HOWARD ROARK AS HERO

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HOWARD ROARK AS HERO

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ayn Rand has written two best-sellers, The Fountainhead and Atlas Shrugged, whose readers, seemingly oblivious of the often blisteringly negative reviews, have become ardent followers eagerly anticipating the next "word" from her pen. Young people, particularly, identify with the Rand heroes because her characters are vital, forceful makers and doers. They are emblems of success, self-confidence, and proficiency. Nathaniel Branden claims that Ayn Rand's "ability to present ... characters who are genuinely heroic ..." is undoubtedly one of the chief reasons for her enormous popularity.¹

Ayn Rand's was a gradual rise to fame, however; she did not attract disciples from her first literary attempts. Early in 1931, while working in the wardrobe department of Radio-Keith-Orpheum, Ayn Rand began work on her first successful piece of writing, Red Pawn, a movie original bought by Universal Pictures in 1932, later traded to Paramount Pictures, but never used. In 1934, her first stage play, The Night of January 16th, produced first under the title Woman on Trial,

opened at the Hollywood Palace and had a successful run there, after which it had a seven-week run in New York and two road tours. 

*We the Living*, which was first submitted for publication late in 1933, was finally published by Macmillan in 1936. Its earlier rejections were the result of its over-intellectual tone, its unfavorable picture of Soviet Russia, and its denunciation of collectivism. By the time the sales had begun to rise, Macmillan had destroyed the type. Barbara Branden claims in *Who Is Ayn Rand?* that the book was "killed" by unfavorable criticism. In 1959 the book was republished by Random House. The New American Library edition sold more than 400,000 copies within a year. *The Fountainhead* was published in May, 1943, and after a slow beginning, had sold 18,000 copies by November; by 1948 sales had exceeded 400,000 copies, with steady sales since that time. *Atlas Shrugged*, published on October 10, 1957, was immediately popular and immediately denounced, as *The Fountainhead* had been, by the critics. Reader reaction was more profound and more widespread than reaction to *The Fountainhead*. Thousands of letters poured in, one result of which was Ayn Rand's course of twenty lectures, "Basic Principles of Objectivism," now offered in several cities. In addition to the popularity of these lectures, there has been an increasing number of invitations for Ayn Rand to speak on college campuses. People discuss

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3 *Ibid.,* p. 188.  
her ideas in homes as well as on campuses. A writer who has such an ardent and expanding following merits analysis—to discover, if nothing else, what it is that has attracted so many readers.

Much of the criticism of Ayn Rand's best-sellers has been unfavorable. Of Atlas Shrugged, Newsweek said that much of the reaction of the literary world would be antagonistic. Of Atlas Shrugged, Newsweek said that much of the reaction of the literary world would be antagonistic. Very little attention is given by any reviewer to a discussion of her style, but reactions are mixed. In reviewing The Fountainhead, Lorine Pruette stated that "... nothing she has to say is said in a second-rate fashion," but that the novel has "... poetry, sometimes a bit too lush..." Almost as an afterthought, N. L. Rothman, commenting in Saturday Review, described Ayn Rand's writing as "... strong, dramatic, everywhere intense and highly articulate." One reviewer of Atlas Shrugged called her style long-winded and mundane.

No reviewer has questioned that Ayn Rand writes novels of ideas. Lorine Pruette asserted that The Fountainhead is the only novel of ideas

5"No Walls Will Fall," Newsweek, L (October 14, 1957), 132.
7Ibid., p. 7.
written by an American woman. It is these ideas about which the
critics have been vehement. Most reviewers were distressed by the
crudeness and sentimentality of The Fountainhead. Barbara Branden
complains that very few of the reviewers understood or stated the theme
of the novel; they offered various other themes: a novel about
architecture, declaring that something should be done about people in
the slums; a book presenting selfish and reactionary ideas; a novel
about a selfless architect. N. L. Rothman and Lorine Pruette did
understand, however, that the book was about individualism.
Although understanding its theme, Rothman challenged the basic
premise itself by drawing a comparison between the result of the
experiences of Howard Roark and Sinclair Lewis's Martin Arrowsmith.
He called Ayn Rand's book comparable in ideals and satire and possibly
narrative skill with Arrowsmith. Arrowsmith, however, emerged from
his search for truth and science without becoming a collectivist or going
the way which Howard Roark chose. Granville Hicks, reviewing for
the New York Times Book Review, maintained that The Fountainhead

10 Pruette, p. 7.

11 Granville Hicks, "A Parable of Buried Talents," New York

12 Branden, p. 163.


14 Rothman, p. 31.
and Atlas Shrugged are alike in their defense of and tribute to the superior individual, who is superior physically as well as mentally, and especially in his capacity for life.  

Among those who understood the basic philosophies were reviewers who violently disagreed with them. Patricia Donegan's review in Commonweal was concerned with the element of savagery and hatred found in Atlas Shrugged. Time's review was primarily a discussion of the weaknesses in Ayn Rand's philosophies. Although Lorine Pruette did not set forth her personal view of the controversial philosophies, she did state very objectively that no one can "... read this masterful work without thinking through some of the basic concepts of our time."  

As most reviewers agreed that there are illogical and impractical ideas in Ayn Rand's novels, so were they generally agreed on the role of her heroes. Helen Beal Woodward summed up thus: "As the shopwindow mannequin exists to display the mink stole, so the stylized vice-and-virtue characters of Atlas Shrugged serve as dummies  

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15 Hicks, p. 5.


18 Pruette, p. 18.
on which to drape the author's ideas."\textsuperscript{19} Richard McLaughlin commented that the characters are allegorical, serving as spokesmen for her moral values, but having little animation or dimension.\textsuperscript{20} Both McLaughlin and Lorine Pruette agreed that the characters are larger than life and romanticized while moving in a modern, realistic setting.\textsuperscript{21} Newsweek's review of \textit{Atlas Shrugged} stated that the characters' "conversations deteriorate into monologues as one character after another laboriously declaims his set of values."\textsuperscript{22} Rothman said about Roark that "it is the flaw in Roark who is a genius but not a great man. It is not necessarily a flaw in the novel, which takes him, we must grant, as its premise."\textsuperscript{23} He went on to contend that Ayn Rand's confusion of values is mirrored in Roark.\textsuperscript{24} All of these views indicate that the main stream of reviewers felt that the values which Ayn Rand proclaims are reflected most clearly in her heroes. While they may be merely straw figures or puppets, their traits, dialogues, and actions provide the key to understanding the philosophical implications of Ayn Rand's novels.


\textsuperscript{20} McLaughlin, pp. 144-45.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 144. Pruette, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{22} "No Walls Will Fall," p. 130.

\textsuperscript{23} Rothman, p. 31.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
Although Ayn Rand considers plot to be the most important element in a novel,\(^{25}\) plots are inadequate without characters shaped by the plots. Her heroes are individuals who think of themselves as shaping their world rather than being shaped by it; the process is not reciprocal, as Plato's cave analogy would have it. All of Ayn Rand's philosophical statements are expressed through the words and the actions of the characters; there are no third-person observations by the writer. In some novels the philosophies are implicit in the natures of the heroes, and no comment by them or about them is necessary to reveal the values which the author is presenting. Even when a novelist such as George Eliot or Thackeray moralizes at the close of a scene or event, he must indeed have something to moralize about--and what but the events and/or the characters which he has created? And who shapes or is shaped by events but the characters? Just as the intelligence test is the best single method of determining a person's future success, so character study may well be the best single method of determining the precise message of an author. The chief but not the only way to "get at" the essence of the "Ayn Rand way of life" is through an analysis of her characters: they not only expound upon her philosophy, but they also practice it in every phase of their lives. This study will be an investigation of character, therefore an investigation of the salient

\(^{25}\) Branden, p. 87.
characters which have stirred the interest that has made Ayn Rand such a popular novelist.
CHAPTER II

THE REPRESENTATIVE QUALITY OF
HOWARD ROARK

There are several important questions to be considered before making a detailed study of the character types of a particular author. First, is it necessary to discuss in detail every major hero created by the novelist? Will any important factor be left undiscussed if any one character is eliminated as a possibility for analysis? If the answers to these questions are negative ones, then is it possible to choose one character who may justifiably represent all of the heroes? If such a choice is possible, which of the characters is the one on whom this burden shall be placed? The answers to these questions can be found only after a careful review of each of the four major heroes and the purposes and methods of the novels in which they appear.

Anthem, the briefest of the four novels, may be more accurately termed a novelette. The novel is too short for a detailed character study, and Ayn Rand implies in the introduction that the purpose of the novel is to demonstrate the evils of collectivism. Anthem is set somewhere in the indefinite future in a world society in which the individual is totally subordinated to and regulated by the State.
Among those who secretly loathe their way of life are Equality 7-2521 (The Unconquered) and Liberty 5-3000 (The Golden One), man and woman, who escape separately and join each other to build a new life beyond the Uncharted Forest. Most of the book is devoted to a description of the regulations of the society, the process by which Equality 7-2521 discovers the principle of electricity, and the establishment of the new society. There is but little recording of Equality 7-2521's philosophies, a fact which is partly due to his background: he is not used to thinking. Though he eventually comes to the proper Randian conclusions, he is initially confused, for his thoughts and the rules of society are in conflict. The opening sentences reveal this conflict: "It is a sin to write this. It is a sin to think words no others think and to put them down upon a paper no others are to see." Toward the end of the book, he begins to articulate the philosophy which he has been formulating in his own mind: "What is my joy if all hands, even the unclean, can reach into it? What is my wisdom, if even the fools can dictate to me? What is my freedom, if all creatures, even the botched and the impotent, are my masters? What is my life, if I am but to bow, to agree and to obey?" Such passages are few, however; skimpy, too, are physical descriptions and passages in which the character is thrown into relief.


2 Ibid., p. 112.
against those who oppose his ideas. These characters move about, act, and speak, but they are not alive—Ayn Rand has presented them as allegorical symbols, much as John Bunyan presented Christian and Faithful. In each case the reader is given the task of relating the outlined characters to a realistic situation. On the basis of these points The Unconquered may be eliminated as a possibility for discussion as the most representative character.

In *Anthem* and in her first novel, *We the Living*, Ayn Rand, like every young writer, was struggling with the problem of articulating her ideas. In addition, she was still in the process of crystallizing those ideas in her own mind. Perhaps one of her greatest problems was that of learning to manipulate the English language properly, for Russian was her native tongue. All of these factors are important in understanding the weaknesses of her first two novels. *We the Living*, as Ayn Rand herself has stated, is "about Man against the State. Its basic theme is the sanctity of human life." This struggle between Man and the State takes precedence over detailed character analyses. However, there are at least four graphic physical descriptions of the male hero, Leo Kovalensky, a young Russian nobleman who suffers in the years following the Russian Revolution. He articulates very few of

3 Branden, p. 146.

his philosophical beliefs; we learn of his character primarily through his actions. Because he eventually debauches himself by giving in to the system which he loathes, Leo Kovalensky cannot be considered as the ideal character, because the Randian heroes, battlers for morality and truth, are winners, not losers. Too, at the time of the writing of the novel, Ayn Rand was not ready "to attempt a full portrait of her concept of the ideal man. The ideal is only suggested . . . in that potential which he (Leo) would have reached had he lived in a free country." 5

_Atlas Shrugged_ is the story of a very unusual strike, in which the "men of the mind" revolt against the world. This strike is begun by the hero, John Galt. He and his followers eventually win; the world gives in. As a character he is fully drawn rather than merely outlined; there are detailed physical descriptions, and Galt sweeps his philosophy from every corner of his mind and deposits it at one point in a pile of words which covers sixty pages. There is only one good reason for excluding John Galt as a possibility for study: he does not actually appear until the last quarter of the novel. He is known of and talked about before, but the reader does not see him in action. Even when he is at last seen in action, he moves against the backdrop of his allies in the idealized world of their Colorado hideaway until the end of the novel,

5Branden, p. 153.
when he is seized and tortured by his philosophical enemies. For these two reasons, then, John Galt may not serve as the choice for a single analysis.

The last question has now been answered: if just one character is chosen for investigation, that character can be only Howard Roark. The next point to be considered involves the first three questions raised. The question of the necessity of a detailed discussion of every major hero must be answered in the light of Ayn Rand's portraits of these characters. If they possess essentially the same attitudes, physical features, and philosophies, then nothing important will be omitted if only one of the characters is chosen as a representative, but even so, all characters must be studied if there is no one character who is truly representative. It must be proven, therefore, that the heroes are essentially the same—that they may differ only superficially, in degree and scope rather than in quality and nature.

The physical characteristics of the Randian hero are essentially the same: light hair; blue or green eyes; deep tan; muscular, yet graceful bodies; tall, slender bodies with long legs; high cheekbones; proud, arrogant faces; frank open expressions. A comparison of Howard Roark and John Galt, as viewed by the principal female characters upon first encountering them, graphically illustrates the striking physical similarities. As seen by Dominique Francon, Howard Roark is a man with arresting features:
Her eyes stopped on the orange hair of a man who raised his head and looked at her . . . . She saw his mouth and the silent contempt in the shape of his mouth; the planes of his gaunt, hollow cheeks; the cold, pure brilliance of the eyes that had no trace of pity . . . . she was looking . . . at . . . the lines of his long legs. She was thinking of those statues of men she had always sought . . . He was working. She saw one strand of red hair that fell over his face and swayed with the trembling of the drill . . . It was not his eyes, not his mouth that she remembered, but his hands. The meaning of the day seemed held in a single picture she had noted: the simple instant of his one hand resting against granite.  

Dagny Taggart's first view of John Galt reveals him as a man with

a face that bore no mark of pain or fear or guilt. The shape of his mouth was pride, and more: it was as if he took pride in being proud. The angular planes of his cheeks made her think of arrogance, of tension, of scorn . . . The light cloth of his shirt seemed to stress . . . the structure of his figure, his skin was suntanned, his body had the hardness, the giant, tensile strength, the clean precision of a foundry casting . . . the color of his skin [blended] with the chestnut-brown of his hair, the loose strands of the hair shading from brown to gold in the sun . . . his eyes were the deep, dark green of light glinting on metal.  

In each one can see the emphasis on the shape of the mouth, the arrogant or contemptuous expression, the long, lean bodies, and the loose strands of hair. In a kaleidoscoped form, the male characters of  

Anthem and We the Living have these same features. The Unconquered, seeing himself for the first time in the reflection of a stream, is awed:

"We sat still and held our breath. For our face and our body were beautiful . . . our limbs were straight and thin and hard and strong."  


8 Rand, Anthem, p. 90.
(He uses the plural pronoun because in his collective society the uttering of the pronoun "I" is a crime.) Leo Kovalensky of We the Living is described thus: "He stood among them tall, straight, young, a god's form with lips that were still proud." Also, "His body was white as marble, and as hard and straight; the body of a god, she thought, that should climb a mountainside at dawn, young grass at his feet . . . ."

Allusions to the heroes' personalities and ideals are at once a part of the physical descriptions. These allusions are more numerous and more complex in the later, more mature novels. In We the Living and Anthem there are but a few hints of the hero type to come. The following description of Leo Kovalensky might apply to Howard Roark or John Galt: "He moved as if his whole body were a living will, straight, arrogant, commanding, a will and a body that could never bend because both had been born without the capacity to conceive of bending." Unlike Roark and Galt, however, Kovalensky crumbles under the pressure of the Communist system. Toward the end of the novel the author notes the change: "He looked into her flaming eyes with eyes that were like mirrors which could not reflect a flame any longer. 'Why bother?' he asked?" Although Anthem is too brief for a

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9 Rand, We the Living, p. 161.

10 Ibid., p. 175.

11 Ibid., p. 312.

12 Ibid., p. 348.
comprehensive character study, there are occasional passages in which The Unconquered expounds the Randian philosophy: "Neither am I the means to any end others may wish to accomplish. I am not a tool for their use. I am not a servant of their needs. I am not a bandage for their wounds. I am not a sacrifice on their altars." An inscription on a building in the hideaway of the "men of the mind" of Atlas Shrugged mirrors the same idea: "I swear by my life and my love of it that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine." This motto contains the core of the philosophy of Galt and the other mental titans of the novel. In a conversation with Gail Wynand, Howard Roark explains his basis of respect for other men:

... I think the only cardinal evil on earth is that of placing your prime concern within other men. I've always demanded a certain quality in the people I liked. I've always recognized it at once—and it's the only quality I respect in men. I chose my friends by that... A self-sufficient ego. Nothing else matters... (To Wynand) if this boat were sinking, I'd give my life to save you... I could die for you. But I couldn't and wouldn't live for you."

Although the foundation of ideas is the same in each passage—that no man must place the needs of others above oneself—there is one chief difference between the earlier two novels and the later two: these philosophical passages occur more frequently in the later novels.

13 Rand, Anthem, p. 110.
Also, because the novels are longer, there are more opportunities for the heroes to demonstrate the ideals which they advocate. Through sheer force of repetition, as in classroom drills, the reader is more likely to begin to grasp the spirit of the Ayn Rand philosophy. Therefore the hero of one of the two later novels would be a far superior choice for detailed study.

Why is it that Ayn Rand always uses the same hero type? One answer is that her hero is the only type of person she admires. Her employment of the same basic character (with minor physical alterations and placement in different settings) is also related to her chief purpose in writing. As a romanticist, "she wrote in order to create the kind of people she would like to know . . . in order to project what life should be like." ¹⁶ This hero type stems not only from her preferences and purposes, but is also traceable to the influences of events, persons, and literary experiences of her childhood and youth.

