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The Balance of Art and Philosophy in Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged

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Dedication

To my *beloved* family, *dearest* friends, and *esteemed* mentors.
I dedicate this work with sincere gratitude.

“Grand overtures of festive unisons command and keep, yet our utterances repeat such enjoyable laminations of virtue, escaping salvation.”

- Unknown

Acknowledgments

In the endeavor of completing this work, it is my duty and obligation to acknowledge and celebrate the assistance of several individuals of personal acquaintance and of not so personal as well.

My dear family. Parents of whom I know no better two persons who could raise a child to come to his own. Siblings who afforded me all they have and more of sibling love and affection.

My dearest friends who inspired, and inspire me still, to be everything I can be and everything they so wrongly think they cannot, they most certainly can.

Esteemed and respected mentors and teachers in all the waters I've dipped my feet into, and every journey I took. Whether in vocation, education, or life experience, I've always found persons who are ready and willing to light the path and guide the way.

Finally, I must credit my supervisor Mr. Salim Kerboua in helping me in ways he might not even know.

Abstract

To this day, Ayn Rand's position as a philosopher incites controversy in intellectual circles of social science, political theory, and mainstream philosophy. Rand attempted to present her worldview in narrative form before maturing and sculpting her ideas into a sustainable philosophical system of thought. This brief analysis aims at examining philosophical merit in relation to literary maturity in Ayn Rand's most famous work *Atlas Shrugged*. This work is set to be an acute intertwining of literary critique and philosophical evaluation, both introduced in their respective chapters in reference to Ayn Rand and her imprint on both worlds, and then brought to perspective as pertaining to *Atlas Shrugged*. In the last chapter, the analysis synthesizes the two preceding chapters to determine how organic the balance of literature, i.e. art, and philosophy is and whether either one has compromised the integrity of the other.

المخلص

لحد كتابة هذه الأسطر، تعتبر آين راند كفيلسوف شخصية مثيرة للجدل في الأوساط الأكاديمية للعلوم الاجتماعية، السياسية، و الفلسفة بشكل عام. حاولت راند من خلال كتاباتها تقديم نظرتها للعالم في شكل سردي قبل أن تتطور إلى تشكيلها إلى نظام فلسفي متكامل. يهدف هذا التحليل إلى فحص شرعية راند الفلسفية فيما يتعلق بالنضج الأدبي في أشهر أعمالها "أطلس ينتفض". تم تصميم هذا العمل ليكون تزوجا متشابكا بين النقد الأدبي و التقييم الفلسفي. كلاهما تم تقديمهما في فصل خاص به، في إشارة إلى البصمة التي تركتها آين راند في كلا الاختصاصين. ومن ثم تم التحليل من منظور الرواية "أطلس ينتفض". في الفصل الأخير، يركب التحليل نتائج الفصلين السابقين لتحديد توازن الأدب، أي الفن، و الفلسفة، و ما إذا كان أحدهما يهدد تواجد الآخر.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	I
Acknowledgments.....	II
Abstract.....	III
الملخص.....	IV
Table of Contents.....	V
General Introduction	1
Chapter one: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand	7
1.1. Historical and Cultural Context of Objectivism.....	8
.1.2 Objectivism: The Basics.....	10
.1.3 Objectivism in <i>Atlas Shrugged</i>.....	12
Chapter Two: Novelist Ayn Rand.....	16
.2.1 Literary History and Influence	17
.2.2 Literary Style and Technique.....	18
2.3. Literariness of <i>Atlas Shrugged</i>.....	22
Chapter Three: Philosophy and Art in <i>Atlas Shrugged</i>	27
3.1. Analysis of Use of Literary Elements.....	28
3.2. Organicity of Art/Philosophy Relationship.....	31
3.3. The Balance of Philosophical Content and Artistic integrity	32
General Conclusion	35
Works Cited	37

General Introduction

What makes morality and ethics philosophy's most contentious and nuanced area of thought? Metaphysics can be widely speculative. Phenomenology can be restricted in its own scientific realities. Epistemology can be lost in its own historicisms. However, Ethics is always accessible, always a topic of discussion, and more importantly, always a breeder of conflict.

Ethics and morality are closer to the social reality than any other philosophical area. They influence social systems that last and have lasted centuries and millennia. They start and they put a stop to radical paradigm-shifting culture wars. In the same way that wealth of resources moves the material world, or the Marxist base, so to do ethics moves the wars and conflicts of the social immaterial, or the Marxist superstructure. Ethics is a philosophical area where God himself is just another philosopher with his own theories and maxims and principles; just another player with his own horse on the racetrack down there with the rest.

