

Howard Roark: A Literary Analysis of Ayn Rand's Ideal Man

By

Anne van Buuren

Dr. Simon Cook

BA Thesis

17 January 2021

4884 words excl.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Emotions	6
Values	8
Appearances	11
Relationships.....	14
Conclusion	20
Works Cited	22

Introduction

In the introduction to the 25th-anniversary edition of *The Fountainhead* (1943) in 1968, Ayn Rand wrote: “never has there been a time when men have so desperately needed a projection of things as they ought to be” (“Introduction” v). Rand offers the readers of *The Fountainhead* this projection and thereby portrays how her ideal man ought to live through the novel’s main character: Howard Roark. This concept of an ideal man eventually led Rand to the creation of objectivism, a philosophy that focuses on the potential that she believed human beings to have (Ghate 105). Rand explains that “since man acts among [...] other men, I had to present the kind of social system that makes it possible for ideal men to exist and to function - a free, productive, rational system which demands and rewards the very best in every man” (Rand, “Introduction” vii). This philosophy, then, is a response to the society she perceived as unjust, based on the conviction that “at the heart of this corruption are the moral ideas by which we are taught to live our lives, and on which we are taught to base our self-esteem” (Salmieri, “Introduction” 6). With objectivism, Rand, therefore, strives to create a different set of morals that are “based on the idea that reality is an objective absolute, that reason is man’s means of perceiving it and that man needs a rational morality”, resulting in “a new code of morality” (Gothelf 73).

Onkar Ghate suggests that Rand only fully developed her philosophy after writing *The Fountainhead* (107), but others argue that objectivism can already be recognised in this novel (Mayhew vii; Milgram, “Notebook” 4; Sugheeta & Jayaraman 79). Rand herself indicates in the introduction to *The Fountainhead* that the projection of an ideal man “is the notice and purpose of [her] writing” which she uses to portray her “moral ideal” (Rand vii), and that Howard Roark is her “first complete realization of this goal” (Mayhew vii). Rand’s writing portrays “man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his absolute” (Rand, *Atlas* 1070).

Gregory Salmieri suggests that Rand believed that “human nature sets a demanding ideal that each individual can and should achieve in his own life and character” (“Introduction” 4). This ideal “is egoistic in the sense that an individual leading such a life is dedicated as a matter of moral principle to his own happiness” (4). For Rand, then, happiness is the result “of achieving what one has rationally identified as objectively good” (4).

In Rand studies, research often focuses on her ideal man or objectivism, and analyses of her novels discuss the way she represents these philosophical aspects in fiction. Other scholars have looked into the character of Roark and some have compared him to Peter Keating, but generally from the perspective of philosophy and, in some cases, psychology. K. Sugeetha and Harini Jayaraman, for instance, analyse the novel’s characters from a psychological perspective and suggest that the only reason Roark manages to find happiness is because of his passion for his work (81-84). This passion, then, creates a state of being “where one is completely absorbed in a creative activity” (78), to which they refer as “flow” (78-80). Sugeetha and Jayaraman offer an analysis of Keating’s unhappiness and Roark’s happiness that hints to the importance of flow in everyday life for “psychologically healthy individuals” (85). Neera Badhwar, on the other hand, examines objectivism in Rand’s fiction and links virtuousness to happiness (77). She suggests that “Rand’s novels dramatize [...] the ancient philosophical claim that the fully happy life must be the ethical life, the life of virtue” (75). Badhwar criticises *The Fountainhead* and claims that it contradicts certain principles of objectivism; Rand argues that it is necessary to have rational goals to obtain happiness, but Badhwar claims it is virtues that lead to happiness (76-7). Though these approaches assess Rand’s ideal man, they overlook the literary aspects of this portrayal. Shoshana Milgram focusses on genetic criticism and analyses the formal aspects of the novel by comparing the published version of *The Fountainhead* to earlier manuscripts and notes made by Rand. She found that Roark's thoughts are described in the manuscripts, but not in the final, published

version, which leaves the reader with less information on which to base their interpretation (“Notebook” 5). Milgram, furthermore, mentions the character Gail Wynand as “Roark’s tragic foil¹” (11) but she does not, however, describe Keating as a foil to Roark, nor further assess the stylistic relationship between these two characters. Michael Berliner, on the other hand, refers, in passing, to Keating as Roark’s foil, but does not discuss the importance of this foil relationship for the depiction of Roark as Rand’s ideal man.

Milgram states that “for the novel to portray the ideal man in the act of discovery would not necessarily be a bad thing [...] but in this case, it would do for the reader what the reader should be doing independently” (“Notebook” 23). However, she does not discuss the narrative techniques used by Rand to create this independent realisation for the reader. The question these critics, then, leave undiscussed is what choices in narrative style Rand makes to communicate Roark’s individualistic nature. I argue that the existence of Peter Keating’s inherently collectivist character provides a foil that is necessary to recognise the personification of Rand’s ideal man in Howard Roark.

