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The Basic Motivation of the Creators and the Masses in *The Fountainhead*

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In religion, the existence of the moral ideal, God, requires no cause, no action, no effort, no achievement. It is beyond account or explanation, to be taken on faith. The existence of evil, then, also becomes unintelligible. How can God, a supposedly omnipotent and supremely good being, permit evil? Although theologians have long tried to give a rational answer to this question, to solve "the problem of evil," the attempt is hopeless. Religion's monopoly in ethics actually leaves man with the following alternative: either abandon reason by dismissing evil as, somehow, justified by a mysterious divine purpose or as nonexistent, and the good as beyond human comprehension—or abandon belief in the ideal.[1]

For Ayn Rand, the ideal is neither to be relegated to an irrational dimension nor to be discarded. It *can* exist, here on earth, but its existence is an achievement; it demands much of man. The focus of Rand's thought is fundamentally on the good: to discover it, to rationally define its nature and causes, and to give it form. "[T]he motive and purpose of my writing," she said, is "*the projection of an ideal man.* The portrayal of a moral ideal, as my ultimate literary goal, as an end in itself" (vii). In the character of Howard Roark, *The Fountainhead* gives us her first complete presentation of the ideal.

Although it is only a secondary issue, there are, she thinks, important things to learn about the nature of evil. Evil does exist in the world: it results when men default on the responsibility to achieve the ideal. And there *is* an actual problem of evil. In the presence of evil men, can the good survive and prosper? And if so, how? This question occupied Rand from early in her life to its end. One can see her thinking about the question in her first philosophic notes to herself.[2] Each of her four novels, *We the Living*, *Anthem*, *The Fountainhead*, and *Atlas Shrugged*, deals with some aspect of the issue: each contains a hero (or heroes) acting in a world in

which significant numbers of men are indifferent or hostile to the good. She returns often to the question in her nonfiction writing, analyzing different aspects of it, as for instance in her article "How Does One Lead a Rational Life in an Irrational Society?"[3] And the question is crucial to the envisioned theme of an unwritten fifth novel, *To Lorne Dieterling*.[4]

Rand's final conclusion is that the good can and (ultimately) must win; evil is impotent.[5] Prior to *The Fountainhead*, however, there was a streak in Rand's thought that considered the possibility that the great man could exist only by trying to rule the corrupt masses, masses who could (and perhaps eventually would) destroy him. These thoughts are most pronounced in her 1928 notes for the planned novel *The Little Street*.[6] The young protagonist is Danny Renahan. "The boy is a perfectly straight being, unbending and uncompromising. . . . He shows how impossible it is for a genuinely beautiful soul to succeed at present; for in all [aspects of] modern life, one has to be a hypocrite, to bend and tolerate. This boy wanted to command and smash away things and people he didn't approve of." The opposition he faces, and which the story was to be a condemnation of, is the mob: "Show that the mob determines life at present *and show exactly who and what that mob is.* Show the things it breaks. . . . Show that all humanity and each little citizen is an octopus that consciously or unconsciously sucks the blood of the best on earth and strangles life with its cold, sticky tentacles." Renahan's fate in the story? "He is surrounded by a mob and lynched. Torn to pieces, beaten to death on the pavement with the water of the gutter running red."[7]

This view of life is blasted away in *The Fountainhead.* Rand's conception both of what greatness demands and of what the "masses" are has changed. Individual greatness is not identified with ruling others, but with the absence of the desire to rule or be ruled; the great man is motivated by the desire to create. A creator, if he is armed with the proper understanding and motivation, is beyond the reach of the "masses"; he has nothing to fear from them or, more generally, from evil.[8] As we shall see, if he achieves complete independence, his life and soul are untouchable and incorruptible. He becomes god-like. Roark achieves this independent state; Henry Cameron, Dominique Francon (until the end), and Gail Wynand, in different ways, do not. In the world of *The Fountainhead*, the creator only has to fear destroying himself.

And the man of average ability is not viewed as intellectually or morally corrupt, though the "masses" remain so. There is potential dignity in any man, in man the individual, even if he possesses only average ability. The sole question, as we shall

see, is whether the average man is motivated by a desire to realize his ability and practice the virtue demanded of him.

THE CREATORS

Roark is beyond the reach of the "masses." He is the independent individual: independent in thought, in judgment, and in action. But Cameron, Dominique, and Wynand all *also* exercise their independent thought and judgment; their conclusions, like Roark's, are formed from their own first-hand thinking. What, then, is the root of Roark's uniquely untroubled and untouched soul—an existence "so healthy that" he "can't conceive of disease" (331)? The root is that Roark's basic *motivation* in life is completely unconcerned with and unaffected by other people. His goal and his pursuit of it are purely independent and selfish. Roark stresses this point in his courtroom speech. "The egotist in the absolute sense," he says, ". . . is the man who stands above the need of using others in any manner. . . . He is not concerned with them in any primary matter. Not in his aim, not in his motive, not in his thinking, not in his desires, not in the source of his energy" (681). "His moral law is never to place his prime goal within the persons of others" (682).

Roark's goal is to build. He wants to transform, for himself, the earth into his vision of a more uplifting, more human place (49). This desire would remain even on a desert island; only its implementation would change: he would not build gas stations and skyscrapers but, say, a hut or a cabin. His basic aim is unconnected to other people. As an architect, he must have clients in order to build (26, 160), but they do not supply him with his motive. They are simply part of the necessary materials from which he builds, like bricks or steel. The type of building the client requires and the specific functions the client needs the building to perform, are, like the site itself, elements which shape the nature of the building Roark designs (578). But the client is not why Roark builds. When Roark sits, alone, at his drafting table, sketching and re-sketching the new structure, bringing his creative vision into existence, the client does not enter his mind.

The focus of Roark's consciousness is on the building: he must make it as great as he can, he must make the building worthy of the site and of its intended function, he must bring his idea of a better world into existence. The client's particular needs and feelings are irrelevant. If Roark accomplishes his primary goal, to design a great building, it is the client's responsibility to appreciate and live up to the structure. Roark designs the building not as another architect would, but as it should be designed: his focus is not client-centric but building-centric; what Roark expects of the client is that the client will use the building not as he would use

any other building, but as the building should be used. Roark thereby immensely enriches his client's life—precisely because his primary focus was not on the client "as he is," but on what should be. Austen Heller tells Roark that when he moves into the house Roark designed for him, "I'll have a new sort of existence, and even my simple daily routine will have a kind of honesty or dignity that I can't quite define. Don't be astonished if I tell you that I feel as if I'll have to live up to that house." "I intended that," Roark replies (136). When Heller tells Roark that Roark has been so considerate of him because the house is so functional and so suited to Heller's genuine needs, Roark says that he did not think of Heller at all, only of the house. "He added: 'Perhaps that's why I knew how to be considerate of you'" (137).

Roark is thus essentially alone when he creates; other people are irrelevant to the process and to the failure or success of its outcome. Fundamentally, they can neither enrich the experience nor interfere with it. What fuels Roark's creative process is his thought, his judgment, and his vision of what can be. When that fuel is transformed into a completed structure, the achievement is his and the joy is his. His standard for determining whether his goal has been reached is independent of other people; they do not enter into the equation. What matters is only whether he has succeeded in creating something that is objectively valuable. Any fame or social standing that he might thereby obtain is insignificant; any wealth he earns or benefit he brings to the client is but a secondary, relatively unimportant, consequence (605, 578). The essence of the creator's motivation is this: he knows that his new idea is true and that it is good—he passionately wants to see it made real, here on earth—he dedicates himself to achieving it. What others may do in response to what he creates is irrelevant. "The creator," Roark states in his courtroom speech, "faces nature alone" (679). The "whole secret of [the creator's] power" is that it is "self-sufficient, self-motivated, self-generated" (678).

The joy that comes from the creator's successful dedication to his aim has a similar quality of self-sufficiency. When Roark agrees to design Cortlandt Homes but to allow Peter Keating to put his signature on it, he tells Keating that he, Roark, will gain what no one can give another: he will have built Cortlandt (581). No one can give this to a man—and no one can take it from him. Although Keating, Gordon L. Prescott, John Erik Snyte, and Gus Webb disfigure Roark's Stoddard Temple and turn it into the Hopton Stoddard Home for Subnormal Children (385), the fact remains that Roark built it. "Nothing else," he tells Dominique, "can seem very important" (344).

Roark's standard of self-respect is derived from his fundamental goal. He reveres himself if he knows that he has

striven to give expression to the knowledge and vision within him, if he has spared no part of himself in the process—think of Roark sprawled on the floor of Cameron's office, asleep, a coffee pot knocked over, and the completed design resting on the drafting table (74–75). Roark respects himself if he has remained true to his truth—true to the creative best within him. How and where he stands in relation to other people is irrelevant. "I don't make comparisons. I never think of myself in relation to anyone else" (582). His own achievements will not be diminished if others have achieved more than he has; nor will his own achievements be enhanced if others have achieved less than he has. Roark does not measure himself against other people; he measures himself against nature. If he has worked to make himself as competent as he can be, then he knows he is good; self-respect must follow. Roark is earnest when he tells Cameron, a man of similar fire and acquired competence, but now almost forgotten by society, that if he ends up as Cameron does, he will "consider it an honor that I could not have deserved" (64).

The core of Roark's being is untouched and untouchable by others. Their hands cannot reach into his motivation, his joy, or his self-respect. No matter the specific frustration and pain in his life, he knows that he is competent, that he has achieved a human stature, and that he is right for reality. This is the source of Roark's serenity and quiet exaltation. "I'm not capable of suffering completely," he tells Dominique. "I never have. It goes only down to a certain point and then it stops. As long as there is that untouched point, it's not really pain" (344).[9]

A consequence of Roark's fundamental way of facing the world, and the fact that he knows "the source of his actions" (27), is that he does not feel fear of or hatred toward other people. Indeed, he does not notice other people, even when he stands on trial, alone, in a courtroom (17, 64, 348–49, 677). A person fears the destruction of his values and hates the cause. Roark explicitly knows that his success or failure is up to him. Others cannot occasion the destruction of his basic values. Only he can. Other people, therefore, are not possible objects of fear or hatred. In the sense of a *characteristic* emotion, both fear and hatred are directed primarily at oneself, no matter how they may be projected outward. A person experiences fear when he senses that *he* is in some fundamental way inadequate to cope; he experiences hatred when he senses that *he* is the cause: he has defaulted on the responsibility to achieve competence and self-respect. Since Roark is firmly dedicated to his values and to his ability, and he is aware of this fact, fear and hatred are emotions unknown to him. "Have you always liked being Howard Roark?" Wynand asks him. Roark's amused, involuntary smile gives the answer (521).

The closest Roark feels to hatred is when he witnesses harm done to those he loves—a hatred for Wynand and his papers because of the despair they cause Cameron (178), a hatred of those who would have Mallory sculpt dimpled babies (329), a hatred for those who make Dominique think that she must become Mrs. Peter Keating and then Mrs. Gail Wynand (374, 463, 515). But even here Roark knows that the actual cause of the harm to those he loves is not other people but the errors and inability to understand on the parts of Cameron, Mallory, and Dominique; they have granted to other people a power those people do not in fact possess.

But that Roark does not feel fear of or hatred toward other people does not mean that he expects his path to be easy. He knows it will be difficult (15, 98). He has seen Cameron's life and knows he is taking a risk in opening his own office after landing the commission to build Heller's house (131). He knows too that the opposition he will face stems from far more than just a reaction to his innovative way of building. Although he does not yet have the words for its cause, Roark senses that he engenders in many people a nameless fear, resentment, and hatred. He knows, for instance, what happened between him and the Dean at Stanton. Roark's existence reminds people that they have betrayed their own souls; in his presence, their fear and hatred of themselves oozes to the surface of their consciousness—and gets projected onto him.

But the fact that many people respond to Roark and his work not with respect and admiration but with resentment and hostility does not concern him. He does hate incompetence, but not incompetent people; he dismisses them without further thought. Their antipathy is a reflection not of Roark and his prospects for success, but of themselves and their own inner emptiness. He consequently has no desire to gain power over such men in order to protect himself from them, and he certainly has no desire to rule them: What possible value could ruling them bring him (529)? Their opposition to him is *their* loss, not his.