Since the dawn of human thought, we have justified the practices of our own entire existence in however condition it was with certain assignments of virtue and vice upon our actions. Whether in the consequentialism of making judgement after the fact, or in the deontology of preset judgement of familiar action; this was the earlier form of the authoritarianism of ethics, legitimized by the prospect of common "good" outcome. Since then, many philosophers, thinkers, and religious leaders have thrown in, each with their own ethical and moral system, the ultimate guide for existence, the manual for leading the "good" life. Each of these systems or philosophical schools of morality is structured, more or less, very similarly to the rest. It starts with a diagnosis of the problems of the age, as something of a critique for the

social of psychological powers that be. Then it provides argumentation tailored to introduce solutions to those problems, with religions these solutions are mainly fantastical covers of actual antagonistic deadlocks that compromise the individual's healthy psychological and social being. The mid twentieth century was when Ayn Rand would take her seat at this ever expanding table of ethical systems.

Russian-American novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand is considered to this day to be an influential figure in philosophy and in political thought. Much of Ayn Rand's legacy is viewed in more infamy than reverence, especially in academia. Consequently, her literature and philosophy are prone to be dismissed in most academic circles. Her literary works received more than their fair share of criticism and, at times, aspersions, from critics, philosophers, media, and public alike. However, since their publication in 1943 and 1957 respectively, her two best-sellers *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* go on strong; and their popularity fiercely resisted what can be said to be an academic "disapproval" of Ayn Rand.

Born Alisa Zinovyevna Rosenbaum on February 2nd, 1905 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, Rand decided to be a novelist at the age of nine. Some months before, she was already reading profusely and developing an occupation for writing screenplays. At sixteen, she became one of the first women to enroll in the University of Petrograd, majoring in History. At Petrograd, Rand quickly developed a passion for political debates and identified herself especially with republican ideals. She became heavily influenced by Nietzsche and Aristotle; the latter she cites as her corporal philosophical influence, notwithstanding his Platonic aspects. Rand graduated from Petrograd in 1924, and around this time she changed her name. The name Ayn is speculated to be from the Hebrew, and Arabic as well, word for "eye". In 1926, Rand arrived at the United States, working odd writing jobs in Broadway and Hollywood. In 1936, her first novel *We, the*

Living was published, a semi-autobiographical work with not much success that is worthy of mention. Rand's breakout literary work was *The Fountainhead* in 1943, the novel was written during, and was nurtured by Rand's experience of short stints of political activism since 1940. *The Fountainhead* became an international success, and it brought Rand fame and financial security which helped sustain her career and her political activism. By 1957 came the pinnacle of Ayn Rand's literary career, her novel *Atlas Shrugged* was released. Despite unfavorable reviews and disappointing reactions from intellectual spheres, *Atlas Shrugged* made its way to become a worldwide best-seller. The novel's success ultimately opened the door for Rand towards philosophical legitimacy and allowed her to make the transition into non-fiction philosophy and to build her philosophical system of *Objectivism*.

Perhaps in defiance of the aforementioned intellectual and critical dismissiveness of *Atlas Shrugged*, the book sustained literary quality and philosophical influence. The many different literary aspects of *Atlas Shrugged* contribute to the delivery of the philosophical thought. The characterization of Henry Rearden, Dagny Taggart, and especially John Galt, is the aspect that is most done with philosophical design. Adding to that, the peculiar and imaginative, yet reflective of the American political and social order, settings for the story; the rollercoaster-y plot trajectory; the genre play and mix-and-match from romance to mystery to science fiction; the lucidly foregrounded thematic presence of Rand's philosophy.

It is the job of the writer to write, and that of the philosopher to think, and of the artist to make art. *Atlas Shrugged* sets out to perform all three while maintaining and respecting the appropriate amount of integrity that should be kept for each. Ayn Rand described art as: "... a selective re-creation of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgments". Meaning art is to be a vessel to philosophy, and philosophy in turn is to be the fuel of art; each must

preserve the other's soundness and they work together in coherent completeness. To find the balance is the writer's task. *Atlas Shrugged* ventured to achieve that balance.

At its core, *Atlas Shrugged* is a book that seeks the delivery of a philosophical message in artistic form. Settings, characterization, plot, themes, literary devices and techniques are all tools that Rand used to attempt voicing her thought into a structured novel form. The "literariness" of *Atlas Shrugged* and the overall artistic quality of the book is a subject of dispute. In previous Rand fiction i.e. *We, the Living*, the integration of the philosophical thought into the literary form was much at the latter's expense. However, seeing as how *We, the Living* and *Atlas Shrugged* are twenty years apart; and despite that even now, such a heavily philosophically driven novel as *Atlas Shrugged* remains too controversial a work to describe as literarily valuable, there is a possibility that Ayn Rand fiction achieved growth and literary maturity to be successful in this integration in that span of twenty years. In light of this possibility, this research seeks to explore the role of literary elements, devices and techniques in sustaining the stability and organicity of the relationship between art and philosophy in *Atlas Shrugged*. In other words, it aims to investigate whether the balance between art and philosophy is achieved.

