Refutations of Objectivism Refutations

AR = Ayn Rand. Oism = Objectivism. Oist = Objectivist. Underlines = links. Cloud shaped boxes are what critics say.

by Elliot Temple, 2019

I'll be happy to answer criticisms as part of discussion with someone interested in seeking the truth about Oism. Read some, find some criticism you agree with and which fits into a philosophy you think is better than Oism (or which decisively refutes a key Oist claim), and ask for answers at my discussion forums.

No. I haven't read most of them. And with so many criticisms listed, surely some contradict each other.

Do you think **all** of those criticisms are correct?

Here are many criticisms of Oism on Noble Soul. I do appreciate that Oists were interested enough to gather the criticisms themselves. A few have rebuttal links but most don't. There are also criticisms listed by Mike Huben, an opponent of libertarianism and Objectivism.

Answered by Justin Mallone.

Ayn Rand and the Is-Ought Problem by Patrick M. O'Neil.

Answered in a four part article.

Oism is a **cult**!

It's a satire, not serious arguments. Anyway it's answered here, as part of a broader response to Rothbard, as part of a broader response to accusations that Oism is a cult.

Mozart Was a Red by Murray Rothbard.

Some of that criticism is true. I've written some of it myself (though I also think some of them have done some good work, especially Peikoff in the past). I've been disappointed by many Oists (and many Critical Rationalists and every other group). But that's not a refutation of Oist philosophy.

Leonard Peikoff, Harry Binswanger, Yaron Brook or another Oist has a big flaw!

Alan Forrester refuted some of it.

Why I Am Not an Objectivist by Michael Huemer

On the Randian Argument by Robert Nozick.

Alan Forrester wrote Criticism of Nozick on Objectivism.

Oism is sexist against women! She didn't want a female president!

I regard AR's understanding of gender roles as better than the mainstream (today, not just in her time) but I don't agree with all of it. This isn't central to Oism.

Oism is wrong about economics. Marx, Keyes or someone else was right.

I await your refutation of Capitalism: A Treatise on Economics, by George Reisman, an Oist economist who studied under Ludwig von Mises and knew AR.

I also await your broader refutation of Austrian Economics, particularly the work of AR's allies Ludwig von Mises and Henry Hazlitt.

I've got great criticisms of Hayek, Rothbard, Nozick, Friedman and others.

Oism has great criticisms of them too. They aren't part of Oism.

The book and blog *Ayn Rand Contra Human Nature*.

See my Critical Review of Ayn Rand Contra Human Nature

The Passion of Ayn Rand and other criticisms of AR's sexual relationship with Nathaniel Branden.

The book was published a few years after AR died, so she didn't respond. That may have been intentional. Oists have responded like The Passion of Ayn Rand's Critics: The Case Against the Brandens. I haven't carefully researched it because it doesn't matter to whether Oism is true.

Oism is inductivist. Karl Popper and others refuted induction.

AR barely mentioned induction and stated she wasn't an expert on it and didn't know the details of the solution to the problem of induction. Oism barely needs any changes in order to use Popper's solution to induction instead of induction. Oism has a lot in common with Critical Rationalism.

Oism is premised on certain beliefs about epistemology, e.g. that reality exists, humans can know things about reality, observing reality is important to learning, science is effective, and improving our knowledge is an ongoing, open-ended process. **Critical Rationalism provides all of these features.** It does the job AR expected induction to do.

Oism isn't perfect. Everywhere AR disagreed with the mainstream view, I think she improved things rather than making things worse. This is more than I can say for any other philosophy. But she didn't solve every problem, research every area, etc. Induction is a mainstream idea that she didn't focus on (though some other Oists have and I don't value that material).

Oism rejects anarcho-capitalism.

The anarchists that AR and Ludwig von Mises disagree with *were wrong and quite bad.* While I disagree on a few details, I'm basically on her side here. Although I expect progress to eventually change our government beyond recognition or replace it with something else (which is roughly what AR thought, too), in general I advocate for a minimal government in discussions.

Pretty much the only good anarchist was William Godwin. He got there not via anything like anarcho-capitalism (he predates modern capitalist economics) but by valuing and taking seriously freedom, reason and peace. He's the epitome of a classical liberal philosopher (rather than economist). He was so ahead of his time in this – he still is, today – that he's been widely misunderstood.

Anyway, can we just agree to start by aiming for minarchy and worry about the rest later? And *don't* advocate smashing the state or other violence. And don't naively think that if we get rid of imperfect institutions then everyone will automatically be wonderful and friendly. Civilization isn't automatic. Reform is great but getting rid of the institutions of civilization in favor of half-baked rationalist replacements is foolish.