When people fail to appreciate one of Roark's designs, the loss is theirs, not Roark's. When people do not hire Roark but instead contract with Keating for a home with Classic façades, with Ralston Holcombe for a Renaissance villa, or with John Erik Snyte or Gus Webb for a bare box, the loss is theirs, not Roark's. In the lead-up to the Stoddard trial Roark tells each person to go and see the Temple for himself. If people are unable to appreciate its beauty, to experience a sense of self-respect and uplift within it, and to stand erect in reverence—if they allow the Temple to be disfigured and turned into a home for subnormal children—the principal loss is theirs, not Roark's. Roark can and does experience

a sense of reverence and uplift from his own life and work in creating structures like the Stoddard Temple; most other people, however, can get such a concrete, esthetic experience only from Roark.[10]

Roark has no desire to force his ideas on others because he knows the attempt is futile. As Roark tells Heller, "I don't like people who have to be handled" (159). Roark can show men his buildings and can explain to a prospective client, and often does, the principles by which he builds, but he cannot make them understand. That requires a spark of thought and of first-hand judgment, a desire to see through their own eyes, which only they can supply. If they do not supply it, the loss is theirs.

Roark does feel pain when he cannot build in his own way—he feels pain during the time he spends employed in the offices of other architects (90, 124), during the months of idleness in his office (175), and, perhaps worst of all, during the period when he must leave the profession to work in a granite quarry, uncertain when or if he will return (203–4). But his pain comes *only* from the fact that he is not erecting, for himself, the world that he wants to create. He is not doing what *he* loves to do: build. The cause of his pain is not fundamentally other people. They have taken nothing from him, and they have nothing they could grant him. What he wants, they cannot give. Their money and second-hand recognition have no meaning to him. If Roark cannot do his work done his way (579), any secondary consequences lose their significance.

This is why there is in Roark's consciousness no experience of being "beaten" by other people. "But I don't think of you," Roark memorably replies when Toohey asks him what Roark thinks of him (389). Roark laughs when Mike Donnigan is outraged by the idea of Roark taking a building trades job in the city and of other architects gloating over Roark's fall. These architects have taken nothing from Roark. What he has, they never can have. And Roark experiences no jealousy toward them: the concept of gain is not applicable to them; to gain, there must be a self that is doing the gaining. Roark's only pain—Mike sees "something in Roark's eyes which he knew Roark did not want to be there" (199)—comes from the fact of not being able to build.

But even this pain of inactivity cannot penetrate deep within Roark, because he also knows that his fundamental course of action is right: there is no other way to achieve his goals, and no other goals worth achieving. He expected it to be difficult and knows that he must wait; he must be patient. He regards his pain as unimportant, detached from the essence of his person, and works to quell it (90, 203–4).

Roark knows it will take time for him to find his "kind of people" (159). He is an innovator. It will take time for his kind of person to first see his buildings, to learn to understand, to learn to desire, and then to come ask him for what only he can give.[11] He knows that his kind of person exists because he knows that he is not a freak, that the rule and method of his functioning is open to anyone to attain. And he sees "so many products of man's genius around us today" (577)—he who knows the source of such products. "I can tell my kind of people by their faces," he says to Heller. "By something in their faces. There will be thousands passing by your house and by the gas station. If out of those thousands, one stops and sees it—that's all I need" (160). Even when Roark dynamites Cortlandt, he thinks he has a chance to be acquitted. (I discuss the topic of Roark's "kind of people" in much more detail in the next section.)

And in any event, Roark knows that he must fight for what he wants, even if the price may be the disfigurement of the Stoddard Temple or ten years in jail. To refuse to fight for his work done his way would be *already* to have lost—to have lost, without the knowledge that he did all he could for his highest value. To renounce his goal to build because the "masses" are indifferent or opposed to him would be to surrender his most basic motivation—and the meaning of his life.[12]

Roark is the ideal, and the fate of the ideal is not defeat at the hands of the "masses." If one remains consistent and whole, fully independent in one's basic motivation, one will achieve joy, self-respect, and success in life. "Success" here does not mean universal fame or fortune, but doing one's own work one's own way on whatever scale possible, and in cooperation with the only kind of people it is worth cooperating with—whether it be Roark designing a five-story department store in Clayton, Ohio, or erecting the Wynand Building in New York City.[13] There are reasons, as we will see in the next section, why the latter scenario for Roark is more likely than the former, but that forms no essential part of Roark's aim.

The possibility of actual defeat enters only when a creator permits other people to cloud his basic motivation or his assessment of the feasibility of, or the means to, his goal. This is what explains Cameron's downfall.

Cameron and Roark share a fundamental similarity: a first-hand passion for their work. Both are innovators. Cameron decides that "no building must copy any other" as he gives form to a new kind of architecture; he designs skyscrapers as they should be designed, flaunting rather than apologizing for their height (44). A newspaper interview of Cameron captures his attitude: "It said: 'Architecture is not a business, not a career, but a crusade and a

consecration to a joy that justifies the existence of the earth" (80). This is Roark's attitude toward architecture as well.

And like Roark, Cameron never compromises his fundamental goal. He never erects buildings that he judges to be flawed and never makes any alterations to his designs to satisfy a client's second-hand demands.

Yet their careers are not parallel. Cameron does rise to the top of the profession and has his pick of clients; but when "an orgy of Classicism" takes place after the Columbian Exposition of Chicago, and "the architect with the best library" comes to be considered best (45), Cameron's firm shrinks, his clients disappear, and he eventually turns to drink, broken by society. Why does he break when Roark does not?[14]

The crucial difference between the two men is that for Cameron, unlike for Roark, the world is *not* divided into "my kind of people" and the others, who do not matter. Cameron does not understand people. In part, this is because Cameron does not have the same self-awareness that Roark has of his own motivation. Cameron tells Roark that Roark will find the words for what Cameron could not (76–77). Cameron does not fully grasp that any person can attain his essential stature, whatever the person's level of ability, so long as the person dedicates himself to the task. Cameron does not actually understand what "his kind of people" would be, let alone have Roark's conviction that they do in fact exist. Revealingly, he tells Roark that "I've lost the habit of speaking to men like you. Lost it? Maybe I've never had it" (63). He sees the incompetence, the indifference, and the meanness of soul of those around him, and silently concludes that *all* people are impossible to communicate with.[15]

But he still needs clients in order to build. As a consequence, there is an impatience and willfulness in Cameron's character that has no counterpart in Roark's. Cameron burns with the desire to build his kind of buildings, but there is no real possibility of his kind of people coming to grasp the functional beauty that he uniquely has to offer. His only recourse seems to be to force them, somehow, to accept it, to in effect shove it down their throats for their own good—as if he could, by a sheer act of will, make others see what he has seen and value what he values. "He demanded of all people the one thing he had never granted anybody: obedience. . . . People called him crazy. But they took what he gave them, whether they understood it or not, because it was a building by 'Henry Cameron'" (44). Toward his clients he is contemptuous and even belligerent, calling them "unprintable names"; he behaves "like a feudal lord and longshoreman" (44).

It cannot work. He is able to keep clients mostly because of his "astute business manager, a mild, self-effacing little man of

iron, who, in the days of [Cameron's] glory, faced quietly the storms of Cameron's temper and brought him clients; Cameron insulted the clients, but the little man made them accept it and come back" (46). But his manager dies—and Cameron "had never known how to face people"; he "had never learned to give explanations, only orders" (46).

He had never known how to face people or learned to give explanations, because he thought it was futile. And this mistaken premise forms a vicious circle. He has concluded that people cannot be reached, and so he treats them contemptuously and offensively; this causes people to misunderstand and to shun him, which reinforces his original conclusion.

Because Cameron senses that he cannot compel people to see the truth of his buildings—but thinks that he *must* do this in order to bring his vision of what could be built into existence—he grows fearful that his gifts will be rejected. He tries to hide this fear by *welcoming* opposition against him: he deliberately fans the hatred against him (44), he curses the Columbian Exposition, he throws an inkstand at a distinguished banker who asks him "to design a railroad station in the shape of the temple of Diana at Ephesus" (45); as his clients become rarer, he grows more overbearing (46).

But his fear of people remains. He confesses to Roark: "Do you ever look at the people in the street? Aren't you afraid of them? I am" (63). Cameron thinks that to build he will have to *beg*. He could not force them to see, so the only alternative is to plead for life from those who are unreachable. He tells Roark that Roark's fate will be to be reduced to begging a man,

> pleading, your voice licking his knees; you'll loathe yourself for it, but you won't care, if only he'd let you put up that building, you won't care, you'll want to rip your insides open to show him, because if he saw what's there he'd have to let you put it up. But he'll say that he's very sorry, only the commission has just been given to Guy Francon. And you'll go home, and do you know what you'll do there? You'll cry. You'll cry like a woman, like a drunkard, like an animal. (65)

Like Roark, Cameron has long periods of waiting, his hands idle. "There will be days," he tells Roark, "when you'll look at your hands and you'll want to take something and smash every bone in them, because they'll be taunting you with what they could do, if you found a chance for them to do it" (64). But the waiting consumes Cameron in a way that it does not Roark, because Cameron has *nothing* to wait for. There is no such thing as his kind

of person. He waits, he is forced to wait, but it eats him up inside—and he turns to drink for an escape.

Cameron and Roark are at root the same. Both are creators whose basic motivation is personal and completely independent from others. For Roark, the motivation is that he loves the earth. "That's all I love. I don't like the shape of things on this earth. I want to change them. . . . For myself" (49). To Cameron, it is a "crusade . . . to a joy that justifies the existence of the earth" (80). This basic aim neither ever compromises or betrays, which is why Cameron can say at the end what Wynand cannot: that it was worth it (178).

But Roark has the strength to persevere to the end, while Cameron does not. Cameron does not because he is mistaken about the means necessary to achieve his end. He has allowed the "masses" to dictate the possibilities: either to force people to see or to plead with the blind. He has precluded from his view of the world the possibility that his, and Roark's, kind of people exist.

Cameron, however, learns from Roark. He senses that Roark can carry the battle to the end, in a way that he could not. "I have no answer to give them, Howard. I'm leaving you to face them. You'll answer them" (76–77). Cameron lives to see Roark's first buildings, he sees Roark's method of gaining clients and of patiently carrying out the battle for their vision, and he loses his hatred for people. "I don't . . . hate anybody anymore," he tells Roark just before he dies (178). He comes to understand at the end that those who cannot see what he and Roark have to offer are penalized by their own default. And he at last understands that another kind of response from people is possible and even to be expected. Hatred remains only for Wynand—a man who pours his energy into the triumph of "overbearing vulgarity" (178); this is the man Cameron thinks Roark will have to fight.

Cameron is the creator mistaken about the proper means of achieving his goal; Dominique Francon, on the other hand, is the stillborn creator. We get a glimpse of her ability in the savage, brilliant writing of some of her newspaper columns; and, during the strike of the Union of Wynand Employees, as she and Wynand struggle to keep the *Banner* going, we get a glimpse of her almost exhaustless energy, greater even than Wynand's (652). But she never acquires the fundamental motivation that is Cameron's and Roark's: to reshape, for *oneself*, the earth into a place of joy. Until the end of the story, she does not fully comprehend the nature and possibility of such a motivation.

Like Cameron, Dominique wants perfection—in a world that accepts only the half-way and the in-between (143, 375). And in essence Dominique shares Cameron's view of humanity. "You know," she tells Alvah Scarret,

> it's such a peculiar thing—our idea of mankind in general. We all have a sort of vague, glowing picture when we say that, something solemn, big and important. But actually all we know of it is the people we meet in our lifetime. Look at them. Do you know any you'd feel big and solemn about? There's nothing but housewives haggling at pushcarts, drooling brats who write dirty words on the sidewalks, and drunken debutantes. Or their spiritual equivalent. . . . That's your mankind in general. (143–44)

Dominique also believes, like Cameron, that mankind seethes with hatred toward the man who desires to reach great things through his love for his work. "You love your work," Cameron tells Roark. "God help you, you love it! And that's the curse. . . . You love it, and they know it, and they know they have you. Do you ever look at the people in the street? . . . The substance of them is hatred for any man who loves his work" (63–64). "[I]t would be terrible," Dominique tells Scarret, "if I had a job I really wanted" (143).

