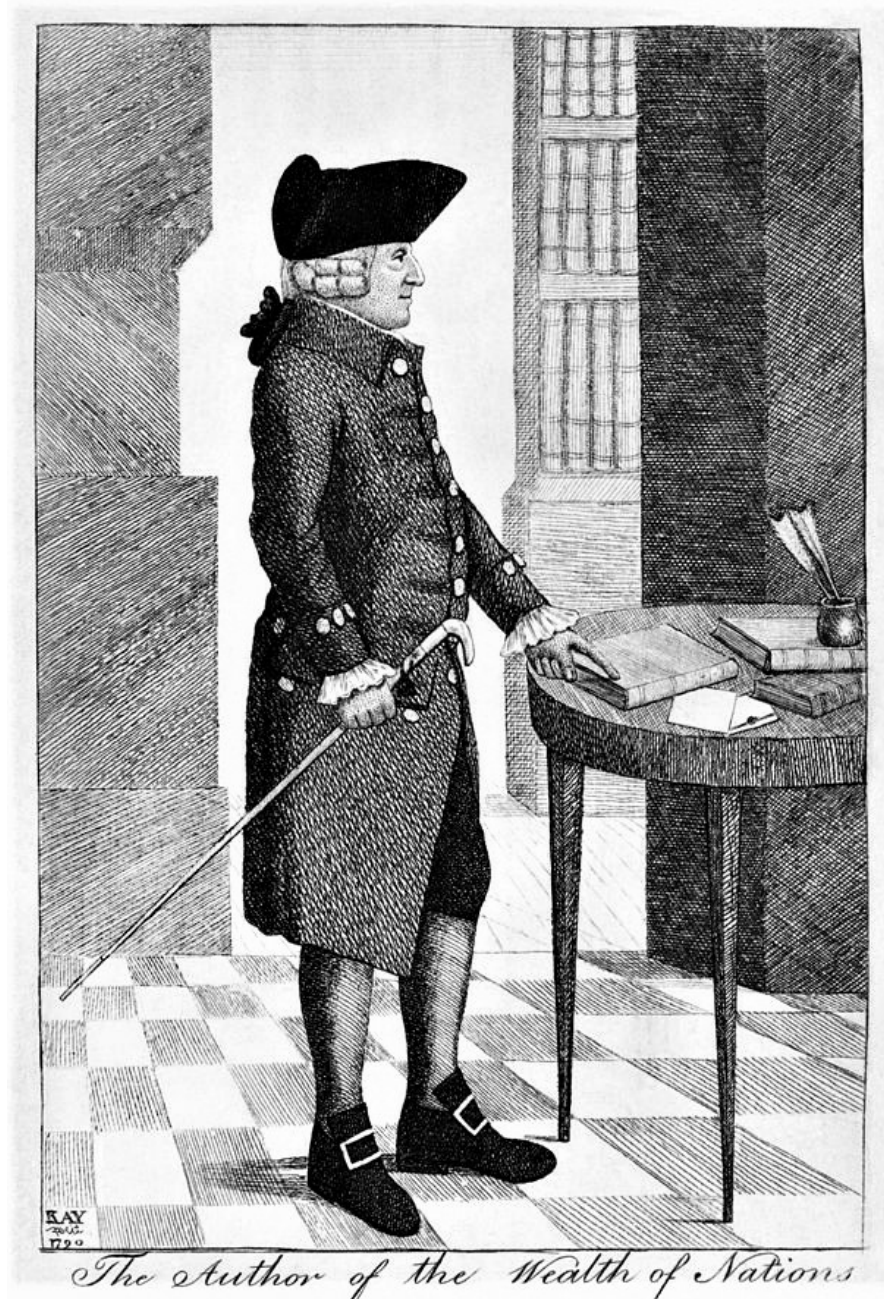
Lobby of the Woolworth Building, designed by Cass Gilbert – Author, Pat M in NYC, Wikis Take Manhattan 2009, Wikimedia. An early advocate of skyscrapers, besides the Woolworth building, Gilbert designed the state capitols of Minnesota, Arkansas, and West Virginia, the Public Library and Art Museum of Saint Louis, and notably, the United States Supreme Court. As usual for the epoch, Gilbert worked in the genres of the Beaux Arts – classical and neo-Palladian, an homage to Greek democracy --- an inspirational moment for an immigrant fleeing USSR communism. Gilbert’s Gothic inspired skyscraper, the Woolworth Building, influenced the early skyscraper architects of New York City and Chicago, until Moderne and Art Deco became dominant in the 1930s.