As a child in Petrograd, Russia, Ayn Rand was bored with fairy tales about helpless orphans, cruel stepmothers, and fairy godmothers. At the age of eight she found her first enjoyable story: a detective story whose hero captures a notorious jewel thief after a series of daring adventures. ¹⁷ At the age of nine she discovered her first hero—a event which had a profound intellectual and emotional influence on her. ¹⁸

¹⁶Branden, p. 147. ¹⁷Ibid., p. 121. ¹⁸Ibid., p. 122.
The hero, Cyrus, a British officer, was tall, slender, and long-legged, with a shock of fair hair falling over his face. "He was a man of arrogant self-confidence, of relentless purposefulness, and proudly-flaunted self-esteem." By ingenuity and daring, Cyrus, the principal character in a children's magazine serial, "The Mysterious Valley," rescued his men after they were captured by an evil rajah. Ayn Rand saw in Cyrus a "symbol of man at his highest potential: man in control of reality, supremely confident and efficacious, able to choose great purposes, to struggle against terrible odds, and to win." Both physically and mentally, this Cyrus is the prototype for all future Randian heroes.

In addition to the influences of fictional heroes in childhood, Ayn Rand had been impressed in adulthood by the novels of Victor Hugo, particularly *Les Miserables*, because Hugo presented a world of "unprecedented scope and grandeur, of magnificently ingenious plots . . . of an exalted sense of life, of man seen as a hero." She particularly respected the character Enjolras, the young insurrectionist, because she saw in him the "dedicated purposefulness and the intransigent love of rectitude that was the essence of her concept of human greatness." Ayn Rand's concept of the ideal man is the focus of both her philosophical and literary interests. This concept is of "man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his

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19Ibid., p. 126.  
20Ibid., p. 153.
life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute."  

Another profound influence has been Frank O'Connor, whom she first saw on a streetcar bound for the movie studio at Culver City where both were employed. Her first reaction to him was one of shock: he was tall and slender, long-legged, with a strand of fair hair hanging over his forehead. "The skin of his face was taut against high cheekbones. His mouth was long and thin. His eyes were a cold, clear blue. He was half-dozing, his body relaxed with the boneless elegance of a cat." He was aloof, with a serene, confident self-sufficiency. Later she found that his character also matched her ideal: he was a man of first-hand values, of independent judgment, of unborrowed soul—her first spiritual ally. Ayn Rand has been Mrs. Frank O'Connor for more than thirty-five years.

One reviewer of *Atlas Shrugged* stated that there is a "melodramatic simplicity that requires no score cards to tell heroes from villains." This simplicity is not an error on the part of Ayn Rand: she has intended her characters to be either black or white. She herself said in an interview for the *Saturday Evening Post*, "I don't like grays." For this reason she admires the black-and-white.

21Ibid.
22Ibid., p. 139.
The uncompromising quality of Mickey Spillane's heroes. Because of their one-sidedness—perfection or total depravity—the Randian characters tend to emerge as puppets in the hands of their creator. However, they are nonetheless consistent. Only by having her characters as models of perfection and by keeping them constant can Ayn Rand achieve her purpose of picturing men as they ought to be rather than as they are.

The first three questions have now been answered. It is not necessary to discuss in detail every major hero, for the characters differ only superficially; therefore no important factor will be omitted if a character is not discussed. Each of the characters is representative of the Randian hero; it is necessary only to choose the best representative, and, for reasons already enumerated, all of the characters except Howard Roark may be rejected as feasible subjects for analysis. Therefore Howard Roark of The Fountainhead will be the subject for this investigation of the Randian hero type. In the following chapters the writer will consider Howard Roark as an individual and as an architect, in view of the sociological hero in America, in the light of the twentieth-century American fictional hero, and in relation to the mythological hero.

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26 Woodward, p. 25.
CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS OF HOWARD ROARK

A preliminary summary of Ayn Rand's theories of characterization and the nature of her heroes is a necessary introduction to a study of Howard Roark or any other Randian hero, for it is her principles and her personality which shape the actions, the character, and even the types of dialogues of the heroes. This brief introduction, then, will serve to acquaint the reader with the processes by which the author devised the person Howard Roark.

It was stated in the first chapter that Ayn Rand writes, not to hold a mirror up to life, but to create the kind of people and the kind of world which could be and should be. Because of this objective she may be called a romanticist. Nathaniel Branden has called her a romantic realist: romantic because her novels deal with absolute values, with the essential and universal in life, and with the presentation of man as a heroic being; realistic because her values are pertinent to this world in this time, and because the issues of her novels are today's crucial and fundamental ones.¹ Essentially, therefore, her novels are a fusion of

¹Branden, p. 73.
idealism and realism; she seeks to apply her philosophical values to concrete situations in the real world.

Although she is concerned with ideals, Ayn Rand's primary purpose in writing is not to win philosophical converts to those ideals, but "to project and make real the characters who are the book's heroes."² Ayn Rand claims that these heroes are not purely symbolic figures nor carbon copies of actual people.³ Rather, they are "persons in whom certain human attributes are focused more sharply and consistently than in the average human being."⁴ In presenting such characters, she centers her attention on the traits and actions which illustrate the characters' values that are their conscious motivation for living. Therefore the accidental, the irrelevant, and the trivial incidents in those persons' lives are omitted. The fact that a man combs his hair, drinks cough syrup, or makes small talk with shop owners may illustrate that he is a "human being like everyone else," but, according to Ayn Rand, such incidents should be excluded because they have no bearing on the theme or the purpose of the novel. She has said herself that "in life, one ignores the unimportant; in art, one omits it."⁵ Ayn Rand's explanation of the reason for the sparsity of small talk by her characters is that as a youngster she was baffled at

²Ibid., p. 74. ³Ibid., p. 81. ⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid., p. 85.
knowing what to talk about when one was not supposed to talk about anything important. She reflected this same puzzlement in a magazine interview years later: "I don't know how to make small talk, and I don't enjoy listening to it." 

Her characters are not types or stock characters representing men as they are; rather they are projections of men as they might and ought to be. Roark articulates this idea in speaking to Steven Mallory about his sculptures: "... your figures are not what men are, but what men could be--and should be.... Because your figures are the heroic in man." Ayn Rand does not ask whether these types do exist, but whether they should exist. This "Superman" concept of hers is Nietzschean in origin. As Nietzsche preached through the lips of Zarathustra, Ayn Rand has created ideal men. Even though they are romantic figures, they "are not knights, gladiators, or adventurers in some impossible kingdom, but engineers, scientists, industrialists, men who belong on earth...." Ayn Rand has challenged the current view of man as "an impotent zombie without intellect, efficacy or self-esteem," or as an incurable neurotic. Thus, she and her followers are able to believe that she has rescued modern literature

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6 Ibid., p. 127.  
7 Kobler, p. 100.  
8 Branden, p. 81.  
10 Branden, p. 81.  
11 Ibid., p. 73.  
12 Ibid., p. 115.
from the predominant trend toward the anti-hero. Her heroes, men of high moral character and intelligence, are exalted, but not at the expense of those of average or below-average ability; those less than superior are drawn with sympathy and respect; Mike Donnigan, Roark's working class companion, is the best illustration of this sympathetic attitude.

Ayn Rand's background and her negative reaction to the presentation of man in the novel are important for the reader to understand in order to evaluate Howard Roark. These general considerations are not sufficient, however; one must also consider the specific personal influences and decisions which led directly to the evolution of the theme of *The Fountainhead* and the character of Howard Roark.

The idea for the theme of the novel had its roots in Ayn Rand's personal analysis of a young female executive in Hollywood with whom Ayn Rand was acquainted. Upon questioning the young woman about her goal in life, Ayn Rand was dumbfounded by the answer which she received: "If nobody had an automobile, then I would want to have one automobile. If some people have one, then I want to have two." From this experience she was led to a definition of two sharply distinct and opposite ways of living and therefore two different types of men. On the one hand there is the man "whose convictions, values, and purposes are the product of his own mind;" on the other hand there is

the "parasite who is molded and directed by other men . . . who places others above self." 16

The character of Howard Roark came into existence after the definition of the theme of the Fountainhead, this theme being evolved from an interpretation of the young lady's motivation: a desire to serve the ideals of the masses rather than one's own values. The theme as identified by Ayn Rand is "individualism versus collectivism, not in politics, but in man's soul." 17

With the theme and the character in mind, Ayn Rand then placed Roark in a specific setting with a specific professional background. She chose a creative profession because "she wanted to show the essence of a creative man's attitude toward his work, an attitude that would apply to any profession;" 18 she chose architecture because it is at the same time an art, a science, and a business. When, after the publication of The Fountainhead, Ayn Rand was asked if Roark was patterned after Frank Lloyd Wright, she replied that the "only resemblance . . . is in their basic architectural principles and in the fact that Wright was an innovator fighting for modern architecture against tradition. There is no similarity in their respective characters, nor in their philosophical convictions, nor in the events

16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., p. 88.
18 Ibid., p. 156.
of their lives. " She chose New York as the setting because to her its buildings symbolize the achievements of men's minds.

Considering her general philosophy and specific motivation, one may better understand the following analysis of the man Howard Roark as an individual and as an architect, realizing with Ayn Rand that any sharp dichotomy between Roark and his work is not possible, for the personal values which Roark subscribes to are not cast aside when he is at the drawing board or a building site, nor does his worship of architecture fade into the background when he leaves the office or a building skeleton.

The first sentence of the novel gives the reader an insight into a strange but distinctive quirk in the spirit of Howard Roark. It says simply, "Howard Roark laughed." He is laughing for the sheer joy of laughing, laughing because he is in love with living. As he laughs, he is standing at the top of a cliff looking down at a lake. Presently he laughs again, this time as he remembers that he has just been expelled from the Architectural School of the Stanton Institute of Technology and that the coming days will be difficult. He has often come to this spot to relax and think; this luxury is another source of joy to him. Once Ellsworth Toohey, the author of an architectural column in the Banner, questions Peter Keating, a fellow student of Roark's at Stanton, about

Roark, asking if Roark laughs often. The answer is no. Keating goes on to say that Roark does not have the ability to laugh at himself. It is true that there are very few times in the novel when Roark is shown laughing. But when he does, he laughs from his soul; he is truly joyous. His rough companion Mike tells him that it's "indecent to be so happy . . . ." as he and Roark are inspecting the partly-finished home of Austen Heller. Again, when Joel Sutton has informed Roark that he will refuse Roark a commission in favor of Peter Keating, Roark laughs when he learns that Dominique Francon has recommended Keating for the job. Sutton tells Roark that "it's not decent to laugh like that." Because Roark rarely laughs, people automatically decide that laughing is foreign to his nature, thus being appalled when he "steps out of character."

Gail Wynand's philosophy of joy parallels Roark's; he summarizes that philosophy in a conversation with Roark: "I was thinking of people who say that happiness is impossible on earth. Look how hard they all try to find some joy in life . . . . By what conceivable right can anyone demand that a human being exist for anything but for his own joy? Everyone of them wants it." These statements could just as logically have been said by Roark. He responds to Wynand that the meaning in life is

\[21\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 231.\]
\[22\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 127.\]
\[23\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 264.\]
\[24\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 543.\]
In talking to the Dean on the day of his expulsion from college, he tries to explain, unsuccessfully, the importance of joy in his work: "I've chosen the work I want to do. If I find no joy in it, then I'm only condemning myself to sixty years of torture. And I can find the joy only if I do my work in the best way possible to me." ²⁵

Howard Roark's greatest source of joy is his work; he loves his work—for its own sake—not for any reward or regard or money. In the scene with Keating in which Keating begs Roark to design Cortlandt Homes, Roark reveals this attitude: "But to get things done, you must love the doing, not the secondary consequences." ²⁶ Keating offers him money, but Roark responds, "You know better than that, Peter. Is that what you wish to tempt me with?" Later in the discussion, after he agrees to design Cortlandt for Keating, he says, "I like to receive money for my work . . . . I like to have people know my work is done by me. But I can pass that up." After the success of "Keating's" Cosmo-Slotnick Building, Keating tells Roark to "drop that fool delusion that you're better than everyone else . . . you'll have clients, you'll have friends . . . you'll be rich . . . famous . . . respected . . . praised . . . admired . . . you'll be one of us . . . ." ²⁷ Roark is puzzled by this outburst, but at this stage of his life is unable to understand the reason for his lack of comprehension of the principle involved.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 16-17. ²⁶Ibid., p. 571. ²⁷Ibid., p. 184.
Later, Keating answers Toohey's questions by affirming the fact that Roark is indifferent to money or admiration. To Roark, financial reward and popular approval are not the motives behind his work, only by-products.

A significant part of Howard Roark's makeup is his attitude toward the human body. Howard Roark loves beauty and suppleness in the human body, and he is intently aware of his own body. On the very first page of the novel Ayn Rand describes Roark as having "a body of long straight lines and angles, each curve broken into planes. He stood, rigid, his hands hanging at his sides, palms out. He felt his shoulder blades drawn tight together, the curve of his neck, and the weight of the blood in his hands. He felt the wind behind him, in the hollow of his spine." He enjoys the physical labor of the quarry and the tiredness which he feels after working there. Again he is aware of his body:

"He felt at times as if it were a match of wrestling between his muscles and the granite . . . He liked the emptiness of his body's exhaustion." A pose that Roark takes often is noticed by Wynand as they inspect Wynand's new home: "He noticed Roark's manner of stopping: his legs apart, his arms straight at his sides, his head lifted; an instinctive pose of confidence, of energy held under effortless control . . . ." Ayn Rand used her husband as a model for this early description of Roark,

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28Ibid., p. 7.  
29Ibid., p. 194.  
30Ibid., p. 543.
which also illustrates the fact that Roark's traits (such as confidence or control) can be seen even in a physical description: "... he had seen Roark moving with the soundless tension, the control, the precision of a cat; he had seen him relaxed, like a cat, in shapeless ease, as if his body held no single solid bone."  

Since she rejects a soul-body dichotomy, Ayn Rand presents this quality of control in both physical and mental terms; there is no dividing line between the two. Roark's control is the control of tension and energy. Austen Heller comments that Roark is "completely natural only when [he is] one inch from bursting into pieces."  

When Dominique tells Roark that she has married Peter Keating, Roark, with the utmost effort, controls himself; Dominique watches him, frightened because there is no outward sign of physical relief: "It would have been easy, if she had seen a man distorting his mouth to bite off sound, closing his fists and twisting them in defense... she did not see him doing this, yet she knew that this was being done, without the relief of a physical gesture."  

Other phrases such as "measured tension" and "a jolt of controlled breath" may be found throughout the novel.  

All people but his few intimate friends are mystified by and afraid of his control because they do not possess it nor understand it.  

Mrs. Keating, at whose rooming house Roark lived during his college

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31 Ibid., p. 27.  
32 Ibid., p. 245.  
33 Ibid., p. 367.
years, expects some emotion from him, for once, when he is expelled; she has always been apprehensive in his presence, because, for some reason unknown to her, she keeps expecting him to "swing out suddenly and smash her coffee tables, her Chinese vases, her framed photographs." Though that display of emotion never comes, Mrs. Keating's reason for fear is clear: Roark is always on the periphery of control. The Dean, too, thinks Roark's control under the circumstances of expulsion to be quite unnatural; "... he wished that Roark would display some emotion." Joel Sutton is disturbed when Roark does not protest the losing of his commission.

All people are uncomfortable, to some degree, in Roark's presence, as indicated by the words apprehensive and disturbed. Even when people pass him on the street, they instinctively turn and stare resentfully, without being able to explain why. Two of Henry Cameron's men who dislike Roark feel that "his presence had a strange quality: it made itself felt and yet it made them feel that he was not there; or perhaps that he was and they weren't." When Austen Heller hires Roark, he has a very similar reaction, though positive rather than negative: "He had the feeling that he was not hiring this man, but surrendering himself into his employment." When Roark enters

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34 Ibid., p. 10. 35 Ibid., p. 15. 36 Ibid., p. 263.
37 Ibid., p. 54. 38 Ibid., p. 120.
Dominique's country home in his dusty work clothes, she expects him to seem out of place; instead it is the room which is incongruous around him. \textsuperscript{39} In Roark's contacts with individuals or groups, he is immediately the dominant and controlling figure; those around him feel inadequate, uneasy, or painfully out of place.

One reason for people's discomfort in Roark's presence is that he is cold and aloof. The men in Cameron's office dislike Roark because "his face was closed like the door of a safety vault; things locked in safety vaults are valuable; men did not care to feel that. He was a cold, disquieting presence in the room . . . ." \textsuperscript{40} Austen Heller, who understands Roark better than most of his associates, says to Roark, "You're the coldest man I know. And I can't understand why--knowing that you're actually a fiend in your quiet sort of way--why I always feel when I see you, that you're the most life-giving person I've ever met." \textsuperscript{41} This apparent contradiction is cleared up in the passage describing Roark's relationships with his employees. "His staff loved him. They did not realize it and would have been shocked to apply such a term as love to their cold, inapproachable, inhuman boss . . . . they knew that he was none of these things, but they could not explain, neither what he was nor what they felt for him . . . . they did not praise him to

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid., p. 204.  
\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., p. 54.  
\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., p. 153.
outsiders . . . they knew only . . . that it was not loyalty to him, but to the best within themselves."  

