

UNITY AND INTEGRATION IN AYN RAND'S *ATLAS SHRUGGED*

EDWARD W. YOUNKINS*

IN *ATLAS SHRUGGED* (1957), AYN RAND PRESENTS her original, brilliant, and controversial philosophy of Objectivism in dramatized form.¹ More than a great novel, it expounds a radically new philosophy with amazing clarity. *Atlas Shrugged* presents an integrated and all-embracing perspective of man and man's relationship to the world and manifests the essentials of an entire philosophical system—metaphysics, epistemology, politics, and ethics. *Atlas Shrugged* embodies Objectivism in the actions of the story's heroes.

Leonard Peikoff (2004) explains that the most extraordinary quality of *Atlas Shrugged* is its integration. Ayn Rand understood that everything that is included in a novel affects that novel. The unity of a novel depends upon the necessary causal and logical connections among its many aspects. It follows

*Edward W. Younkings (younkins@wju.edu) is Professor of Accountancy and Business Administration in the Department of Business at Wheeling Jesuit University in West Virginia.

Acknowledgments: Several people have contributed importantly to this article by reading and commenting on it. I am grateful to the following individuals for their useful observations and suggestions: Roger Bissell, Walter Block, Douglas J. Den Uyl, Mimi Gladstein, Steven Horowitz, Spencer MacCallum, Russell Madden, Douglas B. Rasmussen, Jeff Riggenbach, Peter Saint-Andre, Chris Matthew Sciabarra, Larry Sechrest, and Gennady Stolyarov.

CITE THIS ARTICLE AS: Edward W. Younkings, "Unity and Integration in Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*," *Libertarian Papers* 3, 5 (2011). ONLINE AT: libertarianpapers.org. THIS ARTICLE IS subject to a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 License (creativecommons.org/licenses). Published by the Ludwig von Mises Institute.

¹ Readers interested in learning more about *Atlas Shrugged* are encouraged to see Branden and Branden (1962), Gladstein (2000), Thomas (ed.) (2005), Younkings (ed.) (2007), and Mayhew (ed.) (2009).

that she included no random elements or events. She tied everything to *Atlas Shrugged's* unifying theme of “the role of the mind in human existence” (Rand 1975, 81). As stated by Andrew Bernstein (2007, 50), “Every aspect of the vast panorama that is *Atlas Shrugged* is integrated around the plot-theme of the strike, a principle vital to the novel’s artistic synthesis.”

Atlas Shrugged is a model of integration among theme, story, and characters. All elements are logically connected, tied to the whole, and integrated with the novel’s unifying theme. In *Atlas Shrugged* every character, event, line of dialogue, or description is related to its theme. Even the philosophical speeches are integrated with the events of the story. As Russell Madden (2007, 169) puts it:

In *Atlas Shrugged*, Ayn Rand achieved a consistency of vision and depth of execution unparalleled in the freedom movement. Though some libertarians lambast Rand and *Atlas Shrugged* for its “totalism”; that very coherence is, of course, one of the book’s greatest strengths. The consonance between theme and plot, the congruity between character and action, create a symmetry and a unity of purpose and achievement that have rarely been duplicated.

According to Chris Matthew Sciabarra (2007, 31):

As a novel, *Atlas Shrugged* is a remarkable achievement of integration. Rand had always seen the plot of a novel, its story, as a structured totality: ‘A STORY IS AN END IN ITSELF,’ she wrote to one correspondent. ‘It is written as a man is born—an organic whole, dictated only by its own laws and its own necessity—an end in itself ...’ (Letter to Gerald Loeb, 5 August 1944, in Rand 1995, 157). And so, it is no coincidence that *Atlas Shrugged* itself is a superbly integrated “organic whole,” one that fused action, adventure and sensuality with philosophy, contemplation and spirituality, incorporating elements of science fiction and fantasy, symbolism and realism. It launched a philosophical movement that has been nothing less than revolutionary in its implications.

Andrew Bernstein (2007, 48) adds:

This author knows of no other fictional work that is so thoroughly integrated on so vast a scale as *Atlas Shrugged*. The novel is a concordant literary synthesis of every essential element of human life.

Atlas Shrugged is appealing on many levels. It is a moral defense of capitalism, political parable, social commentary, science fiction tale, mystery story, love story, and more. The further and deeper a person studies *Atlas Shrugged*, the more he will be able to appreciate how these multiple approaches to plot enrich one another. Taken together, these manifold

perspectives impart a moral sense of life that embodies admiration for each individual person's highest potential (i.e., as he can be and ought to be).

Leonard Peikoff observes that *Atlas Shrugged's* marvelously constructed and interwoven plot is a miracle of organization encompassing multiple layers or tiers of depth. Every event, action, and character serves both dramatic and philosophical purposes. Every line is important. Rand's emblematic characters have all irrelevancies and accidents removed. Rand probes each character's motives, connects a set of personal traits to each character's motivation, and integrates the actions of the characters with their motivation and character traits.

Rand selects and integrates actions and events that dramatize the theme of the novel. *Atlas Shrugged* is a "story about human beings in action" (Rand 2000, 17). Rand thinks in essentials in uniting all of the issues of the actions in the novel. Her concern is with values and issues that can be expressed in action. The story's plot action is based on the integration of values and action and of mind and body. Rand thereby shows actions supporting wide abstract principles.

The events and characters of *Atlas Shrugged* portray the philosophical principles that affect the actual existence of men in the world. The conflict between the looters and the creators dramatizes the struggle between contradictory visions, values, and moralities.² Because human values are abstractions made from observations, the reader is given concretes in the novel in order for the abstract values to become real for him.

By including only that which is essential, Rand illustrates the connections between metaphysical abstractions and their concrete expressions. *Atlas Shrugged* is a feat of complex structural integration. The author carefully selected the details with no event, character, line or dialogue, or description included that does not further and reinforce the theme of the importance of reason. Nothing is thrown in arbitrarily. Rand was aware of the specific purpose of every chapter, paragraph, and sentence and could state a reason for every word and punctuation mark in the novel (Rand, 4).

This article is largely a "summary of the literature" type of essay that frequently relies on the views of people writing about *Atlas Shrugged* to make an argument for *Atlas Shrugged* as a highly integrated novel. All of the parts of the paper explain, in one way or another, how integration and unity are

² Readers interested in learning more about conflicting visions may want to read Sowell (1987) and those interested in learning more about the methods of the looters and creators may wish to see Contoski (1997).

represented in *Atlas Shrugged*. Section one examines the philosophical and literary structure and integration of this great philosophical novel. The next part deals with issues of political economy. This is followed by an examination of Rand's techniques of characterization and character development as displayed in *Atlas Shrugged*. The following section takes a look at the philosophical speeches. Mind-body integration is the subject of the next part. The last major section considers *Atlas Shrugged* as a vehicle for social change. The conclusion discusses *Atlas Shrugged* as the embodiment of a fully-integrated philosophical novel.

Philosophical and Literary Structure and Integration

Atlas Shrugged is an achievement of intricate structural composition and integration. The titles of its three major sections pay tribute to Aristotle, correspond to his basic philosophical axioms, and accomplish a thematic goal by implying something regarding the meaning of the events and actions in the respective sections of the novel. In Part One called Non-Contradiction, there is a numerous series of strange and apparently contradictory events and paradoxes with no discernible logical solution. In Part Two, Either-or, based on Aristotle's Law of Excluded Middle, Dagny faces a fundamental choice with no middle road—to continue to battle to save her business or to give it up. Part Two also focuses on the conflict between two classes of humanity—the looters and the creators. Part Three, A is A, is based on Aristotle's Law of Identity. In it, Dagny and Rearden (along with the reader) learn the true nature of the events, and all the apparent contradictions are identified and resolved (Minsaas 1994; Bernstein 1995). By Part Three, both the characters and the readers are able to see the story as an interrelated connection of events. In addition, there are multiple and integrated layers and levels of meaning and implications for each of *Atlas Shrugged's* thirty chapters. Rand's chapter titles are meaningful at the literal level in addition to being significant at deeper philosophical and symbolic levels (Bernstein 1995; Seddon 2007, 47–56).

Douglas B. Rasmussen (2007, 33-45) explains that Rand's reality-is-intelligible thesis is vividly expressed in the section titles of *Atlas Shrugged*. The basic meaning of this thesis is that the things of existence have an identity and that these things can be known. As he explains:

These titles correspond to the Aristotelian laws of thought: Non-Contradiction (the Law of Non-Contradiction [also sometimes called The Law of Contradiction]; Either-Or (the Law of Excluded Middle); and A is A (the Law of Identity). For Rand, as for Aristotle, these laws of thought are not merely how we must think in order to obtain knowledge; they also describe the fundamental

character of reality. These laws are thus ontological and pertain to the very nature of being. Nothing can ultimately exist or be that fails to comply with these principles. The nature of reality is such that (1) something cannot be and not-be at the same time and in the same respect; (2) something either exists or does not exist at a given time and in a given respect; and (3) something is what it is at a given time and in a given respect (34).

Rasmussen notes that for Rand, the laws of thought are not a priori mental categories that people impose on sense perceptions to make them intelligible. Rather, they are laws of reality. It follows that the method of logic is defined by the laws of reality. There is a difference between something as it exists in a man's cognition and as it exists independently of that cognition.

According to Greg Salmieri (2007)³ the messages of Part One are relatively concrete compared to the lessons of Parts Two and Three. Part One sets the context of the novel and tells the story of Dagny Taggart's greatest accomplishment, the construction of the John Galt Line, and of its paradoxical consequences. It illustrates that rationality is the cause of the construction of the John Galt Line. Part Two is essentially moral and is more abstract than Part One. It contrasts two opposite moral codes (the morality of life and the morality of death) and the effects of each. Part Two also portrays Hank Rearden's progressive liberation from guilt and Dagny's conflict stemming from her mistaken premises regarding the looters and the strikers. Part Two additionally demonstrates the redounding sequence of events and consequences of the actions of the strikers and the looters and introduces the idea of the "destroyer." Part Three can be viewed as metaphysical or as moral/metaphysical. This part recasts moral issues in terms of opposite attitudes toward existence. It follows Rearden and Dagny as they grasp more abstractly, fully, and deeply the state of the world and how they should act in it. The whole truth becomes apparent to them when they hear Galt's speech every point of which is a structured restatement of a progressive reasoning process that has taken place throughout the novel. They ultimately come to understand the relevant principles, thereby realizing the need to go on strike.

Salmieri explains that *Atlas Shrugged* is epistemologically progressive and hierarchically inductive as its characters draw abstractions concurrently as the readers are intended to draw them. The characters perform successive inductions and abstractions throughout the novel ending in extremely

³ Greg Salmieri's 2009 essay in Robert Mayham's (ed.) *Essays on Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged* is based on his 2007 audio course.

abstract and wide principles as expressed in Galt's speech. As the characters operate at successive higher levels of abstraction, they see ever more remote and complex causal connections. Rand's characters first comprehend narrow truths about alternative moral codes and then go broader and deeper with respect to the philosophical significance, meaning, and connection of these truths. Throughout the novel new realizations lead to more questions.