To address the primary research problem, the issue at hand would have to be compartmentalized and later reassembled. Thus, the following sub-questions are to be undertaken: What are the basics of Ayn Rand's philosophy in *Atlas Shrugged*? What are the main concepts and ideas expressed? Secondly, what is Ayn Rand literary style, her writing M.O., her literary tools in *Atlas Shrugged*? And lastly, how does Rand adapt the philosophy into the narrative organically? And whether she maintains philosophical proficiency in balance with artistic quality.

Ayn Rand is an important writer of both American and world literature in the twentieth century. An investigation into her literary credentials is a legitimate prospect in criticisms and theorisms of twentieth century literature, art, philosophy, and social and political thought. It is also important in diligent literary studies to give renewed due attention to past writings, and especially at that, past writings that were to some extent disregarded by the academia and the intelligentsia of the time. And finally, to a lesser yet relevant extent, Ayn Rand continues to be an influential name; Thus, a re-vamping of academic methodical analytical work of her literary production is never unneeded or pointless.

This research aims chiefly at exploring the balance of art and philosophy in *Atlas Shrugged* as a primary researchable issue. In addition, it seeks to re-introduce Ayn Rand into the academic sphere and specifically literary studies. Lastly, to attempt to perform literary analysis on a fictional work which delivers a holistic philosophical message, i.e. Objectivism.

Methodologically, this research relies on descriptive, qualitative methodological approaches. That is to say, it describes philosophical subject matter and analyzes literary style and language as well. When it comes to the analysis, an eclectic combination of text-based critical theories, such as formalism and an intent stylistic discourse analysis of dialogue and narrative. Elements of other critical theories such as psychoanalysis and biographical criticism will also be utilized.

Chapter one: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand

Introduction

The opening chapter of this research is dedicated to first addressing Ayn Rand's philosophy of Objectivism. A basic understanding of the ideas Ayn Rand propagates and structures into a system is crucial to discerning its incorporation in the literary work and dissecting how its relationship with the artwork functions. The first concern of this chapter is that a philosophical movement or school when studied or assessed must be put with historical and cultural context. Hence, the first section of historical and cultural context of Objectivism draws a picture of the circumstance of culture in the west surrounding Ayn Rand's crucial years of conceiving Objectivism. The second section, is a brief layout of Objectivism's basics, with special regard to the philosophical areas of metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics; with the aim to articulate the Objectivist contribution in these areas. The last section simply aims to identify Objectivist principles and concepts in *Atlas Shrugged*, the work subject to this research.

1.1. Historical and Cultural Context of Objectivism

The time when Rand would create her philosophy of Objectivism was a time when culture in the western world would take radical paradigm shifts, that were almost to the complete opposition of what Objectivism would be. The sixties of the last centuries were overwhelmed with revolutions in political thought, media, and social reality. A post-modern western world that was reconfigured geopolitically in a grand scale by a second world war awakened a generation of children who witnessed the contribution of World War II to the inherent deadlocked antagonisms of the western social and political reality, such as class and race conflict, cultural oppression in media, and intellectual stagnation of thought in academia.

The revolutions did in fact inspire change, although not the fantastical radical change hoped for by Marxist intellectuals, as several western countries started implementing more socially conscious policies of wealth distribution, media representations and liberties, and military non-interventionism, albeit indirect. In the United States, where Rand lived, the legislature passed monumental civil rights laws especially to bridge the racial gap in the racially tense state of the nation at the time. In addition, several welfare policies and government social programs for housing, education, employment, and nutrition were introduced and implemented with the intent to ease class conflict.

In culture, the sixties saw powerful advocating of cultural liberation, and of dismantling oppressive social constructs that prevent certain practices that were designated by the revolutionaries as individual rights to be independent from political control and not subject to social dictation. Freedom of sexuality and sexual expression, sexual permissiveness and its

media representations were key causes in a cultural revolution mobilized in part by feminist movements, empowered by like-minded Marxist and Post colonialist intellectual allies.

Meanwhile, as the western civilization was experiencing this almost cataclysmic shakeup, Ayn Rand was a Russian immigrant with already two hugely successful novels: *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), as Andrew Bernstein expressed: “Ayn Rand's novels are beloved by the American people and by many others around the world. The *Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*, for example, have each sold millions of copies and continue to sell well over 100,000 copies annually, decades after their publications” (Bernstein, 2008).