His coldness and usual indifference is also evident in his conversations. Roark has two principal ways of conversing; he either listens attentively, answering in clipped phrases or monosyllables, or talks at length about serious matters--architecture or his personal values, with the first predominating. John Galt, however, has a relatively greater percent of passages of "long and serious talk." (Galt's radio speech covers sixty pages.) A random selection of a passage of conversation between Keating and Roark after the success of the Cosmo-Slotnick Building will be sufficient in illustrating the characteristics of Roark's dialogues. Roark's longest dialogue, except for one philosophical postulation and one careful explanation, is sixteen words. There are two with eleven words and one with ten. Almost all of the others are monosyllabic replies such as, "Congratulations," "No, I'm not overworking," "No, not either," or "Shut up!". After redrawing the plans for the Heller house, he walks out with Heller without uttering a word. His work is his method of communication. It is his defense at the Stoddard trial--ten pictures of the building. But at the Cortlandt trial he "opens up" for more than seven pages. His other prolific outpourings, occurring principally

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42 Ibid., p. 301.  
43 Ibid., pp. 183-84.
in his talks with Gail Wynand, indicate that Roark feels a philosophical compatibility with Wynand.

Roark's arrogance, pride, and contemptuousness also cause people to be uncertain about their attitudes toward him. In his blunt way, Mike tells Roark that most people feel that Roark is stuck-up and stubborn. Austen Heller tells him that he is too arrogant to boast. Ellsworth Toohey writes in his column that Roark has the "arrogance of . . . unbridled individualism." When asked by Wynand whether he has always enjoyed being Howard Roark, Roark smiles an amused, astonished, involuntarily contemptuous smile. His is not a conscious effort to be proud or arrogant or contemptuous; it is an involuntary act, a part of his nature.

It is always Roark without rather than against the world. Keating tries to convince him that "you have to live with people, you know . . . . You can join them or you can fight them. But you don't seem to be doing either." (Though Ayn Rand is decidedly anti-Christian, this attitude of Roark's is almost identical to the Christian "in the world but not of the world" philosophy.) But, just a few sentences later, Keating decides that it is Roark against the world: "You don't even have the wits to know you're a flop . . . a failure. And you stand there

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47Ibid., p. 514.  48Ibid., p. 104.
pronouncing judgment. You, against the whole country! You against everybody! Why should I listen to you? You can't frighten me. You can't touch me. I have the whole world with me!" This tirade reveals Keating's fear, not his absence of fear, a fear shared by those who do not understand Roark or his philosophy.

He is indeed always distinctly and irrevocably apart from others, and in most respects he is completely indifferent to their presence. A description early in the novel illustrates this point: "Howard Roark saw no one. For him, the streets were empty." In his relationship with Austen Heller there is also a total indifference; Heller knows that their friendship is a result of "Roark's fundamental indifference. In the deeper reality of Roark's existence there was no consciousness of Heller, no need for Heller, no appeal, no demand." Keating claims that, although Roark can not like anyone, he does not hate anyone, either; he just does not acknowledge people's existence. It is more frightening not to be thought of one way or the other than to be hated. As he is indifferent to people, so is he also indifferent to their ideas. In a discussion with Ellsworth Toohey about Roark, Keating concludes that while Roark may listen politely to others' ideas, it would be better if he would not, because "... when a man listens like that... you

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49 Ibid., p. 186.  
50 Ibid., p. 9.  
51 Ibid., p. 128.  
52 Ibid., p. 83.
know it hasn't made the slightest bit of difference to him. "\textsuperscript{53} In a passage in which Roark and Wynand discuss the stand of the Banner on the Stoddard Temple trial, Roark tells Wynand that in his attitude toward Wynand he is neither kind nor generous, simply indifferent, as he is toward all people. \textsuperscript{54}

This indifference is but another of the factors that make people uncomfortable in the presence of Howard Roark. Also he has "no sense of people."\textsuperscript{55} When Heller warns him that he must learn how to handle people, Roark replies that he was "born without some one particular sense."\textsuperscript{56} He adds that he does not like people who have to be handled. He confesses on another occasion that he does not know how to entreat; to him it is shameful. \textsuperscript{57} Although Keating says to Toohey that Roark has never had a friend anywhere, Roark does have a need and longing for his kind of people. He claims that he can tell his kind by something in their faces. \textsuperscript{58} Heller is surprised by this confession of need. Roark replies, "I need people to give me work . . . . Do you suppose I need them in some other way? In a closer, more personal way?"\textsuperscript{59} When Keating informs Roark that people do not want him, he is aghast that Roark is not in the least upset or even interested. \textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{53}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 231. \textsuperscript{54}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 520. \textsuperscript{55}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{56}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 152. \textsuperscript{57}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 88. \textsuperscript{58}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{59}\textsuperscript{Ibid.} \textsuperscript{60}\textsuperscript{Ibid.}, p. 164.
On at least two occasions Roark attempts to explain that he is only himself, not a part of anything or anyone else. 61 (He is certainly not a pantheist.) As he is conversing with Keating, he says, "I don't make comparisons. I never think of myself in relation to anyone else. I just refuse to measure myself as part of anything. I'm an utter egotist." 62 His assertion of himself as an egotist leads one immediately to the core of one of Roark's philosophies. When Roark begins working for Henry Cameron, Cameron calls him an "insufferable egotist." 63 Heller calls him a "self-centered monster." 64 Throughout the novel Roark has been trying to formulate in words the philosophy by which he has always lived. When he finally is able to articulate it, he says about egotism, "We haven't even got a word for the quality I mean--for the self-sufficiency of man's spirit. It's difficult to call it selfishness or egotism, [sic] the words have been perverted . . . ." 65 At the Cortlandt trial, the philosophical climax of the novel, Roark articulates most profoundly his ideal of egotism: "Men have been taught that the ego is the synonym of evil, and selflessness the ideal of virtue. But the creator is the egotist in the absolute sense, and the selfless man is the one who does not think, feel, judge, or act . . . . The egotist . . . is not the man who sacrifices others. He is the man who stands above the need of others.

61 Ibid., p. 575.  
62 Ibid.  
63 Ibid., p. 42.  
64 Ibid., p. 153.  
65 Ibid., p. 600.
in any manner. He does not function through them . . . . The first
right on earth is the right of the ego. Man's first duty is to himself.
His moral law is never to place his prime goal within the persons of
others."66

Howard Roark has lived by this creed, unswervingly. One does
not see him back down or relent at any time for any purpose. Alvah
Scarrett calls him "one of those fools you can't budge with love or money
or a sixteen-inch gun."67 More than once he has no job and almost no
funds. Everyone is incredulous when Roark turns down a commission
to build the Manhattan Bank Company because his drawings have been
slightly altered. In so doing, he explains, "That was the most selfish
thing you've ever seen a man do."68 He is saving himself, not giving
himself away. After this incident he takes a job in a quarry rather than
continue when he cannot uphold his standards. A natural corollary in
this proof is that Roark is a man of integrity. Kent Lansing defines
integrity as the "ability to stand by an idea."69 Wymand defines it as "the
impossible. The clean, consistent, reasonable, self-faithful, the all-of-
one-style."70 Keating tells Roark to "always be what people want you to
be. Then you've got them where you want them."71 Of course Roark is
indifferent to the idea. He is a man of integrity professionally as well

66Ibid., pp. 674-75.  67Ibid., p. 517.  68Ibid., p. 190.
69Ibid., p. 305.  70Ibid., p. 489.  71Ibid., p. 254.
as personally. In attempting to plead that his plan for the Manhattan Bank Company be accepted as he has drawn it, he says that "the good, the high and the noble on earth was only that which kept its integrity." 72 During the Cortlandt trial he speaks of a man's love for the integrity of his work, adding that his purpose in appearing at the trial is to "say that the integrity of a man's creative work is of greater importance than any charitable endeavor." 73

Often Ayn Rand explains a principle of human living in architectural terms, in order to show the integration of Roark's life and work. In talking with the Dean on the day of Roark's expulsion, Roark says that "a building is alive, like a man. Its integrity is to follow its own truth, its own single theme, and to serve its own single purpose." 74 As he leaves the interview, he reflects that "... he always looked for a central theme in buildings as he looked for a central impulse in men." In talking with Heller about his house, he philosophizes that "your house is made by its own needs. Those others are made by the need to impress. The determining motive of your house is in the house. The determining motive of the others is in the audience." 75 Roark is emphasizing the idea that a man's ideals will be evident even in his reasons for building a house and the type of house he chooses. However, when Roark speaks

72 Ibid., p. 189.  
73 Ibid., p. 678.  
74 Ibid., p. 16.  
75 Ibid., p. 129.
with another client, Mr. Mundy, who wants his home to be a replica of a Georgian-styled colonial mansion, he attempts to change Mundy's plans, because "it's a monument you want to build, but not to yourself. Not to your own life or your own achievement. To other people. To their supremacy over you." He refuses the commission. In refusing the Manhattan Bank Building commission, he uses the argument which he had thought about after leaving the Dean's office: "... an honest building, like an honest man, had to be of one piece and one faith; what constituted the life source, the idea in existing thing or creature, and why--if one smallest part committed treason to that idea--the thing or the creature was dead." Later in the novel, in a conversation with Wynand, Roark explains the idea more explicitly: "Most people build as they live--as a matter of routine... But a few understand that building is a great symbol. We live in our minds, and existence is the attempt to bring that life into physical reality... For the man who understands this, a house he owns is a statement of his life." To Howard Roark architecture is his life. He is often told that loving his work is his curse. Henry Cameron warns him that it will be his destruction: "You love your work... You love it, and they know it, and they know they have you." The they to whom he refers is the people

76 Ibid., p. 156.  
77 Ibid., p. 189.  
78 Ibid., pp. 509-10.  
79 Ibid., p. 56.
in the street, whose "substance . . . is hatred for any man who loves his work." The construction workers who are building Heller's house note that "that guy's in love with the thing. He can't keep his hands off." Austen Heller, as much as he admires Roark, cannot quite grasp the ecstasy which Roark feels when he is working, for he comments, "After all, it's only a building. It's not the combination of holy sacrament, Indian torture and sexual ecstasy that you seem to make of it." Even Keating the architect cannot comprehend it, for he says of Roark at the Stoddard trial, "He thinks you should take your shoes off and kneel, when you speak of architecture . . . . Why? It's a business like any other, isn't it? What's so damn sacred about it?" It is this very sacredness which enables Dominique to say to Roark, "I will hurt you through the only thing that can hurt you--through your work."

As another evidence of Ayn Rand's consistency, Roark does not merely speak about his ideals; he lives them. When he has a staff under him, his men often find him still at work in the morning when they arrive. His work at the drawing board is not magically easy--but the joy and the confidence and the skill are there to make the job easier. When Roark seizes the hybrid sketch of Heller's house, he quickly and self-assuredly alters it as he had originally drawn it: "... his hand flashed forward

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80 Ibid., p. 127.  
81 Ibid., p. 245.  
82 Ibid., p. 344.  
83 Ibid., p. 265.
and a pencil ripped across the drawing, slashing raw black lines over the untouchable water-color. Words such as slashed, ripped, and slashing and others (in a passage not quoted) such as blasted, rent, and hurled indicate the intensity and fury of his desire to re-create the harmony of the original drawing. During the reader’s first glimpse into the character of Howard Roark one sees him in his room, puzzling over a drawing that has troubled him; seeing the error, he seizes the paper and corrects it. Again, words like flung and slashed indicate his passionate and intense love for his work--his work done to perfection. When he is in a place he detests, working with buildings he knows are imperfect, he has to struggle "to choke the knowledge. He had to kill the vision. He had to obey and draw the lines as instructed." This is his supreme torture. Sometimes, when he works all night on Keating’s work and wishes to quit, he goes on because he knows that, however the buildings are later altered, they are better because he has worked on them.

As an architect as well as a man, Howard Roark is alone. He refuses to join the American Guild of Architects or to enter competitions or to collaborate on projects. The Dean informs Roark that "an architect is not an end in himself . . . . Co-operation is the key word to our modern world and to the profession of architecture in particular."

\[\text{84 Ibid., p. 119.} \quad \text{85 Ibid., p. 82.} \quad \text{86 Ibid., p. 18.}\]
He continues by saying that the architect's only purpose is to serve his clients. Howard Roark never subscribes to this theory. He replies, "I don't intend to build in order to have clients. I intend to have clients in order to build." His ideas do not change—"in spite of financial hardships he rejects a contract if it does not suit his standards, as in the case of Mr. Mundy. When Keating is trying to convince Roark to design Cortlandt, Roark says to him, "... I'm never concerned with my clients, only with their architectural requirements. I consider these as part of my building's theme and problem...".

The reader is never in doubt about the character of Howard Roark; he is not incomprehensible nor enigmatic. From the first Ayn Rand makes his character clear and simple—and consistent—with one exception. When he does Keating's work, he is working on buildings whose plans will later be modified, not unified as he is drawing them. The author states that he goes on because he knows that whatever happens later, the buildings will be better because he has worked on them. Does this not seem inconsistent with his rejection of any contract which does not meet his standards and with his dynamiting of Cortlandt Homes?

However, this attitude is the only apparent inconsistency.

Aside from this apparent contradiction, his major qualities of integrity, egotism, perfectionism, confidence, arrogance, pride,

87 Ibid., p. 571.
control, and indifference are both constant and clear. These attributes, however, cover a broad scope; one statement best expresses the essence of his character, a statement by Dominique Francon at the Stoddard trial: "Howard Roark built a temple to the human spirit. He saw man as strong, proud, clean, wise and fearless. He saw man as a heroic being . . . . He thought that exaltation comes from the consciousness of being guiltless, of seeing the truth and achieving it, of living up to one's highest possibility . . . . He thought that exaltation means joy and that joy is man's birthright." To Roark life is a serious business, not to be lived nor thought of lightly. Therefore to the average person (such as Kent Lansing's partner) he is not a regular fellow. This serious attitude is quite disturbing to Peter Keating, who thinks Roark is inhuman because he never relaxes: "Do you always have to have a purpose? Do you always have to be so damn serious? . . . Everything's important with you, everything's great, significant in some way, every minute, even when you keep still. Can't you ever be comfortable—and unimportant?" No, he cannot; he is like a wound-up spring, always on the verge of flying apart. His source of joy is being under this tension; designing and building his simple, austere, unified buildings, living up to his highest possibilities; realizing that he will always be capable of keeping that spring under control, no matter who or what may try to trigger its release.

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CHAPTER IV

HOWARD ROARK AS A TWENTIETH CENTURY
SOCIOLOGICAL HERO

An old Chinese proverb says that "... the great man is a public misfortune." Whether this statement be true or not, men have always had heroes. The types of figures which a civilization admires must often appear in the literature of the age, so that it becomes impossible as well as impractical to separate totally the real hero from the fictional one. However, accepting the theory that writers mirror the age, and the heroic images of their particular period or of a past period, one would expect to find significant and relevant an analysis of a fictional hero in the light of the values of his contemporary society.

In order to present a lucid analysis of Howard Roark in relief against twentieth-century American society, it is necessary first to set forth some of the past and present theories concerning the hero, the purpose being to give the reader some fundamental ideas as a basis for comparison and contrast with the philosophy of Ayn Rand and the embodiment of that philosophy in the person of Howard Roark. This background can be no more than a necessary summary, not a detailed and comprehensive résumé.
The first step in this summary is a definition of the hero and the abstraction of heroism. The material will be presented under the assumption that, as a general rule, the concept of the popular hero is an outgrowth of the spirit of the age: a person who might be a hero in one age might not necessarily be a hero in another period. This theory does not totally conflict, however, with Carlyle's hypothesis that heroes shape the world and its history. Certainly that allegation is justifiable; one may justify his theory by considering such men as Napoleon or Churchill or Alexander the Great. Nevertheless, the "popular climate" must also be considered. Moreover, one must consider a wide sampling of the major heroes of history or of a given era to discover what types have been most predominantly revered. Even before such a perusal, however, a definition of the word hero must be formulated, for there is little value in discussing the heroes of this or any age unless one first clarifies his terms.

Webster's Third International Dictionary lists four definitions of the hero, one of which deals with the mythological and religious signification of the word, another of which deals exclusively with literature. It is the third and fourth which are important to this study. One definition calls the hero "a person of distinguished valor or fortitude." The other states that the hero is "a central personage taking an admirable part in any remarkable action or event; hence, a person regarded as a model." The first concerns bravery and endurance
and has value as a definition. The second, though, hinges on the word admirable: an event or course admirable to one individual or to one period of time might not be admirable to another. Since a value judgment is involved in the definition, it has greater limitations than the first. The more complex definitions, representing the thinking of several scholars, are considerably more valuable in this study. One should be careful to note the considerable divergences in these definitions. In The Hero in History, Sidney Hook says that "whoever saves us is a hero..." He makes this position quite clear in another statement that in analyzing the historical hero, the question of whether a hero must be morally worthy must be ruled out as irrelevant (as in the case of Hitler). Of course, this idea renders the value judgment in the second dictionary definition meaningless. Another of Hook's definitions is that a hero is "an event-making individual who redetermined the course of history..." In an article in Twentieth Century, Harold Rosenberg defines the hero as one "who is able to come to life again after he is perished." He is not forgotten as time passes. Hilaire Belloc offers a three-fold definition, one of which is literary, the other two realistic in terms of the sociological hero: a hero is a

2 Ibid., p. 229.
3 Harold Rosenberg, "The Hero in History," Twentieth Century, CLII (November, 1952), 443.
figure acclaimed as a representative of his nation or his times, a
leader or doer of great deeds; a hero is a person who has suffered
immeasurably for a point of honor or morality. 4 Thomas Carlyle, in
On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History, does not present
a "pat" definition, but among other things he maintains that the hero is
life in all its potentialities. 5 From these interpretations by a few
noted or less-noted authorities, one may see that it would be
ridiculous to attempt to formulate succinctly what scholars have
asserted that the hero is; there are too many facets to the definition.
Perhaps the only idea that they hold in common is that a hero is one
who does, one who is active rather than passive.