Atlas Shrugged becomes progressively more abstract as Dagny and Rearden come to understand increasingly broader abstractions and larger causal connections. By grasping more abstract and sophisticated conceptualizations, these characters, along with the alert reader, gain a wider contextual perspective on the novel's events. Both Dagny and Rearden steadily but gradually gain further realizations about what motivates the looters. They comprehend more deeply and abstractly the nature of two alternative moral codes and what happens if one chooses the wrong moral code. The climactic results are a way of thinking and capping integration that is expounded in Galt's speech and evidenced in Dagny and Rearden's decisions to go on strike.

Atlas Shrugged's plot-theme, the mind on strike, is the essential line of its events. It is the central means of presenting the theme and the main conflict and of linking the theme to the action (Rand 2000, 40-4; 1975, 82-6). More specifically, the plot-theme is the "men of the mind going on strike against an altruist-collectivist society." This is the central situation that dramatizes and expresses *Atlas Shrugged's* abstract theme.

Rand presents conflict in terms of action thus creating a "purposeful progression of events" (2000, 17). To do this she portrays strong willful characters, the creators and the looters, who are in sharp moral conflict with one another. She thereby expresses the plot conflict in action. Dagny Taggart and Hank Rearden, the primary creators, philosophically are against the looters, but in action they support them. In addition, existentially Dagny and Rearden oppose Galt and the strikers but philosophically they agree with them. The plot of *Atlas Shrugged* is a story of human action from which moral issues cannot be separated (Bernstein).

The major plot of *Atlas Shrugged* is the story of the strike (Rand 1997, 399, 416-17, 428-33). In her 1994 audio course, Kirsti Minsaas explains that Rand gradually supplies hints and clues with respect to the existence of the strike and that, through the use and emphasis of subsidiary surface plots, she is able to keep the events of the major plot hidden and to reveal the strike only in a step-by-step and retrospective manner. These secondary cover plots include: (1) Dagny Taggart and Hank Rearden's struggle to save their respective companies and industries primarily through the construction of the

John Galt Line and (2) Dagny's quests to find the inventor of the revolutionary motor and to find and stop the destroyer who is draining the brains of the world. Through the pursuit of the above objectives, the main plot is revealed, the mystery is solved, the question "Who is John Galt?" is answered and the reasons for the collapse of the railroad and of industrial society are understood (Bernstein). The plot of *Atlas Shrugged* has an inexorable internal logic in which the intellectual puzzle is acted out and solved by the heroes.

In his 1995 audio course, Andrew Bernstein observes that there are dual lines of action in *Atlas Shrugged* involving the observable and the unobservable. We perceive Dagny and Hank striving to construct the John Galt Line and searching for the inventor of the motor. We also see the looters, their policies, and the disastrous effects of their policies. What is not discernible is John Galt removing the men of the mind from the world and relocating them in Mulligan's Valley. The key link between these two spheres of action is Eddie Willers who unknowingly feeds information to John Galt, disguised as a low-level worker with whom Eddie has lunch.

The construction of the John Galt Line most directly depicts the mind's role in human existence. Much of the balance of the novel demonstrates the effects of the absence of the men of the mind (Rand 2000, 12). *Atlas Shrugged* teaches that prosperity and productivity depend upon the mind by showing both the presence and absence of the producers in the world.

The most crucial events in *Atlas Shrugged* are dramatized. The key events are shown to the reader as if they were occurring before his eyes. Rand also uses flashbacks (e.g., Eddie Willers thinking back to his childhood) to convey important information. Less critical information is simply narrated (145-60).

Rand applies her inductive theory of concept formation in writing *Atlas Shrugged*, as well as in her other works of fiction. Rand projects important abstractions dealing with values, virtues, emotions, and so on in specific concrete actions. She first presents a "visual description by means of essentials and then the symbolic and philosophic meaning of that description" (127).

Atlas Shrugged is primarily presented to the reader in a form that a person would perceive it in real life. Although Rand chooses the focus or perspective, she presents the reader with "direct sensory evidence" and does not tell him what to think or to feel. She provides information by giving the reader precise, "concrete, objective facts" and observational details. The reader is given the evidence in context and it is up to him to make a reasoned judgment (97).

Andrew Bernstein (1995; 2007, 53-62) has examined four of the integrated literary techniques Rand employed to magnify the plot-theme of the great minds on strike and, resultingly, the theme of the mind's role in human life. These techniques included: symbolism, irony, recasting Greek myths, and what Bernstein has called the juxtaposition of philosophical opposites. Bernstein points out that these literary techniques are never employed as ends-in-themselves, but rather only in order to further integrate and embody *Atlas Shrugged's* plot-theme and theme.

Rand mainly dramatizes the meaning of *Atlas Shrugged* in action, but still effectively uses some symbolism as a supplemental technique. She typically first illustrates an idea in action and then uses a symbol to bring abstract subject matter down to the observational level. It follows that there are no "floating symbols" in *Atlas Shrugged*. Rand has the reader initially experience particular concrete actions in order to have enough information to inductively derive and understand the principle involved, and only then does she employ a symbol to capture the essence of the abstraction (Bernstein). The idea that a tangible symbol represents is something abstract. Key symbols in *Atlas Shrugged* include: (1) The Oak Tree; (2) The Calendar; (3) The Bracelet of Rearden Metal (in the form of a chain); (4) Wyatt's Torch; (5) The Sign of the Dollar; (6) Galt's Motor; and (7) The Cigarette (Merrill 1991, 60-61; Bernstein).

Irony, as a literary device, involves the use of words to convey an actual meaning that is opposite of their literal meaning. Irony in literature involves incongruity between the actual meaning of a statement, character, or event and its apparent meaning. Irony in *Atlas Shrugged* is integrated into the conflict and has both aesthetic and epistemological value to the reader. As explained by Andrew Bernstein (2007, 56):

Atlas Shrugged as a whole is a single, integrated, sustained exercise in literary irony. This is inevitable because of the multiple action levels, the duality between appearance and reality. Since Dagny and the other narrators know nothing of the strike, they interpret the disappearances, the collapse, and the haunting question as inimical to man's life on earth. But to those privy to the strike, the meaning of these events is positive, for the events actually establish cultural groundwork for the intellectual-moral-political renaissance that, for the first time, will make possible the full flourishing of human life on earth. The all-encompassing global irony integrated into the very essence of the plot produces a riveting stream of brilliantly ironic scenes and passages.

Robert Bidinotto (2007, 52) observes that:

Rand's subtlety extends to dialogue ... where double and triple meanings are often embedded in what seems to be casual conversations. For example, there is a delightful irony in many of the early references to inventor-hero John Galt, but since they occur long before he appears in the story, most of them won't be apparent during a first reading.

Rand also effectively alters and adapts some famous Greek myths in order to tell them from an Objectivist viewpoint. These myths include: (1) Phaëton; (2) Prometheus; (3) Atlantis; (4) Atlas; and (5) Odysseus and the Sirens (as alluded to in the story of Roger Marsh). Ayn Rand's use and recasting of ancient Greek myths adds to the epic scope of *Atlas Shrugged*. By changing them, she challenges their traditional meaning and endorses them with new meaning reflecting a revolutionary worldview complete with a new moral philosophy (Bernstein 1995; Minsaas 1994; 2007, 131–140).

Ayn Rand's frequent use of the literary technique of the juxtaposition of opposites involves the sequential presentation and contrasting in consecutive scenes of the universe of the irrational Kantian-Marxists and the universe of the rational men of the mind. By dramatizing the world of the emotional and inefficacious looters with that of the creative and life-promoting producers in side-by-side scenes, Rand successfully illustrates entire and opposite philosophical systems in action and in conflict. (Bernstein 1995; 2007, 60–63). Kirsti Minsaas (1995) instructs the reader of Rand's novels to pay close attention to the author's "thematic interweaving of ideas through the causal patterning and organization of the events." This involves the use of analogical juxtaposition—the method of holding up parallels and contrasts in scenes, descriptions, events, characters, symbols, and so on.

Lester Hunt (2007, 57–62) has commented that *Atlas Shrugged* is a very intentional novel with every detail designed to mean something. Every aspect of the story has a "why" and a "what for." Hunt then describes the extraordinary meaning-saturation of this novel. Hunt terms one structural feature Ayn Rand's "twinning device." Such mirroring with a difference involves "meaning-bearing elements that are linked by salient similarities and at the same time opposed to one another in potentially significant ways" (59). For example, there are two steel magnates (Rearden and Boyle), two major characters with mixed philosophical premises (Rearden and Stadler), two dysfunctional marriages (Hank and Lillian's and James and Cheryl's), two scientists (Galt and Stadler), and so on. Hunt explains that one of the results of this twinning device is to guide the reader's attention toward making mental integrations based on perceiving real similarities and real differences. This reflects Rand's epistemological theory which holds that the creation of

human knowledge involves the finding of bona fide similarities and differences among things.

Atlas Shrugged is a story of human action on a monumental scale in which Rand skillfully ties physical actions to important human values. Values and value-premises, especially those relating to productive work and romance, are both implicit and explicit in *Atlas Shrugged*. The creator of this integrated work of literature realized that it is important to dramatize values. People need to see values embodied in concrete form in the world. *Atlas Shrugged* provides specific examples of what individuals' values are or ought to be (Plauché 2008, 25–36). *Atlas Shrugged* inductively demonstrates the values of a new moral philosophy of rational self-interest. As a result, it provides the emotional fuel to stimulate one's love of existence and to motivate a person toward his full flourishing as a human being. This joyous "sense of life" involves admiration for man's highest potential (Madden, 167–175). This sense of life involves the disposition that achievement and happiness are the normal and the to be expected whereas suffering and disaster are merely exceptions in life. Such a sense of life depends upon the acceptance and consistent practice of rationality in every area of one's life.

Rand illustrates in *Atlas Shrugged* that rationality is the primary virtue and moral requirement. Holding that morality is not primarily social, she explains and illustrates that morality applies even and especially to man alone. A man must choose to think. Rand maintains that rationality, the primary virtue, requires the exercise of six derivative virtues that can be viewed as expressions of rationality: honesty, independence, justice, integrity, productiveness, and pride (i.e., moral ambitiousness).⁴

A Masterful Integration of Philosophy and Political Economy

Atlas Shrugged is an integrated masterpiece of philosophy, politics, and economics. It is an economically literate novel that provides economic enlightenment.⁵ Based on an analysis of reality, it is well-informed on economics and can be viewed as a treatise on political economy providing a literary treatment of proper economic principles, concepts, issues and themes. This great novel portrays a growing crisis of interventionism and systematic government failure and presents a thorough defense of a totally unregulated market system. In her literary passages, Ayn Rand is able to

⁴ For an excellent discussion of the role of the virtues in human flourishing, see Smith (2006).

