

To James Taggart—the eternal threat. The secret dread. The reproach. The guilt (his own guilt). He has no specific tie-in with Galt—but he has that constant, causeless, unnamed, hysterical fear. And he recognizes it when he hears Galt's broadcast and when he sees Galt in person for the first time.

To the Professor—his conscience. The reproach and reminder. The ghost that haunts him through everything he does, without a moment's peace. The thing that says: "No" to his whole life.

Some notes on the above: Rearden's sister, Stacy, was a minor character later cut from the novel.

"Francisco" was spelled "Francesco" in these early years, while Danneskjöld's first name at this point was Ivar, presumably after Ivar Kreuger, the Swedish "match king," who was the real-life model of Bjorn Faulkner in *Night of January 16th*.

Father Amadeus was Taggart's priest, to whom he confessed his sins. The priest was supposed to be a positive character, honestly devoted to the good but practicing consistently the morality of mercy. Miss Rand dropped him, she told me, when she found that it was impossible to make such a character convincing.

The Professor is Robert Stadler

This brings me to a final excerpt. Because of her passion for ideas, Miss Rand was often asked whether she was primarily a philosopher or a novelist. In later years, she was impatient with this question, but she gave her own answer, to and for herself, in a note dated May 4, 1946. The broader context was a discussion of the nature of creativity.

I seem to be both a theoretical philosopher and a fiction writer. But it is the last that interests me most; the first is only the means to the last; the absolutely necessary means, but only the means; the fiction story is the end. Without an understanding and statement of the right philosophical principle, I cannot create the right story; but the discovery of the principle interests me only as the discovery of the proper knowledge to be used for my life purpose; and my life purpose is the creation of the kind of world (people and events) that I like—that is, that represents human perfection.

Philosophical knowledge is necessary in order to define human perfection. But I do not care to stop at the definition. I want to use it, to apply it—in my work (in my personal life, too—but the core, center and purpose of my personal life, of my whole life, is my work).

This is why, I think, the idea of writing a philosophical non-fiction book bored me. In such a book, the purpose would actually be to teach others, to present my idea to them. In a book of fiction the purpose is to create, for myself, the kind of world I want and to live in it while I am creating it; then, as a secondary consequence, to let others enjoy this world, if, and to the extent that they can.

It may be said that the first purpose of a philosophical book is the clarification or statement of your new knowledge to and for yourself; and then, as a secondary step, the offering of your knowledge to others. But here is the difference, as far as I am concerned: I have to acquire and state to myself the new philosophical knowledge or principle I used in order to write a fiction story as its embodiment and illustration; I do not care to write a story on a theme or thesis of old knowledge, knowledge stated or discovered by someone else, that is, someone else's philosophy (because those philosophies are wrong). To this extent, I am an abstract philosopher (I want to present the perfect man and his perfect life—and I must also discover my own philosophical statement and definition of this perfection).

But when and if I have discovered such new knowledge, I am not interested in stating it in its abstract, general form, that is, as knowledge. I am interested in using it, in applying it—that is, in stating it in the concrete form of men and events, in the form of a fiction story. *This last* is my final purpose, my end; the philosophical knowledge or discovery is only the means to it. For my purpose, the non-fiction form of abstract knowledge doesn't interest me; the final, applied form of fiction, of story, does. (I state the knowledge to myself, anyway; but I choose the final form of it, the expression, in the completed cycle that leads back to man.)

I wonder to what extent I represent a peculiar phenomenon in this respect. I think I represent the proper integration of a complete human being. Anyway, *this* should be my lead for the character of John Galt. He, too, is a combination of an abstract philosopher and a practical inventor; the thinker and the man of action together . . .

In learning, we draw an abstraction from concrete objects and events. In creating, we make our own concrete objects and events out of the abstraction; we bring the abstraction down and back to its specific meaning, to the concrete; but the abstraction has helped us to make the kind of concrete we want the concrete to be. It has helped us to create—to reshape the world as we wish it to be for our purposes.

I cannot resist quoting one further paragraph. It comes a few pages later in the same discussion.

Incidentally, as a sideline observation: if creative fiction writing is a process of translating an abstraction into the concrete, there are three possible grades of such writing: translating an old (known) abstraction (theme or thesis) through the medium of old fiction means (that is, characters, events or situations used before for that same purpose, that same translation)—this is most of the popular trash; translating an old abstraction through new, original fiction means—this is most of the good literature; creating a new, original abstraction and translating it through new, original means. This, as far as I know, is only me—

my kind of fiction writing. May God forgive me (Metaphor!) if this is mistaken conceit! As near as I can now see it, it isn't. (A fourth possibility—translating a new abstraction through old means—is impossible, by definition, if the abstraction is new; there can be no means used by anybody else before to translate it.)

Is her conclusion "mistaken conceit"? It is now forty-five years since she wrote this note, and you are holding Ayn Rand's masterpiece in your hands.

You decide.

PART ONE

NON-CONTRADICTION