Dominique senses that the option of trying to force other people to see and to want what is good, as Cameron at first tries, is hopeless. The only real option is the option Cameron finds himself reduced to: to plead with those who hold power over you. "You want a thing and it's precious to you," she explains to Scarret. "Do you know who is standing ready to tear it out of your hands? You can't know, it may be so involved and so far away, but someone is ready, and you're afraid of them all. And you cringe and you crawl and you beg and you accept them" (143).

To escape this fate, Dominique resolves to desire nothing; her desire is to resist all desires (144).[16] What she seeks is freedom, freedom from any attachment to the world. From early in life she suppresses any creative drive within her, before it can take shape and tie her, through her love of her work, to the "masses."

When she meets Roark, she therefore both loves and struggles against him. She loves him, because he gives her her first real desire in the world. But she hates him for this, because she now has something at stake in the world; her freedom is gone (242–43). And when she discovers that the man in the quarry is Howard Roark, creator of the Enright House, she is close to despair. He is a man who loves his work. He will be tortured by the world and forced to beg and crawl for commissions—a fate Toohey graphically spells out for her.

> [T]o start by the side of this mediocrity [Keating] and to watch it shoot up, while he [Roark] struggles

> and gets nothing but a boot in his face, to see the mediocrity snatch from him, one after another, the chances he'd give his life for, to see the mediocrity worshiped, to miss the place he wants and to see the mediocrity enshrined upon it, to lose, to be sacrificed, to be ignored, to be beaten, beaten, beaten—not by a greater genius, not by a god, but by a Peter Keating—well, my little amateur, do you think the Spanish Inquisition ever thought of a torture to equal this? (268)

When Dominique hears Toohey say this, she takes away, that evening, the first of many commissions from Roark, Joel Sutton's office building (269–71).

She does it to spare Roark his looming torture, to starve, near the beginning, his desire to create—as she has long since strangled hers. She does it in self-protection, to remove from her sight the unbearable spectacle of having to watch the man she loves being tortured at the hands of the "masses." She prays without hope—"I believe in nothing and have nothing to pray to" (272)—that she will fail and that Roark will succeed, that Roark cannot be destroyed. But she must follow her actual conviction.

Doubts begin to surface, however, when she sees Roark starting to succeed despite her active opposition and Toohey's deliberate silence. "I'm so happy," she tells Toohey after Roark gets the contract for the Aquitania hotel, "I could sleep with this Kent Lansing, whoever he is." She continues: "I shall try to stop any job that comes [Roark's] way. . . . It's not going to be so easy as it was, though. . . . The Enright House, the Cord Building—and this." She wonders: "Ellsworth, what if we were wrong about the world, you and I?" (314).

The Stoddard trial obliterates Dominique's doubts.

She sees what she had feared: that Roark will face torture because of his love for his work, that he will even walk into the hands of his torturers in order to build—Dominique tells him that Toohey made Hopton Stoddard hire Roark, but Roark just laughs (333–34). She cannot bear to witness any more of such torture. To kill the pain, she plans to efface herself out of existence through marriage to Peter Keating. "Roark, you won't win," she tells him, "they'll destroy you, but I won't be there to see it happen. I will have destroyed myself first. That's the only gesture of protest open to me. What else could I offer you?" (375). The plan fails. To accomplish the same goal, she picks (with Toohey's encouragement) an even more loathsome object, Gail Wynand. But she soon realizes that he is not suitable for her purpose because he seems to be a man from her own world, not theirs (448–49). In the

last act open to her, she intends revenge: she will make Wynand pay for the Stoddard trial and for the *Banner*.

What Dominique must grasp, in order to be able to return to Roark and to enter her own world for the first time, is the basic motivation of those she despises and of those she loves. She must grasp the motivation and resulting smallness of soul of those whom she thinks can harm her and Roark. And she must grasp the motivation and resulting untouchable sense of joy of a creator like Roark. She does not understand either. She is mistaken about the nature of evil and, in part because she has silenced within herself her own desire to create, does not fully understand the nature of the good.

Dominique must see that she has grossly exaggerated the power of the "masses" to control and to destroy. Their primary victim is themselves. Evil, she is beginning to realize during her marriage to Wynand, is not "single and big," it is "many and smutty and small" (492). She has seen the best kind of man that the "masses" have to offer, Peter Keating; she has seen him when he is at the top of the architectural profession; and she has seen the utter emptiness of his life. He controls nothing and has power over nothing. He is a marionette whose strings are pulled by Toohey. And Toohey, too, is petty and small. He is an envy-ridden creature leading a life even more empty than Keating's. His leitmotif, like Keating's, is fear (230). He fears Roark, he fears Wynand, he even fears her; she rightly becomes more and more dismissive of him. When she sees Toohey at her and Wynand's wedding reception, and he quickly turns away from her, she wants to laugh aloud, "but the matter of Ellsworth Toohey caught off guard did not seem important enough to laugh about now" (480).

Toohey's illusion of power comes from Wynand. Wynand creates the *Banner* and turns its voice over to Toohey. And *only* Wynand could create the *Banner*: its source is the warped creator within him. It is Wynand's error and treason (494) that give power to the "masses" and the men, like Toohey, who lead them. And the primary victim of Wynand's treason is himself. She had wanted to make Wynand pay for the *Banner*; she realizes that "It can't be paid for" (494). Wynand's case is tragic; tragic for him and tragic for all creators: he is a potential creator who has turned against his own species. But the tragedy is not inevitable: Wynand can resist. "He could have closed the paper," she tells Roark at the end (666).

But, above all, what Dominique must grasp is the motivation of the true creator. She believes that "Everything has strings leading to everything else. We're all so tied together" (143). She does not yet realize how radically independent is the creator's aim, how unconcerned he is with other people, how irrelevant those people are to the failure or success of his goal, and so how

his joy and suffering are unaffected by them. She is haunted by windows and streets and lunch wagons and cocktail shakers (287, 463), by the undeserving people who might look at or touch elbows with Roark (243), by women who "will hang diapers on his terraces" and men who "will spit on his stairways and draw dirty pictures on his walls" (244). At the Stoddard trial she condemns Roark for sacrilege toward his own values.

> In what kind of world did Roark build his temple? For what kind of men? Look around you. Can you see a shrine becoming sacred by serving as a setting for Mr. Hopton Stoddard? For Mr. Ralston Holcombe? For Mr. Peter Keating? . . . When you see a man casting pearls without getting even a pork chop in return—it is not against the swine that you feel indignation. It is against the man who valued his pearls so little that he was willing to fling them into the muck and to let them become the occasion for a whole concert of grunting, transcribed by the court stenographer. (356)

What Dominique must come to learn, which she does in part from Roark's own example, is the independence of the creator's motivation. She is wrong to think that Roark builds in order to offer his creations to other men, wrong to think that he is casting pearls in hope of a return. Roark's goal is the building, which he builds for his own sake. His return *is* the pearl—which he made. For what kind of men, Dominique asks, did Roark build his temple? For none. He built it for himself, to experience and express his concept of exaltation. Who might benefit from the temple, or even who might come along to destroy it, is not his focus. It might be destroyed, but that does not erase the fact that he built it.

This is the explanation of their differing reactions to the disfigurement of the Stoddard Temple. Dominique's focus is on what vermin dared smash; she thinks they are draining from Roark his very lifeblood. Roark's focus is on the fact that he built the temple—his primary goal realized, something that never can be taken from him. Dominique cannot believe that Roark is not in agony; she cannot understand how the pain can go down only to a certain point. It goes down only to a certain point because the essence of Roark's goal and the core of the experience its achievement brings are devoid of relation to other men.

Dominique must grasp the truth of Roark's words in the courtroom: "The creator lives for his work. He needs no other men. His primary goal is within himself. . . . He is not concerned with [others] in any primary matter. Not in his aim, not in his motive,

not in his thinking, not in his desires, not in the source of his energy" (679–81). She must understand what Roark tells Wynand, that the meaning of life is "The material the earth offers you and what you make of it" (551). When she visits Roark in Clayton, Ohio, at the site of the Janer Department Store, she says "it's the quarry again." Roark smiles. "If you wish. Only it isn't. . . . I love doing it. Every building is like a person. Single and unrepeatable" (462). She must grasp that she is wrong here and he is right. She must grasp that the creative act itself—and the effort, struggle, and dedication it demands—is what brings meaning to life. And this remains so, whether other people turn a blind eye to one's achievement, as happened to Cameron, or disfigure it, as happened to Roark with the Stoddard Temple, or even imprison one for it, as may happen to Roark after Cortlandt.

She has to reach the point where she can declare, with full understanding and certainty,

> Howard . . . willingly, completely, and always . . . without reservations, without fear of anything they can do to you or me . . . in any way you wish . . . as your wife or your mistress, secretly or openly . . . here, or in a furnished room I'll take in some town near a jail where I'll see you through a wire net . . . it won't matter. . . . Howard, if you win the trial—even that won't matter too much. You've won long ago. . . . I'll remain what I am, and I'll remain with you—now and ever—in any way you want. (667–68)

And when she reaches this point, she will be able to see that Roark has a real chance to triumph in the world as it is. Her pessimism about mankind is unwarranted. Roark's "kind of people" can and do exist. Dominique has always known this at one level. She knew that men like Enright and Heller existed and that they were successful and untouched (259). But she dismissed such people, like herself, as "freaks" (Toohey calls any real individual a "lone freak," 223); she did not understand the basic motivation of such men and the fact that this motivation is open to anyone to achieve. She believed that such freaks existed only by accident and by courtesy of the "masses," who could not yet be bothered to crush them. She now knows better. "They own nothing. They've never won. . . . One cannot hate the earth in their name. The earth is beautiful. And it is a background, but not theirs" (665–66). Whatever their number, it is the creators who move the world. There is no reason to conclude that Roark must end up in a granite quarry or a jail cell or even doing only five-story buildings in Clayton, Ohio.[17]

Henry Cameron, as we have seen, is the creator who undermines himself by allowing the "masses" to decide the *means* of achieving his basic goal. Dominique Francon is the would-be creator, who defeats herself by allowing the "masses" to dictate that her basic goal is *impossible* to achieve. Gail Wynand, in contrast, is the creator who destroys himself by allowing the "masses" to *set* his basic goal.

From an early age, Wynand develops a searching, ambitious, and life-aspiring mind. In each crucial area of life, he is met with other people's indifference, incompetence, and resentment. This inhuman opposition leads him to alter his life's ambition.

The young Wynand has a tremendous thirst to learn, to understand and to acquire the traits necessary for success. He teaches himself to read and write at age five and learns his first mathematics and geography from engineers and sailors in his neighborhood. He never accepts anything on another's say-so: it must make sense to him. At age twelve, he enters a church and hears his first sermon on "patience and humility"; he never goes back (403). Into the best streets of the city he ventures in order to discover what makes people successful. "He felt no bitterness against the world of wealth, no envy and no fear" (403). People glare at him, but it has no effect. "He wanted nothing, for the time being, except to understand" (403). When he decides that what makes the people on the streets of Manhattan different from those of Hell's Kitchen are books, he begins to read voraciously, savagely. He even directs his gang to steal books from the Public Library. He must understand. "He could not tolerate the inexplicable. . . . The emblem of his childhood . . . was the question mark" (402–3).

But when he enrolls himself in public school, he feels revulsion for its unwillingness to prize his intelligence and effort. At first his teacher takes great pleasure in calling on him, because he always knows the answers; and when Wynand "trusted his superiors and their purpose, he obeyed like a Spartan" (403). But soon the teacher's attention shifts: "she had to concentrate on the slower, duller children" (403). Wynand cannot understand why they matter more than he does, why he is made to suffer boredom for their sake, why he is being penalized for his ability. "'Why,' he asked, 'should I swill everything down ten times? I know all that.' 'You're not the only one in the class,' said the teacher'" (403). He utters a profanity and quits school in disgust.