⁵ Another fine economically literate novel is Henry Hazlitt's *Time Will Run Back* [1966]2007, originally published as *The Great Idea* in 1951.

teach the lessons of market-oriented economics in a far more memorable and engaging manner than what can be found in books and articles on economics.

To begin with, *Atlas Shrugged* masterfully depicts the role of individual initiative and creativity in economic progress. Rand shows, especially through Galt's strike, that the mind is the fundamental source of wealth and profits. It is the thinkers who are the true creators of wealth and who are crucially responsible for prosperity. It is capitalists, industrialists, and entrepreneurs such as Hank Rearden, Dagny Taggart, Ken Danagger, Ellis Wyatt, and Midas Mulligan who reshape the world by being prime movers in the marketplace. These top individuals in the pyramid of ability contribute much more to prosperity than those at lower levels in the hierarchy. It is the competent thinkers and doers who create wealth and promote human economic prosperity through innovation and the creation of new enterprises. It is these self-actuating rational valuers who propel the world and sustain it. Much of *Atlas Shrugged* is a study of the great producers who have the ability to see, to make connections, and to create what has not been seen before. *Atlas Shrugged* makes a convincing case that (1) the mind is at the root of the creation and maintenance of wealth; (2) the passionate producer is the prime mover and visible hand in markets; and (3) the rational, purposeful, and creative character of the human person is reflected in the act of material production.

According to Horwitz (2007, 226–236), in his “Money Speech” Francisco explains that money is made possible only by men who produce. Money is a tool of exchange which presumes productive men and the results of their activities. Wealth is thus the source of money. Money is the effect, rather than the cause, of wealth. The money that a person holds symbolizes production that has already occurred and that has been judged as valuable by other people. When an individual takes money as his reward for his work he does so in order to exchange it for products and services made possible by other individuals.

Money must be earned through the production of goods and/or services, and production requires the use of reason. This fact is recognized by the heroes of *Atlas Shrugged*. The villains, however, think that money is meaningful no matter how it is obtained. Ignoring the need to produce, the looters try to get money through the use of altruism and coercion. They attempt to evade the fact that life demands production.

Atlas Shrugged in general and Francisco's speech in particular emphasize that it is production which initiates demand for other products and

services—production is the source of demand. *Atlas Shrugged* thus portrays and explains Say’s Law of Markets which states that supply constitutes demand. Production is primary and is a precondition to consumption. An individual can only demand products and services from others if he has previously successfully marketed his own products and/or services. People who consume need to produce in order to obtain money that can be exchanged for other products and services. (Salsman 1997, 2011)

Francisco explains that money is, or should be, an objective standard of value tied to reality in order to act as an integrator of economic values. An objective standard tied to reality requires an objective commodity such as a unit of gold. Gold is the means of preserving wealth and value. Money prices based on such an objective standard accurately express people’s judgments regarding the value of goods and services. Francisco makes clear that this role of money is eroded by inflation. Inflation extinguishes the signaling function of money prices. He says that the debasement of money, through the substitution of paper for gold, is the road to the downfall of society.

Caplan (2007, 215–224) explains that in *Atlas Shrugged* the reader is able to see how regulations in a mixed economy are actually made. Rather than to advance the so-called “public interest,” in reality regulations frequently further the private financial interests of political insiders at the expense of others. Political interest groups lobby for contradictory measures, and the government grants favors to those who have the most votes, political pull, or influence at any given moment. A good example in *Atlas Shrugged* is the “deal” through which the Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule and the Equalization of Opportunity Bill result.

The Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule ostensibly imposes a ban on “destructive competition” by granting seniority to the oldest railroad operating in a given region of the country. Although the stated reasons for the rule are to recognize historical priority and to avoid a transportation shortage, its real purpose is to put Dan Conway’s superb Phoenix-Durango Railroad, Taggart Transcontinental’s competitor for the Colorado freight traffic, out of business. The result is the sacrifice of one of the most productive members of the National Alliance of Railroads (Conway) to further Taggart’s less productive company.

James Taggart uses his political friendships with steel producer Orren Boyle to influence the National Alliance of Railroads to pass the Anti-dog-eat-dog Rule. In turn, Boyle employs Taggart to use his influence in Washington in order to strip Hank Rearden of his ore mines, delivering them

in turn to Paul Larkin, who would provide Boyle with the first chance to obtain the ore.

Boyle agrees to provide the votes needed in the National Alliance of Railroads, and in exchange Taggart uses his Washington connections to pass the Equalization of Opportunity Bill which forbids any one person or corporation from owning more than one type of business concern. This, of course, prevents Rearden from owning the mines that supply him with the resources that he needs. In order to preserve the steel industry, “as a whole” (i.e., to save Boyle’s company), Rearden is stripped of his ore mines which are then placed in the hands of someone else who will give Boyle first priority for the ore. Although the stated rationale for the Equalization of Opportunity Bill is that it is unfair to permit one individual to own several business enterprises, the hidden agenda is to allow Boyle’s unproductive Associated Steel to compete with the more efficient Rearden Steel. The result is the sacrifice of Rearden’s productive firm for Boyle’s unproductive company.

Throughout *Atlas Shrugged*, both the government and liberal politicians say that people must sacrifice for the public welfare. *Atlas Shrugged* illustrates the tragic consequences of following the principle of need rather than the principle of productivity and of adhering to the communist slogan “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.”

For example, the State Science Institute does not want Rearden to put his new metal on the market because of the “social damage” it will cause to steel producers (like Orren Boyle) who can’t compete with him. When Rearden says that he does not worry about other firms, the State Science Institute attempts to bribe and eventually to threaten Rearden to keep his new metal off the market. Rearden understands that true corporate social responsibility is to make profits for the owners while respecting the natural rights of individuals.

Then there is the story of the destruction of the Twentieth Century Motor Company due to the results of the Starnes heirs’ small-scale socialist experiment.⁶ Illustrating the consequences of communism in practice, the employees as a group vote to decide the needs of each worker as well as the expected production of each laborer based on an assessment of his ability. The story of this company shows that when earnings are not based on

⁶ A thorough discussion of the details and consequences of the Starnes Plan at the Twentieth Century Motor Company is provided in *Atlas Shrugged* when Dagny encounters Jeff Allen, a former employee of the company when the plan was introduced (Rand 1957, 616–27).

production, incentives diminish, productivity plummets, and bankruptcy results. It thus serves as a precursor for the ultimate fate of a country as a whole that is heading toward collectivism (Boettke 2007, 179–187; Bostaph 2007, 207–214).

The Twentieth Century Motor Company has constructed its own “society” based on a combination of Marxian and Rawlsian principles of justice that assign priority to the poorest, weakest, and most needy (i.e., “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need”). This system, based on some vague standard of fairness and on the nonrecognition of individual rights, is an inevitable failure.

In addition, there are the Colorado Directives which are intended (at least officially) to help with the national emergency by forcing Colorado to share the suffering. These directives were due to the efforts of economic interest groups who wanted the industrially successful state of Colorado to force its profitable firms to redistribute their earnings. Of course, these laws put Wyatt Oil and other firms out of business and wiped out the Rio Norte Line. Ultimately, these destructive directives hastened the retirement and disappearance of many Colorado industrialists who had created enormously productive enterprises and who had been forced to carry less competent businessmen along with them. Ellis Wyatt and other Colorado industrialists refuse to work under imposed conditions that would result in the destruction of firms that attempted to abide by them.

We also encounter the Railroad Unification Plan and the Steel Unification Plan. The Railroad Unification Plan was James Taggart’s desperate scheme to keep Taggart Transcontinental from going out of business by means of existing off its competition. The plan provides that the total profits of all railroad companies be allocated according to the number of miles of track each owns instead of according to the amount of service that each supplies. Then there is the Steel Unification Plan which would bankrupt Rearden. The Steel Unification Plan is patterned after the Railroad Unification Plan. All of the steel companies’ earnings are to be rewarded according to the number of furnaces each owns. Because Boyle has a great many idle furnaces he would be paid for almost double his actual output. In turn, Rearden would be paid for less than half of his actual output. Both the Railroad Unification Plan and the Steel Unification Plan require companies to produce “according to each one’s ability” with the profits to be allocated “according to each firm’s need.”

Directive 10-289 provides the knockout punch to economic freedom in *Atlas Shrugged* (Boettke; Caplan; Bostaph). Its purported purpose is to stop

the country's economic decline by freezing the economy in its present state. The directive employs comprehensive central government planning to freeze the status quo. It actually allows top government officials and politically-connected businessmen to retain power and enhance their own control of the economy. This directive mandates that all workers remain at their current jobs, that no business is permitted to close, and that all patents and copyrights be "voluntarily" turned over to the government. It also forbids the introduction of new products and innovations and requires firms to annually produce a number of goods identical to the number produced during the preceding year. In addition, the directive freezes all wages, prices, and profits, and requires every person to spend the same amount of money as he did in the preceding year. It prevents businesses from adjusting expenses and making other strategic and tactical decisions. Of course, given that appeals for exceptions can be made to the Unification Board, such government control inevitably leads to the buying and selling of economic favors.

Galt's Gulch (also known as Mulligan's Valley and Atlantis) sharply contrasts with Directive 10-289 and with the mode of operations of the Twentieth Century Motor Company. Atlantis is a microcosm or model of a free society enshrouded by the collapsing interventionist one. This paradigm of a free society consists of a voluntary association of men held together by nothing except every man's self-interest. Here productive men who have gone on strike are free to produce and trade as long as they observe the valley's customs. In this secret free society each individual is unencumbered in the pursuit of his own flourishing and happiness. In Galt's Gulch justice is based on the recognition of individual rights and individual achievement.⁷

As we have seen, *Atlas Shrugged* contains a great deal of economic content. In it Rand provides a literary description of economic institutions and conditions within a particular context. She is able to explain the proper principles and workings of a free market system. Rand skillfully illustrates the cause and effect relationships of events in a society's economy. As a lesson in economics, *Atlas Shrugged* illustrates the necessity to analyze the immediate and long-term, direct and indirect, and intended and unintended consequences of a governmental action or policy. Rand explains that the mind is the source of well-being and that the mind must be free to invent and produce new products and services. *Atlas Shrugged* illustrates that government intervention discourages innovation and risk-taking and obstructs the process

⁷ For detailed analyses of the operation of Galt's Gulch see Sechrest (2007) and Bostaph (2007).

of wealth creation. It also demonstrates that wealth is not causeless and that by removing the cause (i.e., the mind) the strike removes the effect (i.e., wealth). Capitalism is thus shown to be the only moral economic system because it protects a man's mind, his primary means of survival and flourishing.