Ayn Rand completed a three-year program at Petrograd State University in the USSR – Author, A. Savin, Wikimedia. Called Leningrad during the Soviet regime, the city has regained its Russian name, St. Petersburg, founded in 1703 by Peter the Great, Russia’s imperial capital for two centuries and Russia’s Cultural Capitol with the opera and ballet of the Mariinsky Theatre and the art of the Russian State Hermitage Museum and the Tsar’s Winter Palace.

I have a hunch that her family’s bitter life under Lenin’s communist government haunted her all her life. Her childhood poverty led her to embrace laissez-faire capitalism. She believes that the noblest endeavor of man is to create wealth, her perception of Nietzsche’s *Will to Power*, an interpretation which Nietzsche would have rejected. But there were others long before Rand who advocated similar policies. Stefano Borromini, the professor of my 18th and 19th history course, said that Herbert Spencer’s idea of social Darwinism, “survival of the fittest,” was often used as a justification for the stratification of the wealthy and the poor. During the Gilded Age, a permanent upper class and lower class had become entrenched. By 1890, a few hundred families had acquired 70 percent of the nation’s wealth, while 90 percent of the people possessed only 12 percent of the wealth. At the end of the century, William Graham Sumner, a professor of political science at Yale who was an advocate for a laissez-faire economy, promoted the same idea as Ayn Rand — for government to interfere by any means with commerce or to set working standards was harmful to the nation. Any assistance to the poor, Sumner said, weakens their ability to survive in society.

Adam Smith, one of the leaders of the Scottish Enlightenment and a theorist of capitalism, warned of a danger — laissez-faire capitalism could become a conspiracy of corporations — the business class working against the interests of the consumer and working class. The captains of industry would use their great wealth to induce politicians to guarantee a low rate of taxation for the wealthy and little regulation. The buying of political favor would benefit the rich who would accumulate more and more wealth while the working class got less and less.



Scottish economist, Adam Smith, 1790 – Engraving by John Kay, Library of Congress, public domain, Wikimedia. Author of *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith founded the theory of the free market economy. Smith warned of the collusive nature of businesses that seek to control legislation, form monopolies, collude to fix prices, and work against the interest of their customers.

Adam Smith was revolutionary in many ways. He opposed early transnational corporations like British East India Company which was uninterested in the well being of local communities. These kind of large organizations oppressed individual effort. British law allowed American colonists to grow cotton, but not to manufacture with it. A farmer was forced to sell cotton to England for manufacturing and then buy it back as clothing. Adams said that by opposing the giant multinational corporations and governmental restrictions on colonial industry, it would encourage individuals to produce what is of greatest value. One economist said that if Smith's early proposal of granting the colonies representation in Britain's Parliament in proportion to their contribution to public revenue had been acted upon, there would have been no American Revolution in 1776. In the influential *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith proposed economic theories to replace the mercantilist system which had become obsolete in a time of great industrial innovation. While many think Smith was an apologist for the bourgeoisie. That is wrong; his true aim was not to represent the interest of a specific class, but to promote what was good for the wealth of the entire nation. The American economic historian Robert L. Heilbroner wrote in *The Worldly Philosophers* that Smith's theory "is a democratic and hence radical philosophy of wealth. Gone is the notion of gold and treasure and kingly hoards; gone are the prerogatives of merchants or farmers or working guilds. We are in the modern world where the flow of goods and services consumed by everyone constitutes the ultimate aim and end of economic life."



Historian and economist Jean Charles Simonde de Sismondi – Author, Amélie Munier-Romilly, Musée d'art et d'histoire de la ville de Genève, Public domain, Wikimedia. Sismondi was a pioneer of the progressive tax, regulation of working hours, unemployment insurance, sickness benefits, pensions, and the first to use the word *proletariat* to describe the working class.