In the scholarly debate, Rand’s philosophical and political texts are often criticised and undermined (Cox; Cummins). Her fictional works, such as *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), have also received criticism from feminist readers (Brownmiller 315). However, due to the limited scope, this thesis does not engage with the political and philosophical debate, nor with the feminist reading of *The Fountainhead*, and, instead, strives to examine how Rand characterises her ideal man by means of close reading.

¹ This paper defines a foil as “a character in a work who, by sharp contrast, serves to stress and highlight the distinctive temperament of the protagonist” (Abrams & Harpham 264).

Emotions

The first line of the novel reads: “Howard Roark laughed” (Rand² 15), but Rand chooses to remain inexplicit concerning the exact emotion behind Roark’s laughter. The reasons, “the things that had happened to him that morning, and the things which now lay ahead” (15), are known, but is his laughter that of disgust, fear, happiness, an absurdist sensation, or even something else? Throughout the novel, Rand often leaves Roark’s feelings unexpressed, while Keating’s emotions are described explicitly.

Keating’s introduction displays a variety of emotions that he experiences in close proximity to one another. During his graduation from Stanton, his feelings rapidly change from pride to panic, to happiness, closely followed by even more panic when he receives his diploma (28-9). The contrast between Keating’s and Roark’s depicted feelings can be explained by Rand’s use of different narrative styles, as Milgram suggests that in removing Roark’s thoughts from her final manuscript, Rand “dispensed with the description of what she wished to show [...] and relied solely on the presentation of the evidence” (“Notebook” 5). Through the removal of passages containing Roark’s thoughts, and thus his emotions, Rand creates space for the reader to realise that Roark’s emotions are a stable given, while Keating’s are not. This phenomenon becomes apparent during Keating’s and Roark’s first day in their offices. Rand portrays Keating as nervous and uncertain during his start at Francon & Heyer (38), but he also experiences confidence and contempt (38 -39). Eventually, “he proceed[s] with his work swiftly, easily, expertly - and happily” (39). Roark, on the other hand, displays no specific emotion when he first enters the office of Henry Cameron, nor does Rand communicate his thoughts to the reader (47-50). Instead, it is through Cameron’s observations that Rand clarifies the certainty in Roark’s choice (48), but the fast-paced dialogue leaves little room for a description of Cameron’s own thoughts, let alone Roark’s. The opening passages of *The*

² All references to Rand will be concerning *The Fountainhead* unless stated otherwise.

Fountainhead describe Keating's and Roark's lives as parallel to one another, the comparison that this allows for demonstrates that Keating's changing emotions are key to the manifestation of Roark as a man of an implicitly stable emotional state.

Not only does Rand minimise the communication of Roark's emotional state towards the reader, but she also leaves several other characters, such as Mrs. Keating and the Dean of Stanton, wondering as to what he is feeling (18, 23). The Dean, for example, "wished that Roark would display some emotion; it seemed unnatural for him to be so quietly natural in the circumstances" (23). On the other hand, Rand uses several like-minded characters, including Austen Heller, Dominique Francon, and Mike, to communicate Roark's emotions. Mike, for example, mentions Roark's happiness and says: "Control yourself, Red. You are open like a book. God, it's indecent to be so happy!" (135) and, when Roark has to close his office, he conveys Roark's sadness (199). In the closing passage of the novel, Rand does not directly provide insight into Roark's thoughts and feelings, but rather narrates the scene through Dominique's perspective (692-694). Furthermore, Rand occasionally uses Roark's physical surroundings to mirror his feelings, for example: "[t]here was a threat in the silence of his room, in the empty days" (98, 34), yet these emotions are not conveyed as explicitly as Keating's. Only when Roark's emotional state deviates from his constant state of being does Rand provide explicit and implicit clues about his feelings, implying that Roark is predominantly happy.

Happiness is key to Rand's objectivism as it is seen as the constant state of being for Rand's ideal man (Salmieri, "Introduction" 4; Badwar 76). Keating serves as a contradiction to this ideal since his emotional state cannot be defined as singular or simple, but rather as a blend of often conflicting emotions. His lack of satisfaction upon winning the Cosmo-Slotnick building competition and the variety of simultaneous emotions he experiences demonstrate that, even when Keating achieves success (186-9, 320), he does not reach the stable state of

happiness that Rand advocates for her ideal man³. On the other hand, Roark's emotions, while described quite sporadically, are constant and predictable; Rand only depicts him as unhappy when he is unable to work towards his goal. For example, Roark's emotions are explicitly narrated through his own thoughts when his creative freedom is restricted while working for Guy Francon: "[h]e had to choke the knowledge. He had to kill the vision. He had to obey and draw the lines as instructed. It hurt him so much that he shrugged at himself in cold anger" (90). Other changes in his emotional state are visible when he finds a job as a "modernist" and is nervous (103), or when he needs to close his office due to a lack of customers - "It was pain, but it was a blunted, unpenetrating pain" (175). The few instances when Rand describes Roark's emotions in the form of Roark's thoughts, they generally convey sadness or disappointment, not happiness. Contrasted to Keating's ever-changing emotions, Roark is rarely shown to have negative emotions which implies that he is stably happy on all other occasions and, therefore, it was not necessary for Rand to portray his emotions in great detail. Rand's decision to include and exclude feelings highlights the differences between Roark and Keating and establishes Keating as a foil to Roark, his own changing emotions highlighting that Roark remains stably happy - the emotional state of Rand's ideal man.