Characterization and Character Development

Rand adeptly presents the nature of the heroes and villains in *Atlas Shrugged* in terms of their motives. Her main means of characterization are actions and dialogue (i.e., "words in the context of a character's actions"). By observing a Randian character's actions and hearing his conversations, a reader is able to grasp the motives of the character and to discern what is at the philosophical root of that character. Rand masterfully integrates a character's internally consistent actions, decisions, and words with his motives. The particular details she presents are related to wider fundamental abstractions and deeper motivations of the character presented. A man's basic values and premises form his character and inspire him to action (Rand 2000, 58-63).

Rand's characters are formulated with reference to philosophical principles and premises. Her character development involves characters making their philosophical premises ever more explicit. They either follow up and build upon the logic of true premises, continue to follow false premises, correct their false premises, or betray their formerly held true premises (Salmieri).

In her stylized portraits of the characters in *Atlas Shrugged*, Rand presents no random details and focuses on the essentials to understanding each character. The challenge in characterization is to present that which is essential to a particular type of person. By eliminating irrelevant and trivial attributes and actions, her characters become moral projections. Rand's characters are persons in whom certain characteristics and behaviors are pinpointed more constantly and distinctly than in typical persons (Gladstein 2000, 62-3; Rand 1975, 87-9). Her method of slanted realism is to focus selectively on motives, traits, and especially actions that constitute character differences. Rand realizes that what a hero or villain in a novel does paints him better than what he says and enormously better than whatever the author may say about him. A man's actions always reveal key aspects of his character. By excluding superficial or accidental facets of a character's personality, Rand makes certain that attention is not averted from essential purposes and motives. As a result, the reader is able to gain clear and deep insight into her characters.

Each character in *Atlas Shrugged* serves a purpose and each one is an integral part of the entire structure. Rand integrates the characters into the story through the creation of bonds between the various characters.

According to Bidinotto (53):

Good drama is built on conflict. But strong conflict requires extremely willful characters pursuing incompatible goals tied to the story's theme. Their conflicts build powerfully throughout the story, until they're finally resolved in a climax that demonstrates that theme ... Ayn Rand shared this view of good fiction writing. In *Atlas*, her theme is the importance of reason to human life. Her plot, characters, dialogue, and descriptions all reinforce and advance that theme.

Rand is a master of orchestration as evidenced by her matching different kinds of characters against one another. At the most general level we have the looters and the non-looters (i.e., the thinkers and producers). At a more micro level the reader is able to gain clear and deep insight into characters such as the self-made martyred industrialist on mixed moral premises (Hank Rearden), the ideal epic heroine (Dagny Taggart), the supremely able man who enjoys an exalted life on earth (Francisco d'Anconia), the brilliant scientist turned moral traitor and looter-politician (Robert Stadler), the envious nihilist death worshiper (James Taggart), the vacuous power luster (Lillian Rearden), the pivotal character who forces the conflict from beginning to end (John Galt), and so on.

Salmieri contrasts the heroes (i.e., the producers) and the villains (i.e., the looters) with respect to their motivations and worldviews. The heroes are motivated by final causes and are rationally purposeful. Their lives have directionality and unity of purpose and they recognize the role of the mind in man's life. In contrast, the villains are not finally caused—they are merely efficiently caused as they are moved by outside forces. They are unlike the heroes who, as prime movers, initiate courses of action in pursuit of their ultimate goals. Heroes, like Dagny, understand and follow causality and are focused on doing things better and on earning their profits. The villains are portrayed as malicious, purposeless (or at best having short-term irrational purposes), and as seeking the unearned. *Atlas Shrugged's* villainous characters manifest different forms of irrational thought, actions, and pronouncements as Rand skillfully has the various villains expound a variety of economic and other fallacies. This technique aids in developing their characterization.

The looters are proponents of high taxation, big labor, government ownership, government spending, government planning, regulation, and redistribution. They include politicians and their supporters, "intellectuals," government bureaucrats, scientists who sell their minds to the bureaucrats,

and liberal businessmen who, afraid of honest competition, sell out their initiative, creative powers, and independence for the security of government regulation. The non-looters—the thinkers and doers—are the competent and daring individualists who innovate and create new enterprises. These prime movers love their work, are dedicated to achievement through their thought and effort, and abhor the forces of collectivism and mediocrity. The battle is thus between non-earners who deal by force and “profit” through political power and earners who deal by trade and profit through productive ability and enterprise.

Darryl Wright (2007)⁸ explains that the looters are impervious to reason and always believe that the “prime movers” will come to their aid and save them. The looters also want to reverse the order of cause and effect. They believe that by expropriating the wealth of the creators they will gain unearned moral status and self-esteem, but the world does not work that way. By being rational and productive, a man gains moral status and self-esteem, and as a consequence, creates truly-earned wealth. It follows that wealth is the effect of one’s moral status. The looters engage in self-deception in order to fake their moral status and self-esteem to themselves. They use the code of altruism in their efforts to transfer moral status and self-esteem from those who have earned them to those who have not earned them. Rather than attempting to earn wealth, self-esteem, and the respect of others, the looters seek to obtain money, the result of production, through the use of altruism and/or government force.

Ayn Rand’s monumental *Atlas Shrugged*, presents the businessman in a realistic, favorable, and heroic image by emphasizing the possibilities of life in a free society, the inherent ethical nature of capitalism and the good businessman, the strength and self-sufficiency of the hardworking man of commerce, and the value of the entrepreneur as wealth creator and promoter of human economic progress. *Atlas Shrugged* shows the businessman’s role as potentially heroic by celebrating the energy and opportunity of life for men of talent and ability to make something of themselves. This great novel teaches that acts of courage and creativity consist in following one’s sense of integrity rather than in blind obedience, and in inspiring others instead of following them. *Atlas Shrugged* portrays the business hero as a persistent, original, and independent thinker who pursues an idea to its fruition. Rand’s 1957 masterpiece dramatizes the positive qualities of the businessman by showing the triumph of individualism over collectivism, depicting business heroes as

⁸ Much of the material found in Darryl Wright’s 2007 audio course can also be found in his 2009 essay in Robert Mayhew’s (ed.) *Essays on Ayn Rand’s Atlas Shrugged*.

noble, appealing, and larger than life, and by characterizing business careers as at least, if not more, honorable as careers in medicine, law, or education.⁹

Rand, like Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, holds an agent-centered approach to morality and concentrates on the character traits that constitute a good person. Reading *Atlas Shrugged* prompts people to reflect on what is constitutive of a good life. Rand's heroes are shown to hold proper principles and to develop appropriate character traits. The villains in the novel provide examples of what happens to people when they hold faulty principles (or compromise certain important principles) and fail to develop essential virtues.

Atlas Shrugged illustrates that there are good and bad businessmen and that businessmen don't always act virtuously. There are two kinds of businessmen—those who lobby government for special privileges, make deals, as well as engage in fraud and corrupt activities. Then there are the real producers who succeed or fail on their own.

Rand's business heroes are independent, rational, and committed to the facts of reality, to the judgment of their own minds, and to their own happiness. Each of them thinks for himself, actualizes his potential, and views himself as competent to deal with the challenges of life and as worthy of success and happiness (Locke 2000, 2009). *Atlas Shrugged* makes a great case that the businessman is the appropriate and best symbol of a free society. Rand shows that, because life requires the production of values, people in business are heroic. The heroes of *Atlas Shrugged* find joy in taking risks and bringing men and materials together to produce what people value.

Atlas Shrugged chronicles the rise of corrupt businessmen who pursue profit by dealing with dishonest politicians. They avoid rationality and productivity by using their political pull and pressure groups to loot the producers. Rand is scathing in her indictment of these villains who would rob the creative thinkers who are responsible for human progress and prosperity.

Wright describes the looters as secondhanders who exploit the creators in both physical and spiritual concerns. They attack reason through government directives that supercedes the rational judgment of the creators. They assault purpose by reducing the selection of attainable goals down to those dealing with crises. In addition, they attack the self-esteem of the producer by advocating the morality of altruism which holds that the pursuit of happiness is a source of guilt. The looters employ need, weakness, and incompetence as a demand on the creators. They claim that it is permissible

⁹ For invaluable discussions of businessmen as heroes and prime movers see Locke (2000), and Ralston (ed.) (2000), Locke (2009), and Debi Ghate (2009).

and desirable to receive altruistic “gifts” if a person is weak, suffering, or incompetent.

Onkar Ghate (2004, 335–355) explains that the unreason of the looters is exemplified by James Taggart. The looters as secondhanders exploit the creators both materially and spiritually. Taggart is anti-effort and has the need to feel superior. For him, abstract ideas are meaningful only as a tool to bring or keep people down. For example, ideas like “public interest” and “social responsibility” are used to destroy the Phoenix-Durango Railroad, Taggart’s main competitor in Colorado. Feeling a deep sense of inferiority, Taggart desires the unearned when it comes to physical or spiritual concerns. He does not have any positive ambitions or purposes. He is aimless, wants political influence, and sees only the opportunity to destroy. He seeks to destroy value because it is value. Although he wants to get unearned money, he does not view money as a value. Being on the death premise, his goal is to destroy the values required by life. Taggart rationalizes, evades, and disregards his responsibility to think. As a whimworshipper, he wants consciousness to control existence. He thinks that all he has to do is to “want” something. He wants to become rich without earning any wealth and wants to be loved and admired without earning the right to be loved and admired. Taggart desires a world in which reason and purpose are not required to survive and flourish in it. Rebelling against life and existence, he conceals his nihilism even from himself. He simulates concern with values that promote life. He is under the illusion that obtaining wealth and “success” without effort or rational thought will give him moral status and self-esteem. Ultimately, the self-deceived Taggart’s desire to steal becomes a desire to destroy values even though such destruction will result in the loss of his own life.

Kirsti Minsaas (1995) has drawn attention to Rand’s considerable use of analogy in her characterizations. The purpose of this device of presenting characters as parallels and contrasts is to allow the reader to perceive a character’s distinctive nature through comparison with other characters. Her characters are presented contextually as she employs other characters as contrasts that draw out and emphasize each character’s uniqueness. Minsaas explains that such analogical juxtapositions permeate Rand’s novels. An awareness of this network of parallels and contrasts enhances the reader’s understanding of the characters. According to Minsaas, Rand’s use of parallels and contrasts stems from her epistemology. Rand applies her theory of concept formation in portraying her characters. This involves observing similarities and differences between them in order to comprehend their underlying motivations and conceptual and moral nature.

Rand's use of contrasts allows her to illustrate what it means for a human being to be a fully integrated person. At least three of her fictional heroes reflect mind-body integration through their total integrity and consistent loyalty to rational principles. These three are John Galt, Francisco d'Anconia, and Dagny Taggart. Dagny, the primary narrator of *Atlas Shrugged* is arguably the most developed character of these three and can be contrasted with two other characters who accept two different versions of the mind-body dichotomy—Hank Rearden and Robert Stadler.