With a seeming imperviousness to the symptoms of a coming revolutions, Rand’s personal history and experience as a soviet citizen prepared and gave her a disposition for championing enlightenment and republican ideals.

1.2. Objectivism: The Basics

Objectivism is the philosophical system of metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, politics, and even aesthetics designed by Ayn Rand through the course of her literary and intellectual career. The system itself was improved upon frequently by Rand in her later articles, lectures, and interviews, adapted to constantly provide answers to the major questions of the five aforementioned philosophical areas. Objectivists view the system as an all-encompassing philosophy with answers and perspectives to any given philosophical question that relates to the realities of those areas. Leonard Peikoff, the designated heir to Rand herself, stated regarding his sweeping account of Objectivism: “I have covered every branch of philosophy recognized by Miss Rand and every philosophic topic—from certainty to money, logic to art, measurement to sex—which she regarded as important...” (Peikoff, 1991). With this declared mission statement of the intent to cover as much philosophical thought as can be covered, Objectivists set out on this path by detailing the contribution they are to make in every topic.

Objectivist metaphysics are founded in three main dicta: identity, existence, and consciousness. For identity, Ayn Rand links action and the very nature and functionality of causation to the being’s specific nature i.e. its Identity. The identity of the being/entity is directly, and without any intermediary concepts or constructs as post-modernists would claim, responsible for action and causation. Consequently to this establishment of the direct link, Rand defines the nature and functionality, and mechanisms, of causation as “The law of identity applied to action” (Rand, 1992). It is worth mentioning that the Objectivist label of *entity* as opposed to the post-modernist term of the *subject* already illustrates the stark contrast between Objectivism and Post-modernism. The dictum of *existence* was created to distinguish the *something* from *nothing*, to wit, an entity with no attributes that base and perpetuate all of its

possessed knowledge does not exist in metaphysical terms. Finally, *consciousness* is Objectivism's Lockean concept of that which perceives, and in perception it asserts the existence of an independent reality that which it's able to perceive in the first place, Therefore in metaphysical terms as well, having the *consciousness* proves the existence of reality that keeps the consciousness occupied, and herein lies the metaphysical link. In summary, identity, existence, and consciousness are the trifecta of metaphysics in Objectivism.

Epistemology in Objectivism describes the supremacy of *reason*, especially in the classical Enlightenment definition and use, in acknowledging first the existence of knowledge, and then the need for attaining and retaining this knowledge about reality. This supremacy of reason is defined by its position as *the* processor of perceptual information, through characteristically classical Enlightenment scientific method of deductive and inductive reasoning, as Rand decried reason as: "the faculty that identifies and integrates the material provided by man's senses" (Rand, 1964). The reasoning itself is, to objectivists, the authority on knowledge; and as knowledge is built and/or investigated, reason becomes the authority on epistemology.

When it comes to Ethics, it is the foregrounded philosophical area in the objectivist system. Mainly geared and oriented towards an ethicality centered on *self-interest*. The prominence of this centrism around self-interest is heavily demonstrated in its linking to free will and then existence itself: "the fact that a living entity is, determines what it ought to do" (Rand, 1964). Bottom-lined, understanding the nature and applications of *free will*, *thought*, and *self-interest*, would inevitably lead to Egoist Ethics, and if not, then the entity has severed itself from reality.

1.3. Objectivism in *Atlas Shrugged*

The themes of *Atlas Shrugged* communicate outstanding lucidity of presence of the tenets of Objectivism. That is to say, the ideas discussed as both directly in dialogue, description, and narration or with a more underlying and implicit nature, are so remarkably clearly laid out in observing the characters speak “fluent” philosophical discourse. Not only in dialogue, but in characterization and building an ethos of each character that serves Rand’s author intentionality for their role to play in relaying the intended ideas and communicating the designed message under a strict logocentric dictatorship of language. Additionally, and to a lesser extent, the settings of dystopian anti-capitalist world that is antagonistic to “innovators” and “propellers of progress” serve to provide a context and a story concept for Objectivist philosophy to thrive in the novel’s reality.

Atlas Shrugged is a narrative representation and illustration to the importance and place of egoist ethics, in defending “reasonable self-interest”. As explained before, reason’s supremacy in existence, identity and thought therefore render virtues, values, and vices of living products and functions of either applying reason or not applying it. Rand’s process of characterization is a methodical personification of philosophy’s different modes of thought in a way that it becomes an archetypical process of characterization. Robert Bidinotto explained that: “Rand rejected the literary convention that depth and plausibility demand characters who are naturalistic replicas of the kinds of people we meet in everyday life, uttering everyday dialogue and pursuing everyday values. But she also rejected the notion that characters should be symbolic rather than realistic” (Bidinotto, 2011).

