it's not necessary, the creator's life and the nature of the universe do not require it, his life does not depend on others. Second, man is a being with free will; therefore, each man is potentially good or evil, and it's up to him and only to him (through his reasoning mind) to decide which he wants to be. The decision will affect only him; it is not (and cannot and should not be) the primary concern of any other human being.

Therefore, while a creator does and must worship *Man* (which means his own highest potentiality; which is his natural self-reverence), he must not make the mistake of thinking that this means the necessity to worship *Mankind* (as a collective). These are two entirely different conceptions, with entirely—(immensely and diametrically opposed)—different consequences.

Man, at his highest potentiality, is realized and fulfilled within each creator himself. . . .Whether the creator is alone, or finds only a handful of others like him, or is among the majority of mankind, is of no importance or consequence whatever; numbers have nothing to do with it. He alone or he and a few others like him *are* mankind, in the proper sense of being the proof of what man actually is, man at his best, the essential man, man at his highest possibility. (The *rational* being, who acts according to his nature.)

It should not matter to a creator whether anyone or a million or *all* the men around him fall short of the ideal of Man; let him live up to that ideal himself; this is all the "optimism" about Man that he needs. But this is a hard and subtle thing to realize—and it would be natural for Dagny always to make the mistake of believing others are better than they really are (or will become better, or she will teach them to become better or, actually, she so desperately *wants* them to be better)—and to be tied to the world by that hope

It is proper for a creator to have an unlimited confidence in himself and his ability, to feel certain that he can get anything he wishes out of life, that he can accomplish anything he decides to accomplish, and that it's up to him to do it. (He feels it because he is a man of reason . . .) [But] here is what he must keep clearly in mind: it is true that a creator can accomplish anything he wishes—if he functions according to the nature of man, the universe and his own proper morality, that is, if he does not place his wish primarily within others and does not attempt or desire anything that is of a collective nature, anything that concerns others *primarily* or requires primarily the exercise of the will of others. (This would be an *immoral* desire or attempt, contrary to his nature as a creator.) If he attempts that, he is out of a creator's province and in that of the collectivist and the second-hander.

Therefore, he must never feel confident that he can do anything whatever to, by or through others. (He can't—and he shouldn't even wish to try it—and the mere attempt is improper.) He must not think that he can . . . somehow transfer his energy and his intelligence to them and make them fit for

his purposes in that way. He must face other men as they are, recognizing them as essentially independent entities, by nature, and beyond his *primary* influence; [he must] deal with them only on his own, independent terms, deal with such as he judges can fit his purpose or live up to his standards (by themselves and of their own will, independently of him) and expect nothing from the others. . . .

Now, in Dagny's case, her desperate desire is to run Taggart Transcontinental. She sees that there are no men suited to her purpose around her, no men of ability, independence and competence. She thinks she can run it with others, with the incompetent and the parasites, either by training them or merely by treating them as robots who will take her orders and function without personal initiative or responsibility; *with herself, in effect, being the spark of initiative, the bearer of responsibility for a whole collective.* This can't be done. This is her crucial error.

This is where she fails.

Ayn Rand's basic purpose as a novelist was to present not villains or even heroes with errors, but the ideal man--the consistent, the fully integrated, the perfect. In *Atlas Shrugged*, this is John Galt, the towering figure who moves the world and the novel, yet does not appear onstage until Part III. By his nature (and that of the story) Galt is necessarily central to the lives of all the characters. In one note, "Galt's relation to the others," dated June 27, 1946, Miss Rand defines succinctly what Galt represents to each of them:

For Dagny—the ideal. The answer to her two quests: the man of genius and the man she loves. The first quest is expressed in her search for the inventor of the engine. The second—her growing conviction that she will never be in love . . .

For Rearden—the friend. The kind of understanding and appreciation he has always wanted and did not know he wanted (or he thought he had it—he tried to find it in those around him, to get it from his wife, his mother, brother and sister).

For Francisco d'Anconia—the aristocrat. The only man who represents a challenge and a stimulant—almost the "proper kind" of audience, worthy of stunning for the sheer joy and color of life.

For Danneskjöld—the anchor. The only man who represents land and roots to a restless, reckless wanderer, like the goal of a struggle, the port at the end of a fierce sea-voyage—the only man he can respect.

For the Composer—the inspiration and the perfect audience.

For the Philosopher—the embodiment of his abstractions.

For Father Amadeus—the source of his conflict. The uneasy realization that Galt is the end of his endeavors, the man of virtue, the perfect man—and that his means do not fit this end (and that he is destroying this, his ideal, for the sake of those who are evil).