The question of what heroism is, is another knotty problem.
Webster's Third International Dictionary defines heroism as implying
"superlative, often transcendent, courage, especially in fulfilling a
superhumanly high purpose where the odds are against one."
Emerson defines heroism in this manner: "Towards all . . . external
evil the man . . . assumes a warlike attitude, and affirms his ability
to cope singlehandedly with the infinite army of enemies. To this
military attitude of the soul we give the name of Heroism. 6 He states

4 Hilaire Belloc, "Heroes and Martyrs," Commonweal, XII (July 30, 1930), 341.
further that heroism has pride; it is the extreme of individual nature. These ideas are parallel to Ayn Rand's, but one statement of his concerning heroism which would incense her is that heroism feels and never reasons, and therefore is always right. The consensus of these definitions is that heroism is an attitude held by a person who has confidence in his ability to perform superhuman tasks.

What is the need for heroes and what is the function of heroes in society? Many modern thinkers agree that the need for heroes is a part of the human condition. Orrin E. Klapp calls the hero a jack to lift people above the level which they would be on without the model. Klapp holds too that society must have heroes to give relief from the pettiness of daily life. Though Leonard Bacon was speaking primarily of the literary hero, his statement is also pertinent to the hero in society: "The Hero is a necessity of our nature. We desire him as we desire beauty, and well-being and a reasonable universe. He's a kind of absolute and ultimate psychological fact." There is a feeling of apprehension among thinkers, however, that Americans believe that


they can have a healthy society without heroes. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., warns Americans not to be "complacent about our supposed capacity to get along without great men. If our society has lost its wish for heroes and its ability to produce them, it may well turn out to have lost everything else as well." He believes that a "free society cannot get along without heroes because they are the most vivid means of exhibiting the power of free men. The hero exposes to all mankind unsuspected possibilities of conception, unimaginined resources of strength."

What the hero is and what the hero does are factors not easily separated or delineated, but for simplicity they may be dealt with as distinct entities. There are as many theories about the function of the hero as there are about his nature. Joseph Campbell has expressed very concisely one school of thought about the function of the hero: "It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse." This idea parallels Carlyle's "great man" interpretation of history. Carlyle pictures the hero as one who spreads a shadow of his own likeness over sections of the world's history.

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12 Lehman, p. 56.
Ayn Rand enunciates this same idea through Ellsworth Toohey: "... 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 [technological achievement] would have been possible." From the context it is not possible to determine whether this philosophy is Ayn Rand's or not. Emerson believes that first, however, the hero usually labors in contradiction to the mainstream of mankind as an obedience to an internal impulse of character. Another function of the hero is to embody, as perfectly as possible, the true aspirations and fundamental desires of a particular people.

The view contrary to the one that heroes are important shapers of history is that heroes are not born, but are products of their time. They do not make history; rather they are the products of historic times. William James holds that the social environment selects the great from those who vary from the norm. If the variation is not useful to the era, the hero will be rejected or destroyed; otherwise he will be honored. Dixon Wecter echoes this idea in his statement that the hero "is selected because he seems to fit the mould desired by the

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masses, and, once his work is done, he is idealized to fill that mould even better." 17

The nature of man is an important consideration in the process of understanding the nature and function of the hero in society and of understanding Howard Roark in relation to his contemporaries. The doctrine of man has varied considerably since philosophers first began contemplating it. Both Plato and Aristotle subscribed to the Sophists' principle that man is the measure of all things, though they are not generally in accord. 18 Aristotle thought that a man's failure to demand due recognition is a mark of weakness and small-mindedness. 19 One who demands recognition without justification is a fool, whereas a proud man is one who justifiably thinks himself worthy of great things. Pride, the crown of the virtues, implies greatness. However, it is difficult to be truly great, for first one must have nobility and goodness. While Ayn Rand would endorse these ideas, particularly concerning the meaning of pride, she would not at all agree with Plato's views, for he made unselfishness the most important trait of the governing class. 20

17 Ibid., p. 6.


Most Roman writers followed this Platonic ideal. Cicero said that the great-souled man does not make personal glory the objective of his life and that self-interest is not the supreme good of man. Socrates viewed man as a moral being, capable of making a final moral decision. He taught that man has to discover and recognize in himself what is right and good; this right and good is universal. Though the Greeks had a customary morality, Socrates believed that the moral man is not he who wills and does the right, nor the innocent, but he who is conscious of his actions.

Skipping to the eighteenth century, one finds Rousseau stressing the obligation of the individual to himself. He says that man's first law is to provide for himself and his self-preservation; his first cares are those he owes to himself. Moreover, he is the sole judge of the proper means of preservation, thus becoming his own master.

The thinker who is perhaps the most important in this particular study is Nietzsche, whose philosophies Ayn Rand admires, with the exception of his rejection of reason. There are, though, several of his philosophies concerning the nature and function of man and the heroic man which deserve treatment as a basis for a discussion of Roark in view of past and present philosophies. In Thus Spake Zarathustra,

\[\text{Ibid., p. 41.}\]

\[\text{Hegel, p. 280.}\]

Nietzsche calls man a "polluted stream." While imploring man to pull himself out of the mire, he does admit some progress: "Ye have made your way from the worm to man, and much within you is still worm." He says resoundingly, "I teach you the Superman. Man is something that is to be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass man?" Like Emerson, he contends that "... your virtue is your self..." He calls on mankind to "surpass, ye higher men, the petty virtues, the petty policy, the sand-grain considerateness, the ant-hill trumpery, the pitiable comfortableness, the 'happiness of the greatest number'--!" Repeatedly he stresses the fact that the type of man most hated and feared by society is the creator: "The creator, hate they most, him who breaketh the tables and old values, the breaker, --him they call the law-breaker." Like Ayn Rand, he defines man as the valuator.

In contradiction to these theories of the nature and purpose of man is the Christian doctrine. Christians are unified in believing that the chief purpose of man is to know and love God. If man does so, then material possessions are superfluities to him. Though imperfect, each man is unique and capable of a relationship with his Creator. Born with a capacity for both good and evil, he has the potential for redemption and reconciliation with God.

24 Friedrich Nietzsche, <i>Thus Spake Zarathustra</i> (New York, 1928), p. 4.

25 Ibid., p. 96.  
26 Ibid., p. 310.  
27 Ibid., p. 228.
Moving to the present, one may find significant the controversial study of the changing American character in The Lonely Crowd. In this sociological work the authors set forth the theory that today there are three basic types of individuals. The determination of these types is through their motivational patterns. The first of these, the tradition-directed person, is controlled primarily by the culture and by "power relations among the various age and sex groups, the clans, castes, professions . . .".\textsuperscript{28} Though Riesman (one of the co-authors) makes several distinctions between various subspecies of the second type, the inner-directed, there is one common factor: "The source of direction for the individual is 'inner' in the sense that it is implanted early in life by the elders and directed toward generalized but nonetheless inescapably destined goals."\textsuperscript{29} The most prevalent type, however, is the third, the other-directed, whose " . . . contemporaries are the source of direction . . . either those known to him or those with whom he is indirectly acquainted, through friends and through the mass media."\textsuperscript{30} An important function of the latter part of this chapter will be to test Roark in the light of these three categories.

The historical role of the hero has changed considerably through the centuries. Wecter affirms that the earliest legendary heroes were


\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., p. 30.

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 37.
supermen--Achilles, Beowulf, and Theseus--surpassing others in bravery, loyalty, and strength. The earliest of England's national heroes, Alfred the Great, was a man of valor and wisdom, a worthy model for youth. 31 To the qualities of bravery, valor, and fearlessness the society of medieval feudalism added the qualities of gentleness and purity. Reginald L. Cook believes that society has always used the hero for the image of what it wants its men to be, discarding the heroes that become false or tiring as the image changes. 32 His theory might explain such phenomena as the exalting of the patriot in eighteenth-century America, the appearance of the respectable, "prim-and-proper" creatures of the Victorian era, or the prominence of the Renaissance explorers. Some hero types are constant rather than variable, however. In the United States the soldier and explorer have always been revered, as have the heroes of the legal profession, which has produced patriots and statesmen in large quantities.

What, then, are the hero types of the twentieth century? Modern theorists have written prolifically on the subject. In Heroes, Villains and Fools, Orrin Klapp categorizes heroes as winners, splendid performers, heroes of social acceptability, the independent spirits, and the group servants. 33 In an earlier article in the American Journal

33 Klapp, Heroes, Villains and Fools, p. 27.
of Sociology he lists the roles of the hero as the conquering hero, the "Cinderella," the clever hero, the delivering and avenging hero, the benefactor, and the martyr.\textsuperscript{34} One can see some obvious overlapping categories, such as group servants, which have been simply broken down into benefactors and martyrs; winners and conquering heroes; and splendid performers and Cinderellas. The point here, however, is not to argue the possible similarities or breakdowns, but to acquaint the reader with some of the major classifications so that he will understand the categorizing of Howard Roark.

Besides breaking down heroes into basic types, one may also list individual and specific qualities. Of those authors who have made such lists, Wecter's is one of the most complete and definitive. His typical hero is 1) self-respecting, decent, and honorable, with a sense of fair play, 2) firm and self-confident in leadership, 3) not necessarily a genius \cite{Klapp1966}[Great intelligence may even be a handicap], 4) without vanity or personal arrogance, 5) not effeminate, 6) one who has no arrogance of caste, 7) one who pays tribute to conformity, 8) chaste, loyal, honest, and humble, 9) a hard worker, tenacious and enterprising, 10) a man of good will, a good neighbor, 11) one who keeps touch with his birthplace and origins, 12) one with versatility and the ability to tinker, 13) one who does things better than ordinary people, but whose

\textsuperscript{34}Klapp, "The Creation of Popular Heroes," p. 136.
achievements are comprehensible to all, 14) one whose "labels"
conform to those of the group, 15) brave, honest, strong in character,
16) one who loves America more than himself, 17) one whose "ruling
passion" is a sense of duty. 35 Even this list is not a complete one,
and, since it is the work of a single man, it may be slanted as a
representative sampling. Following is an elaboration of those traits
most frequently mentioned by authorities in the field.

One attitude is that above all other qualities Americans admire
physical prowess; the muscles take precedence over the mind. 36 One
need only recall the glorification of the American athlete, particularly
the football player, in the twentieth-century. A related quality is
physical courage. In the nineteenth century Carlyle offered the theory
that the virtue which hero-worshipers exalt most highly is courage. 37
Twentieth-century writers such as Wecter subscribe to this belief, 38
and the majority of writers with whom this writer is acquainted reaffirm,
either explicitly or implicitly, that courage is one of the most important
qualities of the hero.

Perhaps the most interesting attitude of the American people
toward their heroes is their view of the heroes' mental capacities and

35 Wecter, pp. 482-87.

36 Leo Gurko, Heroes, Highbrows, and the Popular Mind

37 Lehman, p. 23. 38 Wecter, p. 486.
their success. After claiming that a reputation for genius may be harmful, Wecter says that the hero must be able to do things better than ordinary people, but that his achievements should be comprehensible to all. He adds that the hero must not claim infallibility. While the hero must be greater than average, he must still be agreeable to the average person. He continues that people subconsciously wish that their heroes should not always be resourceful, lucky, and invincible so that the masses may better identify with them. 39 Andrew Greeley goes so far as to say that Americans fear heroes because they are a reproach to their laziness and indifference. 40

There is disagreement among authorities as to whether heroes are or should be modest and humble or proud. Wecter claims that the hero most accepted by the American people is firm and self-confident, yet humble and devoid of arrogance. The October, 1906, issue of Outlook lists one quality of the first-rank hero as modesty. 41 These views on humility and modesty are contradicted by Klapp in his assertion that more than three times as many hero types stress egotistic achievement as stress group service. 42 Outlook and Wecter would


40Andrew M. Greeley, "The Vanishing Hero," America, CII (October 12, 1959), 352.

41"Heroes and Heroism," Outlook, LXXXIV (October 27, 1906), 444.

disagree with this statement, stressing the American hero's devotion
to duty and public service. 43

The quitter is never admired in any society; it follows then that
Persistency is an important quality. Emerson thought that persistency
is the hero's chief characteristic. 44 He says that all men have
wandering impulses and flashes of generosity. He advises the potential
hero to abide by his decisions and resist the desire to reconcile himself
with the world. The twentieth-century view of Wecter is expressed in
his listing of the qualities of tenacity and enterprise.

Of the status of the hero in the twentieth century, modern
thinkers are prolific and are in general accord. In Heroes, Villains
and Fools Klapp laments the "decline of the titan, the passing of the
saint, the age of celebrity gods . . . ." 45 To Robert Emmett Jones,
the age of heroes is past--man has resigned himself to his insignificance
in a world either unaware of or hostile to him. 46 Arthur M.
Schlesinger, Jr., echoes the conviction that "ours is an age without
heroes . . . ." 47 Greeley's article in America confirms this view:


44 Atkinson, p. 258.

45 Klapp, Heroes, Villains and Fools, p. 122.

46 Robert Emmett Jones, The Alienated Hero in Modern French

"One searches the national scene in vain for any trace of a hero."

Cook concludes that the status of the hero today has made ours the age of the vanished hero. The tragedy is that there is nothing that can fill the void.

Since the majority of modern thinkers contend that the image of the twentieth-century American hero has declined, they must also be concerned with the position which the hero now occupies. A popular consensus is that today's hero is closer to the anti-hero. This destroying of the hero, according to Klapp in the American Journal of Sociology, comes about when he is cast in unheroic roles. Robert Brustein, in an article titled "America's New Culture Hero," gives the reader his characterization of the current American hero: he is of medium height and lower-class birth; he is surly and discontented. With his right hand on his hip, he slouches or walks with a shuffling gait. He scratches often, slumps in chairs, and rarely smiles. This inarticulate hero has come to be popular through such heroes as movie star James Dean.

Television has also been a significant influence in the public's choices of heroes. Americans idolize TV stars as they once worshiped

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48 Greeley, p. 350.  
49 Cook, p. 10.  
matinee idols. According to Greeley, TV has made the extraordinary look ordinary. The hero is "reduced to the commonplace, the banal, the trivial . . . ." Heroism vanishes not in disgrace but in boredom. Children particularly are affected, for to them such daring adventurers as Superman, Sky King, and Tarzan are common enough to be thought of as run-of-the-mill. TV has also exalted foolish eccentrics such as Dobie Gillis, Comer Pyle, and Chester A. Riley; "weirdos" such as The Beverly Hillbillies, The Munsters, and The Addams Family. Marya Mannes claims that this elevation of jerks coincides with the moral breakdown occurring since World War II. Some of these jerk-types, "heroes" who confuse right and wrong, such as Bret and Bart Maverick, Mike Hammer, and James Bond (in fiction), Napoleon Solo, and Paladin, are more demoralizing than out-and-out villains. Marya Mannes concludes that "the jerks have had their day; it is time now for heroes."

Popular real-life heroes have lost their importance. Even a hero such as John Glenn has never had the devoted following that Charles Lindbergh had. The most popular baseball heroes, such as Mickey

52Greeley, p. 351.
54Klapp, Heroes, Villains and Fools, p. 145.
Mantle and Willie Mays, cannot compare in stature with Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, or Ty Cobb. Edison was a far more popular scientist than our present-day Jonas Salk will ever be. The spectacular, in other fields as well as science and sports, has become the everyday occurrence.