Furthermore, the typical characters of Ayn Rand are described not as realistic representations of everyday people, but as characters with personality traits more sharply focused than in average human beings in the real world (Bidinitto, 2011).

The plot of the novel runs in demonstration of the critical importance and value of innovators and industrialists to society. The stark opposition to Marxism is utilized to drive the main conflict of the story between characters and in between character and social reality. Consequently, this conflict gives Rand more space to lay down philosophical findings, and make these findings underlying to plot events and character dialogue. Moreover, Objectivism in *Atlas Shrugged* is a critique of the state apparatuses of ideology that impose state-interventionism in the social order. One of the strongest political implications of *Atlas Shrugged* is that Fascism and Communism, and all the ill effects thereof, are products of state-interventionism introduced through ideological state devices to diminish individual rights. In the novel, Rand asserts that interventionism creates modes and patterns of parasitical living for the majority of the social subjects, thus weakening both their existence and that of the innovative and hard-working progress-driving minority represented in the industrialists.

At one point in the novel, the protagonist John Galt illustrates Ayn Rand's political model stating that: "The political system we will build is contained in a single moral premise: no man may obtain any values from others by resorting to physical force", meaning a categorical refusal of interventionism that denies their property, which is expressed in surprisingly Stirnerite fashion by Rand: "no rights can exist without the right to translate one's rights into reality—to think, to work and to keep the results—which means: the right of property" (Rand, 1992).

In the reality where *Atlas Shrugged* takes place, the practice of villainizing industrialists and innovators and diminishing or belittling their achievements only halts progress and puts

society in a stasis that turns to regression, and regression births crushing tyranny. To Ayn Rand, this crushing tyranny is not necessarily the future of a planned economy society, i.e. socialist, but of a mixed economy society as well even. The last point that articulates objectivist philosophy concerning government role in *Atlas Shrugged* is politically prescribed altruism, where government bureaucracies and apparatuses exploit the virtue of charity for political gain by implementing “socially-aware” policies. This implementation, as far as Rand is concerned, is a tactic for individual-oppressive government to perpetuate socio-economic problems and simultaneously give space to the system to reproduce itself generationally.

As far as the Stirner/Locke modelling of individual rights and property in the novel, the story can be read as a history turning point of a major strife between two kinds of people: those with parasitical existence living off those who innovate, produce, and create progress. *Atlas Shrugged* was described by Edwards Younkins in this concern as: “an apocalyptic vision of the last stages of conflict between two classes of humanity—the looters and the non-looters. The looters are proponents of high taxation, big labor, government ownership, government spending, government planning, regulation, and redistribution” (Younkins, 2007).

Conclusion

This introductory chapter was designed to fill in the position of a theoretical framework where an explicit one couldn't be had, or at least not in a definitive stated form. As the analysis of the art and the philosophy is rigidly intertwined and fluctuating, this chapter introduced the philosophy so as to assist in understanding the crux of the thesis. Firstly, it provided the context of Objectivism by way of describing the climate in which it was conceived so as to understand its drives and influences. The second part headlined basics of Objectivism as pertains to three main traditional concerns for philosophical practice, basics that were deemed important in understanding what follows. Finally, "Objectivism in *Atlas Shrugged*" was a delineation of the presence of Objectivist concepts in the novel.

Chapter Two: Novelist Ayn Rand

Introduction

This chapter will aim to draw a picture of Ayn Rand as a literary practitioner. To draw a satisfactory demonstration of her literary functionality, and then later tie in with the the question of What is Ayn Rand literary style, her writing M.O., her literary tools in *Atlas Shrugged*?. Firstly, the discussion overviews the literary history of Ayn Rand, with the purpose of investigating her creative past and the chronicles of literary practice to provide a background on her literary merit. Secondly, it would go without saying, nor justification, that a proper assessment and view of Ayn Rand's literary technique and mode of operation, is to be had. This view will establish the need and matter of an analysis itself. Lastly, the discussion opens the book on *Atlas Shrugged* the employ the remarks made by the previous section on this chapter on the narrative.

2.1. Literary History and Influence

As a professional writer, Ayn Rand began with writing and selling screenplays to Hollywood studios and production companies. She invested all her potential and talents in this occupation, and followed closely the realizations and productions of her creations, displaying uncompromising commitments to her writings. Her first literary success was in 1932, selling Universal Studios her screenplay titled *Red Pawn*. It was a drama narrating the story of intelligence operative Joan Harding a.k.a. Frances Volkontzeva who infiltrated a monastery located in Strasnoy Island in northern Soviet Russia. The monastery was a secret prison for political prisoners, one of which is Joan's husband Michael. To free Michael, Joan develops a romance with state-appointed warden Kareyev, and under the guise of being his new bride, gains access to the prison; and a love triangle relationship develops between the three. Although *Red Pawn* was never made into film and Paramount Pictures still own the rights to it, it was a critical point in Rand's literary career that allowed her to explore the dynamics of romantic realism in writing drama.