Values

'Second-hand lives' was Rand's initial title for *The Fountainhead* (Peikoff 695; Milgram, "Life" 26). It is, therefore, no surprise that one of the major themes of the novel is the split between first- and second-hand characters, whose respective value systems stress the difference between Rand's ideal man and his opposite. *The Fountainhead* contrasts first-handedness, or individuality, to the collective body of second-hand characters, as first-hand characters "perform the function of valuing for themselves" (Salmieri, "Valuing" 53), whereas second-

³ Upon officially opening the Cosmo-Slotnick Building, Keating is bored and thinks: "I should be happy" (320) but he is not.

hand characters allow society, or the collective, to set the values to live by (53; see also Ghate 106). First- and second-handedness can also be interpreted as Rand's way of communicating part of her philosophy, as the principles of egoism and altruism return in objectivism. Rand defines ethical egoism as a moral theory of "how people ought to act" (Salmieri, "Egoism" 132) with one's own interest as the ultimate goal of all actions (131-132). Altruism, on the other hand, is Rand's term for the idea that "man has no right to exist for his own sake, [...] and that self-sacrifice is his highest moral duty, virtue and value" (137), an attitude which is reflected by the second-hand characters in *The Fountainhead*. Ethical egoism and first-handedness appear to be traits of Rand's ideal man, as he is in pursuit of his own ambitions and goals, with his constant happiness as the goal in his life (Salmieri, "Introduction" 4). It has been stated that Roark and Keating are first- and second-hand characters (Berliner 52; Milgram, "Life" 26-7; Peikhoff 695). However, it has not been examined before how Rand communicates Roark's values through Keating's contrasting lack of personal values.

Throughout the novel, Keating demonstrates behaviour and thoughts that coincide with the values of second-hand characters. His collectivist nature is first emphasised during his graduation, as Rand introduces him with extreme attention to others around him (28-29, 31-32, 128). Through his thoughts, Rand illustrates that Keating only appears to assess his worth by comparing himself with less talented people (29, 38-9). According to Ghate, "the exact nature and extent of a man's self-esteem will shape his particular values" (118). Self-esteem "is the reputation a man acquires with himself" (116) and it is, to Rand, of vital importance to have self-knowledge (116-7). However, there is a clear lack of self-knowledge in Keating's character as he is unable to make his own decisions and always seems to wonder: "what will people say?" (Rand 35). As a result, Keating does not trust his own abilities and, instead, ascends the capitalist hierarchy in unfair ways; it is Roark who aids him in designing important works (72-73, 90-91, 173-174), to become a designer, Keating removes Davis and Stengel from

the office (53-54, 67-71), and he scares Heyer into a stroke by blackmailing him (182-186). Keating's secret to being liked is to "always be what people want you to be. Then you've got them where you want them" (261), but in reality, it is exactly this behaviour that gives these people power over him, rather than the other way around. It is, therefore, quite fitting that Ghate describes Keating as a "parasite on other people's consciousness" (118), as he depends on others to determine what his achievements are worth. Furthermore, Keating's thoughts reveal that his need for other people's approval is also the predominant reason he chose the profession of architecture, as "[a]rchitects, he thought, always made brilliant careers. And once on top, did they ever fail?" (Rand 31). He is in near-constant conflict with himself due to his lack of self-worth and need for others to define himself.

Not once in the novel does Roark evince active self-doubt, nor does Rand describe insecurities concerning his career. For that reason, Ghate describes Roark as a "man of serene self-esteem, *quietly* but supremely confident in his capacity to think and judge and build, and unquestioning of his worthiness to exist" (italics added, 118). Rand's subdued description of Roark stresses the different approach she takes to communicating his values while minimising the use of thoughts. For example, it only becomes evident that Roark does not care for other people's opinions or approval through conversations with other characters (Rand, 20, 21, 33, 72-3). In accordance to this, Milgram suggests that "[t]he plot involves [Roark] in conflict with the world, not with himself. He is at peace with himself" ("Notebook" 23). This inner peace is a result of Roark's self-knowledge and his clear personal value system. The importance of this system is again stressed by his reason for practising architecture, as, unlike Keating, Roark's motivation - "I love this earth. That's all I love. I don't like the shape of things on this earth. I want to change them. [...] *For myself*" (italics added, Rand 49) - is solely his own.