In the world of work, which he enters at a very young age, Wynand is eager to improve each business where he is employed. The response he encounters is similar to that of the teacher's. He sells newspapers on street corners and explains to the pressroom

boss that they could boost circulation by delivering the paper to the reader's door each morning. He is answered not with an argument but with indifference: "Yeah? . . . Well, you don't run things around here" (402). Working in a grocery store, underutilized, Wynand one day explains to the owner why it would be good to sell milk in bottles. He's met not only with indifference but with outright hostility: "You shut your trap . . . don't you tell me nothing I don't know about my business. You don't run things around here" (402).

Met with this ceaseless refrain, Wynand learns to loathe people. "He felt many emotions toward his fellow men, but respect was not one of them" (402). With great effort, however, Wynand learns "to keep silent, to keep the place others described as his place, to accept ineptitude as his master—and to wait" (402). To wait for what? To wait for the time when he, not incompetence, would be in command and could achieve his vision of the world. At his favorite job, bootblack on a ferry boat, he loves to look at Manhattan when he has no customers, to look "at the yellow boards of new houses, at the vacant lots, at the cranes and derricks, at the few towers rising in the distance. He thought of what should be built and what should be destroyed, of the space, the promise and what could be made of it" (402).

At its deepest root, Wynand's motivation is like Roark's (and Cameron's). Both hate incompetence and both want to erect, for themselves, their vision of a better world.

But Wynand allows the smug incompetence and indifference of other people to warp his motivation. Underlying Wynand's fierce desire to learn and to work is a profound will to live. One of his most significant memories, when he looks back on his life, is himself, at age twelve, back against a wall, ready to fight three gang members for his life (399–401). When people turn a blind eye to that will to live, Wynand cannot stomach it. Age fifteen, severely beaten by a drunken longshoreman, Wynand manages to crawl, his blood smearing the pavement, to the door of a saloon. It was the only time Wynand ever asked for help. The saloonkeeper looks at Wynand, "a glance that showed full consciousness of agony, of injustice—and a stolid, bovine indifference" (404); he slams the door in Wynand's face.[18]

In a world where his will to live is resented by incompetents, the teenage Wynand concludes that it is rule or be ruled, kill or be killed. "Did you want to scream," the adult Gail Wynand asks Roark,

> "when you were a child, seeing nothing but fat ineptitude around you, knowing how many things could be done and done so well, but having no power to do them? Having no power to blast the

> empty skulls around you? Having to take orders—and that's bad enough—but to take orders from your inferiors! Have you felt that?"
>
> "Yes."
>
> "Did you drive the anger back inside of you, and store it, and decide to let yourself be torn to pieces if necessary, but reach the day when you'd rule those people and all people and everything around you?"
>
> "No."
>
> "You didn't? You let yourself forget?"
>
> "No. I hate incompetence. I think it's probably the only thing I do hate. But it didn't make me want to rule people. Nor to teach them anything. It made me want to do my own work in my own way and let myself be torn to pieces if necessary." (529)

Roark's and Wynand's differing conclusions here explain the meaning of what Wynand, age sixteen, does after his father has died and he stands atop the roof of his tenement, alone against the city. The time "had come to decide what he would make of his life" (405). To Wynand, that question now means: What must he do in order to rule? "He asked himself a single question: what was there that entered all those houses, the dim and the brilliant alike, what reached into every room, into every person? They all had bread. Could one rule men through the bread they bought? They had shoes, they had coffee, they had. . . . The course of his life was set" (405).

Against the hatred of the "masses," Cameron had seen only two possibilities: by a sheer act of will, somehow to force them to see and accept the good and, if that fails, to beg. Dominique thinks the first possibility is hopeless and the second shameful: she renounces begging by renouncing desire. Wynand too will not beg. Nor will he try to force the good on people. But he sees another possibility. To rule them: to control them and keep them at bay by catering to their depraved desires.

Wynand is losing grip of his original motive. That motive had been to create, to build that which should be built and destroy that which should be destroyed, and to thereby fulfill the promise of what could be made of the world. His original motivation was Roark-like. But people's indifference to the good and to justice is warping that motivation—he is permitting it to be warped. In an act that would be unimaginable to Roark, Wynand allows others to

determine what career he will choose. Wynand will still create—but the "masses," and not his own vision, will dictate what he creates and why.

Why does he want to rule? Wynand has no real answer to this question. He would say that at *some* point he will have the power necessary to stop catering to depravity and instead to erect his kind of world. But that point is undefined and *indefinable.* It is an abstraction that can never be made concrete. He still loves the city and its skyscrapers, he loves the possibility they represent, and he would throw his body over the skyline to protect it (446); but he never actually does anything to improve that which he loves.[19]

This is the deep significance of the Wynand Building to him. The envisioned building represents his original motivation and aim: to sweep aside what should not exist and build what should. But his whole career does precisely the opposite. Wynand wants to believe that his basic goal is still to rebuild his city and that he will in the end make his goal concrete, in the form of the Wynand Building. But by the logic of his life, he never will. And so, although he himself does not know why, he never feels ready to erect the Wynand Building (499). He comes to feel ready only when he comes to feel "as if I had been forgiven" (592–93).

Wynand's actual motivation has turned defensive. He is not on a crusade for his values and vision of existence, as Cameron was and Roark is. He is on a crusade to protect himself and his values from destruction at the hands of a belligerent mob. But what of his self will there be left to protect, once he abandons the essence of self: the motivation of a creator?

Wynand pours his energy into his chosen goal, and by eighteen is an associate editor of a fourth-rate newspaper, the *Gazette.* At twenty he falls in love with a woman and offers his creative energy to her in support and protection of this supreme personal value. "Sitting at her feet, his face raised to her, he allowed his soul to be heard. 'My darling, anything you wish, anything I am, anything I can ever be. . . . That's what I want to offer you—not the things I'll get for you, but the thing in me that will make me able to get them. That thing—a man can't renounce it—but I want to renounce it—so that it will be yours" (406). Her reaction is moronic indifference. He renounces love.

In the two most important areas of life, creative ambition and romantic love, Wynand has now barred his soul from expressing itself. What good then is the power he seeks? What will he accomplish with it, when he gains it? What is there left to defend? This is the contradiction of Wynand's life, which he confronts for the first time a year later.

He faces a crucial test because, in the fate of Pat Mulligan, his goal to rule comes into conflict with his prior vision of what the

world should be. Wynand "was twenty-one when his career on the *Gazette* was threatened, for the first and only time. . . . [W]hen Pat Mulligan, police captain of his precinct, was framed, Wynand could not take it; because Pat Mulligan was the only honest man he had ever met in his life" (406).

Mulligan is being framed by the people who control the *Gazette*—and Wynand wants to fight for him. This will mean the destruction of the *Gazette* (and more), Wynand knows, but he still wants to fight. "His decision contradicted every rule he had laid down for his career. But he did not think. It was one of the rare explosions that hit him at times, throwing him beyond caution, making of him a creature possessed by a single impulse to have his way, because the rightness of his way was so blindingly total" (406). Wordlessly and subconsciously, Wynand still wants to see his vision of the world made real, protected, and defended, and he will act for it despite his chosen goal to rule. That goal still remains subordinate to his vision of what should be.

In order to bring down the *Gazette*, Wynand seeks as his ally the famous editor of a great newspaper who had written "the most beautiful tribute to integrity" Wynand had ever read (406). The editor is shocked that anyone could take so seriously the swill he writes. His glance is one Wynand "had seen before: in the eyes of the saloonkeeper who had slammed the door" (407).

Wynand now makes his fateful choice. He renounces integrity not because it cannot be achieved—there is no question of Mulligan actually being a corrupt policeman, unworthy of defending—but because it is not *worth* achieving. Why is it not worth achieving integrity, fighting for his vision, and even going to jail in its cause if necessary? Because then the "masses" will be ruling over Wynand, snickering at him. His standard of what is worth having is now intimately tied to the "masses" and their corrupt leaders. To achieve integrity, he thinks, is to embrace victimhood. Wynand walks back to the *Gazette* "feeling . . . only a furious contempt for himself, for Pat Mulligan, for all integrity; he felt shame when he thought of those whose victims he and Mulligan had been willing to become. He did not think 'victims'—he thought 'suckers'" (407). And what makes power worth having? It will prevent one from being other people's sucker. Wynand reverses course and writes an editorial for the *Gazette* denouncing Mulligan.

Although he is not yet aware of the full meaning of his choice, Wynand has chosen the emptiness of ruling: ruling without purpose or goal, ruling for the sake of ruling, ruling as an end in itself. Wynand is not building an empire to defend the few men of integrity who may exist in the world; he has used his incipient empire to destroy such a man. He is not building his empire to

protect those he loves; he has renounced personal love. He is not building his empire to protect himself; he has now abandoned the fundamental goal that made up his self, his desire to erect his kind of world. Wynand no longer has any real answer to the questions: To rule—for whom? To gain power—for what? His goal is now to *not* be a sucker, which irrevocably ties him to others. To avoid being a sucker is *not* to achieve anything.

This is the cause of Wynand's inner emptiness, which he feels, at age fifty-one, a gun raised to his temple (390). Only the dread of discovering the unanswered in his life keeps him going. "The thought of death gave him nothing. The thought of living gave him slender alms—the hint of fear" (415). The emblem of his childhood, the question mark, remains, but it now hangs solely over his own life.

The editor of the great newspaper knew that there was something very wrong in the way the twenty-one-year-old Wynand thanked him. But he "did not know"—as Wynand did not know then—"that it had been an obituary on Gail Wynand" (407).

Wynand's life thereafter is a quest for power. By twenty-two he owns the *Gazette* and changes its name to the *Banner*. The majority of the public prefers to help a chambermaid with a "tragic expression and disarranged clothes" (408) rather than a starving scientist, and this is therefore the mentality the *Banner* is designed to appeal to. Wynand delivers "the paper, body and soul, to the mob" (408). He does the same for his personal life. "Every bastard in the country," he observes, "knows the inside of my icebox and bathtub" (413). Devoid of a real end, he pursues the means passionately and unscrupulously: "All the drive, the force, the will barred from the pages of his paper went into its making" (409). By age forty he has erected his empire.

But Wynand begins to sense the meaninglessness of his quest. He creates the art gallery as a refuge and an escape. He goes there, occasionally, to experience both joy and suffering (413). Joy, because he can contemplate the existence of integrity—but an existence that can never be made concrete, real. Suffering, because his power is useless if there is nothing that can exist in life worth using it for.

Outside of this refuge, Wynand must convince himself that there is no other road open but the one he took. "You can't escape depravity, kid," he gently tells a talented young reporter who, unlike most, will not work for Wynand. "The boss you work for may have ideals, but he has to beg money and take orders from many contemptible people. I have no ideals—but I don't beg. Take your choice. There's no other" (412).

Confronted with individuals who seem to have reached financial success by some other means, Wynand sets out, "coldly

and with full intention," to ruin them (411). By deliberately taking a loss on his investments, he destroys, among others, a bank president, a head of an insurance company, and an owner of a steamship line. "The men were not his competitors and he gained nothing from their destruction" (411).

Confronted with the possibility that some may experience real, discriminating personal love, which he has renounced, Wynand sets out to prove the phenomenon illusory. "It was said that he never enjoyed a woman unless he had bought her—and that she had to be the kind who could not be bought" (413).

Through a "long process" and toward a result for which there "had been premonitory signs," these desires crystallize into a need to break men of integrity (413).

Wynand himself does not know the cause of his desire (496–97). But faced with the—to him—contradiction of a man of integrity who is not a victim, Wynand must prove to himself that the man does not actually possess integrity. These men, many of whom were able to withstand the indifference and hostility of the "masses," cannot withstand the ferocious ability that Wynand directs against them. But their destruction does not and cannot bring Wynand joy: the desire to crush them is his life's basic meaninglessness coming to the surface.