Achiever and creator, Dagny Taggart, the intellectual equal of Ayn Rand's male heroes, is perhaps the strongest female protagonist in Western literature. Free of inner conflict, she is passionately creative and comfortable with respect to her fundamental relationship to existence. She is a model of synthesis, unity and mind-body integration. Dagny personifies the values of independence, individualism, purpose, and self-actualization.

Dagny is an engineer and the operating vice-president of a transcontinental railroad, who deals with every industry and every policy of the looters. Because of her integrating context, she has contact with every industry, thus permitting the reader to see the total collapse of modern industrial civilization.

Dagny, like Hank Rearden, is a self-initiator who goes by her own judgments and is the motive power of her own happiness. Unlike Rearden, she does not feel guilty for her achievements. Dagny is a purposeful, strong, and passionately creative embodiment of mind-body unity. She understands that the world lives because of the work of the prime movers and then hates them for it. The parasites both need the creators and despise them at the same time. They desire to exploit the creators and then make them take blame for their actions. Dagny realizes that it is because producers are concerned with nature and reason that they are able to create within the reality of an objective and knowable universe. According to Dagny, "the sight of an achievement was the greatest gift a human being could offer to others." (Rand 1957, 222) She knows that material production is an expression of man's highest aspect—his creative mind. It is the mind that enables men to deal with physical reality. Dagny recognizes that the creators are expected to feel guilty for their virtues. Of course, the creators are guilty only of not claiming their moral value and virtues.

Dagny chooses romantic partners who affirm her positive sense of life, which involves the integration of values, love, and sex. She understands that love is an emotional response, as are friendship and admiration, when one encounters a person who embodies his or her values. Dagny's romances with Francisco, Rearden, and Galt exemplify what a relationship between two

integrated and self-actualized persons can be. Her relationships illustrate that sex is the supreme form of admiration of one human being for another and that the values of one's mind are connected to the actions of one's body.

Although Dagny is a paragon of mind-body integration, she does not fully understand the world's situation and is conflicted because of this lack of knowledge. Salmieri notes that Dagny thinks that the strikers are "giving up." Although she realizes that it is wrong to live and work under the rule of the looters, she also believes that it is immoral and dishonorable to surrender the world to them. She views quitting as a form of resignation or capitulation. Dagny does not want to give up Taggart Transcontinental but does not realize that by staying in the world she is giving the looters the means to enslave her. By remaining in the world she is sanctioning her enemies' moral code. Her willingness to continue to fight the looters in the world indicates that she does not fully understand the full value of herself and of the other producers.

At one point in the novel, Dagny is on a "mini-strike" of herself when Directive 10-289 is passed. The Taggart Tunnel Disaster is an effect of this directive and of Dagny's absence. She is not there to advise regarding the situation. The disaster is the effect of the mind's absence and thus concretizes the novel's theme of the importance of the mind in man's existence.

Salmieri explains that for most of the story Dagny wrongly believes that the looters love their lives and that they want to live. We could say that she is on the "wrong track." She thinks that she can make them see the truth and that she can win the battle. Dagny did not want to abandon the greatness of the world of the producers. Throughout Part Three of the novel she progressively comes to realize that the irrational looters are indifferent, purposeless, and do not value their lives. This begins to become apparent to her when she meets with Mr. Thompson and the other looter-politicians. At that point she is on the verge of understanding that the strike is required by the nature of existence and is thus the embodiment of rational egoism. She and the other heroes will ultimately realize that the looters' irrational doctrines are not errors of knowledge but instead are conscious breaches of morality.

Throughout most of the novel, Dagny believed she was right to go on in an incomprehensible world that is somehow stopping her from achieving her values. She needed to check her premises. She did not comprehend that Taggart Transcontinental and other great enterprises are only values in a certain context and that the required context of freedom no longer existed in the looters' world. She ultimately realizes that the looters do not value her

products or those of the other producers. By the end of the story, she understands what motivates the looters. At the close of the novel she understands the contradictions in her principles and the need to go on strike. She realizes that there is no chance of winning by staying in the world of the looters. Dagny recognizes that justice cannot be attained by submitting to injustice.

Dagny has a fuller and more explicit conception of morality than Rearden does and is more morally consistent than he is. Her error is that she does not fully understand the looters' moral code and motives. She understands that their policies have the effect of keeping the men of the mind from functioning at their best but she does not grasp that such obstruction is, in fact, their intention. This is an intention that they desire to hide even from themselves. It is inconceivable to Dagny that the looters actually want to destroy the creators. Their motive becomes fully clear to her when they want to torture and/or kill Galt rather than to switch course and rescue themselves. It becomes apparent to her that she must quit when she realizes that the looters do not desire to live and that they are motivated by hatred for Galt and the other prime movers, for themselves, and for existence. Prior to this point she believed that the looters would eventually comprehend the uselessness of their policies and would concede. Because she thought that they were rational and that they wanted to live she fought to save Taggart Transcontinental and to force the looters to give up (Wright).

Hank Rearden, a great industrialist who accepts the mind-body dichotomy, is the primary human instantiation of Atlas in Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*. He is a master of reality whose erroneous surface ideas do not corrupt his essential character and subconscious in terms of his psychopistemology. Although Rearden's words and ideas sanction an unearned guilt, his actions belie his words. Down deep he does not believe the notion of the mind-body split.

Rearden is a self-made man who is devoted to productive work and achievement. In the beginning of the novel his existence is schizophrenic and compartmentalized with a most satisfying work life and a bad family life. Hank works passionately and enthusiastically and then feels guilty about it. His family members, especially his nihilist wife Lillian, desire to destroy his greatness and do all they can to make him feel guilty for his productivity, work ethic, and rational achievement. As a result, Rearden feels a guilty sense of obligation toward his family and attempts to atone, in an altruistic sense, to their many accusations.

Hank and the other industrialists are the worst victims of the conventionally accepted altruist-collectivist philosophy. It is the mistaken

sanction of the men of ability that paves the way for the parasites and statist looters who want the creators to produce for the world and then to suffer for doing so. A moral code based on altruism and the idea of a mind-body split holds the creators guilty because of their greatest virtues. This moral code is used as a weapon against Rearden who does penance by sentencing himself to many years of selfless service to his family and to the looters. Once Rearden and the other producers gain an understanding of the looters' evil and of the importance of their own morality, they will attain the sense that life is about accomplishment and joy rather than about suffering and disaster.

Not only is he a constant victim of the looters, his relatives, and his associates, Hank also views his passion for Dagny Taggart as animalistic and degrading. When Rearden finds himself desiring Dagny, his split-self experiences a meltdown. Riddled with guilt, Hank is worried about his wife and his lack of virtue. He considers his forced love for his wife to be virtuous and thinks that his authentic love for Dagny is wrong and a guilty pleasure. Early in the novel, Hank has concluded that sex is purely physical, degrading, lustful, sinful, and of no spiritual meaning. Although Rearden himself is a very sexual being, he regards sex as a lower bodily urge.¹⁰

For a great part of the novel, Rearden experiences an internal civil war between the principles of the creators in his work and the principles of the looters and moochers in the rest of his life. Hank desperately needs to import to his personal life the same principles that he uses in his productive life. It is under the tutelage of Francisco and Dagny that Rearden slowly awakens to the truth, understands the motives of the looters and of his family, and realizes his own virtues and values. They assist Hank in integrating his productivity and sexual desire with each other and with his self-worth.

Salmieri explains that throughout the novel Rearden comprehends more deeply and progressively the causes of, and interrelationships between, the various problems he faces in his personal life and work life. The story of his liberation from guilt is one in which many strands and threads of his new realizations are woven together. For example, he sees the connection between the guilt surrounding the sale of Rearden Metal to Ken Danagger and the guilt associated with his affair with Dagny. Throughout the novel the connection between economics and romance becomes ever more explicit. By the end of the story he understands the evil of the idea of the mind-body dichotomy.

Rearden's discussion with Francisco at James and Cheryl's wedding reception aids in Rearden's liberation from guilt. Francisco introduces a more

¹⁰ For more on this see Brown (2007).

philosophical perspective to Rearden and to the readers when he tells Rearden that he is willing to bear too much suffering. This talk gives Rearden a moral sanction and leads him to realize that he has been guilty in accepting a wrong moral code and of giving the looters and his family a moral sanction based on that wrong code of morality. He comes to understand that he should not accept condemnation from a false moral code. Rearden learns from Francisco that the guilt is his own because he has been willing to bear punishment for what were really his virtues.

Throughout much of the novel Rearden needs to absolve himself of his unearned and undeserved moral guilt that had damaged his moral estimate of himself and of his capability for self-esteem. He needed to attain a belief in his own morality and in his right to self-esteem. His limited tacit approval of the ethics of altruism was behind his failure to comprehend the role and existence of moral values and ideals in his life (Wright).

Hank Rearden's decision to go on strike takes a long time to develop. Until his discussion with Tinky Holloway and the other looters regarding the proposed Steel Unification Plan, Rearden had thought that the looters would ultimately be rational. During this encounter the looters make irrational claims on Rearden to produce for them. Under the Steel Unification Plan, Rearden will go bankrupt no matter what his output happens to be and Orren Boyle's Associated Steel will receive the majority of Rearden's profits. After the confrontation, Rearden drives back to his mills, happens upon the dying Wet Nurse, is saved by Francisco (disguised as worker "Frank Adams"), and listens to Galt's logic as delivered to him by Francisco. In the next chapter, "The Concerto of Deliverance," Rearden disappears to Mulligan's Valley. Now seeing the truth, he recognizes that he must give up the world in order to save it.

By understanding morality and himself in terms of the metaphysical principle of mind-body integration, Hank is freed from the self-sacrifice ethics that underpin his servitude. It is Rearden's inner conflict that drives the plot and it is his liberation from his mistaken premises and ultimate conscious acceptance of his subconscious Objectivist premises that resolve the conflict. In the end he no longer holds his greatest virtues as his guilt.¹¹

Wright explains that Dagny and Rearden's misjudgment is that they consider evil to be powerless and view the looters' policies as self-defeating. They do not understand for much of the story that these are impotent unless they are empowered by the good (i.e., by themselves and the other creators). It is only the producers' toleration and tacit acceptance of the looters' moral

¹¹ For more on Hank Rearden's mind-body dichotomy see Murr (2007).

code that makes the devastating results possible. They had allowed their enemies to write the moral code. Before Dagny and Rearden can effectively battle their enemies, they must come to understand how they are complicit in their own victimization. Irrational (i.e., evil) people and their schemes can only succeed if they are helped and supported by rational (i.e., good) individuals.