In the text of The Fountainhead Ayn Rand has several incidental comments to make, through her characters, about the hero in our society. These comments are important in that they reveal her attitude about the hero, and with that knowledge one is better able to understand the contrasting figure of Roark. At one point Keating asks Roark why he always has to have a purpose, why he always has to be so serious. He queries, "Don't you get tired of the heroic?"56 When Roark wants to know what is heroic about him, Keating replies, "It's what you make people feel around you . . . . The un-normal. The strain. When I'm with you--it's always like a choice. Between you--and the rest of the world." In a conversation between Alvah Scarlett of the Banner staff and Dominique, she raises the question, "Is it an inspiring sight to see a man commit a heroic gesture, and then learn that he goes to vaudeville shows for relaxation? Or to see a man who's painted a magnificent canvas--and learn that he spends his time sleeping with every slut he meets?"57 Through Dominique Ayn Rand

56Rand, The Fountainhead, p. 81.  
57Ibid., p. 136.
is saying that heroism must be constant, in private as well as in public; it must encompass all areas of one's life. In talking with Joel Sutton about a contract, Dominique comments that "it's very difficult to be a hero... and you don't have the figure for it." Ellsworth Toohey once tells Keating to "... sit up... You don't look like a hero, slumped that way." Through these two comments Ayn Rand indicates that a hero can never relax his heroic posture—he must always look heroic. At the Stoddard trial, in one of his tirades, Keating says, "Why do we have to be all keyed up? We're only human. We want to make a living. Why can't things be simple and easy? Why do we have to be some sort of God-damn heroes?" In defending Roark prior to the Cortlandt trial, Wynand writes in the Banner, "To what level of depravity has a society descended when it condemns a man because he is strong and great?... We have never made an effort to understand what is greatness in man and how to recognize it..." The Dean of Stanton, remembering a professor of Roark's saying that Roark was a great man, winces, because he does not approve of great men. Under Wynand's direction, the Banner prints articles on past heroes, in "a long, heroic line—each a man who stood alone, the [men] who defied men." To Keating before the Cortlandt trial, Toohey says, "Great men can't

58Ibid., p. 262.  
59Ibid., p. 314.  
60Ibid., p. 344.  
61Ibid., p. 616.  
62Ibid., p. 17.  
63Ibid., pp. 617-18.
be ruled. We don't want any great men. Don't deny the concept of greatness. Destroy it from within. The great is the rare, the difficult, the exceptional. Set up standards of achievement open to all, to the least, to the most inept—and you stop the impetus to effort in all men, great or small. "64

In the opinion of many thinkers, what Toohey advocates in the preceding statements is precisely what has happened in the twentieth century. America no longer has any great men. And, according to Ayn Rand's allusions in the novel, people do not want to be heroes; it is too difficult. Besides, most people either fear or misunderstand greatness; because of their fear or ignorance they condemn those who are great. In The Fountainhead Ayn Rand has defined greatness and heroism by creating Howard Roark.

Perhaps one reason why the American public does not idolize its heroes as much as even thirty years ago is that Americans are too sophisticated, or perhaps they mistrust heroes, fearing that they have unheroic angles which will emerge in time. 65 Whatever the reasons for the decline of the hero in twentieth-century America, however complex they may be, it is generally agreed that American hero types have changed and that the image of the hero has deteriorated greatly. In view of these significant departures from American tradition and from world

64Ibid., pp. 628-29.  
65Greeley, p. 351.
tradition, one may view with special interest the character of Howard Roark. The remainder of this chapter will be an analysis of Roark as part of the pattern of twentieth-century society, an attempt to define him in terms of today's heroes.

At the outset one must recall that Roark was unlike his contemporaries in the novel. In that period of the 1920's and 1930's he was a creator, an innovator in a world of followers and second-handers, by whom he was hated, feared, and misunderstood.

In terms of the initial definitions of the hero, Roark "fits," for he is a person of "valor and fortitude," able to defend and retain his ideals in a hostile environment. The second definition proves more interesting, however: "A central personage taking an admirable part in any remarkable action or event; hence, a person regarded as a model."

Certainly Roark's refusal of contracts and his dynamiting of the Cortlandt project would be remarkable actions, but the connecting word hence renders the second half useless, for Howard Roark was never regarded as a model because of his actions or philosophies--quite the contrary. Turning to Hook's idea that anyone who saves us is a hero, one may find that in the opinion of Ayn Rand Roark does "save" the world, or is at least one instrument in keeping civilization from utter ruin. Roark also fits Belloc's definition that a hero is a person who has suffered immeasurably for a point of honor or morality, but not his definition that a hero is a figure acclaimed as a representative of his nation or his times.
Rosenberg's definition that the hero is one who can come to life again after he has died is reflected in *The Fountainhead* by the comment of Steve Mallory, the sculptor, in a conversation with Dominique: "I often think that he's the only one of us who's achieved immortality. I don't mean in the sense of fame and I don't mean that he won't die some day. But he's living it . . . one can imagine him existing forever." 66 Since Ayn Rand preaches that people should live life to the fullest degree, one would expect that she would subscribe to Carlyle's belief that a hero is life in all its potentialities. Roark's contemporaries, however, do not consider him life in all its potentialities. Concerning heroism, Roark is assuredly within the bounds of Emerson's definition that the hero "... assumes a warlike attitude, and affirms his ability to cope singlehandedly with the infinite army of enemies."

From Ayn Rand's point of view, the function of the hero is parallel to Campbell's view that the creative hero is the one who will save society. But as Emerson stated, the hero is at first working at cross purposes with the world, as so many have been, and as Howard Roark certainly is. Gail Wynand expresses this observation to Howard in Wynand's penthouse: "Howard, everything you've done in your life is wrong according to the stated ideals of mankind. And here you are. And somehow it seems a huge joke on the whole world." 67

67 Ibid., p. 539.
would not agree with Outlook, however, that one function of the hero is to mirror as clearly as possible the fundamental characteristics of a people, for she does not project people as they are, but as they might be. Nor would she agree with William James's contention that the hero is a product of his social environment, nor with Wecter's idea that the hero is selected because he seems to fit the pattern which society admires, for obviously Roark is not a product of his environment. Ayn Rand is so unconcerned with Roark's social background that she barely mentions it; the only facts that the reader can glean are that Roark has made his own way by working in the building trades and that his father was a steel puddler who had died when Roark was quite young. 68 And from the generally negative reactions of those who knew him, one may conclude that Roark is clearly the opposite of the type most admired: the selfless second-hander.

Riesman's theory of the motivational patterns of the people in today's society is an unusual but captivating explanation for men's behavior patterns, and it is equally interesting to attempt to fit Roark into one of the three patterns. It is impossible for him to be tradition-directed, for that type is controlled by the culture or by power groups such as the clans, castes, or professions. Considering the aspect of the power of the profession, one will recall Roark's refusal to be

68 Ibid., p. 17.
associated with or dictated to by the architectural associations or any
single architect, employer, or client. Neither do the traditional
architectural models have any influence on Roark's architectural style,
except perhaps a negative one. When the Dean informs Roark that
architects can only "choose from the great masters," Roark replies,
"I don't give a damn what any or all of them think about architecture
... Why should I consider what their grandfathers thought of it?" Later in the conversation he says, "... I set my own standards. I
inherit nothing. I stand at the end of no tradition. I may, perhaps,
stand at the beginning of one."

The source of direction for the inner-directed is the elders. Since
Roark has no respect for the Dean nor for Guy Francon, one of his
employers, or any "cultural" elders, he cannot be classified as inner-
directed. Too, there is in the novel no mention of parents or other
adults who could have been early influences. The only person whom he
wishes to emulate is Henry Cameron, the once-prominent architect
whose professional integrity has caused him financial ruin.

As for the third type, the other-directed, whose contemporaries
determine the behavior patterns, Howard Roark is the very antithesis.
Peter Keating, however, is a perfect example of the other-directed
individual. Keating's mother explains the philosophy to him, saying,

69 Ibid., p. 15.
"Your life doesn't belong to you, Peter, if you're really aiming high
... It takes strength to deny yourself in order to win other people's
respect."

Roark indicates his antithetical views in his defense at the Cortlandt trial: "[The egotist] does not function through [others]. . . .
He is not concerned with them in any primary matter. Not in his aim,
not in the source of his energy."

Perhaps Riesman could add a new category of the personal-directed, one who is directed by his own values and moral standards.

Classifying Roark as a modern hero type is not so difficult, for using Klapp's divisions, one may call Roark a winner, an independent spirit, and, in one sense, a conquering hero. One may also consider Wecter's specific list of seventeen characteristics of the hero. Roark is self-respecting, though the term seems weak and insufficient in view of his pride and unswerving faith in himself. The word decent, according to the "American standard of morality," does not apply to Roark, for he commits fornication and dynamites a housing project. Howard Roark's sense of fair play does not match that of the "ordinary citizen," the best example being the dynamiting of the Cortlandt project. Roark is firm and self-confident in leadership, although he does not ask for followers. When the Dean asks him if he cares to make people think as he does, he says no; he does not propose to force his ideas on anyone. He feels

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70 Ibid., p. 147.  
71 Ibid., pp. 674-75.
assured that those who want him will come to him. As an employer he
demands the best from each worker, generally receiving it. However,
Howard Roark is a genius. He is arrogant, but not vain, for vanity is
a form of false pride, and Roark has no reason to be humble. He does
not, though, have any arrogance of caste; he does not accept or reject
a person on the basis of social position, but on the basis of personal
integrity. Such is the case in his friendship with Mike Donnigan. Roark
is certainly not effeminate and certainly does not pay tribute to
conformity in any sense that would undermine his values. He tells
Heller that "there are some rules I'm perfectly willing to obey. I'm
willing to wear the kind of clothes everybody wears, to eat the same
food and use the same subways. But there are some things which I can't
do their way . . . ."72 He is not chaste; he is loyal only to principles
and persons that he admires; he is honest with himself and others, though
contemporary society would publicly, at least, condemn his dishonesty
in doing Keating's drawings for him. But Roark is not a man of good
will, nor is he a good neighbor; he depends on no one and expects no one
to depend on him for any primary need. He is not one who keeps in touch
with his birthplace and origins. Although Roark may be versatile, he is
never pictured in that manner by Ayn Rand; he is shown with single-minded
devotion to architecture. Obviously one who does things better than

72 Ibid., p. 335.
other people, Roark, with his work, is not always understood by the
masses or by society's leaders. His labels partially conform to those
of the "in group"--he is white and Anglo-Saxon (presumably), but he is
not Protestant; in fact, he does not even believe in God, only in man.
He does not love America more than self--to him the self is more
important than any person or country. He never makes any allusions
to America or American ideals. His "ruling passion" is anything but
a sense of duty to others; he believes that man's first duty is to himself:
"His moral law is never to place his prime goal within the persons of
others."73

Concerning Americans' admiration of the physical above all else,
one may certainly find an excellent example in the person of Howard
Roark, for his body is beautiful, supple, and graceful, and Roark, proud
of his body, walks straight and tall. However, one must remember Ayn
Rand's rejection of the soul-body dichotomy. She would never agree
that physical strength or beauty should take precedence over the mental;
to her they are inseparable, but she does glorify reason, the essence of
the mental side of man. Along with other thinkers, Ayn Rand has given
her heroes courage, in Roark's case a quiet, stubborn, persistent
courage. After Heller hires him and he opens his own office, he is
visited first by Keating, who tells Roark how much he admires Roark's

73 Ibid., p. 675.
courage in taking a step with less experience and recognition in the profession than he, Keating, has had. At the Cortlandt trial Roark testifies that the courage of man comes from within his own spirit.

Keating's attitude toward Roark provides an excellent example of the reactions of people toward heroes. Keating is drawn to and at the same time fearful of him. Early in the novel when Keating is seeking advice from Roark, he departs satisfied because of the shabbiness of Roark's clothes, but he is also uneasy without knowing why. When Roark is working for Francon, Keating admits to himself feeling a sensual pleasure in giving orders to Roark; he is again feeling superior to a man who he knows is truly far superior to him. Once Keating admonishes Roark to come down to earth and be normal; he is afraid of Roark because Roark is not normal, because he has ideals. Though he begs Roark to stop being a fool so that he can become a success, Roark tells him that in truth Keating does not want him to be successful, that he fears Roark intensely. Later in the conversation Keating screams that Roark cannot frighten him, but his very manner implies the opposite. Keating is one of those average people who wish to find the heroes' "clay feet" so that they may know that heroes have faults like ordinary humans. Keating fears Roark because Roark's genius and persistency are a reproach to Keating's laziness and ineptitude.

74Ibid., p. 122.  75Ibid., p. 60.
76Ibid., p. 83.  77Ibid., p. 184.
A comparison of Roark with other modern heroes is quite revealing. Roark fits into the general description of Klapp in only two ways: he is of lower-class birth, and he smiles infrequently. He is too proud to be the slouching, slumping, or unshorn type which is currently in vogue. Popular TV characters seem petty and mean in relationship to Roark. The stupidity of Gomer Pyle and the naiveté of The Beverly Hillbillies are ridiculous in comparison with the nobility of Roark. Superficially, perhaps, some people might compare him to the Maverick brothers, saying that Roark confuses right and wrong, because his concept of right and wrong differs from the "standard morality." On closer observation, however, one will realize that Ayn Rand, through Roark, makes quite clear both Roark's standard of right and wrong and his constancy in following the right. At the time when Roark lived, heroes were still important to the American people, and the spectacular was still noticed; that explains the furor which erupts over Roark's actions. Today, however, when so many spectacular events are occurring, Roark might not achieve notoriety. He stands alone against the background of the twentieth-century concept of the hero. He fits but partially into any of the molds. Roark is only partially typical of the twentieth-century American hero when one considers particular traits such as honesty or tenacity or pride. Because specific modern heroes often appear petty and small in comparison with Roark, one may conclude that either Roark is
strikingly different from the typical American hero or that the theories about the American heroes are not a valid standard for judging those heroes.
CHAPTER V

HOWARD ROARK AS A TWENTIETH CENTURY
FICTIONAL HERO

Finding a snugly-fitting niche for Howard Roark, or any other hero, among twentieth-century fictional heroes is no easy task. Analyzing Roark himself is less difficult than attempting to isolate some clear patterns among the seeming infinitude of heroes in the modern novel. The attempt must be made by examining the characteristics of the fictional hero and the current social conditions which have produced him, by comparing him to past heroes, and by restating some of the premises of earlier novelists in constructing their heroes.

The dominant current in nineteenth-century literature was realism, and toward the end of the century came its offshoot, naturalism. The qualities of naturalism as a literary movement include a scientific or pseudo-scientific approach; a treatment of men as biological pawns; the use of literature as a documentation of society, often with technical details of a particular trade or occupation; a sometimes conscious suppression of the poetic elements, with a resulting flatness and

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1Donald Heiney, Recent American Literature (Great Neck, New York, 1958), pp. 15-16.
objectivity of style; a tendency to be concerned with the seamier aspects of life; occasional socialistic or radical political ideas. In the twentieth century, however, the certainties of literary types are wholly lacking. As Recent American Literature has pointed out,

There is no one single school, no one tendency, which can be said to typify the age. Never before in literary history have there been so many . . . movements existing simultaneously. This diversity is naturally only an aspect of a general diversity in social development: the twentieth century, having no one dominant social philosophy, cannot hope for a single and homogeneous kind of literature.

Two principal tendencies, however, may be distinguished. The first is the realistic-naturalistic school, begun in the nineteenth century by such writers as Balzac and Tolstoy. Today writers of this school tend to be politically militant and liberal in attitude. The second trend, the reaction to realism, rejects external objectivity, turning instead to psychological fiction, neo-romanticism, impressionism, and various other expressions of anti-realism. Writers of this school include Edith Wharton and Sherwood Anderson. The psychological novel is marked by analysis of the conflict between right and wrong within the hero and by intense analysis of internal motivation. The revival of romanticism is marked by a flamboyance of language, "a liking for fantastic, heroic, or superhuman characters, and an inclination toward fantastic plot material."
No matter what the age, stylistic trends, or philosophies, "all fiction is a comment upon the life and nature of man." The fate of man in modern fiction is essentially the same as the fate of man in modern society, for fiction is an instrument that mirrors, however imperfectly, the life of man. Fuller's contention is that while not every writer will be aware of a thesis about man as he writes, each author will have a premise about the nature of man which will be implicitly, if not explicitly, stated. A novelist's thesis may be implicit because it is stated negatively or subtly. The writer may criticize society through a hero who is the antithesis of his personal philosophy. Sean O'Faolain theorizes that the writer must work in the framework of his society; he cannot openly reject the philosophies held by the majority. If he opposes them, he must do so subtly. He does agree that novelists are consciously aware of and prepared to accept the fact that "certain current ideas expressed firmly and clearly what the majority of people meant by a good or wholesome life." While the novelist might not subscribe fully or even partially to these ideals, while he might criticize them or poke fun at them, he could not deny that they were the foundation of society. Whether accepting or rejecting the ideals of a particular culture, the writer holds up a mirror and says, "This is what life is like."

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As a result of this positive correlation between man in fiction and in life, much of the information concerning the nature of the hero, predominant hero types, and the function of the hero in society, which were presented in the previous chapter, is applicable to a study of the fictional hero.

To understand adequately the nature and function of the hero in fiction, one must also be aware of the presentation of mankind in the novel, for it is generally through the author's presentation of the hero, or central character, that one is able to ascertain his basic assumptions about man. In the Western tradition man has usually been presented as a being created with the potential for a relationship with his Creator, this relationship being one of love and knowledge. Each individual is unique and imperfect, but is capable of redemption and reconciliation with God, but not through works, for his pride may cause his downfall. He is portrayed with the potential for both good and evil.

Toward the last of the nineteenth century the "novel of man" first appeared. In this type of novel man is seen as biologically accidental, self-sufficient, inherently good, ever-progressing, self-perfecting, and morally responsible. According to Fuller, this attitude is now obsolete. Modern disillusionment resulting from the contemporary moral breakdown has precipitated a new attitude toward man. Man is seen as ironically

7 Fuller, p. 9.  
8 Ibid., p. 10.
and biologically accidental, inadequate, aimless, meaningless, isolated, inherently evil, thwarted, self-corrupting, and morally answerable to no one. His uniqueness is suppressed, and he inhabits a hostile universe created by irrational or malignant forces. One must realize that this type is not the only, but is the predominant, current hero type. If this type is the most common, one may conclude that this type represents current popular attitudes toward heroes, for if the idealized man is dishonest, crude, or pathetic, then by the author's implication all men are so.