If integrity cannot exist in anyone, what is the point of gaining power? To achieve what and protect whom? But, much more obviously, if integrity can exist, what is the point of Wynand's life? Wynand therefore wants the person to break, but even this outcome cannot validate his life. When, against Alvah Scarret's expectation, he manages to break the first of the men of integrity, Dwight Carson, Wynand laughs almost uncontrollably. The "laughter had an edge of hysteria" (414). Wynand's inability to control his emotion "contradicted everything [Scarret] knew of Wynand; it gave Scarret a funny feeling of apprehension, like the sight of a tiny crack in a solid wall; the crack could not possibly endanger the wall—except that it had no business being there" (414).

The crack is blasted open when Wynand meets Dominique and Roark.

Wynand falls in love with Dominique. He responds to her integrity and thinks that, if integrity could exist at all, it could exist only in such a mangled form. Its bearer would have to be a profound victim. He tells her, "Do you think I could believe any purity—unless it came to me twisted in some such dreadful shape as the one you chose?" (448). But even this much is hard for Wynand to admit, since he is at the stage where he cannot acknowledge the existence of *any* embodiment of integrity, and Dominique's life is superior to his. His love, like all love he thinks,

is exception-making (496). “Why didn’t you set out to destroy me?” Dominique asks him (497). “The exception-making, Dominique. I love you. I had to love you. God help you if you were a man” (497).

For the first time, the adult Wynand loves something in the world. His love for Dominique is an expression and recapturing of his true self, of that within him which thinks and judges and says “Yes” and “No”—of that which he has never permitted expression before.

> I’ve never really wanted anything. Not in the total, undivided way, not with the kind of desire that becomes an ultimatum, “yes” or “no,” and one can’t accept the “no” without ceasing to exist. That’s what you are to me. But when one reaches that stage, it’s not the object that matters, it’s the desire. Not you, but I. The ability to desire like that. Nothing less is worth feeling or honoring. And I’ve never felt that before. (502)

His love for Dominique becomes his salvation: a justification of his pursuit of power. Although his power has in a sense protected him from the mob—in a glass cage atop a skyscraper—the price was his soul; in his person, there exists nothing worth protecting. But Dominique’s soul remains intact. Wynand has an overwhelming desire to shield her from the “masses.” He orders all the Wynand papers to destroy every picture of her and to never write about her (459); he does not even want her to leave the penthouse (487). “I must put her out of reach—where nothing can touch her, not in any sense,” he tells Roark when asking him to design their new home outside the city; the “house is to be a fortress” (519).

Wynand knows that Dominique does not love him (495–96), but his consecration to her will validate his own life. He rededicates himself to the *Banner*. He “worked with a new energy, a kind of elated, ferocious drive that surprised the men who had known him in his most ambitious years” (487). “Nothing changed,” however, “in his methods and policy” (487). Nothing essential changes in his policy because he thinks the *Banner*, the vehicle for appeasing and controlling the “masses,” is what gives him the power to protect Dominique from them. His newfound joy causes him only to try to eliminate the worst excesses of the *Banner* and to let Dwight Carson go (523). Wynand views himself as a great alchemist who takes “the worst refuse of the human spirit” and makes “of it this necklace on [Dominique’s] shoulders” (489).

Now that he has Dominique and his love for her, real in the world, he experiences for the first time the only kind of experience "worth feeling or honoring"; he is no longer much interested in learning—nor afraid of facing—the unanswered in his life (502).

But one thing does still haunt Wynand, and that is the fact that the *Banner*—and so his life—served as an instrument to torture Dominique. "FIRE THE BITCH" read the cablegram he sent when Dominique wanted to print, in her column in the *Banner*, what she had said on the stand during the Stoddard trial. Dominique pins the cablegram to her dressing room mirror; when he holds her, his eyes often move to it (490). An unanswered question remains: Is the *Banner* really Dominique's protector or her tormentor?

He must face the full implications of this question when he meets Roark. At first, Wynand helplessly responds to Roark's integrity; the integrity of his buildings and the integrity of his person. "I never meet the men whose work I love," he tells Roark. "They're an anticlimax to their own talent. You're not" (518). But when Wynand learns that the full power of the *Banner* was unleashed against Roark during the Stoddard trial, Wynand senses the question he cannot escape. Alone at his desk, after reading the file on Roark, Wynand hears the presses of the *Banner*. He "had always liked that—the sound of the building's heart beating." But now he wonders. "He listened. They were running off tomorrow's *Banner*. He sat without moving for a long time" (525).

When Wynand realizes that Roark is through with the Stoddard trial, but he is not—that it is Wynand who will have to face and forgive himself for the Stoddard trial and, he dimly senses, for his pursuit of power—Wynand feels the danger to himself (526–30). He looks for the easier way out: to crush Roark in order to reaffirm his conclusion that a man like Roark is impossible. But though Wynand does not yet know this, it is not, as we have seen, really a way out. And it is only comparatively easier, since it is a form of self-torture. Roark sees what "Dwight Carson had been the first [to see]. Wynand's lips were parted, his eyes brilliant. It was an expression of sensual pleasure derived from agony—the agony of his victim or his own, or both" (532). The fate Wynand wants to sentence Roark to is the fate that Wynand *chose* for himself. "You'll create in your sphere," he tells Roark, "what the *Banner* is in mine" (532). But if this fate would empty Roark's life of meaning, does this not imply that Wynand's is *already* empty of meaning? Wynand cannot escape the basic contradiction of his life's motivation.

Roark, of course, does not give in. Wynand is not happy about this fact, but he does not fight further, since he senses that Roark would survive the battle while he would not (533). In

another act of love as exception-making, Wynand submits to his reverence for Roark. It is both penance and atonement. Penance, because he "is punishing himself for what he has done—by bowing before what he should have done."[20] When Dominique asks Wynand what Roark is to him, Wynand answers: "a hair shirt" (552). But it is also atonement, because it is Wynand's "first acceptance of an ideal."[21]

Through Roark, Wynand begins to learn the true nature of the creator's motivation and the fact that that motivation is radically unconcerned with and unaffected by other men. "I always look at the men in the street," Wynand tells Roark. "I used to hate them and, sometimes, to be afraid. But now I look at every one of them and I want to say: 'Why, you poor fool!' That's all" (547).

But if this is the correct attitude toward other men, it means that Wynand's life is beyond redemption.

His redemption, Wynand thought, would come first in the form of using the *Banner* to protect Dominique and, now, in the form of promoting Roark. Wynand does not have to face the "unthinkable"—closing the *Banner* (589)—because he can use it to plug Roark. There are now days when he loves the *Banner* (589). But Wynand is beginning to get a glimpse of the nonexistence of his power; his readership remains indifferent to Roark's achievements and the people who frequent intellectual circles begin to sneer at Roark, "the genius of the yellow press" (590). "We'll see," Wynand says in contemptuous response, and continues "his private crusade" (590).

In the aftermath of Cortlandt's destruction, the *Banner* rises to Roark's defense—and readership plummets, employees rebel and strike, Wynand's editorials and arguments go unheeded, and the mob grows contemptuous of him and of Roark. Three weeks into the strike, he goes to Roark to admit that the *Banner* is not helping but actually hurting Roark. Roark tells him it does not matter. This is a battle between Wynand and God—as Dominique put it (618)—a civil war for Wynand's soul. "I knew that something like that had to happen, when I saw you for the first time," Roark tells him. "You knew it long before that" (654). "If you stick to the end," Roark tells him, "you won't need me any longer" (653).

But to stick to the end, Wynand realizes, means to close the *Banner*. It means that the goal of Wynand's life was worse than useless: his basic motivation placed his life in the service of the destruction of that which he loved, integrity. He is back to the beginning of his career. He is back to the choice of defending Pat Mulligan by destroying the *Gazette*, or of preserving the *Gazette* and sacrificing the only honest man he knows. Only now the

choice is writ large—Howard Roark versus the *Banner*—and its meaning is fully clear to Wynand.

Wynand now grasps his moral treason and the cause of his inner emptiness. He cannot forgive himself; he must be the one to pay for his sin.[22] He surrendered to the mob even before selling out Pat Mulligan; he surrendered to the mob by allowing it to dictate his basic goal in life: to rule. "Howard," Wynand thinks to himself, "I wrote that editorial [denouncing Roark] forty years ago. I wrote it one night when I was sixteen and stood on the roof of a tenement" (662). Wynand will not try to evade responsibility: "I had no right to kneel and seek redemption," he thinks to himself (658). "I'll pay—I signed a blank check long ago and now it's presented for collection—but a blank check is always made out to the sum of everything you've got" (656). By placing his incredible creative power in the hands of the "masses," he gave expression to their souls and allowed them to direct his ability toward the destruction of that which he loved. "Anything may be betrayed, anyone may be forgiven. But not those who lack the courage of their own greatness" (663).

His last solace is to return to Dominique, now as a beggar. He is again back at the beginning. At age twenty, Wynand had bared his soul to an unworthy woman; by allowing such experiences to warp his aim in life, it is now *his* soul that is unworthy of the woman *he* loves, and it is he who must seek a relationship he cannot deserve. In their final meeting, Wynand accepts the full pain his life has caused his highest value, Dominique, and that which she loved: Howard Roark. "I think I should have understood," he says in the manner of "a bank teller balancing a stranger's account that had been overdrawn and had to be closed." "You married Peter Keating. Right after the Stoddard trial" (671). When Dominique cries that he had no right to become what he became, if he can take it like this, he replies: "That's why I'm taking it" (671). He allows the *Banner* to smear Dominique and receives letters "generous in their condolences, unrestrained in the indecency of their comment on Dominique Francon"; he forces himself to read every letter; it "was the worst of the suffering Gail Wynand was to know" (673).

His final act is to commission the Wynand Building—the symbol of his original and deepest motivation, which he now knows he betrayed. "I told you once," Wynand says to Roark in their last meeting, "that this building was to be a monument to my life. There is nothing to commemorate now. The Wynand Building will have nothing—except what you give it. . . . Build it as a monument to the spirit which is yours . . . and could have been mine" (692).

THE AVERAGE MAN AND THE MASSES

The creator is mistaken to give sway to other people. In his view of how to reach his goal, of whether it is possible to reach his goal, and of what goal he should therefore be trying to reach, he must not allow the specific choices or actions of other men to enter. To his basic goal of building the things he knows to be valuable, in order to reshape for himself the earth that he loves, he must hold fast. If he does, the evil of the "masses" and of their intellectual molders and agitators will have no power to touch him. If he does, the ideal of creative productivity and joy is reachable—here, now, on this earth. In *The Fountainhead*, individual greatness does not consist in ruling others, but in being radically independent from them.

When the creator grasps the nature and meaning of his actual motivation, he will also understand that the idea that others form a mob eager to tear him to pieces is mistaken. In essence, *anyone* can share the motive of the creator. As Roark explains in his courtroom speech: "Degrees of ability vary, but the basic principle remains the same: the degree of a man's independence, initiative and personal love for his work determines his talent as a worker and his worth as a man" (681). The masses do not represent a fact of nature; membership in their ranks is *self-made*, by a chosen default, and does not indicate the essence of man, not even of the man of average ability (hereafter, the "average man"). It is wrong, as the notes for *The Little Street* suggest, that "all humanity and each little citizen is an octopus that consciously or unconsciously sucks the blood of the best on earth and strangles life with its cold, sticky tentacles." Some men lower themselves to the state of an octopus—or to that of a swine grunting in the muck, in the more accurate imagery of *The Fountainhead*—and some do not. The creator's attitude should be to ignore those who debase their own souls, however many their number, and to seek out those who do not.