Rand gave the characters of *The Fountainhead* one choice: "[t]o think or not" (17), and she describes this as man's primary choice (*Virtue* 17, 19-20; see also Ghate 115). She suggests

that if someone “chooses irrational values, he switches his emotional mechanism from the role of his guardian to the role of the destroyer” (*Virtue* 24). Rand describes Keating’s thoughts in great detail, yet he is not thinking for himself as he makes the explicit choice to “escape the responsibility of consciousness” (Rand 369), and Keating thus relies on other characters, such as Toohey to think for him, which illustrates his second-hand nature. The differences between Keating’s inability and decision not to think for himself, and Roark’s ability to do so - even though his thoughts are not explicitly described - creates a sharp contrast between the two characters. It is, therefore, through the self-doubt in Keating’s thoughts, that Rand communicates the self-knowledge his opposite possesses. By leaving out Roark’s thoughts, Rand could have created a flat character, but through the oppositions with Keating, she communicates Roark’s self-knowledge and his inherent first-hand value system.

Appearances

The architectural profession forms the backdrop of *The Fountainhead* and serves to underscore several key themes of the novel. Besides communicating first- and second-handedness, it also stresses the differences in physical attributes. The foil relationship between Keating and Roark is further established through the binary opposition of their appearances and, through the link these appearances form, with their architectural styles and value systems.

Ingrid Rowland states that until the 20th century, architecture was largely influenced by the aesthetic of Vitruvius (15-16). This architectural tradition stems forth from the ancient Greek and Roman classical methods and focuses on “the three virtues of *firmitas*, *utilitas* and *venustas*” (original italics, Rowland 31), that can be translated to structural stability or strength, functionality or utility and aesthetics or beauty (Kunze). Rowland suggests that, in *The Fountainhead*, Rand subjects “Vitruvius to scathing ridicule as the ultimate symbol of slavish adherence to tradition, reserving special scorn for that tradition's emphasis on architectural ornament” (15). Rand’s philosophy aims to break free from similar collectivist conventions

and praises individuality instead. It is, therefore, through her ideal man that she illustrates this, as Roark works “free from the tyranny of the past” (15). A similar separation from tradition can be observed in Roark’s physical appearance, while Keating’s attributes are described as more classical. Concerning their physique, Camille Bond observes that Rand “makes a point to construct every character’s personality and physical appearance with reference to the philosophical opposition between individualism and collectivism” (19). There is also a connection between Keating’s and Roark’s respective architectural styles, values, and physical appearances.

Whereas Roark’s value system and emotions are not always portrayed explicitly, Rand illustrates his physical appearance in detail, describing him as unusual: Roark is a man with “a body of long straight lines and angles, each curve broken into planes” (15), hair “the exact color of ripe orange rind” (15) and a face with “high cheekbones over gaunt hollow cheeks” (16). Various second-hand characters describe his hair as “preposterous” (32), and his face as “most unpleasant” (94, see also 61-2). In contrast, first-hand characters seem to be fascinated by his physique nonetheless. Dominique, for example, finds his face “the most beautiful face she would ever see, because it was the abstraction of strength made visible” (205). It appears that Rand created Roark’s appearance as unfitting with the conventional perception of beauty (Peikoff 697), and, as Bond argues, his “physical form adheres to the same rules [...] that characterize his buildings” (14). Roark’s architectural style is radically different from the Vitruvian tradition, as his buildings are “made by its own needs. Those others are made by the need to impress” (Rand 136). Roark’s choice of modern functionality over classical ornament and beauty does not adhere to the values set by others, but to his own. Paradoxically, his work is perceived by other first-hand characters as being aesthetically pleasing because of its functionality (136). Roark’s physical appearance is described as equally unconventional as his architecture, yet he is perceived as beautiful by a select few, because of the inner strength he

radiates. Roark's break from Vitruvian architecture, then, stresses his individuality not only through his work but also in terms of his physique.

Unlike Roark, Keating practices architecture in accordance with the Vitruvian value of *venustas* and copies earlier classical works, perceiving his own works as good only "because men were still worshipping the masters who had done it before him" (72). This classical aspect of Keating's architecture returns in Rand's description of his physical appearance as "[h]is head had a certain classical perfection in the shape of the skull, in the natural wave of black ringlets about finely hollowed temples" (29). The more refined face of Keating is an opposition to Roark's features, and a similar contrast is apparent in their architectural styles. While Keating adheres to the Vitruvian virtue of beauty to impress those around him, his designs do not possess the same modern functionality of Roark's. In fact, Keating's first building has "twisted corridors" and "lightless corners" because it is a mixture of earlier classical buildings but, with the help of Roark, "an immense living room grow[s] in the space [Keating] had thought too limited" (73). Keating's reliance on Roark for structure and functionality and his reliance on earlier classical buildings for beauty illustrates the way Rand criticises the Vitruvian system. Keating's physique has a more classical kind of appeal, and, similar to his Vitruvian buildings, his value system consists of a mix of values predefined by other people.