Cartoon showing Cyrus Field, Jay Gould, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and Russell Sage, seated on bags of millions, being carried by workers – Author, *Puck* magazine, Mayer, Merkel & Ottmann lith., U.S. Library of Congress, Public domain

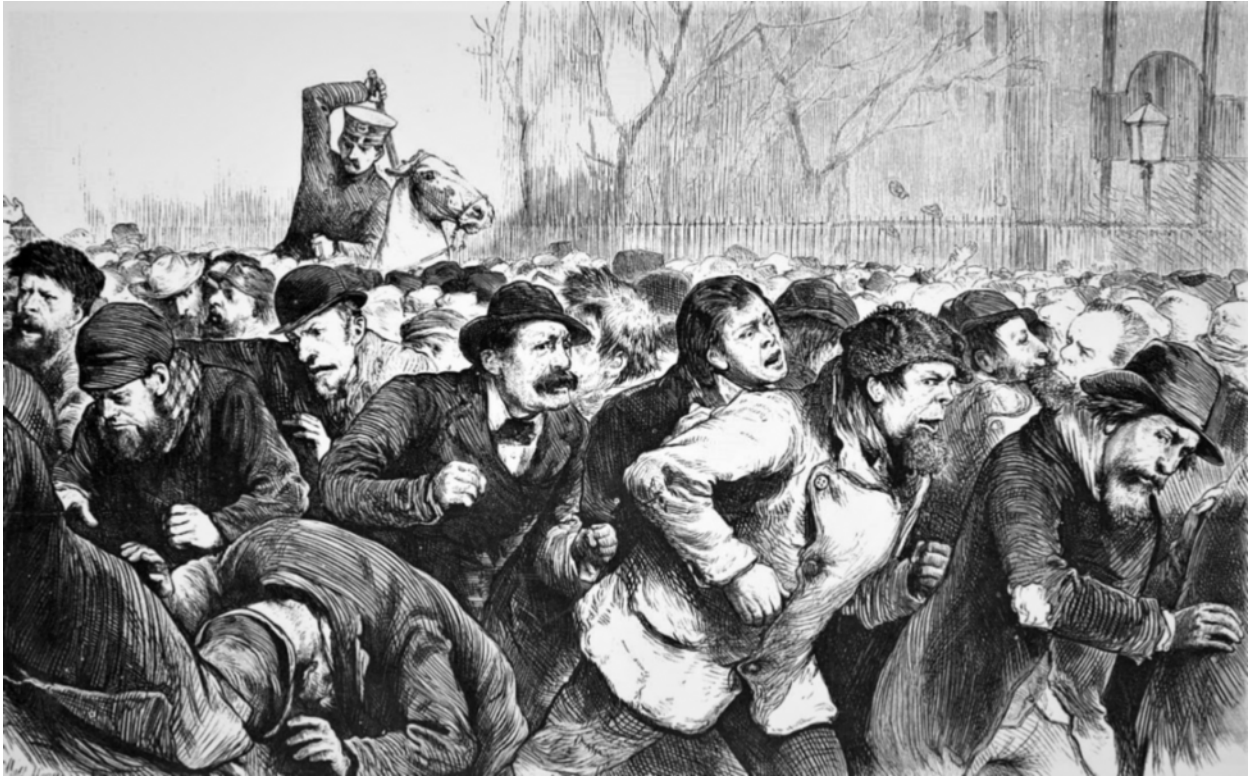
Marx called capitalism the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Jean Sismondi, an economist who originally followed Smith's laissez faire theories and then critiqued them, observed that economic theory focused exclusively on the means of increasing wealth and ignored how wealth could produce people's well-being and happiness. Before Marx's *Das Kapital* criticized capitalism for the exploitation of labor, Sismondi had observed that industrial progress had created wealth, but had also created chronic poverty in the midst of plenty. Free competition unchecked by any form of government regulation kept wages low so that the workers could not earn enough to buy the products they were making. Observing capitalism in England, Sismondi said that the laissez faire system encouraged overproduction and under consumption which led to periodic crashes and recessions that fell heavily on the backs of the proletariat, a word Sismondi invented from the Latin word, *proles* the lowest class in ancient Rome. The capitalists and entrepreneurs ignored Sismondi's critique until the 20th century when industrialist Henry Ford in 1914 gave his workers a \$5 a day wage which enabled them to buy the Ford automobiles which they were producing.