After *Red Pawn*, Rand wrote *Night of January 16th*, a play written for theater, set in a murder trial courtroom where jury members are members of the venue audience, as a sort of interactive theater. Secretary Karen Andre involved romantically with her boss Bjorn Faulkner of whom she was accused of murdering. Jury members a.k.a. audience are tasked with judging the case purely from testimony and courtroom proceedings without being offered preceding context to the case; consequently, the verdict issued by the audience decides the ending of the play into two possible conclusions according to the majority vote of the audience. A successful dramatization of the conflict between independent individuality and conformist collectivism, E.E. Clive first produced the play in 1934 in Hollywood theater, and then it later moved to New

York on Broadway a year later. Paramount Pictures produced a film based on the play in 1941, however, Rand had creative disapprovals of the film.

In the 1940s, Ayn Rand took to political activism. She participated in public speaking events and endorsed political candidate. This stint of political activism inspired what would become her breakout literary work: *The Fountainhead* (1943). *The Fountainhead* tells the story of determined youthful architect Howard Roark who struggles against society's "leeches" and those who enable them. The novel was written during, and was nurtured by Rand's experience of short political activism since 1940. *The Fountainhead* became an international success, and it brought Rand fame and financial security which helped sustain her career and her political activism.

2.2. Literary Style and Technique

Ayn Rand's aesthetic theory of literature is that of rebranded Aristotelian mimesis in the conception and realization of a literary work. She held that art was the medium with which to communicate representations of reality. This view stood in opposition of the established modernist and occasionally post-modernist, definitions of art as nonrepresentational. Nevertheless, Rand did not follow a strict literalism of the mimesis function of art. Stylized representation was the core of her philosophy concerning aesthetics. "Essential to her aesthetic theory is the view that art involves a form of stylized representation," states Kirsti Minsaas (Minsaas, 2005). It is not an intermediary task of writing to present mirrors for the world to see its exact image in, but instead a selective re-creative presentation of reality in compliance with what the artist himself sees as essentials of reality. Consequently, this position introduces a

“strong expressive dimension” that invades and, to a certain degree, may even compromise the stability of what was established before as a mimetic basis of her literary style. Literary style of Ayn Rand can be boiled down to eight distinct techniques that illustrate a larger stylistic disposition across her body of work. As relating to the topic at hand, the main three of the said techniques, or stylistic proclivities and tendencies, will be discussed in this section.

Language authoritarianism in Ayn Rand’s fiction is a major key that can be used to unlock and breakdown her style. The dictatorship that privileges language in Rand’s novels is yet another function of her mimesis. It is known for scholars who synthesize Derridean deconstruction with Lacanian psychoanalysis that language and society are interchangeable when discussing their relationship, i.e. control, with the subject. Rand mimics a societal conformity-demanding oppression of the individual by making language impenetrably fortified; meaning it is arborescently in control of the people, the events, the social reality and metaphysical understandings of the world of the novel. Not four words when three will do, an extreme stringency with words often leads readers to think that Rand is "robotic" and her characters not "chatty". Rand’s tendency to be economic and precise with language expresses her intention of deadlocking interpretation of her writing, and focusing those interpretations sharply towards her intentionality with the material, i.e. there can be no Derridean deference of meaning because an all-powerful logocentrism presents in her fiction imposes on the reader to process the words as they are with no space for open interpretation. This Ayn Rand practice of privileging language more convincingly asserts her mimetic basis of creating art.

Secondly, dialogue in Ayn Rand’s fiction is the main vessel for delivering the themes. Characters, equipped with signature Randian amplifications of certain personality traits, characters make statements that are built and structured to communicate the philosophy first as a

priority. Rather than move the social dynamics of the story, characters go on monologues and dialogues that serve the concretization of the philosophical ideas to be presented. This unconventional characterization goes back to her definition of art as re-creative mimesis rather than just “*representational*” and “*imitative*”, the two key concepts of mimetic theory. Ayn Rand’s characters and their metaphysical value judgements represent, for lack of a better word, “that what could be” rather than that what is or should be. In this, Kirsti Minsaas writes: “The phrase ‘re-creation of reality’ is thus carefully chosen to stake out for art an intermediate realm of representation that lies between fantastic creation (creating out of a void) and imitation (reproducing things as they are)” (Minsaas, 2005).