In the world of *The Fountainhead*, average men are divided into two categories, inclusion in which is determined by their singular response to the greatness in man. Do they admire competence and look up to the creator? Or are they indifferent to, even resentful of, the presence of both? The indictment of the masses in *The Fountainhead* is the indictment of the average man who is not roused by the sight of greatness. Even if such a man cannot match the enormous creativity of the pathbreakers in his society, he can appreciate and give thanks for what they bring into existence that he could not; he can acknowledge his intellectual debt to them; he can resolve to equal their creative dedication in his own life and on his own scale, with whatever creative spark he

possesses and has managed to fan; and he can defend and support them when they come under attack. Average men who refuse to do this—average men who, in Toohey's words, "have not risen in fury when we called you average" (638)—are condemned.[23]

Most of the opposition Roark (and the other creators) faces comes from those indifferent or hostile to achievement. From the Dean, who neither approves of criminals nor great men and therefore concludes that Roark is a dangerous man, not to be encouraged (25–26)—to the architects who will not consider hiring Roark, not because they thought he was worthless but because they "simply did not care to find out whether he was good" (99)—to Gordon L. Prescott, an architect who bemoans "the hardships placed in the way of [the profession's] talented beginners" but who, when he meets Roark and sees Roark's drawings, tells him that the "genius is the one who knows how to express the general" (100)—to Mrs. Wayne Wilmot, who resents that Roark is trying to teach her something about buildings (162)—to those who "did not know whether his buildings were good or worthless" but who think they are nevertheless fit to judge Roark because "they knew only that they had never heard of these buildings" (175)—to Ralston Holcombe, who, in a moment of "complete sincerity," can say before his fellow architects that we "are only men and we are only seekers. But we seek for truth with the best there is in our hearts" (200), and yet who can, when he sees the Heller house, denounce it and declare that there "ought to be a law" (137)—to Joel Sutton, who tells Roark that "I think you're a great architect" but that "that's just the trouble, greatness is fine but it's not practical" (271)—to the wretches who criticize the Stoddard Temple (342–43)—to those who attack Roark as "an egomaniac devoid of all moral sense" (622) because he deprives them of the idea that charity is an "all-excusing virtue" and exposes the social worker as deriving "an unearned respect from all, by grace of his fingers on the wounds of others" (622)—the sum and essence of people's opposition to Roark is their unwillingness to try to match his achievement and stature of soul. These are the average men who see greatness—and do not want it. These are the men who form Mallory's beast (331–32, 511).

In the character of Peter Keating we see the basic cause of this rejection of greatness. Keating can recognize Roark's greatness, and one of Keating's most appealing aspects is that he occasionally responds to it. Early in the story, for instance, in a conversation with Roark, Keating remarks: "'You know,' said Keating honestly and unexpectedly even to himself, 'I've often thought that you're crazy. But I know that you know many things about it—architecture, I mean—which those fools never knew. And I know that you love it as they never will'" (33). But to match

Roark's dedication and effort is too demanding. "When I'm with you," Keating tells Roark, "it's always like a choice. Between you—and the rest of the world. I don't want that kind of a choice" (89).

What Keating wants is a borrowed greatness: greatness, without the effort it entails; self-respect, without the bother of having to achieve it. He flocks to those who make him feel that this is possible. Prescott gives a speech about the meaning of architecture: "The architect is a metaphysical priest dealing in basic essentials, who has the courage to face the primal conception of reality as nonreality—since there is nothing and he creates nothing. If this sounds like a contradiction, it is not proof of bad logic, but of a higher logic." Keating listens attentively, with "thick contentment"; he thinks to himself: "One could not worry about one's value or greatness when listening to this. It made self-respect unnecessary" (292). At Toohey's meetings for young architects, Keating finds "a feeling of brotherhood, but somehow not of a sainted or noble brotherhood; yet this precisely was the comfort—that one felt, among them, no necessity for being sainted or noble" (245).

To men like Keating, the presence of a great man can topple their moral rationalizations and fraud. A man like Roark stands as a constant reminder of what they are not, and as a reproach. They need to feel superior to a man like Roark, so they ignore him and oppose him and hate him and denounce him—and seek an escape from him. For all of this, Toohey supplies them the means.

Toohey helps manufacture the masses by appealing to the worst in the average man. His racket is to convince men that it is wrong to admire greatness and, even more, to kill in their minds the very conception of greatness (635). He helps deprive men of genuine self-respect, which they must then replace with the illusion of self-respect (605–7, 635). It is an illusion that requires, as Keating's example shows, the spiritual slop of irrationalism, altruism, and collectivism that Toohey continuously feeds them. But Toohey's racket cannot exist without the basic default of a man like Keating: Keating's refusal to exert the effort required to work and to rise. A man who retains a core of competence and so of self-respect is immune to Toohey's machinations. "I can't understand why people of culture and position like us understand the great ideal of collectivism," declares Mitchell Layton, "while the working man who has everything to gain from it remains so stupidly indifferent. I can't understand why the workers in this country have so little sympathy with collectivism." "Can't you?" answers Toohey (556).[24] Toohey knows the source of his power;

he knows that he is a dependent seeking power over dependents, a life even more empty than Keating's (638–39).

The average man enters the rank of the masses only by his own default. It is neither his fate nor indicative of his nature. How can he achieve the moral stature of a Howard Roark? Only by practicing the opposite of compassion: the demanding virtue of admiration. "Compassion is a wonderful thing," Dominique explains to Mrs. Jones.

> It's what one feels when one looks at a squashed caterpillar. An elevating experience. One can let oneself go and spread—you know, like taking a girdle off. You don't have to hold your stomach, your heart or your spirit up—when you feel compassion. All you have to do is look down. It's much easier. When you look up, you get a pain in the neck. Compassion is the greatest virtue. It justifies suffering. There's got to be suffering in the world, else how would we be virtuous and feel compassion? . . . Oh, it has an antithesis—but such a hard, demanding one. . . . Admiration, Mrs. Jones, admiration. But that takes more than a girdle. (282)

To practice the virtue of admiration *does* demand much of a man. He must respect and nurture the best within himself and within any man: his ability to produce and create on whatever scale he is capable of. His God must be man's competence. He must be willing to look up and to exert the effort to learn from those of superior knowledge and ability. He must be willing to acknowledge the intellectual gifts that he receives from those more productive than him, which he can become worthy of in part by showing his gratitude. He must judge the world scrupulously, deciding for himself what deserves his "Yes" and his "No" (539). And then he must further and fight for that which he sees to be good, for that to which he has granted his "Yes." To practice the virtue of admiration is to stand, head lifted, and give thanks for the greatness of another man and all that it, and its sight, will make possible in one's own life. It is to be *motivated* by the best possible to oneself and to man.

This is the virtue that Mike Donnigan exemplifies—and why he represents the best of the men of average ability. When Roark first meets him, Mike is struggling to bend some conduits around a beam. Impatient with the know-nothing architects normally sent to the building site, Mike dismisses Roark when Roark tells him that he is wasting his time. But when Roark demonstrates to Mike a more efficient way, by cutting a hole in the beam and running the pipes straight through, Mike's attitude

changes. He stares with *reverence* at the hole that Roark's expert hands have burned: "Jesus! . . . Do you know how to handle a torch!" (92). Mike is not, as many people would be, resentful of the fact that Roark has "shown him up"; Mike, rather, is appreciative of the fact that he has learned a better way to do things. He later seeks out Roark's company and tells Roark of the only thing he worships: "expertness of any kind" (93). As to what counts as expertness, Mike judges that first-hand; Mike despises all other architects, but profoundly admires one, Cameron, for whom he once worked. When Roark tells Mike that he too has worked for Cameron, and indicates the same admiration for Cameron as Mike's, their friendship is sealed.

Thereafter Mike supports and fights for Roark in whatever way he can, knowing that he is the lucky one for being able to participate in the erection of Roark's buildings and the progression of Roark's career. Mike works on every one of Roark's buildings (336). When Roark discovers him at the construction site of his first building, the Heller house, Roark is shocked that Mike would bother with a small private residence. "Why such a come-down?" Roark asks him. Mike knows better: "you think it's a come-down? Well, maybe it is. And maybe it's the other way around" (134). Mike is properly outraged when Roark is fired from Francon and Heyer (97) and, later, when Roark must close his office because he cannot find enough clients (197); Mike helps land Roark the job he needs in the granite quarry. He stands by Roark's greatness despite the abuses hurled at Roark by the hostile crowd: he is in Roark's camp of supporters at both the Stoddard and Cortlandt trials. And he takes inspiration from Roark, who helps Mike sustain his conviction that the good is worth striving for and will prevail: "I told you not to worry," he tells Mallory at one point during the construction of Monadnock Valley, "at the [Stoddard] trial that was. He can't lose, quarries or no quarries, trials or no trials. They can't beat him, Steve, they just can't, not the whole goddamn world" (508).

This virtue of admiration is shared by all of Roark's friends and forms the bond between them. Cameron hires Roark over his own reluctance, because he recognizes Roark's incredible talent. Austen Heller responds to Roark's greatness when he sees it in Snyte's office, offering Roark the commission on the spot. He then works to bring Roark clients and praises Roark's buildings in print. Roger Enright picks Roark as his architect based on his own judgment of good architecture; persists in locating Roark, who is working in the granite quarry; and fires from his employ the bored secretary who could not be bothered to properly assess Roark as a potential builder of the Enright House (251); he also wants to bring Roark clients. Both Heller and Enright confront Dominique when

they think she is attacking Roark's buildings in her columns. Kent Lansing fights savagely for Roark. He tells him: "I want a good hotel, and I have certain standards of what is good, and they're my own, and you're the one who can give me what I want. And when I fight for you, I'm doing—on my side of it—just what you're doing when you design a building. Do you think integrity is the monopoly of the artist?" (313). And of course Roark acts in the same way. He respects the work of Enright and Lansing, he praises Heller's articles, he profoundly admires Cameron.

After Heller in his writings defends Monadnock and Roark's other buildings by putting "into words the things Roark had said in structure. Only they were not Austen Heller's usual quiet words—they were a ferocious cry of admiration and anger," Lansing names the quality all these men share: "It takes two to make a very great career: the man who is great, and the man—almost rarer—who is great enough to see greatness and say so" (512).

To cultivate the ability to recognize greatness reaps immediate benefits. Mike learns from Roark and gets to participate in the construction of buildings he could never have designed himself. Heller gets his house; Enright, his apartment building; Lansing, the Aquitania Hotel.

But the virtue should be cultivated for more than this. To practice the virtue of admiration is how men of less than supreme ability play their role in creating a human world. As Toohey notes, looking out over the lights of the city. "Think of the thousands who worked to create this and of the millions who profit by it. . . . it is said that but for the spirit of a dozen men, here and there down the ages, but for a dozen men—less, perhaps—none of this would have been possible" (281). These few men, Roark observes in his courtroom speech, were usually made to suffer for the great gift they brought. Imagine if they had *not* been made to suffer. Imagine if the creators sensed that they faced not a drooling beast—masses indifferent, even hostile, to achievement—but a group of *individuals* eager to rise and meet the demanding task of looking upward. What then might have been possible?

Imagine what Cameron might have created, if he had not turned, in despair of finding another human face, to drink. Imagine what Dominique might have done, if she had not been paralyzed by people who settle for the half-way and the in-between. Imagine what Mallory might have created, if he had not sensed that he was ignored and hated for his ability. Imagine what Wynand might have built instead of the *Banner*, if in childhood he had been admired and encouraged for his tremendous intellect and drive.

A creator like Roark will hold out to the end. The creator who is fully conscious of the nature and moral rightness of his

motivation knows that he is beyond the grasp of evil; the pain can go down only to a certain point. But men of lesser ability have no right to demand such moral endurance of the Roarks, and no interest in doing so.[25]

The crucial difference between the virtue of admiration and of compassion is captured in the scenes dealing with the disfigurement of the Stoddard Temple (383–87). Built, as Dominique says, as a "temple to the human spirit," in which one can experience exaltation through the contemplation of man "as strong, proud, clean, wise, and fearless" and the consciousness of "living up to one's highest possibility" (355)—it is transformed into the Hopton Stoddard Home for Subnormal Children. It goes from a building dedicated to man's greatness to one dedicated to cases of congenital incompetence. The ladies who pick the Stoddard House's occupants make "a point of rejecting those who could be cured and selecting only the hopeless cases" (385). The children enter "their new home, their eyes staring vacantly, the stare of death before which no world existed" (385). Outside, children from the slums "gape wistfully" at the Home (385). "These children had filthy clothes and smudged faces, agile little bodies, impertinent grins, and eyes bright with a roaring, imperious, demanding intelligence. The ladies in charge of the Home chased them away with angry exclamations about 'little gangsters'" (385–86).