The Bosses of the Senate, 1899 – Cartoon by Joseph Ferdinand Keppler, *Puck* magazine, Mayer, Merkel & Ottmann lithograph, U.S. Library of Congress, Public domain



Cartoon showing a Standard Oil tank with the tentacles of an octopus seizing the steel, copper, shipping industries, a state house, the U.S. Capitol, and reaching for the White House – Cartoon by Joseph Ferdinand Keppler,



Unemployed workers beaten by the mounted police in the Tompkins Square Riot, 1874 – Author, Matt Morgen, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, U.S. Library of Congress, Public domain

During the Gilded Age of the late 19th century, Sismondi's prediction about the dangers of unregulated capitalism came true. With no firewall between commercial banks and investment banks, heavily leveraged investment speculation caused the great World Depression of 1929. The absence of a firewall between ordinary consumer banking and investment banking allowed Wall Street firms to gamble with their depositor's money held in their commercial banks. In the U.S., the Glass-Steagall Act of 1932 and the Banking Act of 1933 separated commercial and investment banking, but it had come too late to prevent the world economy from collapsing. Sismondi was the first to seriously examine business cycles and their damage to the social fabric. Sismond advocated that the wages of laborers be increased, giving them more buying power, thereby creating a greater gross national product. Higher wages bring greater national wealth.

Although Adam Smith believed that labor motivated by self-interest creates a valuable product, he also noted that the gluttony of the rich leads to unproductive labor. As he pointed out in, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, in spite of man's innate inclination toward self-interest, our sense of morality is informed by social relationships. Unlike Ayn Rand, Adam Smith believed that positive moral judgments are made by our sympathetic understanding for others. My conclusion — when there is a great disparity of income a nation cannot create a democracy.

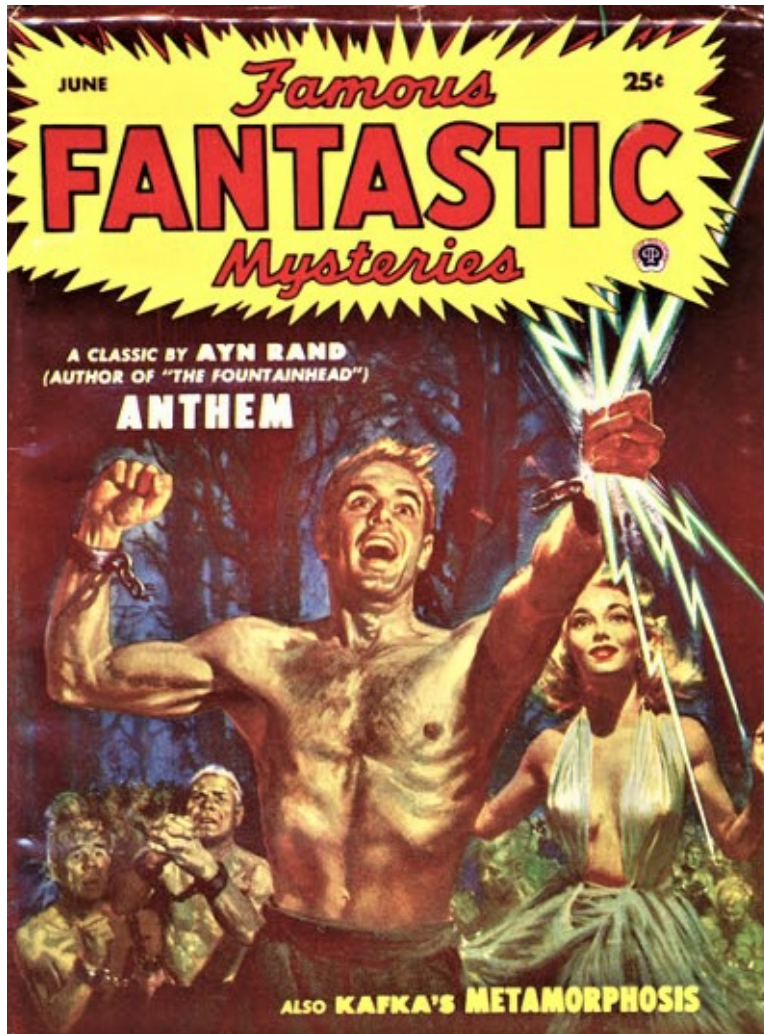


Cover of Ayn Rand's first book, *Pola Negri*, 1925, Moscow, Russia – Unknown author, Public domain, Wikimedia

Ayn Rand certainly doesn't mince words, calling homosexuality "immoral and disgusting." She said that the European colonists were justified in taking land from American Indians. Her interminable magnum opus *Atlas Shrugged* astounds me. She holds up the wealthy, the talented, and the powerful as the oppressed. I have a love for Russian literature, especially Dostoyevsky, Turgenev, and Chekov, but the grandiose prose of this Russian, I found impossible to struggle through. Her characters are two dimensional figures who deliver repetitive tracts on the heroic struggle of the oppressed entrepreneur. It's a science-fiction romance written in hyperbolic prose devoid of humor, relentlessly pushing a pseudo-philosophy that had been discredited by the deeds of the robber barons of the last century.