Lastly, the third practice/technique that Rand employs is complex yet complete plotting style. Ayn Rand took complete advantage of her authority on her fiction because she believed that an artist who does not design plot events meticulously and in a manner that serves his artistic “re-creation” of the world is not an artist, but a mere writer of a chronicle that tells an invented story. She held that “A plot is a purposeful progression of logically connected events leading to the resolution of a climax” (Rand, 1971). The word purposeful denoting two principles: Obligations on the author to seek a plot design that presents distinct logical connectivity of all events in the story (the same way Objectivism sees the world); therefore, the story is to be a chain of sequential causations logically connected in Neoclassicist fashion, and in this the plot is complete. The second principle is for the characters to be created in a large set, each character with basic set of drives, animated by sharp focus on specific traits and archetypal personification of pre-existing schools of thought, an in through dynamic interactions, the plot becomes complex. In *The Romantic Manifesto*, Ayn Rand explains this: “If

the characters of a novel engage in lengthy abstract discussions of their ideas, but their ideas do not affect their actions or the events of the story, it is a bad novel” (Rand, 1971).

2.3. Literariness of *Atlas Shrugged*

Atlas Shrugged is organized in three significant parts, every one of which comprises of ten sections. The titles of the parts and sections propose various layers of importance. The three sections, for instance, are named to pay tribute to Aristotle's laws of rationale; yet as Dr. Minsas watches, Ayn Rand additionally attaches these titles to the significant topics and occasions of the story. Section One is named "Non-Contradiction," and suitably, that aspect of the novel defies the reader with a large group of confusing inconsistencies and mysteries having no evident consistent arrangements. Section Two, named "Either-Or," centers basically around Dagny Taggart's battle to determine a quandary: either to proceed with her fight to spare Taggart Transcontinental, or to surrender it. Section Three is named "An Is A," representing what Rand alluded to as "the Law of Identity" – and here, in the end segment of the book, the responses to all the riddles are recognized and settled. Like a decent ensemble, Atlas Shrugged's numerous abstract wealth become evident just when we give close consideration, and after numerous introductions. Its initial pages give an ideal delineation. What follows is a passage of the book:

As Eddie Willers walks the shabby streets of Manhattan, he thinks of a huge oak tree of his childhood, a symbol to him of eternal strength. 'It will always be there,' he thought – until the night the tree was struck by lightning and split in two. The next day, standing before the fallen tree, Eddie was shocked to see that the trunk was only an empty shell; its heart had rotted away long ago; there was nothing inside – just a thin gray dust that was being dispersed by the whim of the faintest wind. The living power had gone, and the shape it left had not been able to stand without it. Moments later, Eddie approaches the reassuring tower of Taggart Transcontinental, his mature symbol of enduring power and strength, and he thinks of the company's proud slogan...From Ocean to Ocean, forever – thought Eddie Willers, in the manner of a rededication, as he walked through the spotless halls into the

heart of the building, into the office of James Taggart, President of Taggart Transcontinental.

Obviously these entries are intended to fill a few needs. It is entirely regular that the rotting city around him may help Eddie to remember the rotted oak tree of his adolescence. The flashback encourages us to comprehend his uncomfortable mind-set. However, Ayn Rand likewise plans the portrayal of the tree's spoiled trunk as a similitude for Taggart Transcontinental. One hint is in her redundancy of "heart." Just as the tree's "heart had spoiled away quite a while in the past," so too had "the heart" of the Taggart Building, in the individual of its leader. For there was not generally anything inside James Taggart's office, either – only a turning gray, purposeless man who, similar to the residue inside the tree, was scattered by the impulse of any passing wind. Taggart Transcontinental's living force had additionally gone, and what was left couldn't keep on standing any longer.

Moreover, the section additionally remains as a representation for the entire disintegrating society – and the dim, dusty way of thinking at its heart. It quietly and emblematically anticipates the whole plot of the book. Such imagery is wherever clear in *Atlas Shrugged*, loaning unordinary power of passion to the standard subtleties of scenes and occasions. Ayn Rand continually puts in any case immaterial "cements" – names, titles of sections, occasions, and objects of numerous types – into settings which present for them a large group of implications, and make a remarkable embroidered artwork of representation.

The part named "The Top and the Bottom" opens in a costly housetop restaurant that is low and dull, similar to a basement. Inside, James Taggart and his amazing companions are plotting to demolish their rivals. The section closes in the storm cellar cafeteria of Taggart Transcontinental, a chipper spot of room and brilliant light. Inside, Eddie Willers is talking with

an anonymous railroad specialist. Just a lot later in the novel does the reader understand that the unknown specialist is John Galt.