Keating's appearance and career eventually fall into deterioration, which symbolises the decline in popularity of Vitruvian values in the 20th century, as Rowland states that copying from the classical works becomes almost unfeasible in the modern age of skyscrapers (15). Keating's initial erect posture (Rand 81) becomes more "hunched" (563) and the classical elements of his face become swollen as he gains weight, but "[a] hint of his beauty remained and made him look worse" (563). Bond, therefore, identifies him "as [a] lifeless shell[] of [his] former self[], as a consequence of [his] inability to seize [his] opportunity for individual happiness when it arises" (26).

On the other hand, Dominique describes Roark as unchanging (462) and throughout the novel, he remains “straight and gaunt” (574). His appearance resonates with the similar strong and functional buildings he creates. Contrastingly, in Keating’s buildings, this functionality is lacking, and so is his physique and value system. Keating’s physical deterioration, then, serves as a symbol for the missing happiness in a second-hand society that bases its values on others. The adherence to Vitruvian values in Keating’s work is an example of this, as it presents building as repeating and rearranging the old. The portrayal of Roark's stability through his unchanging physical appearance and values, communicates Rand's ideology of how the morality of her ideal man might be the key for individualism to triumph over collectivism. The binary opposition these differences in their respective appearances create, then, further stresses the foil relationship through which Roark’s character is developed.

Relationships

In *The Fountainhead*, the difference between first- and second-hand characters becomes apparent in how they define themselves, in their architectural styles and through the description of their appearances. The binary oppositions these create are also exemplified in the way Keating and Roark interact with other characters. The contrasts between their relationships further establish Keating as a foil to Roark.

Because of his second-handedness, Keating relies on other people’s opinions and Rand further criticizes his lack of personal values by exposing his dishonesty in his interactions with other characters. Keating’s relationships are defined by his desire to impress others and, as a result, he tries to be exactly what others want him to be by saying what he suspects they want to hear, even when that means not telling the truth (Rand 42, 66, 117, 148). For example, when Toohey asks Keating what he thinks of the temple of Nike Apteros and gives his opinion on it, Keating pretends that Toohey’s opinion is his own (227). Keating’s relationship with Francon displays similar dishonesty as he lies to Francon by suggesting that he based his building on

Francon's earlier work, while the building is, in fact, designed by Roark (72-3). Francon utilises similar methods of copying other people's work as his own, and his like-mindedness to Keating is stressed: "they were both contented, bound tighter together by a common method and a common guilt" (73). Paradoxically, Rand makes no mention of Keating visiting Francon after his retirement, suggesting that their friendship in the beginning of the novel is merely a tool for Keating to guarantee his success. Moreover, Keating's friendship with Toohey appears to be based on advantages too, but this time for mutual monetary gain: for Keating, it is positive publication, and for Toohey, it is power (634-40). It appears that even though Keating tries to be exactly what others want him to be, he does not have meaningful and lasting friendships due to this same quality (607). However, there are a few instances where Keating seems to have honest conversations with Roark and Dominique, but they never last long as Keating quickly returns to his general pretentiousness (422-30, 574-5, 582-3).

Roark's continuous honesty in his interactions creates a stark contrast to Keating's dishonesty. Unlike Keating, Roark is unable to assume false states of being, as honesty appears to be at the heart of his character: "I can't pretend an anger I don't feel" (527). As a result of his sincerity, Roark has lasting friendships that build on an unspoken connection. This is, for example, visible in interactions with Wynand, as he tells Roark: "It's almost useless to talk to you, Howard. [...] You seem to hear everything I say a minute in advance" (542). Furthermore, Roark's friendship with Cameron is built upon their mutual honesty, trust and understanding, leading to a similar non-verbal connection (75), and even after Cameron's collapse, Roark visits him occasionally until his death (99, 132-3, 178). Such a mutual understanding occurs with Dominique as well, as, from their first introduction onwards, they read each other perfectly, even though little is said (203-7). Rand stresses the unspoken connection between Roark and Dominique throughout the novel when she narrates it through Dominique: "[s]he saw the reflection of her next words on his face before she had pronounced them" (374, see also 272-

4, 282, 275, 344, 375, 612-3). Furthermore, Dominique highlights two oppositions between Keating and Roark. Firstly, there is a contrast between Dominique's active involvement with Roark (206-7) and her passive-aggressive acquiescence with Keating during sex (308), which gives the impression that only first-hand characters, such as Roark, can be her lover. Secondly, for Roark, she is exactly what he wants her to be by being herself (271-4). However, when she is married to Keating, Dominique pretends to be everything Keating wants her to be, copying his general behaviour (422-7). This stresses the impact of pretentiousness as it makes Keating unhappy. Paradoxically, it is Keating himself that displays this pretentiousness in most of his interactions (51-2, 66, 71, 146, 255-6).