In a paper delivered in October, 1964, at Texas Christian University, Betsy Colquitt discussed three dominant representations of man in literature of the past hundred years: the passive man, the hidden man, and the superficial man. The theme of passivity is exemplified in Hemingway's short story "A Clean Well-Lighted Place." The second type, the hidden or introspective man, while extremely conscious of self, is unable to communicate or to act. Extreme self-awareness causes the hero's downfall. Quentin Compson, for instance, is shown in his hidden self in The Sound and the Fury. The superficial man is the man who does not know himself or acts as if he does not. He is akin to Riesman's "other-directed personality." Sinclair Lewis's George Babbitt is an excellent example of the shallow, conforming

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9 Betsy Colquitt, "Contemporary Literature and What It Says to and about the Conditions of Modern Man" (October, 1964), p. 4.
American who never knows quite what is wrong with his life. As Betsy Colquitt clarifies, however, these three categories are not mutually exclusive; there are similarities as well as differences which might be considered.

The isolation of these three dominant types supports the theory that a major theme in literature today is the disintegration of man—a former theme being the disintegration of society. Indeed, the alienation of the self from society is perhaps the basic assumption of the modern novel. The resulting fear, anarchy, and hopelessness in many novels forbids the creation of even a symbolic hero to replace the traditional hero, the inner-directed man whose ideals opposed those of the world. Chester Eisinger states that the writers of the forties particularly were pre-occupied with the survival of individual identity; self-knowledge is the subject that they pursued most persistently. Contemporary heroes do not struggle just with the world—they struggle first with themselves. Though Ayn Rand's primary concern is also the survival of individual identity, her heroes are not involved in an intrapersonal struggle, because they know their own minds; they struggle

10 Fuller, p. 3.


against a world whose values, or lack of values, they reject. This inner assurance is apparent on the first page of The Fountainhead, as Roark thinks, "There were questions to be faced and a plan of action to be prepared... He knew also that he would not think, because everything was clear to him already, because the plan had been set long ago..."  

The question of the hero's purpose and function must also be considered. Reasons for having a protagonist vary. For Ayn Rand the hero epitomizes what life could be like. He must be a "man of the mind." Though the distinguishing feature of man is his mind, and in man's existence choice or decision is his glory or his burden, man in today's novels often seems incapable of or unwilling to make rational decisions. Early in the century John Palmer stated that the modern hero is in a novel not to make the story or take decisive steps, to influence the trend of events, or even to interest readers in him, but just so that things may happen to him. He is put into an environment to be saturated with it.

A supporting theory about the function of the hero is that "the modern method of constructing a novel is to put, in the dead center of a succession of irrelevant phenomena, the vacant but sensitized cerebrum of a blank young man, and to empty out before him vast quantities of

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15Fuller, p. 23.  
ideas and impressions about life as they may chance to occur to the author. "17 This type of character could not be called a hero in the ordinary sense. Because of the misapplication of the term hero, reviewers and critics frequently become confused when trying to describe a central character as a hero, for the hero is not always of great magnitude; he may be a little man representing the struggles, defeats, and minor triumphs of others like him—a Babbitt, for instance. 18

The pressures of the contemporary environment upon the writer are more complex and subtle than one might at first imagine. One must realize that the hero, as one ordinarily uses the term and the idea, is a social creation, representing a socially approved norm. 19 He must also realize that anyone who rebels against the ideals of society in real life or in fiction must "find himself not only in conflict with his community but in conflict with his origins and probably with his own nature." 20 This realization would mean nothing to Ayn Rand, who has consciously and deliberately articulated a philosophy which denies almost every popular political and social philosophy of today.

17 Ibid.
18 Smith, p. 30.
20 O'Faolain, p. xiii.
Because of the uncertainty and variability of modern life, the heroes of our society's novels are likely to be both uncertain and varied. There are no accepted norms of feeling or conduct to which the individual may appeal for security. 21 In a fluctuating, unstable society, man attempts to find alternate modes of life as new modes of behavior congeal. "Chance and absurdity rule human action. The hero recognizes this, and knows that reality is but another name for chaos." In a world dominated by chance and error, even heroes cannot attain complete knowledge. The hero acts or is acted upon, but his perception of his situation remains limited and relative. Socrates once said, "We do not live as we know how." 22 He erroneously thought that if men knew the right, they would automatically do it. In reality, man (and the novel-hero) knows a limited good, but cannot measure up even to that. Because the hero never attains full knowledge, he cannot be considered a classical tragic figure, 23 whom Longley defines as an essentially noble figure who does evil or despicable acts but who engages the loyalty and sympathy of the reader. 24 It must be remembered that the tragic hero is aware of his deeds and their consequences. The readers of Ayn Rand's novels would come to the conclusion, however, that her heroes

21 Litz, p. 321.  
22 Fuller, p. 65.  
23 Litz, p. 330.  
24 John Lewis Longley, Jr., The Tragic Mask (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1963), p. 139.
do perceive a perfect moral code and are able to attain perfection; her heroes have no flaws.

Many critics and practitioners of the modern novel, then, stand in opposition to the basic literary and philosophical premises of Ayn Rand. Many would deny her black-and-white theory of character. Garland, for instance, wrote that "human motives are forever mixed; irony and contradiction prevail. This is reflected in the situation of the protagonist who cuts across the lines of good and evil. There are no pure villains in fiction, no blameless heroes." Ayn Rand finds it degrading for man to worship a god of perfection whom man can never equal; she advocates man's worship of the human spirit. Roark articulates this philosophy in explaining the statue for the Temple of the Human Spirit to Mallory: the figure must be "the heroic in man. The aspiration and the fulfillment, both. Uplifted in its quest--and uplifting by its own essence. Seeking God--and finding itself. Showing that there is no higher reach beyond its own form." Fuller, though, has found that in man's worship of the creature instead of the Creator one finds the "source of the ugliest, most loveless and despairing, views of modern writing."

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27 Fuller, p. 19.
Many, however, concur with Ayn Rand in other basic assumptions. Along with other writers of the nineteen-forties such as Robert Penn Warren and Carson McCullers, Ayn Rand rejected the theme of social issues and turned to moral-ethical problems. This new brand of fiction rejected public experience. The writers became alienated from society and relied on their private vision, from which they wove the substance of their fiction.

Though Hamlin Garland wrote in the latter part of the nineteenth century, his interpretation of the future role of the hero is surprisingly accurate. He once predicted that "if the past was the history of a few titled personalities riding high on obscure waves of nameless, suffering humanity, the future will be the day of high average personality, the abolition of all privilege . . . . And fiction will celebrate this life." Richard Chase echoes Garland's assumption: "If the past celebrated lust and greed and love of power, the future will celebrate continence and humility and altruism." He said that "the fiction of the past dealt largely with types, often with abstractions or caricatures. It studied men in heroic attitudes. It concerned itself mainly with love and war. It did not study men intimately except in vicious or criminal moods." If one correctly identifies current trends in hero types, he could say that these preceding predictions were correct. Real people, not types

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28 Eisinger, p. 4.  
29 Litz, p. 28.
or caricatures, are predominant—Hemingway's Santiago, Harper Lee’s Scout. Men are studied intimately in every imaginable type of situation—Arrowsmith in bacteriological research, Holden Caulfield inside himself on a rebellious weekend.

The day of the common man has arrived, then, and with it the common literary hero. Writing in 1903, Mrs. L. H. Harris observed that thinking of modern heroes is like recalling faces in a crowd.Heroes are "just like everyone else"—they do not stand out. They are more like ordinary mortals and less like the gods of mythology. They appeal to our wit and experience more than to our imagination. According to Eugène Véron, however, the truth is that Americans no longer care for god-like heroes; they care for men.

Finding no satisfactory social pattern for living in their social environment, the novelists of the twenties naturally failed to see in that environment a social hero who adequately symbolized the good life. They replaced the traditional hero with what is now termed the anti-hero. The anti-hero is one who is trying to define himself, to find his own sanctions. He is groping, puzzled, cross, and frustrated. Using these definitions, one cannot classify Roark as an anti-hero, for he is confident, not puzzled; serene, not cross; his frustration is not intense

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30 Mrs. L. H. Harris, "Heroes and Heroines in Recent Fiction," Independent, LV (September 3, 1903), 2112.

31 Litz, p. 29.

32 O'Faolain, p. xxix.
enough to cause any mental imbalance. In a Saturday Review of Literature article, Donald Barr defines the anti-hero as one whom the reader favors, but one who is at odds with the accepted standards of society, with society itself, and with himself. According to this definition, Roark is in one sense an anti-hero: he is at odds with the accepted standards of society. Unlike many protagonists, he is not at odds with himself. Once Keating muses that one either has to be with the world or against it, but that Roark seems to be neither. This is true, for Roark is not fighting the world, but the standards of the world. William James Smith brands the Randian hero as a new and formidable variety of anti-hero. He states that no one else has created a character of this type. He does concede, however, that the world would be a richer place for a few more heroes like John Galt.

Ayn Rand's personal opinion about the hero and anti-hero is discernible in several of her statements within the text of the novel. In a description of Toohey's background and tastes, she mentions that he prefers character study to action in novels, and that he prefers novels without a plot and, most important, without a hero. Since he

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35 William James Smith, p. 149.

36 Rand, The Fountainhead, p. 293.
represents the antithesis of her philosophy, one may conclude that Ayn Rand prefers the opposite: novels with action, plot, and, most important, with heroes.

The modern heroes, or anti-heroes, are strange creatures indeed. The Independent calls them pasty creatures who go about without a "rag to conceal their mutilated souls and lower natures."

They have no "overcoming spirit." The typical hero is a weakling who can escape his anxiety only through compulsion. He is often narcissistic, communicating infrequently and superficially with others. Smith says that the "hero" of the thirties was a "spindly-legged oaf who gets beaten up by "company finks" or picks cranberries and wonders about the meaning of life.

The writers of the twentieth century did not invent the anti-hero or the novel without a hero. Even the earliest novelists used the unheroic hero--Tom Jones, for instance, is the prototype of the roguish hero in the English novel. In the nineteenth century Thackeray subtitled his Vanity Fair "A Novel without a Hero." The rogues such as Tom Jones, Rob Roy, and Huck Finn belong to just one of several types

37 "The Backsliding of Heroes and Heroines, " The Independent, LXI (November 22, 1906), 1242.


39 William James Smith, p. 149.
of anti-heroes, another being the "lovable bum." The implications of books like *Tortilla Flat*, which tell of bums and other shiftless creatures, is that if one does not like these people, he is a self-righteous bigot who refuses to love the "common clay of humanity."\(^{40}\) The "lovable bum" syndrome has been replaced today, though, by the "genial rapist, the jolly slasher, the fun-loving dope pusher."

Aside from the bums and rogues who comprise major anti-heroic types, one may recall that there are a few truly heroic figures in past and present fiction, such as Jean Valjean, Sidney Carton, and Martin Arrowsmith. In trying to list twentieth-century fictional heroes, however, one finds it extremely difficult to find even one wholly heroic figure created by a major novelist.

With weaklings and degenerates as heroes and pessimists as creators, one might wonder whether there is a shred of hope for the hero-figure. Eisinger believes that there is. He sees in the fiction of the forties an attempt to record the survival of the self, in spite of the conspiracy of history and society to destroy it.\(^{41}\) According to an article in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, "the hero will return again; his shadow is now approaching over the horizon."\(^{42}\) Sean O'Faolain, however, says that the hero can return to literature only when certainty returns to

\(^{40}\) Fuller, p. 33.  
\(^{41}\) Eisinger, p. 20.  
\(^{42}\) H. Smith, p. 31.
men in general. The present prospect for certainty among men and within men is not at all bright.

With the diversity and complexity of life in today's world, and specifically in America, the task of discovering some three or four major hero types in twentieth-century fiction is impractical, for almost everyone who has made such an effort has produced different conclusions, sometimes widely divergent ones. According to Ihab H. Hassan, the controlling image of recent American fiction is the image of the hero, or the anti-hero. Hassan lists the rebel-victim as the principal type of hero-figure, subdividing this type into ten categories, among which are the lonely youth (The Catcher in the Rye), the grotesque (The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter), the underdog (From Here to Eternity), and the comic picaro (Breakfast at Tiffany's). This rebel-victim is an actor, but also a sufferer leaning to nihilism, frenzied self-affirmation, and psychopathy on the one hand; martyrdom, immolation, and defeat on the other. The "ethic" of this new hero is defined by his actions and even more by his passions. According to Hassan, the type is "one of the last exemplars of a vanishing conception of man. This creature, half-demonic and half-quizotic, still placates darkness with the light of human pride, agony, or derision." In this respect he is a good deal like the ancient heroes and scapegoats of mythology.

43 O'Faolain, p. xlii.
As it is impossible, therefore, as well as impractical to isolate two or three hero types which can properly be called dominant and representative of twentieth-century fiction, a brief account of the hero types of some of the major novelists of this century will have to serve as the basis of evaluating Roark.

Dreiser strives to remain completely objective in his novels, and he causes both saints and sinners to suffer. But his characterization is a chief weak point in his writing; his heroes often commit sudden, unmotivated acts, and their successes are often lacking in credibility. Convinced that the universe is illogical, Dreiser consequently presents plots in which virtue is punished and vice rewarded without any apparent moral foundation. In Sister Carrie, for instance, Dreiser pronounces no moral judgments; neither are there any heroes or villains in the novel. Carrie and her lover, Hurstwood, fall through lack of character and the influence of a corrupt capitalistic society.

Hugh Walpole once called Babbitt "... an ugly book, dealing with ugly people...." Whether this statement is justified or not, Lewis's novel and its hero have become an important symbol and a common household word. Babbitt is the archetype not only of the middle-class businessman but of the middle-class American, who is "devoted

45Heiney, p. 88.


to push and progress, to good fellowship... to playing safe in religion and preserving a religious respect for the latest inventions in industry. "48

He is an other-directed man who is motivated by what people will think about him, not by his own feelings and aspirations. "The salient thing about him... is his complete lack of originality--and that is precisely the salient mark of every American of his class. What he feels and thinks is what it is currently proper to feel and think. "49 Lewis exposes "typical Americans" as being "somewhat stupid, feeble in brain and will, stuffed with conceit of their own excellence... "50 They are incapable of having any real interpersonal relations; having no substance, they are incapable of being genuine--they are hollow shells, not individuals. 51 While Babbitt is "a hero sprung from the loins of America, "52 Lewis did try to find a real hero instead of a butt, succeeding in Arrowsmith, whose hero Martin Arrowsmith is a rebel and a "perverse outlandish scientist who refuses to worship Mumbo Jumbo... ."

Thomas Wolfe's heroes present quite a contrast to those of Lewis. Wolfe is unusual among twentieth-century writers. A writer of amazing creativity and ego, he is intensely personal and subjective. 53 His two major heroes, Cant and Webber, are Titans: they have huge frames, they do everything on a grand scale, and they "rage furiously at the banality

48 Ibid., p. 103. 49 Ibid., p. 22. 50 Ibid., p. 64.

51 Ibid., p. 74. 52 Ibid., p. 66. 53 Heiney, p. 165.
and indifference" around them. Logically, then, a major theme in Wolfe's novels is the "cult of genius." Wolfe pictures the genius as moody, unpredictable, often violent, and unhappy. He is misunderstood and therefore persecuted by less able men. Loving man "in the abstract," he is unable to cultivate the friendship of individuals. The "bestiality, the materialism, and the shallowness of ordinary men fill him with horror." Wolfe's heroes are at last destroyed by a "complacent and unfeeling society."

The Faulkner hero is often abnormal, or cruel and degenerate. Faulkner's attitude toward man is explainable in part by the fact that Faulkner frequently makes his characters incapable of understanding fully the meaning of the events in which they participate. This inability may be considered proof of Faulkner's belief that man is helpless in the face of evil. "Faulkner's characters, although diverse, tend to fall into a set of clearly defined groups." Caddy Compson is representative of the rebellious and nymphomaniacal young girls from aristocratic backgrounds. Lena Grove is one of the "half-witted country girls, easily exploited by town slickers." Quentin Compson typifies the moody, rebellious younger sons. Joe Christmas is distinct in the

54Ibid., p. 208.


strength of his pride, ruthlessness, arrogance, and cold self-sufficiency. 57

The Hemingway heroes are "lifelike in proportion as they are projections of his own personality." 58 The situations which are appealing to Hemingway are chiefly physical: warfare, sports, love, and sensory pleasures. "Even the finer sensations in Hemingway... seem to be essentially physical reactions; the hero feels them with his body rather than his mind, and generally manages to make a response to them through some sort of bodily reaction." Hemingway's concept of character is hard--his characters are cynical and laconic, never gushy. Hemingway the stoic admires people who can accept their pain or hardship without whining. Hemingway profoundly respects the traditional, unspoken code which has been handed down for generations, such as the rules of hunting. Romero in The Sun Also Rises is admired because he is a man of tradition (as a bullfighter) and therefore a man of character. He also stands up stoically to a fight with Cohn, one of Brett Ashley's admirers. The theme of To Have and Have Not reveals another of Hemingway's attitudes toward man: "that man cannot stand alone, that only in union with other men can he find the strength to stand up to evil." Harry, the hero, is a moral coward, but nevertheless is no villain; rather he is unwise, learning his lessons too late.