Regarding the legend of Robin Hood, she writes,

He is held to be the first man who assumed a halo of virtue by practicing charity with wealth which he did not own, by giving away goods which he had not produced, by making others pay for the luxury of his pity. . . . He disposed of the property of his betters by proclaiming his willingness to devote his life to his inferiors at the price of robbing his superiors.



Cover of Ayn Rand's *Anthem* in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, 1953 – Popular Publications, Lawrence Sterne Stevens, Public domain, Wikimedia

All of this time I had believed that Robin Hood was fighting against the brutal tax policies of the Sheriff of Nottingham. For Christ sake, wasn't Robin Hood, who opposed high taxes and fought valiantly against an oppressive government, a greater hero than John Galt? But to expect some kind of consistency in a polemicist is a fool's errand.

I view Objectivism as a form of religious belief which helps to explain her hypnotic appeal especially to young students, just as they are galvanized by Frederick Nietzsche's superman in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and *Beyond Good and Evil*. The hero of *Atlas Shrugged*, John Galt proclaims that we can only be free when we live in an unregulated free market. Ludwig von Mises, economist of the Austrian School, admired Rand for bluntly telling us that all the advancements which we take for granted are due to those who are better than us. For Rand, those with few assets are inferior and those with great assets are superior.

Like Plato's *Republic*, supermen with superior intellect and talent will rule. Rand despised, "intellectuals," which was odd considering that she was an intellectual herself. Rand wrote, "Intellectuals? You might have to worry about any other breed of men, but not about the modern intellectuals: they'll swallow anything." I think Rand despised intellectuals who had different ethical values than her own. Those who seek untarnished heroes and an apocalyptic vision are the ones who will be swayed by the ideological sermons of *Atlas Shrugged*. Rand's fear of being controlled by others and her desire to champion the pursuit of egoistic happiness, leads me to think she is still combating the nightmares of her childhood in the Russian revolution. Ayn Rand has replaced the cult of the state with the cult of the individual.

I agree with the writer who said, Ayn Rand's book is 'nearly perfect in its greed.' Madame de Staël said, "We live in an age when self-interest alone seems to determine all of man's acts — and what empathy, what emotion, what enthusiasm can ever grow out of self-interest." Ayn Rand failed to recognize that altruism is a profound survival trait. I thought back to my dinner with Roger on Lac d'Annecy. As the light faded on the calm surface of the lake, I was reminded of the painting by Paul Cézanne. I imagined Roger as a character in an



Le lac bleu, 1896 – Painting by Paul Cézanne of Lac d'Annecy, Courtauld Institute of Art, Public domain, Wikimedia

Ayn Rand novel, a captain of industry, a creator of wealth, Plato's philosopher king. As the dying sun reflected in his grey eyes, he'd said, "Fulfilling my desires is my purpose in life."

A damaged creature binds his wounds in narcissism.

A week after returning from the Giacometti exhibition, a courier arrived at the dormitory with a package from the jeweler in Paris, Boucheron. I waited until Gisella returned before I opened it. It was a brooch in the form of a plumed bird, like one would see in the jungles of the Amazon, eyes of rubies, its body in amethysts, the wings aflame with sapphires and diamonds.

"My God," Gisella said, "he must be madly in love with you!"

"I don't know how I can accept this,"

"When a man buys a girl, sapphires, rubies, and diamonds, it's pretty serious." She pinned it on my sweater. "It's so beautiful on you! I think you should keep it. Heavens knows you deserve it with all you have put up with. You're not going to get rich dancing. It's of enormous value and you might need the money one day."



Frédéric Boucheron founded The House of Boucheron in 1858 during the Second French Empire, the first jeweler to locate in the Place Vendôme. Queen Elizabeth II has a collection of Boucheron jewels – Unknown author, Public domain, Wikimedia

I understood Gisella's practicality, but I knew she was wrong. I'd had something of enormous value once and I had lost it.

All night, I lay awake pondering what I was going to do about the brooch. I thought of Sandrine's earrings, yellow diamonds shimmering in the moonlight. Had Roger given those diamonds to her? There was something sad about Sandrine, the hardness at the corners of her mouth, the scars on her wrist.