Honesty appears to be a solid basis for friendship in *The Fountainhead*, as Roark has a multitude of friends, such as Heller, Mike and Steven Mallory, who return throughout the novel and take pride in, worry about, or even defend Roark (91-3, 97, 133-4, 136, 159-61, 197-9, 313, 343-4, 512). These friendships form because of Roark's values, as illustrated through Heller, who realises "that he had found the best friend he could ever have; and he knew that the friendship came from Roark's fundamental indifference" (135). It is this group of friends that Roark makes along the way who sit together at the Cortlandt trial, watching and supporting him (674)⁴. By contrast with Keating, Roark's indifference proves flattery as ineffective and suggests that, although Keating acquires multiple acquaintances throughout the novel, his dishonesty and manipulation leave him without lasting friendships. Roark's indifference becomes even more apparent when comparing the way he interacts with Toohey, as opposed to Keating. While Toohey's opinion is of significant value to Keating, it is not to Roark, as, when Toohey asks Roark: "[w]hy don't you tell me what you think of me?", Roark answers:

⁴ Earlier instances of a similar inclusion are the construction of both the Stotard temple (336) and Monadnock Valley (508).

“[b]ut I don’t think of you” (389), which again stresses the fundamental difference between Roark and Keating.

Rand further highlights this contrast through the conversations Keating and Roark have with each other. Roark’s sincerity causes Keating to experience “more pleasure [from Roark’s compliments] than from any other compliments he had received” (32). This sincerity appears to bring about Keating’s honesty when they are together, though only temporarily (33-4). A recurring notion is that others, such as the Dean or Francon, feel threatened by Roark (20-6, 95), as their insincere attempts at flattery or small talk dissipate under Roark’s stare. Keating experiences a similar threat because his usual pretentiousness and flattery also do not work with Roark: “[p]eople were his protection against people. Roark had no sense of people. Others gave Keating a feeling of his own value. Roark gave him nothing” (73, see also 87, 90). Nonetheless, Keating returns to Roark throughout the novel, either to gloat at Roark’s initially unsuccessful career, or to ask for his help (34-5, 72-3, 90-1, 173-4, 190-4) and, occasionally, he attacks Roark verbally. However, Roark remains calm and sincere, only asking Keating “why betray so much” (193) or neutrally interrupting him with the occasional “shut up” (88). In light of objectivism, Salmieri suggests that through values and morality, a life can be led that brings happiness and that this life is “in accordance with the virtues of rationality, independence, integrity, honesty, justice, productiveness and pride” (“Egoism” 132). Throughout their conversations, Roark acts more in conformity with these moral principles than his opposite Keating.

Another contrast between these two characters is created on a stylistic level. Rand employs a variety of narrative techniques to communicate Keating’s and Roark’s interactions with others. Keating’s dialogues are often accompanied by his thoughts and narrated through his perspective, which allows the reader insight into his mind. A difference between their conversational styles is that Roark is direct and uses few words (127, 173), while Keating has

no such directness. The lack of small talk in Roark's interactions further limits the access the reader has to Roark, and this shrouded interiority adds to the plot-driven quality of *The Fountainhead* as it creates tension whether or not Roark will succeed. On the other hand, Rand communicates Keating's thoughts to the reader by means of an omniscient narrator and, similar to certain other characters, such as Wynand (390, 391, 399) and Dominique (448), his thoughts are presented in indirect discourse (28, 29, 441)⁵. These differences in narrative access are visible in the first three sections of *The Fountainhead* - "Peter Keating" (15-200), "Ellsworth Toohey" (201-390) and "Gail Wynand" (391-503) - where Rand's objective narration does not leave much room for Roark's thoughts, but rather present him through the eyes of other characters. This way, she forces the reader to form an opinion of Roark with the limited information conveyed, and it is not until this opinion is already broadly established that Rand introduces Roark's perspective more regularly. Roark's relationship with Dominique, for example, is generally described from her perspective (203-18, 282-84, 287-9, 310-11, 324, 692-694). During Dominique's visits to the quarry, for instance, Rand portrays Roark in great detail but only through Dominique's observations and thoughts, leaving Roark's interiority and perspective unexplored (203-218).

Whenever Roark is narrated through the narrative perspective, it is usually only in summary (15-7, 201-3). In the last section of the novel, "Howard Roark" (503-694), however, the shift in narrative perspective reveals more of Roark's interiority as his thoughts are now more often narrated through indirect speech. A few examples of this include when he visits *The Banner* - "Howard Roark looked up at the tiled vault. He had never hated anyone. Somewhere in this building was its owner, the man who had made him feel his nearest approach to hatred" (515) - or when he sees the empty shell that Keating has become - "This is pity, he thought,

⁵ Rand's use of indirect discourse is visible in: "The hall before him, he thought, was a splendid specimen of architecture" (28) or "The crowd was there, thought Peter Keating, to see him graduate, and he tried to estimate the capacity of the hall" (29).

and then he lifted his head in wonder. He thought that there must be something terribly wrong with a world in which this monstrous feeling is called a virtue” (583). Furthermore, conversations with Keating that were generally narrated from Keating’s perspective are now occasionally communicated from Roark’s point of view: “Roark knew that he must not show the shock of his first glance at Peter Keating - and that it was too late” (573). The narrative techniques in the first three sections of *The Fountainhead* continue in the fourth, but Rand uses indirect speech for Roark more frequently.