Atlas Shrugged demonstrates that the greater a person's productive ability, the greater are the penalties he endures in the form of regulations, controls, and the expropriation and redistribution of his earned wealth. This evil, however, is made possible only by the sanction of the victims. By accepting an unearned guilt—not for their vices but for their virtues—the achievers have acquiesced in the political theft of their minds' products. *Atlas Shrugged* shows the creators being sacrificed to the parasites and also dramatizes that the irrational looters need the assistance of rational people in order to “succeed”. The moral code of self-sacrifice is used against and accepted by the creators who are made to feel guilt for their achievements and wealth. This is the “sanction of the victim” moral principle. The fact that Galt understands this principle and that Dagny and Rearden fail to comprehend it, establishes the major plot conflict in the story. In order to fight the altruist foundation of statist political economy, the men of the mind will need to withdraw their sanction.

Tibor Machan (2007, 77) takes issue with a particular characterization of the “sanction of the victim” as advanced by both Rand and Peikoff:

Rand states that the thrust of the idea is that “it is the good, the able, the men of reason, who act as their own destroyers, who transfuse to evil the blood of their virtue and let evil transmit to them the poison of destruction” (Rand 1957, 972-3; 1961, 165). And it is Peikoff (1976) who states that “The ‘sanction of the victim’ is the willingness of the good to suffer at the hands of the evil, to accept the role of sacrificial victim for the ‘sin’ of creating values. Rand’s statement in her letter to me is more precise: “[The sanction of the victim is] accepting as a sin the thing which [is one’s] greatest virtue and the greatest of all human virtues: [one’s] rationality, the desire to know and to understand.” She does not suggest that those who do this are good, morally good, that is. The reason this is more accurate is that those who freely comply with evil done to them are not, at least in that respect, morally good.

Rand’s emphasis on rationality in her letter (1962) to Machan is in accord with her portrayal of rationality as the basic moral virtue in *Atlas Shrugged*.

Rearden, Dagny, and the other prime movers suffer spiritually and begin to view life as a mental weight and weary load rather than as a joy.

Rearden's spiritual exploitation runs deeper than Dagny's. Rearden lacks an explicit awareness of morality that Dagny possesses. He is open to attack because in his conscious beliefs he is oblivious to morality. Whereas Dagny never questions her right to her own happiness and self-esteem, Rearden does question his right to them. This destroys him spiritually and produces the foundation for his material exploitation. His partial acceptance of altruism despiritualizes his pursuit of happiness and his capacity for self-esteem. Rearden does not explicitly realize that he is operating by a moral code in his work life. Of course, he does so implicitly. His work life epitomizes morality as it leads to production, life, and life-enhancing values. Although he was proud of his thinking and acting, he did not explicitly identify these as moral and virtuous. He failed to identify the source of his pride as a moral value and as morally justified (Wright).

Robert Stadler, a man of great intelligence and Director of the State Science Institute, is a Plato-like character who holds a theoretical versus applied science split. He is a cynical and brilliant theoretical physicist and intellectual elitist who believes that most people are corrupt, stupid, and incapable of virtuous behavior and that only a rare handful of men are open to reason. Stadler is contemptuous of applied science and material production. He is a thoroughgoing Platonist who thinks that the human mind, reason, and science exist on a higher realm that has nothing to do with life on earth.¹²

Stadler resorts to the extortion of citizens to finance his theoretical noncommercial projects. Why would a man with such a great mind tragically turn to the use of brute force to get the funding he desires? The answer is that Stadler concludes that his work must be sustained through government force because he thinks that reason is impotent in the world. Because he wants unearned material wealth for his laboratory, he aligns himself with the statist brutes and looters and their barbarous methods. Stadler thinks that the role of the mind is to deal with a higher realm of reality that is divorced from this world and that, therefore, the mind is inefficacious in dealing with this world. He deduces that brute bodily power is dominant in a world in which most people are irrational, emotional, and impervious to reason. Because most individuals can't appreciate science, he needs a state-backed science institute to force people to finance his research. John Galt recognizes that Stadler, his former professor at Patrick Henry University, is a traitor to the mind and breaks with him when he endorses and joins the State Science Institute. At one time, Stadler would say that the phrase "free scientific

¹² Long (2007) observes that Stadler is the primary fictional embodiment of Platonic dualism in *Atlas Shrugged*.

inquiry” was redundant. He later insists that government is necessary to conduct scientific inquiry.

Floyd Ferris, top coordinator of the State Science Institute, has written a book called *Why Do You Think You Think?* Stadler knows that this book is trash but he does nothing to condemn it. It contains many of the same ideas as those espoused by Dr. Simon Pritchett at the Rearden’s wedding anniversary party earlier in the story. Ferris’s book is filled with “ideas” of “thinkers” such as Hume, Kant, Hegel, and Marx. Advancing the notion of skepticism, Ferris says that, because knowledge is impossible, man should act according to his instincts and feelings. He defends materialism and says that the brain is an instrument of distortion. Ferris goes on to say that only contradictions exist—reality is contradictory and unknowable. He is attempting to give people a reason not to think. He wants them to accept, adjust, and obey. Ferris is a power-luster who wants to be a dictator. Stadler not only gives his tacit approval to Ferris’s outrageous book, he actually begins telling the public that people think too much and that they should leave the thinking to the elite. This is the very message that Ferris is promoting! He wants to attack and destroy men’s minds thus paving the way for him to control them.

Stadler, a man once with a great mind, chooses to renounce the mind by throwing in with the force-wielders. Believing that the thinkers are his enemies, he seeks dictatorial physical power over others and, in the end, is destroyed by his own power-lust. Stadler is doomed once he turns his mind over to the brutes. He is destroyed because he mistakenly thinks that he can survive by joining the power-lusters. At that point, the men of the mind become his enemy alongside the looters who always were his enemy given that Stadler, at least in the beginning, was one of the thinkers. Ultimately, Stadler has nowhere to go. Toward the end of the novel he realizes that, if Galt and the other men of the mind are victorious, he will be repudiated as a traitor to the mind and that, if the looters win, he will be shackled to the irrational brutes. At the end of the story, Stadler, the great mind who once yearned for other great minds, wants to have John Galt murdered!¹³

¹³ Andrew Bernstein (1995; 1996; 2001) provides in-depth and detailed perceptive analyses of Dagny Taggart, Hank Rearden, Robert Stadler, and many more of *Atlas Shrugged’s* dramatic characters in his audio courses. Readers interested in gaining a greater understanding of Rand’s characters and process of characterization are encouraged to listen to Bernstein’s more thorough and systematic explanations along the same lines as the brief character descriptions provided above.

The Philosophical Speeches

The lengthy, philosophical speeches in *Atlas Shrugged* are integrated components of the plot, make explicit the principles dramatized throughout the actions of the novel, and move the story onward. For example, Francisco's "money speech" attends to Rearden's moral turmoil, frees him from his feelings of guilt, aids him in his trial, and moves him toward joining the strike.

Salmieri observes that Francisco's money speech is an abstract summation of many points previously dramatized in the first part of the novel. Specifically, Francisco explains that reason is the root of production, that production is the root of money, that money is destroyed without these prior roots, and that there is a moral difference between trade and force. This speech provides Rearden with new knowledge that will be important for his liberation from guilt (e.g., at his trial) as well as with gaining gratitude from Francisco. He also learns to enjoy the wealth that he has earned from his production especially when he buys luxury items for Dagny—Rearden gains pleasure through such purchases.

In addition, Galt's speech on the radio ties together all the ideas previously dramatized in action in the novel, leads to Galt's capture and the story's climax, hastens the collapse, and makes the rebuilding of society easier. Galt's speech is necessary in order to understand the climax of the novel. When the looters hear his speech, they realize that he is the best thinker in the world and thus search for him in order to enlist his help in saving the deteriorating economy. It is the speech that moves Galt from mythical to concrete status in the novel. The events and actions prior to the speech provide the inductive evidence needed to derive the principle that "the mind is man's tool of survival." By then the reader and the American people in the novel have seen the men of the mind in the world, their gradual disappearance, the effects of the looters' policies, and the resulting crumbling of the world. It is a matter of justice for Galt to tell the people what he has done. It is through this speech that Galt demonstrates the value of the men of the mind. Galt's long speech is warranted because the detailed and complex events previously presented concretize the message given in his speech. The knowledge contained in Galt's speech is what convinced the strikers earlier in the novel to abandon their firms and to retreat to Galt's Gulch. The philosophy of the morality of life embodied in the speech is what the producers needed to hear and accept in order for them to realize their own greatness and to stand up against the looters. Galt's speech was not given until the American people were ready to hear it (Bernstein 1995; Ghate 2001; 2009, 363–374). In large part, his Objectivist statement is addressed to the common but rational listeners in an effort to gain their support by going

on strike themselves. In his audio course, Onkar Ghate explains that after a brief introduction, Galt's speech is broken into three parts: (1) the Morality of Life (i.e., The Code of the Producers); (2) the Morality of Death (i.e., The Code of the Looters); and (3) the importance of choosing the morality of life (i.e., acting as a rational human being).

A national broadcast by Mr. Thompson, the Head of the State, is interrupted by Galt who, in a three-hour speech, spells out the tenets of his philosophy (Rand 1957, 923–79). Among his many provocative ideas is the notion that the doctrine of Original Sin, which holds man's nature as his sin, is absurd—a sin that is outside the possibility of choice is outside the realm of morality. The Fall of Adam and Eve was actually a positive event since it enabled man to acquire a mind capable of judging good and evil—man became a rational moral being. Another provocative idea is that both forced and voluntary altruism are evil. Placing the welfare of others above an individual's own interests is wrong. The desire to give charity, compassion, and pleasure unconditionally to the undeserving is immoral.

Galt explains that reality is objective, absolute, and comprehensible and that man is a rational being who relies upon his mind as his only means to obtain objectively valid knowledge and as his “basic tool of survival.” The concept of value presupposes an entity capable of acting to attain a goal in the face of an alternative. The one basic alternative in the world is existence versus non-existence. “It is only the concept of ‘Life’ that makes the concept of ‘Value’ possible.” An organism's life is its standard of value. Whatever furthers its life is good, and that which threatens it is evil. It is therefore the nature of a living entity that determines what it is good or bad for it, and for those living things that can choose, it is the ultimate basis for now life is to be lived (and thus what ought or ought not to be done).

Galt identifies man's life as the proper standard of man's value and morality as the principles defining the actions necessary to maintain life as a man. Because life as a man is one's purpose, he has “a right to live as a rational being.” To live, man must think, act, and create the values his life requires. In other words, since a man's life is sustained through thought and action, it follows that the individual must have the right to think and act and to keep the product of his thinking and acting (i.e., the right to life, liberty, and property).