One can only wonder how many Wynands are among those "little gangsters," and how badly they have been mangled inside.

Men of greatness, as already indicated, must also practice the virtue of admiration. In regard to a man of equal ability, this means mutual admiration, as exists between Roark and Cameron. In regard to a man of lesser ability, this means that they should appeal to, deal with, promote, and accept nothing less than the man's best; great men will thereby play a role—beyond creating their life-giving products—in creating a human world. This is Roark's policy.

Roark patiently waits for clients: for his kind of men. He offers them the very best of himself—his work—and in the name of that value often explains to them the meaning of buildings and what they should be seeking from architecture. We see Roark doing this with the very first of his potential clients, with Wayne Wilmot, with Robert L. Mundy, with Nathaniel Janss, and with the Sanborns (161–70). As Roark begins to build, choosing to erect only uncompromised structures of incomparable value, individuals who may not be able to equal Roark's achievements, but who have retained the capacity to respond to them, see Roark's buildings and do respond. Jimmy Gowan sees Heller's house, likes it, and hires Roark to build his filling station (158). John Fargo hires Roark to

build his department store after walking through the Gowan Service Station and the Heller house (167). This is the pattern by which Roark gets almost all his clients.

Roark knows that such men, though comparatively rare, are not freaks.[26] They have simply achieved their human stature, the basic independence that anyone can attain. It will take patience to find them and for them to see and to learn—as Lansing says to Roark, "men like you and me would not survive beyond their first fifteen years if they did not acquire the patience of a Chinese executioner" (336–37). But it is possible, and they are the only kind of people worth dealing with.

And the better people do learn from Roark—they come to see the logic, the purpose, and the functional beauty of his buildings, and they respond. Roark designs the Enright House "as a rising mass of rock crystal . . . so that the future inhabitants were to have, not a square cage out of a square pile of cages, but each a single house held to the other houses like a single crystal to the side of a rock" (234). It rents "promptly. The tenants . . . did not discuss the value of the building; they merely liked living there. They were the sort who lead useful, active private lives in public silence" (308). The Stoddard Temple also attracts patrons to experience its unique conception of exaltation. "There were a few who came, and saw, and admired the building in silence. But they were the kind who do not take part in public issues" (342). Monadnock Valley—for which Roark had argued that "people of good taste and small income had no place to go, if they found no rest or pleasure in herds. . . . Why not offer these people a place where, for a week or a month, at small cost, they could have what they wanted and needed?" (506–7)—also proves a success. It is rented out within a month of opening and by the end of the summer leased for the following year. It attracts a "strange mixture" of people: "society men and women who could have afforded more fashionable resorts, young writers and unknown artists, engineers and newspapermen and factory workers. . . . The place became news; but it was private news" (510).[27]

In his day-to-day work Roark also seeks to deal only with the best within each man. In the sunlight of Roark's office, each man's irrelevancies are stripped away.

> [Roark] did not smile at his employees, he did not take them out for drinks, he never inquired about their families, their love lives or their church attendance. He responded only to the essence of a man: to his creative capacity. In this office one had to be competent. . . . But if a man worked well, he needed nothing else to win his employer's benevolence: it was granted, not as a gift, but as a

> debt. It was granted, not as affection, but as recognition. (309)

Rather than feeling vulnerable or insignificant, each man feels that, for once, he is being seen for whom he really is, for what really matters about him and for what is truly important in life. Although their friends and family say that Roark's office must be cold and inhuman, the employees know, without having the ability to put the knowledge into words, that for the first time in their lives they are in a *human* environment. They experience self-respect toward themselves and loyalty and love toward Roark (309).

When a creator like Roark ceaselessly strives for the best within himself, and then offers that in trade to those who can see and appreciate it, he gives courage and inspiration to those willing to enter the same battle. Mallory might not have the breadth of vision and conviction, and the moral strength and endurance, to persevere alone, as Roark does, but he will work to earn the lifeline Roark's very existence throws him (329–32). During the construction of Monadnock Valley, Mallory thinks to himself: "Battle . . . is a vicious concept. There is no glory in war, and no beauty in crusades of men. But this was a battle, this was an army and a war—and the highest experience in the life of every man who took part in it"; those working on the project do their part to deserve the experience that Roark makes possible for them, with the unstated knowledge that their leader will keep them from harm—"the architect who walked among them . . . the man who had made this possible—the thought in the mind of that man—and not the content of that thought, nor the result, not the vision that had created Monadnock Valley, nor the will that had made it real—but the method of his thought, the rule of its function—the method and rule which were not like those of the world beyond the hills" (508).

By his life, Roark does what George Washington advised: he raises a standard to which the wise and the honest can repair. As Part Four of *The Fountainhead* opens, the boy on the bike is searching for real "joy and reason and meaning in life." "Don't work for my happiness, my brothers," he thinks to himself, "show me yours—show me that it is possible—show me your achievements—and the knowledge will give me courage for mine" (504). He sees Monadnock Valley. "Who built it?" he asks Roark. "I did." "Thank you," the boy replies. Roark inclines his head, in acknowledgement; he "did not know that he had given someone the courage to face a lifetime" (505–6).

But there is even more than this to Roark's benevolence. Roark knows that the good has never had a voice. Recall those who can respond to the Enright House, to the Stoddard Temple, and to Monadnock Valley: good people, but without public voice.

Remember his employees, who can find no name for the feeling that represents the best within themselves. Remember that even exemplary men like Roger Enright think they have no abstract ideals (251). And remember the task Cameron charges Roark with:

> I have no answer to give them, Howard. I'm leaving you to face them. You'll answer them. All of them, the Wynand papers and what makes the Wynand papers possible and what lies behind that. It's a strange mission to give you. I don't know what our answer is to be. I know only that there is an answer and that you're holding it, that you're the answer, Howard, and some day you'll find the words for it. (76–77)

Roark will find the words, primarily for himself—"I wished to come here and state my terms," Roark says at the Cortlandt trial. "I do not recognize anyone's right to one minute of my life. . . . I am a man who does not exist for others" (684)—"and for every creator whose name is known—and every creator who lived, struggled and perished unrecognized before he could achieve" (685). But Roark's words are also addressed to the jury, and he thinks that he has a chance of winning (654).

Roark selects as jurors those with the "hardest faces," "attentive and emotionless" (675). The twelve men—executives, engineers, factory workers, a mathematician, a truck driver, a brick layer, an electrician, a gardener—are precisely the type of men who would choose to live at the Enright House, to come to the Stoddard Temple to experience uplift, and to vacation in the peaceful solitude of Monadnock Valley. These are good, average men, who live honorable lives, without public acknowledgment or voice. These are men who are unable to equal Roark's creative genius, unable to find the words that name Roark's achievement and the forces that oppose Roark, and unable to express their understanding and gratitude (though they probably should do more in regard to this last, as Mike does). But if the words and the case are presented to them, they will make the right choice. Roark explains to them the conflict between creators and second-handers, the immorality of their existing moral concepts, the fact that he was not paid for Cortlandt, and the reason why he had to dynamite it. The jury acquits him (685).[28]

There is in *The Fountainhead* a tremendous rift between the honest average man, represented by Mike, and the intellectuals, represented by Toohey and his avant-garde of nihilistic writers, architects, and critics. True, to the extent that the average man is not motivated by his work, by developing his competence and earning his self-respect, he needs the moral rationalizations the

intellectuals provide him. This is Keating's dependence on Toohey: Toohey preys on a person's insecurities and immoralities, and drives a wedge between a person and his soul. But to the extent that what motivates the average man is commitment to creative work and genuine self-respect, he is in no need of the intellectuals. This is why the workers—who would contain men in varying degrees similar to Mike—do not go for Toohey's collectivism. But even the best of them remain vulnerable, unable fully to understand themselves, unable consistently to identify the good, unable to explain and defend it against those who attack it. To all the good men whom the intellectuals deprive of voice—from honest men of average ability to, most importantly, creators like Cameron and Mallory and Wynand—Roark provides a voice in his courtroom speech.

Gail Wynand's course of action in this regard is the opposite of Roark's. Wynand appeals to the worst in men (which is the reason Roark's friends hate Wynand). Wynand does not look for his kind of reader; he designs his papers for the man who "lacked even the positive distinction of a half-wit" (409). He does not address the minds of the public, but instead, through "enormous headlines, glaring pictures and oversimplified text," helps relieve them of the responsibility of thought, of "any necessity for an intermediary process of reason, like food shot through the rectum, requiring no digestion" (409). He does not offer his creative best to the world and thereby inspire fallen creators to rejoin the battle or nascent ones to take it up; he offers the spectacle of an "exceptional talent . . . burned prodigally to achieve perfection in the unexceptional" (409). His work helps drive a man like Cameron to despair and an average man to spiritual bankruptcy. Wynand does the opposite of raising a standard to which the wise and the honest can repair; he creates a pool of slime in which the dishonest can frolic. Is it any wonder, then, that he comes to loathe the sight of the men around him?

During the strike of the Union of Wynand Employees, as Wynand tries to use the *Banner* to defend Roark, he thinks to himself

> that men had been willing to work for him when he plugged known crooks for municipal elections, when he glamorized red-light districts, when he ruined reputations by scandalous libel, when he sobbed over the mothers of gangsters. Talented men, respected men had been eager to work for him. Now he was being honest for the first time in his career. He was leading his greatest crusade—with the help of finks, drifters, drunkards, and humble drudges too passive to quit. The guilt, he

> thought, was not perhaps with those who now refused to work for him. (650)

Worst of all, Wynand has the intellect to explain and defend greatness. We see this in his conversation with Roark aboard the yacht and in his articles defending Roark. But Wynand chose to turn his voice over to others. He does not present to men the actual alternatives, in clear, explicit, graspable terms. He never allows them the possibility of making an honest, informed choice. He presents them only the *Banner*'s and Toohey's intellectual corruption. When Wynand tries to argue Roark's case with minds that have been constantly fed such corruption, he is met with "indifferent silence, half boredom, half-resentment"—and with pronouncements quoted from the *Banner* (628–29).[29]

Wynand has helped create Toohey; without him, Toohey is powerless. Toohey's first mention in the story is in connection with the magazine *New Frontiers*, which has "a following that described itself as the intellectual vanguard of the country; no one had ever risen to challenge the description" (50). Wynand's crime is not only that he did not challenge this vanguard—he who, like Roark, could have found the words "for something that should win" (133)—but that he built Toohey his platform. Wynand has unleashed Toohey and the masses:

> I released them all. I made every one of those who destroyed me. There is a beast on earth, dammed safely by its own impotence. I broke the dam. They would have remained helpless. They can produce nothing. I gave them the weapon. I gave them my strength, my energy, my living power. I created a great voice and let them dictate the words. The woman who threw the beet leaves in my face had a right to do it. I made it possible for her. (663)

At the end of the Cortlandt trial, when Wynand and Roark both rise to face the jury, it is the final verdict on Wynand's life. At this point, there is no question in Wynand's mind that, whether or not Roark is acquitted, Roark's way of life is right and Wynand's is wrong. In this sense, Wynand is simply awaiting formal sentencing. But one outstanding issue remains. Was Wynand right that the average man is inherently corrupt and impervious to reason? This would not justify, but it would at least mitigate, his quest for power. But the jury's acquittal of Roark, without need of further deliberation upon hearing Roark's speech, reveals that even on this issue Wynand is mistaken. Offered clear alternatives, the best among average men will choose the rational one.