57 Longley, p. 197. 58 Heiney, p. 149.
Steinbeck admires everything that is materially unsuccessful:
"the have-nots, the misfits, the racial minorities . . . the simple, the poor, and the oppressed."59 His heroes are for the most part rural heroes who are essentially noble in spite of their illiteracy and usual weak-mindedness. He has not presented realistic characters, for as country people they are glorified and poetized romantically. Steinbeck presents these rural folk-heroes sympathetically; when they do wrong, it is generally through accident or stupidity.

According to Carl Van Doren, "... a deeply moving literature . . . must have heroes and villains in more than average proportions . . . ."60 Repeatedly as one peruses the reviews and analyses of modern literature, he encounters the statement that the leading character is not a hero at all, but a victim, or a villain, or an anti-hero, one who simply "fills in" the usual place of the hero. 61 This failure among major novelists to produce clearly defined heroes—and villains—has been rectified by Ayn Rand. Her revolt against non-heroes is a conscious and an articulate one, for the literature with which she was acquainted did not satisfy her, particularly the kinds of heroes presented. To her, writers have seen man as a mindless cripple,

59 Ibid., p. 227.


61 Colquitt, p. 6.
inhabiting garbage cans. Determined to rescue man from the trash barrels and place him in more favorable circumstances, she has accomplished this objective in The Fountainhead.

In his review of the book, N. L. Rothman says of Roark, "Roark is like the sun. It is difficult enough to see him, but to see anybody else afterward is impossible." The blinding light of his genius and integrity is hard on the eyes, and when one looks away, his eyes are still affected by that radiance. Is this man a real hero, or does he merely occupy the usual position of the hero? William James Smith has denied the heroic in Roark by saying that "for a terrible moment it looked as though we were going to have a new and formidable variety of anti-hero as exemplified in the work of Miss Ayn Rand." According to the dictionary definition, he is a hero—a leading character and a performer of mighty deeds. From a strictly literary standpoint, John Lewis Longley defines the hero as "one who, however twisted and mistaken or despicable his actions may be, performs those actions in a commitment to something more than simple aggrandizement, something, perhaps, that is bigger and better than he is." The phrase "however twisted

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63 Rothman, p. 30.
64 William James Smith, p. 149.
65 Longley, p. 139.
and mistaken or despicable" allows leeway for those critics who disagree violently with the premises of Howard Roark's life. Yet according to this same writer's definition, Roark may also be classified as a villain, for Longley defines the villain as one full of the sickness of self, committed to nothing beyond himself, often unable to apprehend greatness or magnitude. According to his own views, Roark is full of self, but that fullness is not a sickness; to him its antithesis, selflessness, is the sickness. He testifies at the Cortlandt trial that the "world is perishing from an orgy of self-sacrificing."66 While committed to nothing but himself (for self is the highest good), Roark is not unable to recognize greatness, at least as he defines it, for he is the epitome of greatness, and he is able to recognize that same greatness in others.

Before one can grasp the essence of Howard Roark's character, he must first be acquainted with the literary tradition from which he sprang. In the introduction Branden's analysis of Ayn Rand as a romantic realist is quoted. After looking at definitions of each of these terms, one will conclude that she is not wholly either of these, nor is she predominantly naturalistic in tone. According to Mark Schorer's definition of realism, "... a faithful depiction of the details of ordinary life and a willingness to come to grips with all that is not genteel in experience,"67 Ayn Rand is not a realist at all, for any "faithful

depiction" she makes is not of ordinary life, nor does she dwell on
details, but on significant ideas and events in her heroes' lives. She is
a realist in the sense that she deals with contemporary issues in
contemporary settings, but her characters are idealized; she does not
picture people as they are. Considering the reaction to realism, one
notes that her style is romantic in its lush flamboyance of language and
her presentation of heroic and superhuman characters and the inclination
toward fantastic plots. However, her novels are not marked by any
analyses of conflicts between right and wrong within the hero, for Roark
has no inner conflicts. Neither does she analyze Roark's internal
motivation; she merely presents it as a statement of his code of ethics.

Ayn Rand is less a naturalist than a realist or romanticist. Her
heroes are not biological pawns but men of free will and self-determination.
She is concerned with the nobler rather than the seamier aspects of life.
Her style has been criticized for its over-poetic style rather than the
reverse. In fact, the only element of naturalism which can be
credited to Ayn Rand is her scientific documentation of the mechanics of
architecture. One may conclude, then, that it is impossible to find a
convenient groove in which to place Ayn Rand; she is a curious and
unique combination of the three predominant literary approaches.

68 Pruette, p. 7.
Unlike those writers in the mainstream of Western tradition, Ayn Rand has not presented Roark as an imperfect creature capable of reconciliation with God. Only once in the novel does Roark ever admit to a mistake—he realizes that he should not have done Keating's work for him, not because it was underhanded, however, but because it violated Roark's own personal code. Otherwise Roark is an "all good" character, with the potential for but not the inclination toward evil behavior.

The obsolete attitude seen in the "novel of man" comes very close to Ayn Rand's attitude in her presentation of Roark, who preaches and practices the doctrine of the self-sufficiency of the human spirit. Through Roark, man is presented as inherently good, not inherently evil. Man is self-perfecting; since there is no God and no reason for one, man must and does rely on himself to be the model of perfection, the standard of judgment. In For the New Intellectual Ayn Rand correctly, one would think, diagnoses the plight of modern man as a lack of individual moral responsibility. Her prescription, however, is not widely accepted; her standard of morality which Roark typifies is too radical and idealistic a code for people to accept.

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In her unpublished paper, Betsy Colquitt presents three predominant types of characters which have appeared in the fiction of the last hundred years. Even the casual observer will immediately discover that Howard Roark is only remotely like any of these three characters. He is passive in a very curious sense: he does not resist the world by any methods which the world comprehends. Thus to those around him Roark is practicing passive resistance, while in actuality he is rejecting the world's standards by refusing to accept them.

The term passive as Betsy Colquitt employs it suggests unwillingness to enter the drama of life, "... expending no action or energy in work..." The passive man, having nihilistic preferences, is "estranged, alienated, lonely, and isolated."

The hidden man is an unusual creature who is finally "damned by knowing only the reality of his terrifying self." While Roark is like this type in his consciousness of self, there is an important difference: Roark's knowledge is perceptive; the hidden man's knowledge is that which he can neither control or understand.

The superficial man is more greatly divergent from Roark than the others: Roark is antithetical to the other-directed shells of men who bear the label superficial. Unlike Roark, this man does not know himself, nor does he have any hope of future awareness.

71Colquitt, p. 5.
All three of these types are alienated in one sense or another: alienated from self-understanding, from society, from reality, or from meaningful relationships with other individuals. Roark's alienation is of a different nature: it is wilful, purposeful, and consistent with his character. He alienates himself from society because he despises its standards; he does not become a hermit, however; he continues to live in the world, but by a different set of standards. He must continue to have associations with people so that he can have contracts. His ethical standard causes his immediate alienation from all individuals whose views do not concur with his (that eliminates almost everyone).

The day of the king, the nobleman, and the aristocrat has passed. In the place of these former heroes is the common man. Today's fictional hero could be anybody; his role is to typify and represent his age, not to serve as a model or standard to spur men to greater and nobler deeds. In the midst of this tradition stands Howard Roark, who is not like everyone else, who is meant to serve as a pattern for others to follow.

While Dreiser's heroes often act without recognizable motivation, Roark never acts without clearly understandable motivation. This motivation, however, is not always discernible to the reader at the time when the act is committed or the words spoken. In the first place, the author does not always prepare the reader explicitly for Roark's actions. He is almost totally unprepared for Roark's "defense" of showing
photographs at the Stoddard trial; though he is anticipating some dramatic action, the reader does not expect the dynamiting of Cortlandt Homes. Roark's statements to the Dean early in the novel are shocking because the reader has never heard anyone reason in that fashion; for some time the reader will be shocked or confused at Roark's actions and reactions; then when he begins to understand Roark's "way," he may begin to even anticipate his actions.

As a naturalist Dreiser pronounces no moral judgments; he places characters in situations and then stands objectively by to observe their actions. Sometimes vice is rewarded and virtue punished. To Ayn Rand, the universe just does not operate in that manner. Roark is serenely confident that eventually his way—the way of virtue—will be triumphant. The novel could end in no other way but triumph for Roark and his soul-mates; any other conclusion would be a contradiction of Ayn Rand's and Roark's philosophy of the final triumph of morality.

Roark and Lewis's Babbitt could hardly be more different. According to Roark's theory of people, Babbitt is a second-hander, a parasite "fed by the minds of others." His basic need is "to secure his ties with other men. . . . He places relations first. He declares that man exists in order to serve others." Babbitt lacks originality; Roark is the innovator, the creator. Lewis's "typical American," who is

72 Rand, The Fountainhead, p. 673.
stupid and weak-minded, stands in sharp contrast to Roark the genius. Arrowsmith and Roark have a great deal more in common; the chief difference lies in the nature of their struggles. Arrowsmith goes through a series of personal conflicts between his idealistic desire for pure research and his practical desire for success. As Henry Cameron is Roark's spiritual adviser, so is Max Gottlieb Arrowsmith's. Through Gottlieb's guidance Arrowsmith eventually achieves peace of mind. Roark has never had this personal struggle to contend with, and he needs no one to help him solve his problems.

There is an interesting contrast between Wolfe's and Ayn Rand's presentation of the genius. While Wolfe's heroes "rage furiously" at the mediocrity and indifference in their world, Howard Roark patiently and passively lives in opposition to the standards which he abhors. The four adjectives used earlier to describe the Wolfian hero—moody, unpredictable, violent, unhappy—cannot be used at all to describe Roark. Roark is never moody; no matter what the circumstance, he maintains an evenness of temper and levelness of tone. Roark is always predictable, and he never steps out of character. However, he is predictable only after the reader is oriented enough to anticipate Roark's behavior patterns. Like most geniuses, both Gant and Roark are misunderstood and scorned. But while Gant is ultimately destroyed by his society, Roark overcomes the banality of his environment. Although both heroes love man in the
abstract, neither has many individual friends. Roark's small circle of friends is due to his extreme discrimination in choosing friends. On the whole Roark the "strong silent" hero is the antithesis of the raucous and voracious Wolfian hero.

William Faulkner and Ayn Rand are at the two extremes of thinking in regard to the question of evil: Faulkner believes that man is unable to overcome it; Ayn Rand believes that by character and will man may undoubtedly overcome it. The characters of both writers are natural outgrowths of these attitudes. Faulkner's characters are usually inept in one or more areas of life: they may be sexual deviates, moral cowards, or mental incompetents, while the Randian heroes are perfect. To Faulkner, man is not always capable of understanding himself. Roark functions properly only because he does understand himself and those who are his philosophical enemies.

Like Hemingway's heroes, Ayn Rand's are projections of her personality. Hemingway's heroes find their chief pleasures in physical activity, and Roark finds work, whether physical or mental, to be a source of pleasure. He finds as much immediate satisfaction working in the stone quarry as he does drawing plans or supervising at a construction site. In other ways, Hemingway's and Ayn Rand's concepts of character are surprisingly parallel. Roark is laconic and terse, economical of words. In a conversation with Austen Heller which covers almost two pages, Roark manages only a few brief phrases such as
"Nothing," "That's true," except for two comparatively lengthy passages. When he is talking with philosophical enemies, the length of his statements decreases proportionately. He says only what has to be said. Both Roark and the Hemingway heroes stoically accept the vicissitudes of life without petty complaints. Hemingway and his characters respect tradition because it is tradition; Roark does not view tradition as sacred; he judges tradition relatively rather than absolutely. Hemingway's heroes illustrate his theory that "no man is an island." Roark asserts in a conversation with Wynand that "every form of happiness is private. Our greatest moments are personal, self-motivated, not to be touched . . . . But now we are taught to throw everything within us into public light and common pawing. To seek joy in meeting halls."73

Steinbeck uplifts and exalts those who are not beautiful. His rural, simple, bumbling heroes are a startling contrast to the self-assured, suave, urban heroes of Ayn Rand. When one places Tom Joad beside Roark, how can anyone still call Joad a noble hero? Considering Lenny in Of Mice and Men, one realizes that neither he nor his friend George are heroic; they are merely pathetic. Steinbeck's heroes are not to be emulated, only pitied, whereas Roark can be admired and emulated.

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73 Ibid., p. 600.
Of all the enumerated and conceivable patterns and types of patterns among twentieth century fictional heroes, there is no one into which Roark fits comfortably. He is the square peg which refuses to be forced into any of the round holes. He is partially Carlylean—"sheer wonder unmitigated by sociological considerations";74 partially Nietzschean—a contrast to those who in their hearts "want simply one thing most of all: that no one hurt them. Thus do they anticipate everyone's wishes and do well unto every one. That, however, is cowardice, though it be called 'virtue.'—"75 But most of all Roark is simply a new type of creature, one who knows solitude and its joys; who, wherever he wanders, whatever he does, is "ever in the presence of his own essence . . . ."76 Blessed by superiority in every facet of body and mind, Roark quietly but firmly asserts his own being and philosophy on a callous or hostile world and, ignoring the inadequacies of others, successfully achieves the desires of his heart.

74Lehman, p. 61.
75Nietzsche, p. 181.
76Litz, p. 326.
CHAPTER VI

HOWARD ROARK AS A MYTHOLOGICAL HERO

The gods and mortals who were the heroes of Greek and Roman mythology have many characteristics similar to those of men, for the Greeks made their gods in their own human image.¹ This was a new idea—the Egyptians had had their grotesque, immovable stone gods, the Mesopotamians their creatures unlike any human or animal—weird combinations of man and bird, or lion and bull. The Greek sculptor's concept of Apollo was based on the model of the Greek athletes. "Greek artists and poets realized how splendid a man could be, straight and swift and strong. He was their fulfillment of their search for beauty." Among the immortals there was only one who was not perfect and beautiful—Vulcan, the God of Fire, son of Hera. The mortal heroes possessed the same beauty and symmetry of body as the immortals and essentially the same spirit and attitude toward life. Apparently the chief point of divergence is that the gods were simply without peers—they had powers which mortals could not hope to possess.² Their superiority lay in the degree rather than in the quality of their abilities.

¹Edith Hamilton, Mythology (New York, 1953), p. 16.
In the *Iliad* Apollo warns Tydeus not to act like a god: "... think not to match yourself against gods, for men that walk the earth cannot hold their own with the immortals." This idea is echoed later in the brief statement that "the gods are stronger than men."  

The gods could be pictured only as eternally young, forever in the bloom of youth. Although mortals grew old and died, they were often touched by a god and made to look younger, stronger, and fairer. Ulysses is changed in his encounter with Nausicaa in the city of the Phalacrians and after his return to Ithaca, upon first making himself known to Penelope. In each case he is described as being "taller and stronger than before; she [Minerva] also made the hair grow thick on the top of his head, and flow down in curls like hyacinth blossoms; she glorified him about the head and shoulders..." Thetis, in mourning for her son Patroclus, describes him as "... the most glorious of offspring... fair and strong, hero among heroes..." Aeneas, too, was a man of striking beauty: "Aeneas was standing there in an aura of brilliant light, / Godlike of face and figure: for Venus herself had breathed / Beauty upon his head and the rosyate sheen of youth on / His manhood and a gallant light into his eyes."  

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3 Homer, *The Iliad* (Chicago, 1952), p. 34.  
4 Ibid., p. 150.  
6 Homer, *The Iliad*, p. 130.  
Although beauty was an essential ingredient, that beauty had to be accompanied by tall stature—no short, dumpy men were acceptable heroes. In the *Iliad* Ajax is described as a "great and goodly warrior whose head and broad shoulders tower above the rest of the Argives."\(^8\) Epeus the boxer is called "both brave and of great stature. "\(^9\) Of great import is the fact that Ulysses, though broader across the chest and shoulders, is a head shorter than Agamemnon, "foremost of the heroes, without peers among the multitude of earthly heroes."\(^10\)

Besides their height and perfectly-proportioned bodies, the heroes were often noted for their hair, which was usually golden and curly. Menelaus is described in the *Iliad* as yellow-haired;\(^11\) Melander is called the golden-haired;\(^12\) Juno had hair that "flowed in a stream of golden tresses..."\(^13\) Diana is the "fair-crowned goddess."\(^14\) Fair hair was not a universal necessity, though, for the hero Hector was dark-haired.\(^15\)

In addition to physical similarities, the mythological heroes possessed many similarities of spirit: among the most significant are pride and self-confidence for the Greek, obedience and loyalty for the Roman; bravery and cunning are common to both.

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\(^8\) Homer, *The Iliad*, p. 21.  
\(^9\) Ibid., p. 168.  
\(^11\) Ibid., p. 164.  
\(^12\) Ibid., p. 16.  
\(^13\) Ibid., p. 100.  
\(^14\) Ibid., p. 153.  
\(^15\) Ibid., p. 159.
The spirit of the mythological heroes is the Greek spirit: "To rejoice in life, to find the world beautiful and delightful to live in..."\(^{16}\) Besides this love of existence, the early Greek heroes were individualistic, self-sufficient, and proud. \(^{17}\) Aeneas is described in the *Iliad* as he leaped from his chariot as "a lion in the pride of strength."\(^{18}\) Peleus is labeled "proud enough as it is..."\(^{19}\) Ajax and Achilles are two heroes who are "well-assured of their own strength..."\(^{20}\) Self-confidence is alluded to in Meriones's comment to Aeneas: "... however strong and self-confident you may be..."\(^{21}\) Edith Hamilton describes Achilles, the epitome of the Greek hero, as proud, selfish, egotistical, and stubborn;\(^{22}\) Prometheus is resourceful and filled with unflinching courage.