He asserts that since men are creatures who think and act according to principle, an enforced doctrine of rights ensures that an individual's choice to live by those principles is not violated by other human beings. All individuals possess the same rights to freely pursue their own goals. These rights are innate and can be logically derived from man's nature and needs—the state is

not involved in the creation of rights and merely exists to protect an individual's natural rights. Because force is the means by which one's rights are violated, it follows that freedom is a basic good. Therefore, it follows that the role of government is to "protect man's rights," through the use of force, but "only in retaliation and only against those who initiate its use" (Ghate 2001; 2009, 363–374; Gladstein 98–106; Stolyarov 2007, 99–106; Gotthelf 2009, 375–395).

Mind-Body Integration

Atlas Shrugged illustrates the inextricable linkage of the mind and the body. In it Ayn Rand argues that the rational, purposeful, and creative character of the human person is reflected in the act of material production. The mind, man's highest and noblest aspect, enables him to deal with physical reality in order to create wealth and abundance that sustain and promote his practical survival and flourishing on earth. Productivity involves the use of reason to adapt nature to man's life requirements (Rand 1997, 549–51).

Likewise, *Atlas Shrugged* teaches, especially in the romance between Dagny and Rearden, that love is rooted in reason and that sexual choice is the result of a person's basic convictions and values. Sex is a "celebration of life," the ultimate form of admiration and respect of one person for another, and the physical expression of a person's spirit. Just as productive activity is the conversion of values into physical form, "sex is the means and form of translating spiritual admiration for a human being into physical action (606–7). In an important way the romance between Dagny and Hank ties the entire story together and shows that production and sex have a mutual essence that joins them (465). The same principles used in one's creative (i.e., productive) life are applied to one's personal life.

Atlas Shrugged demonstrates that man is an indivisible entity that can only be separated for purposes of discussion. There are inextricable linkages and correspondences between one's mind, body, and actions. It follows that the values of one's mind are not disconnected from the actions of his body. Cartesian dualism of mind and matter is incompatible with true human existence. Man is an indivisible union of consciousness and matter (551).

Galt's speech embodies the principles of integration at the core of Objectivism. During the period in which she was working on this sixty-page speech Rand commented:

You had set every part of you to betray every other, you believed that your career bears no relation to your sex life, that your politics bear no relation to the choice of your friends, that your values bear

no relation to your pleasures, and your heart bears no relation to your brain—you had chopped yourself into pieces which you struggled never to connect—but you see no reason why your life is in ruins and why you’ve lost the desire to live? (661-62)

Rand’s integrated worldview totally rejects the mind-body dichotomy and all of the additional mistaken dichotomies that are based on it. According to Sciabarra (2007, 26):

By connecting reason and production, thought and action, theory and practice, fact and value, morality and prudence, Rand intended to uncover the “deeper, philosophical error” upon which these various dichotomies were based. As such, *Atlas Shrugged* was designed to “blast the separation of man into ‘body’ and ‘soul,’ the opposition of ‘matter’ and ‘spirit’” (551). Rand rejected the metaphysical dualists who had bifurcated human existence. She proclaimed in her journal that “Man is an indivisible entity.” Mind and body “can be considered separately only for purposes of discussion, not in actual fact,” she explains. Thus, in the projection of her “ideal man,” John Galt, there is “no intellectual contradiction and, therefore, no inner conflict” between mind and body (29 June 1946 in Rand 1997, 512).

It was this kind of “indivisible union” (663) that Rand glorified in her exalted conception of human sexuality as a response to values. She explained in her journals that she had wanted to concretize the “essential, unbreakable tie between sex and spirit—which is the tie between body and soul” (6 October 1949, 609).

Sciabarra (2007, 26) explains that:

In Rand’s view, the “spiritual” does not pertain to an other-worldly faculty. The “spiritual” refers to an activity of human consciousness. Reason, as “the highest kind of spiritual activity,” is required “to conquer, control, and create in the material realm” (551). Rand does not limit material activities to purely industrial production. She wishes to “show that *any* original rational idea, in any sphere of man’s activity, is an act of creation” (550). This applies equally to the activity of industrialists and artists, businessmen and intellectuals, scientists and philosophers. Each of these spheres is accorded epistemological significance—and supreme respect.

Atlas Shrugged masterfully illustrates that the production of goods, services, and wealth metaphysically precedes their distribution and exchange. The primacy of production means that we must produce before we can consume. Production (i.e., supply) is the source of demand. This means that products are ultimately paid for with other products. It follows that the passionate producer is the prime mover and visible hand in markets (Salsman

1997). Production, like existence, is primary and rests on the laws of identity and causality. Recognizing the integration of mind and body, Rand illustrated in *Atlas Shrugged* that the rational, purposeful, and creative character of human creation is manifested in the act of material production.

Social Change

Ideas are the most powerful forces in the world and the motive power of human progress. Fortunately, there exists a novel that: articulates a theoretically-consistent, systematic, and intellectually-sound defense of capitalism; expounds the principles of traditional liberalism, voluntary cooperation, and individual freedom; and exposes the errors of collectivism and coercionism. This novel is *Atlas Shrugged*. As moral warriors for capitalism, we can use this great novel to disseminate the conceptual and moral foundations of a free society. We can use the novel to introduce people to the idea of the free market as a moral institution and not solely as a means for efficient production. *Atlas Shrugged* is an excellent means to market these ideas. It is an accessible, interesting, and exciting work that presents an integrated case for freedom and against collectivism. *Atlas Shrugged* is a powerful tool to educate, persuade, and convert people to support a just and proper political and economic order that is a true reflection of the nature of man and the world properly understood.

Ayn Rand understood that the American Revolution had been partial and unfinished. This understanding was one of her reasons for writing *Atlas Shrugged*. In *Atlas Shrugged*, she demonstrated what was needed to complete the American Revolution. Rand saw that the Founders' political revolution was not accompanied by a needed revolution in moral philosophy. The Founders had continued to espouse an anti-individualistic moral code grounded in Judeo-Christian ethics based on altruism. The failure to derive a proper and coherent moral theory of individual rights resulted in the subordination of self-interest to the notions of the public interest and the common good. What was needed was a firm philosophical underpinning to finish the work of the American Revolution. Through the demonstration and explication of a new code of morality in *Atlas Shrugged*, Rand supplies the missing ingredient of the American Revolution (Mayer, 2008, 191–219).

Onkar Ghate (2007) has called *Atlas Shrugged* America's "second declaration of independence" which has the potential to bring about an intellectual change in the culture. He explains that each individual needs an explicit moral statement of his own self-worth. The original Declaration of Independence did not fully provide this moral statement due to the mystical Christian altruistic morality revealed in the Founders' writings. *Atlas Shrugged*

offers a new conception of the moral ideal and can be viewed as a “declaration of moral independence.” Whereas the Founding Fathers taught people not to accept undeserved political serfdom, *Atlas Shrugged* teaches people not to accept an unearned guilt, not for their vices but for their virtues.

The Declaration of Independence was not methodologically committed to individualism—it spoke in collective terms such as “rights of the people” and “one people.” In turn, the Constitution did not define rights, give a principled explanation of them, or assign the government the limited and narrow role of protecting and enforcing their rights (Jackson, 2005, 405–444).

From the beginning, Ayn Rand intended *Atlas Shrugged* to be a “much more social novel than *The Fountainhead*” (Rand 1997, 398). She wanted to write a novel that would mainly be a portrait of the whole focusing on the relationships that make up society (392). Viewing each social problem from a transdisciplinary and multidimensional perspective, Rand dismissed all suggested one-sided solutions as inadequate and fragmentary.

According to Sciabarra (2007, 23)

Atlas Shrugged explores these relations in every dimension of human life. It traces the links between political economy and sex, education and art, metaphysics and psychology, money and moral values. It concentrates on the union of spiritual and physical realms and on the specific, concrete means by which certain productive individuals move the world, and by which others live off of their creations. It shows the social importance of the creative act by documenting what would happen if the prime movers, the ‘men of the mind,’ go on strike.

Sciabarra (24-25) continues:

As I have suggested in my book, *Ayn Rand: The Russian Radical*, Rand’s mature analytical framework reaches its apex in *Atlas Shrugged*. In this work, it can be said that Rand examines a collapsing social order and its dysfunctional social relations on three distinct analytical levels:

Level 1: The Personal. On this level, Rand explores the mystics’ epistemological and psychological assault on reason and the human mind, as well as the altruistic ethical inversion that is required of each individual who submits to the edicts of statist politicians. Such submission entails the ‘sanction of the victim,’ without which the whole coercive edifice would be undermined.

Level 2: The Cultural. On this level, Rand explores the utter cultural, educational, and artistic bankruptcy of a society at war with human

creativity, as well as the linguistic use of euphemism as a legitimating ideological tool of the politically privileged.

Level 3: The Structural. On this level, Rand is concerned with the devastation of economic and political structures wrought by statist regulations, prohibitions, and controls on production, which foster a tribalist war of all against all.

The novel shows how each of these levels entails relations among entities—Rand's characters, who are individual human beings acting purposefully within their given social context. In Rand's conception, the relations on these three distinct levels of generality—the personal, the cultural, and the structural—can only be abstracted and isolated for the purposes of analysis, but never reified as wholes unto themselves. The levels are *both* preconditions *and* effects of one another. This has vast strategic implications for social praxis, for the techniques of social change: A genuine revolution against the structural corruptions of politics and economics cannot succeed without a corresponding personal and cultural transformation.

In *Total Freedom* (2000), Sciabarra cautions us not to reduce the study and defense of freedom to economics or politics with an inadequate understanding of the interconnections between the philosophical, the historical, the personal, and so forth. Sciabarra's message is that libertarians need an effective strategy that recognizes the dynamic relationships between the personal, political, historical, psychological, ethical, cultural, economic, and so on, if they are to be successful in their quest for a free society. He explains that attempts to define and defend a nonaggression axiom in the absence of a broader philosophical and cultural context are doomed to fail. Typical libertarian opposition to state intervention is not enough. Libertarians must pay greater attention to the broader context within which their goals and values can be realized. The battle against statism is simultaneously structural (political and economic), cultural (with implications for education, race, sex, language, and art) and personal (with connections to individuals' tacit moral beliefs, and to their psychoepistemological processes). The crusade for freedom is multidimensional and takes place on a variety of levels with each level influencing and having reciprocal effects on the other levels.¹⁴

It is possible to analyze society from different vantage points and on different levels of generality in order to develop an enriched picture of the many relationships between the various different areas. It cannot just be dictated from the political realm, but must filter through all of the various

¹⁴ For more on dialectics as context-keeping, see Welsh (2008).

levels and areas. Any attempt to understand or change society must entail an analysis of its interrelations from the perspective of any single aspect.