At the beginning of the novel, Roark tells the Dean that he does not know whether he has any family and appears indifferent about it (25). It is because of this that Gerard Loughlin suggests that “Roark says he owes nothing to anyone, but we can see he owes everything to others” (92) as “he needs to be seen by Dominique, and through her eyes, by us” (95). In the closing scene, Rand once again narrates the story through the gaze of Dominique, and Loughlin, therefore, states that “[a]s she flies up the side of the building, so do we; as she gazes upon Roark, so do we also: and he knows it” (95), suggesting that Roark, as a self-made man, can only exist when he is seen by others such as Dominique and, through her, by the reader (95). Loughlin’s criticism of Roark, and Rand for that matter, is that nobody can exist without others. However, unlike Keating, Roark does not require social interactions, nor is he dependent on other people for happiness. Arguably, it is Rand’s active choice to have Roark largely narrated objectively, and, therefore, without describing him through the eyes of other characters, Rand would have been unable to fully develop Roark’s character. As Milgram states, Rand removed the thoughts from her final version as in those moments, Roark was “less than himself” (“Notebook” 23), and “[b]ecause, as [Rand] envisioned her ideal man, he was always essentially himself, never less than himself - that is what being an ideal man means - and she decided to focus the characterization on essentials” (23). Rand’s portrayal of Roark through

the eyes of others, and through the comparison with his binary opposite, is therefore essential to the manifestation of her ideal man.

Conclusion

In *The Fountainhead*, Rand communicates the identity of Roark, her ideal man, through the contrast with Keating. Her objective narration provides little to no description of Roark's thoughts, values and emotions, whereas Keating's are expressed in great detail. As their lives are intertwined at the beginning of the novel, it is through Keating's changing emotions and lacking personal value system that Rand highlights Roark's stable emotional state of happiness and inherent value system. Rand utilises their appearances to exemplify their architectural styles, as she describes Roark's character, like his buildings, as functional and strong. Keating, on the other hand, is focussed on impressing others with his designs through the classical values set by those before him. Their different appearances and architectural styles are a symbol for their contrasting personalities and, once again, stresses their opposing value systems, creating a binary opposition. A similar contrast returns during their interactions with other characters; while Roark is sincere, Keating is pretentious and often dishonest. As a result, Keating has no lasting friendships. Furthermore, while Keating is narrated throughout the novel in omniscient narration with the use of indirect speech, Roark is largely portrayed through the eyes of other characters. Rand's objective narration of Roark can be explained by Milgram's observation that Rand removed large sections of Roark's thoughts from her final draft to present a character that is "never less than himself" ("Notebook" 5). In the first three sections of the novel, therefore, the reader is reliant on the observations of others, since Roark is not described in omniscient narration. Unlike Keating, Roark speaks truthfully in his encounters with others which partially eliminates the need for an in-depth description of his thoughts, while for Keating's character, these thoughts convey truths that dialogues cannot. In the final section of the novel, however, Rand's narrative technique changes and Roark becomes the narrative

perspective more often, allowing insight into his perspective on life. By then, the reader already has a broadly established opinion of Roark's character, formed through the observations of others, Rand's symbolism and foil relationship. Though it is a stylistic choice to introduce Roark's character without the use of his thoughts, it also stresses the importance of reason and morality in the search for happiness, as Keating becomes lonely and miserable, both mentally and physically, while Roark does not. Keating as a foil to Roark, therefore, also exposes what Rand sees as the possible result of a life lived for society, or rather, a life without objectivism. Due to the limited scope of this paper, other similar foil relationships in *The Fountainhead*, such as Cameron's and Francon's, and Wynand's and Roark's, have been omitted. These relationships can shed further light on how Rand's usage of her skill of language brings across her philosophical ideas. This exemplifies how subtle, unspoken messages, communicated through a foil, influence the reader's perception of the fictional characters' behaviour. It has been suggested that Rand further developed her ideas on objectivism during her writing of *The Fountainhead*. In light of genetic criticism, analysing this novel further in comparison with its earlier manuscripts might shed light on the influence that the development of Rand's philosophy might have had on the characterization of her ideal man and his opposite. As this novel can be regarded as a foundation piece of Rand's early objectivism, it would be interesting to see if similar narrative patterns return in her later fictional works, such as *Anthem* (1938 - 1946) or *Atlas Shrugged*.