In her 1945 letter "To the Readers of *The Fountainhead*," Rand observes:

> The success of *The Fountainhead* has demonstrated its own thesis. It was rejected by twelve publishers who declared that it had no commercial possibilities, it would not sell, it was "too intellectual," it was "too unconventional," it went against every alleged popular trend. Yet the success of *The Fountainhead* was made by the public. Not by the public as an organized *collective*—but by single, individual readers who discovered it of their own choice, who read it on their own initiative and recommended it on their own judgment. . . . To every reader who had the intelligence to understand *The Fountainhead*, the integrity to like it and the courage to speak about it—to every one of you, not in mass, but personally and individually, I am here saying: *Thank you.*[30]

At a deeper level, however, it is the *existence* of *The Fountainhead* that demonstrates its own thesis. It took a mind like Roark's, a mind whose *motive* was its own truth, a mind which wanted to see, for itself, this kind of story and characters made real, a mind which understood that meaning in life comes from what one creates, not from how others respond or fail to respond to it—it took such a mind to create *The Fountainhead.* For a reader who cherishes the sense of exaltation that comes from entering *The Fountainhead*'s world, and who has been inspired by Ayn Rand's achievement to have the courage to revere the best within himself and within man, to say "thank you" hardly seems enough.[31]

NOTES

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1. In her "Introduction to the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition" of *The Fountainhead* (v-xi), Rand discusses some consequences of religion's monopoly in the field of ethics.

2. David Harriman, ed., *Journals of Ayn Rand* (New York: Plume, 1999), 66–74.

3. Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism* (New York: New American Library, 1964), 82–86.

4. For Rand's notes on the unwritten novel, see Harriman, J*ournals of Ayn Rand,* 704–16. In an editorial comment on these notes, Harriman writes: "So AR has come full circle. She returned at the end to a problem that had concerned her from the beginning: how does one maintain a view of life as it could be and ought to be, while living in a

culture that is predominantly hostile to rational values. At this stage, however, she knows the solution" (715–16).

5. The best single source to read to understand her final view on the power of the good and the impotency of evil is *Atlas Shrugged.* However, apart from a few endnotes in which I mention later places where Rand dealt with a point I am discussing, my focus is going to be strictly on *The Fountainhead.* There is much more to say about Rand's later elaborations on some of the general issues I discuss, elaborations contained both in *Atlas Shrugged* and in some of her nonfiction articles. For instance, I think her full analysis of Mallory's beast is her analysis of the phenomenon of hatred of the good for being the good. But all this later material would require an essay of its own; I have, however, already touched on one aspect of it in "The Death Premise in *We the Living* and *Atlas Shrugged*," in Robert Mayhew, ed., *Essays on Ayn Rand's "We the Living"* (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2004), 335–56.

6. Harriman, *Journals of Ayn Rand*, 20–47. These notes are fascinating from the perspective of how many issues they contain that she returned to in *The Fountainhead* and of how her views on those issues developed by the time she wrote *The Fountainhead.*

7. Harriman, *Journals of Ayn Rand*, 27, 24, 29; square brackets in original.

8. The context of *The Fountainhead*, as well as of the discussion in this chapter, is that of an essentially free society, not of a dictatorship. I do not mean to suggest by this qualification, however, that Rand thought evil is potent in a dictatorship; the point is only that (somewhat) different considerations are relevant when applying her principles about the efficacy of the good and the impotency of evil to the case of a dictatorship. The political conditions in *Atlas Shrugged* are close to those of dictatorship; a central theme of the novel, nevertheless, is the impotency of evil and the power of the good.

9. Leonard Peikoff offers a penetrating analysis of Rand's philosophic point here, distinguishing between "metaphysical pleasure" and "the more specific pleasures of work, friendship, and the rest." See Leonard Peikoff, *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand* (New York: Meridian, 1993), 335–343; the quotation is from 340.

10. In a 1937 note to herself, Rand writes: "If a genius passes unnoticed, the loss is humanity's, more than his. There must have been many great innovators that never influenced culture because they were not recognized in time. So much the worse for culture." In a 1944 note, she writes: "[Fools] cannot stop the inventor or the invention. It is the history of every great innovation that it [overcame] fools. And it's the fools who suffered—not the inventor, nor society. *Provided* the social system is *free,* and the inventor has a chance to fight." Harriman, *Journals of Ayn Rand*, 124, 267; second set of square brackets in original. And in a 1948 letter to a fan, she writes: "I wrote [*The Fountainhead*] for the same reason Roark built his buildings. How people would react to it was not my primary concern. If they are not brave enough, it is their tough luck, not mine. I have found, however, that a great many of them are brave enough for it." Michael S. Berliner, ed., *Letters of Ayn Rand* (New York: Dutton, 1995), 417.

11. In a 1962 letter to a fan, Rand writes that "if your achievement is rationally valuable, you will find people who will appreciate it—as you should have learned from the story of Howard Roark. No man can expect to be an innovator and, simultaneously, expect to find a ready-made audience sharing in advance the values he has not yet produced." Berliner, *Letters of Ayn Rand*, 593.

12. In that same 1962 letter to a fan, Rand writes: "You say that you want to quit. How can you quit what you have never started? If you do not fight for your own ideas, you have no right to blame the ideas of others, nor to complain." Berliner, *Letters of Ayn Rand*, 594.

13. In a 1940 synopsis of *The Fountainhead* (then still provisionally titled "Second-Hand Lives") written for prospective publishers, Rand writes "[Roark] never achieves universal recognition—which he never sought. But he wins the freedom to work as he believes, he fights through to the chance of creating great buildings." Harriman, *Journals of Ayn Rand*, 231.

14. Rand says of Cameron: "Cameron is an independent man who has been broken by [an inimical] society; he is a man who could have been like Roark, but his premises and confidence were not strong enough." Ayn Rand, *The Art of Fiction: A Guide for Writers and Readers*, ed. Tore Boeckmann (New York: Plume, 2000), 80; square brackets in original.

15. Unsurprisingly, Rand possessed Roark's conviction, not Cameron's. And I suspect her conviction came from the same source: her own understanding of her basic motivation and method of functioning. In a 1944 letter to Gerald Loeb, she writes: "all my life I have been troubled by the fact that most people I met bored me to death and I wondered where and how one can meet interesting people. I knew such people existed, I didn't believe that all of humanity was like the dreadful, wishy-washy, meaningless specimens I saw around me—but I seemed to have terrible luck in meeting the kind I could have liked. . . . but I do like people—when they are really human beings—I love to meet interesting minds and exchange ideas and feel an interested affection, not contempt, for those around me." Berliner, *Letters of Ayn Rand*, 153.

16. Rand states Dominique's motivation this way in her 1940 synopsis of *The Fountainhead.* See Harriman, *Journals of Ayn Rand*, 229–30.

17. In a 1943 letter to Archibald Ogden, her editor, Rand writes: "It will be my fate, like Roark's, to seek and reach the exceptions, the prime movers, the men who do their own thinking and act upon their own judgment. The Tooheys . . . don't count—and may God damn them. One man out of thousands is all I need—all any new idea needs—and these men, the exceptions, will and do move the world. Whatever I do in my future career, I will always have to seek and reach an Archie Ogden. You were the first and the most eloquent symbol of what I mean." Berliner, *Letters of Ayn Rand*, 104.

18. Tellingly, the adult Wynand does nothing to the longshoreman but drives the saloonkeeper to suicide (405).

19. And so, at the end, he knows that he betrayed his city and that the skyscrapers stands in judgment of him (662–63).

20. Harriman, *Journals of Ayn Rand*, 233.

21. Harriman, *Journals of Ayn Rand*, 233.

22. In Berliner, *Letters of Ayn Rand*, Rand calls it "moral treason" (644) and an "unforgivable sin" (224).

23. In her 1947 "Screen Guide for Americans" Rand writes:

> In the American doctrine, no man is *common.* Every man's personality is unique—and it is respected as such. He may have qualities which he shares with others; but his virtue is not gauged by how much he resembles others—*that* is the Communist doctrine; his virtue is gauged by his personal distinction, great or small. In America, no man is scorned or penalized if his ability is small. But neither is he praised, extolled and glorified for the *smallness* of his ability. America is the land of the *uncommon man.* It is the land where man is free to develop his genius—and to get its just rewards. It is the land where each man tries to develop whatever quality he might possess and to rise to whatever degree he can, great or modest. It is *not* the land where one is taught that one is small and ought to remain small. It is not the land where one glories or is taught to glory in one's mediocrity. No self-respecting man in America is or thinks of himself as "little," no matter how poor he might be. *That*, precisely, is the difference between an American working man and a European serf.
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> Harriman, *Journals of Ayn Rand*, 362.

24. In her article "Don't Let Go," Rand writes:

> The innocence and common sense of the American people have wrecked the plans, the devious notions, the tricky strategies, the ideological traps borrowed by the intellectuals from the European statists, who devised them to fool and rule Europe's impotent masses. There have never been any "masses" in America: the poorest American is an individual and, subconsciously, an individualist. Marxism, which has conquered our universities, is a dismal failure as far as the people are concerned: Americans cannot be sold on any sort of class war; American workers do not see themselves as a "proletariat," but are among the proudest of property owners. It is professors and businessmen who advocate cooperation with Soviet Russia—American labor unions do not. *Philosophy: Who Needs It* (New York: Signet paperback edition, 1984), 212.

25. In her article "The Establishing of an Establishment," Rand writes:

> We shall never know how many precociously perceptive youths sensed the evil around them, before they were old

> enough to find an antidote—and gave up, in helplessly indignant bewilderment; or how many gave in, stultifying their minds. We do not know how many young innovators may exist today and struggle to be heard—but we will not hear of them because the Establishment would prefer not to recognize their existence and not to take any cognizance of their ideas. So long as a society does not take the ultimate step into the abyss by establishing censorship, some men of ability will always succeed in breaking through. But the price—in effort, struggle and endurance—is such that only exceptional men can afford it. Today, originality, integrity, independence have become a road to martyrdom, which only the most dedicated will choose, knowing that the alternative is much worse. A society that sets up these conditions as the price of achievement, is in deep trouble.
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> The following is for the consideration of those "humanitarian" Congressmen (and their constituents) who think that a few public "plums" tossed to some old professors won't hurt anyone: it is the moral character of decent average men that has no chance under the rule of entrenched mediocrity. The genius can and will fight to the last. The average man cannot and does not. In *Atlas Shrugged*, I discussed the "pyramid of ability" in the realm of economics. There is another kind of social pyramid. The genius who fights "every form of tyranny over the mind of man" is fighting a battle for which lesser men do not have the strength, but on which their freedom, their dignity, and their integrity depend. It is the pyramid of moral endurance."
>
> Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It*, 171.

26. Note that Mallory puts the percentage of men who understand and respond to Monadnock Valley at one tenth of one quarter of the population (512).

27. In her article "What Is Capitalism?" Rand explains the progress of innovation under capitalism: without sacrifice of anyone to anyone, the creator raises the intellectual standards and judgment of other people by demonstrating to them what is possible. In *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* (New York: Signet, 1967), 11–34.

28. In her article "Altruism as Appeasement," Rand writes:

> When intellectual leaders fail to foster the best in the mixed, unformed, vacillating character of people at large, the thugs are sure to bring out the worst. When the ablest men turn into cowards, the average men turn into brutes. No, the average man is not morally innocent. But the best proof of his non-brutality, of his helpless, confused, inarticulate longing for truth, for an intelligible, rational world—and of his response to it,

> when given a chance he cannot create on his own—is the fact that no dictatorship has ever lasted without establishing censorship. No, it is not the intelligent man's moral obligation to serve as the leader or teacher of his less endowed brothers. His foremost moral obligation is to preserve the integrity of his mind and of his self-esteem—which means: to be proud of his intelligence—regardless of their approval or disapproval. No matter how hard this might be in a corrupt age like ours, he has, in fact, no alternative. It is his only chance at a world where intelligence can function, which means: a world where he—and, incidentally, they—can survive.
>
> Ayn Rand, *The Voice of Reason: Essays in Objectivist Thought*, ed. Leonard Peikoff (New York: Meridian, 1989), 39.

29. The sentence before Washington's famous words is apt in regard to Wynand: "If to please the people, we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterwards defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and the honest can repair."

30. Berliner, *Letters of Ayn Rand*, 672–73.

31. I would like to thank my fellow participants in the March 2006 Anthem Foundation Consultancy at the University of Texas, Austin—Harry Binswanger, Allan Gotthelf, Robert Mayhew, and Tara Smith—for preliminary discussion of some issues pertaining to the subject of this essay.