People need to understand both the necessity for objective conceptual foundations and the need for cultural prerequisites in the fight for the free society because some cultures promote, and others undermine, freedom. Freedom cannot be defended successfully when severed from its broader requisite conditions. We must attempt to grasp and address all of freedom's prerequisites and implications. Ayn Rand's greatest legacy to mankind, *Atlas Shrugged*, addresses all of these prerequisites and implications, serves as a blueprint for the future, and is a potential source for social change.

David Kelley (2007, 41-49) maintains that *Atlas Shrugged* is still relevant and no less important today than it was fifty years ago. He is convinced, as so many of us are, that its message will still matter in the coming years. As he puts it:

Atlas Shrugged is a timeless work, because it is a philosophical work. Much in the book is dated, to be sure, but not its philosophical core. *Atlas* is a ringing defense of capitalism as the only social system consistent with human nature and human values. It lays out in dramatic form the worldview on which a capitalist society depends; that human life in this world is the standard of value and morality; that reason is man's means of survival and the glory of his nature; that production, not sacrifice, is the most exalted form of human activity; that producers are the Atlases who carry our world on their shoulders; that thinking, creating, and producing are activities of individuals, who must be free to act on their own judgments, following their own visions; that the individual has the moral right to live for himself and to pursue his own happiness, and does not need to justify his existence by service to God or country (41).

A Fully-Integrated Philosophical Novel

Atlas Shrugged concretizes through hierarchical, progressive, and inductive demonstration Rand's systematic philosophy of Objectivism. In her great novel Rand dramatizes grand themes and presents an entire and integrated view of how a man should live his life. She does this by providing an abstract and holistic moral perspective on the concretes presented in the novel. Rand is able to both concretize abstractions and to draw abstractions from a number of concretes. She is able to project in action what each abstraction means. Rand's great power comes from her ability to unify everything in the text to form an integrated whole. The major theme of *Atlas Shrugged*, the role of reason in man's life, is embodied in every event, character, and line of dialogue. As a great novel of romantic realism, *Atlas*

Shrugged magnificently demonstrates that men can objectively and rationally know the good and can freely choose the good. The theme and plot are inextricably integrated. Rand is a superb practitioner of synthesis and unity whose literary style and subject are organically linked and fused to the content of her philosophy. She unifies the many aspects of *Atlas Shrugged* according to principles of reality. Rand made many revisions and changes in this novel to make certain that everything fit together.¹⁵ Believing that a novel should be an end in itself, she created *Atlas Shrugged* as a remarkably integrated organic whole. There have been many good philosophical novels but none have been as brilliantly integrated and unified as *Atlas Shrugged*. *Atlas Shrugged* is arguably the greatest combination of philosophy and literature written to date.

References

- Bernstein, Andrew. 1995. *Philosophic and Literary Integration in Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Seven audio lectures. New Milford, Connecticut: Second Renaissance Books.
- . 1996. *Ayn Rand's Fictional Characters as Philosophical Archetypes-Part One*. Four audio lectures. New Milford, Connecticut: Second Renaissance Books.
- . 2001. *Ayn Rand's Fictional Characters as Philosophical Archetypes-Part Two*. Four audio lectures. New Milford, Connecticut: Second Renaissance Books.
- . 2007. Transfiguring the Novel: The Literary Revolution in *Atlas Shrugged*. *The Objective Standard*. 2, 3 (Fall). 47-66.
- Bidinotto, Robert James. 2007. *Atlas Shrugged* as Literature. *The New Individualist* (October): 50-55.
- Boettke, Peter J. 2007. The Economics of *Atlas Shrugged*. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 179-187.

¹⁵ Knapp (1998) illustrates and describes in her original archival research that Rand was a disciplined artist who made many additions, subtractions, and other changes.

- Bostaph, Sam. 2007. Ayn Rand's Atlantis as a Free Market Economy. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkings. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 207-214.
- Branden, Nathaniel and Barbara Branden. 1962. *Who Is Ayn Rand?* New York: Random House.
- Brown, Susan Love. 2007. Beyond the "Stillborn Aspiration": Virtuous Sexuality in *Atlas Shrugged*. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkings. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 279-91.
- Caplan, Bryan. *Atlas Shrugged* and Public Choice: The Obvious Parallels. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkings. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 215-24.
- Contkoski, Edmund. 1997. *Makers and Takers*. Minneapolis: Minnesota: American Library Publishers.
- Ghate, Debi. 2009. The Businessmen's Crucial Role: Material Men of the Mind, in *Essays on Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Robert Mayhew. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 299-316.
- Ghate, Onkar. 2001. *A Study of Galt's Speech*. Five audio lectures. New Milford, Connecticut: Second Renaissance Books.
- . 2004. The Death Premise in *We The Living* and *Atlas Shrugged*. In *Essays on Ayn Rand's We the Living*. Edited by Robert Mayhew. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books. 335-356.
- . 2007. *Atlas Shrugged: America's Second Declaration of Independence*. Two Audio Lectures. New Milford, Connecticut: Second Renaissance Books.
- . 2009. The Role of Galt's Speech in *Atlas Shrugged* in *Essays on Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Robert Mayhew. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 363-374.
- Gladstein, Mimi Reisel. 2000. *Atlas Shrugged: Manifesto of the Mind*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Gotthelf, Allan. 2009. Galt's Speech in Five Sentences (and Forty Questions) in *Essays on Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Robert Mayhew. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 375-395.

- Hazlitt, Henry. [1966] 2007. *Time Will Run Back*. Auburn, Alabama: Ludwig von Mises Institute.
- Horwitz, Steven. Francisco d'Anconia on Money: A Socio-Economic Analysis. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 225-236.
- Hunt, Lester H. Some Structural Aspects of *Atlas Shrugged*. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 57-62.
- Jackson, Candice E. 2005. Our Unethical Constitution. *Journal of Ayn Rand Studies* 6, no. 2 (Spring): 405–44.
- Kelley, David. 2007. A Philosophy for the 21st Century. *The New Individualist*. (October): 40–49.
- Knapp, Shoshana Milgram. 1998. *Ayn Rand's Drafts: The Labors of a Literary Genius*. Two audio lectures. New Milford, Connecticut: Second Renaissance Books.
- Locke, Edwin A. 2000. *The Prime Movers*. New York: AMACOM.
- . 2009. The Traits of Business Heroes, in *Essays on Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Robert Mayhew. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 317–334.
- Long, Roderick T. 2007. Forced to Rule: *Atlas Shrugged* as a Response to Plato's Republic. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 89–97.
- Machan, Tibor R. *Atlas Shrugged's* Moral Principle of the Sanction of the Victim. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 75-88.
- Madden, Russell. 2007. Fuel for the Soul. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 167-175.
- Mayer, David N. 2008. Completing the American Revolution: The Significance of Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* at Its Fiftieth Anniversary, *Journal of Ayn Rand Studies* 9, no. 2 (Spring): 191–219.

- Mayhew, Robert, ed. 2009. *Essays on Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Merrill, Ronald E. 1991. *The Ideas of Ayn Rand*. Chicago, Illinois: Open Court.
- Minsaas, Kirsti. 1994. *Structure and Meaning in Ayn Rand's Novels*. Audio lecture. Principal Source Audio.
- . 1995. Concept Formation and the Fiction of Ayn Rand (Lecture) *Institute for Objectivist Studies*. Summer Seminar.
- . 2007. Ayn Rand's Recasting of Ancient Myths in *Atlas Shrugged*. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Murr, Virginia. 2007. The Price of Passivity: Hank Rearden's Mind-Body Dichotomy, In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 295–300.
- Peikoff, Leonard. 1997. *Unity in Epistemology and Ethics*. Eight audio lectures. New Milford: Connecticut: Second Renaissance Books.
- . 2004. *The DIM Hypothesis: The Epistemological Mechanism by Which Philosophy Shapes Society*. Fifteen audio lectures. New Milford, Connecticut: Second Renaissance Books.
- . 1976. *The Philosophy of Objectivism*. Lecture Series.
- Plauché, Geoffrey Allan. 2007. On *Atlas Shrugged* and the Importance of Dramatizing Our Values. *Journal of Libertarian Studies*. 21, 4: 25–36.
- Rand, Ayn. 1957. *Atlas Shrugged*. New York: Random House.
- [1971] 1975. *The Romantic Manifesto: A Philosophy of Literature*. Second revised edition. New York: Signet.
- . 1961. *For the New Intellectual*. New York: New American Library.
- . 1964. *The Virtue of Selfishness*. New York: New American Library.
- . 1997. *Journals of Ayn Rand*. Edited by David Harriman. New York: Dutton.

- . 2000. *The Art of Fiction*. Edited by Tore Boeckmann. New York: Plume.
- . 2000. *Why Businessmen Need Philosophy*. Edited by Richard E. Ralston. Ayn Rand Institute Press.
- Rasmussen, Douglas B. The Aristotelian Significance of the Section Titles of *Atlas Shrugged*. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 33-45.
- Salmieri, Gregory. 2007. *Atlas Shrugged as A Work of Philosophy*. Four audio lectures. New Milford, Connecticut: Second Renaissance Books.
- . 2009. Discovering Atlantis: *Atlas Shrugged's* Demonstration of a New Moral Philosophy, in *Essays on Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Robert Mayhew. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 397-452.
- Salsman, Richard. 1997. *The Invisible Hand Comes to Life: Economics in Atlas Shrugged*. Two audio lectures. New Milford, Connecticut: Second Renaissance Books.
- . 2011. Economics in *Atlas Shrugged*. *The Objective Standard* 6, 1 (Spring).
- Sciabarra, Chris Matthew. 1995. *Ayn Rand: The Russian Radical*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- . 2000. *Total Freedom: Toward a Dialectical Libertarianism*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- . 2007. *Atlas Shrugged: Manifesto for a New Radicalism*: In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 23-32.
- Sechrest, Larry J. 2007. *Atlas, Ayn, and Anarchy: A is A is A in Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 189-96.
- Seddon, Fred. 2007. Various Levels of Meaning in the Chapter Titles of *Atlas Shrugged*. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 47-56.
- Smith, Tara. 2006. *Ayn Rand's Normative Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Sowell, Thomas. 1987. *A Conflict of Visions*. New York: William Morrow and Company.
- Stolyarov, G. II. 2007. The Role and Essence of John Galt's Speech in Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*. In *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Edward W. Younkins. Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company: 99–106.
- Thomas, William, (ed.). 2005. *The Literary Art of Ayn Rand*. Poughkeepsie: The Objectivist Center.
- Welsh, John F. 2008. *After Multiculturalism: The Politics of Race and the Dialectics of Liberty*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Wright, Darryl. 2007. *Ayn Rand's Ethics from The Fountainhead to Atlas Shrugged*. Two audio lectures. New Milford, Connecticut: Second Renaissance Books.
- . 2009. Ethics: From *The Fountainhead* to *Atlas Shrugged* in *Essays on Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Edited by Robert Mayhew. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 253-273.
- Younkins, Edward W. (ed.). 2007. *Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged*. Aldershot: United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Company.