On my birthday, Roger had given me a turquoise Balenciaga gown with a *chinoiserie* shawl of golden silk embroidered with peacocks. It was easy to become accustomed to money. I had an insatiable desire to go to concerts and theatre. I had to have performance art in my life. At the same time, I was angry at myself for letting him indulge me. It torments me. I'm betraying myself.

I've inherited from Yvonne a feeling of solidarity with the people. Never having been attracted to the bourgeoisie, Yvonne would not have been interested in a friendship with a man like Roger. But she was old enough to make her own living, while I'm a student with little money who wants to experience the world.

I remembered the night when I was talking to Roger about the French Resistance during the war. I know a lot about the Resistance because of Emile. He'd delivered a lecture in Germany at the University of Heidelberg on the massacre of the village of Oradour-sur-Glane near Clermont-Ferrand. Emile was a scholar



Oradour-sur-Glane, destroyed by Das Reich battalion under orders of Major General Lammeding, SS Panzer Das Reich - Shutterstock

of military affairs. He knew a lot about the Waffen-SS, the armed wing of Hitler's Nazi Party. Even before Oradour-sur-Glane, the Waffen-SS troops were known more for their atrocities than their fighting ability. In Distomo Greece, they went door to door killing Greek civilians in revenge for an attack by the Greek Resistance. Babies were thrown into the air and caught on the blade of a bayonet. They stabbed pregnant women and beheaded the village priest. On my bookshelf is an autographed copy of Emile's lecture on the massacre of Oradour-sur-Glane. It's heartbreaking. I've reread it many times and think, how could this happen? How can ordinary men commit such atrocities? That is the conundrum, Emile said. How do ordinary men arrive at that darkness of being?

After the American and English invasion of Normandy in 1944, the German high command, Field Marshal Rundstedt, ordered the elimination of all French Resistance fighters. Major General Lammeding of the SS Panzer Das Reich executed his orders. In previous combat on the Eastern Front, Lammeding had executed thousands of Soviet citizens. Reassigned to the Western Front, he brought his methods to France. Shortly after the June invasion, Lammeding's troops hung 99 males from the village of Tulle. The following day, probably informed by a French Milice collaborator, a Das Reich battalion, commanded by SS Major Adolf Diekmann, surrounded the village of Oradour-sur-Glane. He ordered the entire population exterminated.



Oradour-sur-Glane, destroyed by Das Reich battalion under orders of Major General Lammeding, SS Panzer Das Reich – Author, Dennis Nilsson, Public domain, Wikimedia



Oradour-sur-Glane burned by the Das Reich battalion, 10 June 1944 – Author, Dennis Nilsson, Public domain, Wikimedia



Boulangerie Thomas-Ragon, Oradour-sur-Glane – Author, Dennis Nilsson, Public domain, Wikimedia



The church in Oradour-sur-Glane where the women and children were burnt to death by the Das Reich battalion commanded by SS Major Adolf Diekmann – Author, Dennis Nilsson, Public domain



Oradour-sur-Glane post office, Haute-Vienne, Limousin, France – Author, Dennis Nilsson, Public domain, Wikimedia

Two hundred men were locked into the barns. Over four hundred women and children were locked into the church. The SS troops set fire to the barns and the church. Those who tried to escape were shot down. The soldiers aimed at their legs so they would die more slowly. The rest burned alive.

Emile said the truth is hard to discover. In the case of atrocities, justice is elusive. Major Diekmann was killed in action three weeks later. Most of the killers never stood trial. Although condemned to death in absentia by a French court, Germany refused to extradite SS General Lammerding. He was never brought to trial.

When I finished my story, Roger didn't say a word. I remembered how he avoided talking about the Vichy government. He'd never spoke about his experiences during the Nazi occupation. Whenever I brought up the 1940's, he said he didn't believe in talking about the past. For the first time, I wondered if he'd been a collaborator during the war.

In that moment I missed Gio so much I almost broke down. Every night my skin hungers for a caress. But the only caresses are my own, the silken caresses for which I long.

Driving back, I couldn't speak all the way to Lausanne. I can only love an artist. That's why I miss Gio so keenly. He understood my work. He often came to see me dance. I came to hear him blow his horn. We had a silent understanding — a way of feeding each other's spirit. That's why right from the first I was close to him. The artist in him had inspired the artist in me.

All though the night I couldn't sleep. Like a ghost, the light appeared in the window at dawn. That was the moment I knew I had to get out.