In order to understand the subtle differences between the Roman and Greek mythological heroes, one must first consult philosophers who reflected the ideals of those two civilizations. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle discusses at some length the place of the virtue of pride in man. He comments that "since the truly great-souled man is pre-eminent in all the virtues, he deserves the highest honor.

\(^{16}\) Hamilton, p. 32.


\(^{18}\) Homer, *The Iliad*, p. 33.  \(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 64.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 72.  \(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 118.  \(^{22}\) Hamilton, p. 81.
Therefore any honor that he demands is only what is his due; he can never be excessive in his claims for honor or recognition. 

Pride, then, is a virtue, the most important trait of the truly great man, who possesses all the virtues.

Whereas Aristotle and the Greeks considered pride to be the "crown of the virtues," Cicero, the most representative spokesman for the Roman point of view, states that the great-souled man does not make personal glory the objective of life, that self-interest is not the supreme good. Cicero emphasizes social virtues rather than individual virtues. The Roman philosophy is that the chief glory of a Roman arises from fulfillment of duties to others.

One may see the contrast more clearly by observing two treatments of the hero Aeneas. Since the Aeneid is told from the Roman Virgil's viewpoint, the hero Aeneas is accordingly given traits favorable to the Romans rather than those favorable to the Greeks, which were ascribed to him in the Iliad. He exemplifies the Roman ideal in the epithets most commonly applied to him: true-hearted, god-fearing, ever-faithful, duteous of heart, great-hearted.

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24 McNamee, p. 41.
The heroes were also alike in their aloofness, aloneness, and solitude. Even the physical descriptions, such as the previously-mentioned ones of Ulysses and Aeneas, often indicate that the hero is standing alone, apart from any others. In all the heroes' major triumphs, the heroes must win alone, as Aeneas alone founded Rome.  

The hero is seldom pictured as having or being a companion—his major victories are single combats with extraordinary men or beasts.  

Besides being similar in physique and spirit, the early heroes had strikingly parallel life-patterns. In The Hero Lord Raglan has presented the interesting theory that the events in early heroes' lives fall into a consistent and recognizable pattern. He lists Oedipus as the most nearly perfect, because he scores twenty-one out of a possible twenty-two points. Other heroes are rated accordingly, some scoring as few as nine points. He includes not only mythological heroes, but also the Germanic hero Siegfried, the Celtic King Arthur, and Biblical heroes such as Elijah, Joseph, and Moses. Following are his twenty-two points.

1. The hero's mother is a royal virgin;
2. His father is a king, and
3. Often a near relative of his mother, but

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27 Lord Raglan, p. 195.

28 Ibid., pp. 178-79.
The circumstances of his conception are unusual, and

He is also reputed to be the son of a god.

At birth an attempt is made, usually by his father or his maternal grandfather, to kill him, but

He is spirited away, and

Reared by foster-parents in a far country.

We are told nothing of his childhood, but

On reaching manhood he returns or goes to his future kingdom.

After a victory over the king and/or a giant, dragon, or wild beast,

He marries a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor, and,

Becomes king.

For a time he reigns uneventfully and

Prescribes laws, but

Later he loses favour with the gods and/or his subjects, and

Is driven from the throne and city, after which

He meets with a mysterious death,

Often at the top of a hill.

His children, if any, do not succeed him.

His body is not buried, but nevertheless

He has one or more holy sepulchres.

Several of these points are applicable to a discussion of the typical Randian hero.
In each of her novels Ayn Rand consciously includes mythological symbols, with a slightly different emphasis each time. The very title of *Atlas Shrugged* implies a conscious paralleling. Atlas, himself a Titan, represents in the novel the magnates or professional titans, the "men of the mind" who strike against the world. Like Atlas, they have borne the burden of the world until they can bear it no longer, and thus they shrug. Ayn Rand articulates the idea through the words of copper tycoon Francisco d'Anconia:

If you saw Atlas, the giant who holds the world on his shoulders, if you saw that he stood, blood running down his chest, his knees buckling, his arms trembling but still trying to hold the world aloft with the last of his strength, and the greater his effort the heavier the world bore down upon his shoulders--what would you tell him to do? . . . To shrug. 29

This preoccupation is again quite clear in *Anthem*. After the Golden One (note the allusion to fair hair and complexion) and the Unconquered One have settled in a home built in the Unmentionable Time, he discovers the word "I" in a book and exalts the "I," or the ego, as a god. "And now I see the face of god, and I raise this god over the earth, this god whom men have sought since men came into being, this god who will grant them joy and peace and pride. This god, this one word: 'I.'" 30 In renaming himself (original names were similar to telephone numbers), he takes the name Prometheus, giving his mate

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the name of Gaea, the mother of the earth and all the gods. The reason for his choosing the name Prometheus is clear: as Prometheus brought fire down to men and became their savior, so the Unconquered One, in secret, discovered the principle of electricity and was eventually driven from the civilized world for his heinous "crime." Then, at the close of the novelette, in summarizing the history of man's enslavers, Prometheus says that "At first, man was enslaved by the gods. But he broke their chains."

Like the early heroes, Prometheus and Gaea began their new society alone. Prometheus had discovered the wonders of electricity alone at night in the tunnel. Alone he went to the scholars to share his knowledge. Alone he fled into the Uncharted Forest to seek a new life, a life of freedom. And alone he sought to understand the words in the books he read in the house which he and Gaea had found.

The most overt allusions to the gods in We the Living occur in many of the descriptions of Leo Kovalensky, very similar to descriptions of mortal heroes in the Iliad as "godlike heroes" or in the Aeneid when Aeneas is pictured as "godlike of face and figure." Kovalensky, though dark-haired and dark-eyed, has a beautiful form:

"The tutors, and the servants, and the guests looked at Leo as they looked at the statue of Apollo in the Admiral's study..."\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31}Homer, The Iliad, p. 47.

\textsuperscript{32}Rand, We the Living, p. 127.
Later in the novel Ayn Rand describes him as he waits in a bread line: "He stood among them, tall, straight, young, a god's form with lips that were still proud." 33 Through Kira's eyes he is seen as "white as marble and as hard and straight; the body of a god, she thought, that should climb a mountainside at dawn, young grass under his feet, a morning mist on his muscles in a breath of homage." 34 The necessary qualities of the gods, height, pride, youth, and beauty, are all stressed in the preceding illustrations, along with the inference in the third quotation that even Nature must do obeisance to him.

Howard Roark is also a god-figure, not necessarily because he is a more perfect one than any other Randian hero, but because he is more fully drawn than her other characters. It is a matter of detail rather than quality. Like the mythological hero, Roark has a beautiful body. As indicated in Chapter III, he is described as tall, supple, and graceful. He is frequently pictured at work, so that the reader may observe the play of his muscles and the intensity with which he performs his tasks, either in the building trades or at the drawing table. As did the Greek artists and poets, Ayn Rand realized how splendid a man could be, her heroes being expressions of her love of physical beauty and perfection.

33 Ibid., p. 161.
34 Ibid., p. 175.
Though mortal heroes were eventually doomed to die, they could be made younger-looking or handsomer by the gods. Ayn Rand pictures Roark in his youth; when the novel ends, Roark is only in his mid-thirties. For that reason the reader can never picture him as anything but young--he is shown neither as a child nor as an old man. To Steve Mallory, Roark will never die, for he has the air of immortality about him. Mallory reveals this feeling in a conversation with Dominique:

"I often think he's the only one of us who's achieved immortality. I don't mean in the sense of fame and I don't mean that he won't die some day. But he's living it... one can imagine him existing forever."

Height and beautiful, usually blond, hair are characteristics common to the mythological hero. Roark is tall and slender; his hair, while light rather than dark, is an interesting variation, because it is a flaming orange. This hair is Roark's most arresting physical feature, and Ayn Rand mentions it several times, usually in connection with his work, when a shock of the carrot-colored hair often falls over his forehead. Once at a formal party Roark is described as the man with the orange hair, and Toohey once makes a special point to call attention to the ludicrousness of the color in a conversation with Dominique, to whom he sarcastically remarks, "I wouldn't have that ice-blue chair over there... I'd have it carrot red. An ugly, glaring outrageous red.

Like Mr. Howard Roark's hair."
The virtue of pride places Roark in the camp of the Greek heroes rather than the Roman, for the Romans emphasized that the greatest glory for a Roman is service to others. Roark is a Greek in another of his attitudes toward life: he rejoices in life, finding the world a beautiful and delightful place. During his first meeting with Henry Cameron, he states that one of his reasons for becoming an architect is that he loves this earth and only this earth, but that he does not like the shapes of things on the earth. By becoming an architect, he can alter those shapes to please himself. The Greek hero is also an individualist, a self-sufficient man. One will recall previous elaborations on these qualities: Roark is willing to eat and dress like others, but some things he cannot accept; he is unwilling to rely on any individual to supply any primary need which he might have.

Aloneness, aloofness, and solitude are common both to the mythological hero and to Roark. Like the mythological hero, Roark is often pictured alone, or at least apart from others. One will remember that Roark is alone as the book opens and as it closes (although Dominique is approaching him). Even in a crowd Roark stands out, not only because of his red hair, but also because he is aloof from the intimacy of any group. He often causes people to feel that they do not belong, that they are out of place in his presence. His victories, too, must be won alone.

37 Ibid., p. 41.
Roark is the sole defense at both the Stoddard trial and the Cortlandt trial. He refuses to collaborate on any architectural project which would cause him to compromise his principles. (When employed by John Erik Snyte, he is able to design as he wishes, but only parts of his plans are retained in the final drawings, the best features being taken from each drawing submitted.) His dynamiting of the Cortlandt project is not quite a solitary project, for Dominique is his secret "accomplice." Among his favorite commissions are homes, homes that are remote, like Austen Heller's and Gail Wynand's. Even the resort at Monadnock Valley indicates Roark's love of solitude. Instead of having lodges where guests would be in close quarters, he makes the development a series of detached, isolated cottages assuring privacy for the occupants. Like the mythological hero, Roark is seldom pictured as having or being a companion; his true friends can almost be counted on the fingers of one hand: Dominique Francon, Gail Wynand, Steve Mallory, Henry Cameron, Austen Heller, and Mike Donnigan. Only once is he pictured as a sympathetic companion to any other person. Once the watchman at the Aquitania building site stops Roark to tell him that he once had a son--almost--for the son had been born dead. Roark understands: he smiles and puts his arm around the old man's shoulder.  

Perhaps most interesting, however, is the comparison of Roark's life to those of the mythological and legendary heroes. None of the

\[^{38}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p.} \ 329.\]
heroes whose lives were submitted to the twenty-two point test of 
Lord Raglan fulfilled every requirement. Raglan found them acceptable 
with as few as nine points. Since nothing of significance is known about 
Roark's parents or his birth, items one through eight are not 
applicable. Roark scores his first point on item nine: nothing is told 
of his childhood. On reaching manhood, he goes to his future "kingdom, " 
the world of architecture. After a victory over opposing forces (the 
leading architects), he, with Heller's assistance, is able to establish 
himself as a "king, " with his own office and staff. He does not marry 
a princess at this point, however. For a time he does work (reign) 
uneventfully and designs and erects buildings (prescribes laws); then 
later he loses favor with the public (the Stoddard incident) and is 
temporarily driven from his successful position--the only jobs he 
receives involve no more than remodeling rooming houses.

A second divergence occurs at this point. Unlike mythological 
figures, Roark does not die; therefore, none of the remaining points, 
except for one, is applicable. Before elaborating on that one point, 
this writer will call attention to point twelve, that of the hero's marriage 
to a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor. Though the point is 
out of order, it is not stretching the truth too far to say that Dominique 
is the daughter of Roark's predecessor, for Guy Francon was a 
prominent architect. Another interpretation is that Roark marries the 
former wife of his predecessor, Peter Keating.
The most interesting parallel is that of point nineteen: the hero's life ends at the top of a hill. Obviously Roark's life does not end, but the novel ends with Roark at the top of the partly-finished Wynand Building. This fact would at first seem coincidental unless one realizes that each of the four novels ends similarly. *Anthem* ends with Prometheus and Gaea living in a home on the side of a mountain. *We the Living* ends with Kira's death on the edge of a hill. (This is the only one of Ayn Rand's novels which ends tragically.) *Atlas Shrugged* ends as John Galt ascends the "highest accessible ledge of a mountain"\(^{39}\) somewhere in the Rocky Mountains. Because of the consistency of these conclusions, it may be concluded that the device is both purposeful and significant and that it coincides with the concept of the mythological life-pattern.

It is important to note that the chief difference between the Randian hero and the mythological hero is that her heroes are triumphant rather than tragic figures; they win rather than lose. William Letwin comments in *The Reporter* that Ayn Rand's work is contrary to the tradition of tragedy, in which the hero's pride, no matter how fully justified by his greatness, always causes his downfall.\(^ {40}\) For the Randian heroes, pride is one of the causes of eventual success and triumph. Kira is the only exception. One must realize, however, that

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one purpose of *We the Living* is to show how such a political system can
destroy man's potential; without Kira's death or moral deterioration
the novel would not have served its purpose.

According to Raglan's test, Roark scores ten points; he is on the
periphery, barely making the grade. Conceding the fact that he may be
classified as a mythological figure, one may then wish to discover
whether he is representative of one particular hero. There are
striking similarities between Roark and Prometheus. One idea which
precipitated this conclusion is the fact that the Unconquered One in
*Anthem* changes his name to Prometheus as he begins a new life in the
land beyond the Uncharted Forest. The symbolism is quite obvious:
just as Prometheus brought fire down to man, so did the Unconquered
One rediscover the secret of electricity. Each of them came into
disfavor with higher powers as a result: Prometheus with Zeus, the
Unconquered One with the Scholars.

Roark, too, may be identified as a Promethean figure. The very
meaning of the name illustrates a quality of Roark's, for the name
means forethought. Roark has practiced forethought—he knew from the age
of ten what his profession would be, he knows that someday he will remove
all obstacles to success, and he knows, always, precisely what actions
to take in any situation, without having to ask anyone's advice. After
his expulsion from Stanton, he tells Keating with calm assurance that
he is going to New York to work for Cameron, when he has not made any contact with Cameron. 41

There are several versions of the legend of Prometheus. One is that Zeus denied fire to men to punish Prometheus, the benefactor of man, for a trick he had played on Zeus. 42 But by stealth Prometheus broke a stalk of pithy fennel, approached the chariot of the sun, and got a flame going. Descending to earth, he lit a pile of brushwood, and from that moment man had the precious gift of fire. Because he wanted man to have and to be the best, because he exercised forethought, and because he was a resourceful, daring genius, he was taken to the wastes of Scythia and forced to hang from a cliff, upright and sleepless, enduring the torture of having an eagle peck away each day at his liver, which would restore itself each night. With Zeus's consent, Prometheus was finally released by Hercules, who also slew the eagle. Throughout the years of agony Prometheus did not yield, and so even today he is a symbol of rebellion against injustice and the authority of power.

Roark, like Prometheus, is a savior of mankind. He too revolts against the accepted standard of authority, in Roark's case the "sacred tradition" of altruism and selflessness. He defies the earthly "gods" or authorities, never yielding to nor complaining about the momentary

41 Rand, The Fountainhead, pp. 28-29.

injustices inflicted upon him, for he knows, as Prometheus probably
did, that someday he will be victorious. Roark displays the same
qualities of mind: intelligence, daring, imagination, courage,
resourcefulness, and patience.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Howard Roark is a unique figure among fictional heroes in recent decades. A man of integrity, a man in love with his work and with the heroic human spirit, Roark must be considered a hero in the strictest sociological sense of the word: one who accomplishes great deeds. He does not represent, however, the typical sociological hero of today, for today's heroes, while they may be identified with, cannot be admired or emulated, for they are generally presented as immoral, inconsistent, apathetic, or rebellious.

As a fictional type, Roark is no closer to the prevalent or even the obscure hero types. He is akin to Wolfe's heroes in that he is a genius, but his qualities are nothing like those of the Wolflan genius. Neither is Roark similar to the environment-trapped heroes of Steinbeck and Dreiser. The parallel with Hemingway's heroes is primarily in the terseness of language. Roark has nothing in common with the typical degenerate Faulkner hero. Roark may be compared with only one major figure of Sinclair Lewis's--Arrowsmith--for both he and Roark fight tirelessly for an ideal. Roark stands in defiant opposition to the anti-hero of today's fiction.
If a choice must be made, Roark is more like the mythological hero than either the sociological hero or the fictional hero. He has the beautiful physique, the pride of the Greek heroes, the aloofness, and the solitude which are necessary requisites for the mythological hero.

To a reasonable extent, the life-pattern of Roark fits the pattern devised by Lord Raglan. In particular, his accomplishments are strikingly parallel to those of Prometheus, who was also a "savior of mankind."

Though parts of Roark's characters occasionally parallel those of the sociological hero and the fictional hero of this century, as a whole Roark more closely resembles the mythological hero, though certainly one must conclude that Roark is a curious blend of many types, and that he cannot be justifiably classified as any of the three: he is like no other hero or type of hero.
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