Works Cited

- Abrams, Meyer Howard, and Geoffrey Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Cengage Learning, 2011. *GoogleBooks*. Web. 4 Oct. 2020.
- Badhwar, Neera K. "Ayn Rand's Contribution to Philosophy." *Reason Papers* 23 (1998): 75-78. *Reason Papers*. Web. 10 Sep. 2020.
- Berliner, Michael, S. "Howard Roark and Frank Lloyd Wright." *Essays on Ayn Rand's "The Fountainhead"*. Ed. R. Mayhew. Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007. 41-64. *Google Books*. Web. 31 Aug 2020.
- Bond, Camille. "The Experience of Flying: The Rand Dogma and its Literary Vehicle." *Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive* (2017): 1-72. *Wellesley College*. Web. 15 Jan. 2021.
- Brownmiller, Susan. *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*. New York: Ballantine books, 1975. *Archive.org*. Web. 16 Jan 2021.
- Cox, Stephen. "Ayn Rand: Theory versus creative life." *The Journal of Libertarian Studies* 8.1 (1986): 19-29. *Mises.org*. Web. 17 Jan. 2021.
- Cummins, Denise. "This Is What Happens When You Take Ayn Rand Seriously." *Public Broadcasting Service*. Economy, 16 Feb. 2016. Web. 17 Jan. 2021.
- Ghate, Onkar. "A Being of Self-Made Soul." *A Companion to Ayn Rand*. Gotthelf, Allan, and G. Salmieri, eds. John Wiley & Sons, 2016. 105-129. *WorldCat.org*. Web. 10 Oct. 2020.
- Gotthelf, Allan. "The Morality of Life." *A Companion to Ayn Rand*. Gotthelf, Allan, and G. Salmieri, eds. John Wiley & Sons, 2016. 73-104. *WorldCat.org*. Web. 10 Oct. 2020.
- Kunze, Donald. "The Vitruvian Virtues of Architecture: Utilitas, Firmitas, Venustas." *The Boundary Language Project*, 2015. Web. 15 Jan. 2021.

- Loughlin, Gerard. "Becoming-skyscraper: Ayn Rand's Architect." *New Interventions in Art History: Architectures, Modernism and After*. Ed. A. Ballantyne. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. 88-100. Research Gate. Web. 31 Aug. 2020.
- Mayhew, Robert. "Preface" *Essays on Ayn Rand's "The Fountainhead."* Ed. R. Mayhew. Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007. 3-39. *Google Books*. Web. 31 Aug. 2020.
- Milgram, Shoshana. "*The Fountainhead* from Notebook to Novel: The Composition of Ayn Rand's First Ideal Man." *Essays on Ayn Rand's "The Fountainhead."* Ed. R. Mayhew. Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007. 3-39. *Google Books*. Web. 31 Aug. 2020.
- . "The Life of Ayn Rand." *A Companion to Ayn Rand*. Gotthelf, Allan, and G. Salmieri, eds. John Wiley & Sons, 2016. 22-46. *WorldCat.org*. Web. 10 Oct. 2020.
- Peikoff, Leonard. Afterword. *The Fountainhead*. 1943. By Ayn Rand. New American Library Penguin Group, 2001. 695-704. Print.
- Rand, Ayn. *Atlas Shrugged*. New York: New American Library Penguin Group, 1957. Print. *Archive.org*. Web. 17 Jan 2021.
- . *The Fountainhead*. 1943. New York: New American Library Penguin Group, 2001. Print.
- . "Introduction to the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition." *The Fountainhead*. 1943. By Rand. New American Library Penguin Group, 2001. v-xi. Print.
- . *The Virtue of Selfishness*. New York: Penguin Group, 1964. *Archive.org*. Web. 07 Jan. 2021.
- Rowland, Ingrid D. "From Vitruvian Scholarship to Vitruvian Practice." *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 50 (2005): 15-40. *JSTOR*. Web. 15 Jan. 2021.
- Salmieri, Gregory. "An Introduction to the Study of Ayn Rand." *A Companion to Ayn Rand*. Gotthelf, Allan, and G. Salmieri, eds. John Wiley & Sons, 2016. 3-21. *WorldCat.org*. Web. 10 Oct. 2020.

---. "Egoism and Altruism: Selfishness and Sacrifice." *A Companion to Ayn Rand*. Gotthelf, Allan, and G. Salmieri, eds. John Wiley & Sons, 2016. 130-156. *WorldCat.org*. Web. 10 Oct. 2020.

---. "The Act of Valuing (and the Objectivity of Values)." *A Companion to Ayn Rand*. Gotthelf, Allan, and G. Salmieri, eds. John Wiley & Sons, 2016. 49-72. *WorldCat.org*. Web. 10 Oct. 2020.

Sugeetha, K., and Harini Jayaraman. "Happiness: A Journey rather than a Destination in Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*." *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities* 10.2 (2018): 77-86. *Rupkatha*. Web. 28 Aug. 2020.