Here's A Nasty Piece Of Work Channeling Ayn Rand.

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The modern conservative is engaged in one of man's

oldest exercises in moral philosophy; that is,

the search for a superior moral justification for selfishness.

John Kenneth Galbraith, economist, 1908-2006

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Dear Editor:

Atlas Shrugged is a celebration of life and happiness. Justice is unrelenting.

Creative individuals and undeviating purpose and rationality achieve joy and fulfillment.

Parasites who persistently avoid either purpose or reason perish as they should. . .

NY, Alan Greenspan

New York Times, November 3, 1957.

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If any civilization is to survive,

it is the morality of altruism that men have to reject.

Ayn Rand, 1960 Yale Law School lecture

The Brute Meaning of Ayn Rand's "Virtue of Selfishness." The video below showcases a thoroughly nasty piece of work clearly home-schooled in Randian concepts of self-interest (although I bet he flunked). However, he represents a commonplace Tea Party *mis*understanding

of Rand's "selfishness" concept, an understanding that is as simplistic as it is utterly boorish in the sense of immoral selfishness, or in Rand's term "irrational" self-interest. (See text below video) Ayn Rand did not have a barren view of morality after all. She believed, as a foundation principle, that one does not exist to be another's slave, but, in reverse, that others do not exist to be one's slave either.

The miserably arrogant, self-satisfied, smarmy, and smug SOB from Florida who graced CSPAN's May 16th *Washington Journal* obviously believes that he mustn't be made a tax slave to benefit *anyone* else whatsoever, but contra-Rand, he also holds that others exist to fuel his own avarice. I don't know for sure, of course, but he might have turned Rand's stomach as well.

The Virtue of Selfishness.? That's the title of one of Ayn Rand's more controversial books, and it is thought by many to be an accurate statement of her basic moral philosophy. The dictionary is not kind to the word "selfishness." It turns out that there's more complexity there than can be packed into Rand's short phrase "the virtue of selfishness." Rand maintained that "selfishness" ought have one and only one definition, and maintained in The Virtue of Selfishness, A New Concept of Egoism:

> It is not a license "to do as he pleases". Just as the satisfaction of the irrational desires of others is not a criterion of moral value, neither is the satisfaction of one's own irrational desires. Morality is not a contest of whims. (pg. 8)

Rand proposed (or, rather, *demanded*) that "selfish interests" be stripped of "evil" connotations. The term ought, instead, be considered the very basis of a rational society. In a circular fashion, Rand insisted that rational actions were selfish actions, when "selfishness" and rationality were understood as she would have them understood.

In the end, as I've learned, like Horatio in *Hamlet*, "there are more things in heaven and earth . . . than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Rand, as misanthropic, paranoid, and domineering as she was, has been to some extent misunderstood. She does not provide a practical, advisable, or compassionate (a word she likely detested) way of ordering society, but in her writing she was more complex than I've thought, and her libertarian and Tea Party followers even more simplistic than they've already proved.