Ayn Rand is introducing an allegory for the ethical reversal of a degenerate society – for what occurs in a general public that rewards evil and rebuffs great. The section's title, and the occasions it portrays, show what researcher Kirsti Minsaas depicts as a “recurrent idea in Rand’s novels: that in an irrational society, the best are frequently demoted to the bottom, while the worst are to be found at the top” (Minsaas, 2005).

Rand's nuance stretches out to discourse where twofold and even triple implications are frequently inserted in what is by all accounts easygoing discussion. For instance, there is wonderful incongruity in a considerable lot of the early references to John Galt; yet since they happen before he shows up in the story, the vast majority of them will not be obvious during an initial reading.

When Dagny and Rearden find Galt's deserted engine, they contemplate the destiny of its obscure designer. Rearden is sure that the man must be dead. In the event that a brain that splendid was as yet alive, he tells Dagny, "the whole world would know his name at this point." A couple of seconds after the fact, he includes, insightfully, "There was the motor for the John Galt Line." At that point there's the verbatim redundancy, toward the conclusion of the story, of a section that shows up close to its start: the portrayal of the hints of Halley's Fifth Piano Concerto.

It was a symphony of triumph. The notes flowed up, they spoke of rising and they were the rising itself, they were the essence and the form of upward motion, they seemed to embody every human act and thought that had ascent as its motive. It was a sunburst of sound, breaking out of hiding and spreading open...Only a faint echo within the sounds spoke of that from which the music had escaped, but spoke in laughing astonishment at the

discovery that there was no ugliness or pain, and there never had had to be. It was the song of an immense deliverance.

That portrayal initially acquaints us with Dagny Taggart, catching her optimistic desires. Be that as it may, when it's rehashed toward the end of the novel, a similar depiction passes on an absolutely new significance: not Dagny's aching for the ideal, yet her victorious accomplishment of it. Here, it gives us the satisfactory sentiment of a finished circuit. Be that as it may, past such abstract gadgets, Ayn Rand 's most noteworthy literary ability is her capacity to coordinate the novel's ideas with its plot components.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the research described Ayn Rand's literary origins, from her screenplay days at Hollywood; where each work, whether it made its way into production or not, has helped shaped both Rand's world view and her literary skills. The stories to likes of Red Pawn, and The Night of January 16th, inspired Ayn Rand's philosophy and honed her literary capabilities. In the second section concerned with Rand Literary style, the research explains Rand's heavy leaning proclivity for a designed model of characterization, which we explained. In the third section, the research incorporates the observatory findings of the previous sections into a literary assessment of *Atlas Shrugged*, as pertaining to Rand's literary style and inclinations of characterization and dialogue. This three part analysis of Rand literariness aimed to answer the question of sketching the novelist Ayn Rand.

Chapter Three: Philosophy and Art in *Atlas Shrugged*

Introduction

The last chapter of this research is where attempt the synthesize what we have so far. The question of this chapter is, naturally, intrinsic to the thesis as a whole. How does Rand adapt the philosophy into the narrative organically? Does she maintain philosophical proficiency in balance with artistic quality? Through the combination of the findings of the first two chapters and the incorporation of insights made and arrived to by famous Rand scholars, the discussion first turns towards Ayn Rand's capability of mastering different literary elements such as plot and characterization, and explaining what she adds, or rather her twist on the conventionalities. The second part of this chapter invites the reader to consider Ayn Rand's definition of art, and subsequently, fiction writing, in order to unravel her intended model of making an organic combination of philosophy and art. Lastly, we aimed to show the balance of philosophy in art in so far as how they art correlated in the very structuring of the novel. We aim to demonstrate this correlation by relating the development of the message synchronizing with the development of the events.

3.1. Analysis of Use of Literary Elements

Atlas Shrugged uses most story elements to drive its points home. As carriers for themes, elements such as mainly characterization, complex plot, and symbolism are all enlisted to the arrival to where Ayn Rand intends at arriving, that is a full communication of her philosophy.

Characterization in the novel expertly presented protagonists and antagonists based on their motives and drives. Actions and dialogue were the principal tools of building the characters i.e. “words in the context of a character’s actions”. Analyzing a character’s doings and sayings enables the reader to understand their drives and so clearly process their philosophical standpoints and depths. The mastery of characterization in *Atlas Shrugged* also comes from achieving compatibility between a character’s inner motives and their outer ethos. Every particular detail that a character provides to the reader either through thought or through action can be picked up and used to discern the wider philosophical conclusions that are intended. Edward Younkins illustrates this point stating that: “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” (Younkins, 2011).

Additionally, concerning characterization, they are presented with a romantic realism spin, in how they are built realistically but with a certain aspect of their personality heightened and romanticized. By Rand’s own admission, her characters are realistic expectations of everyday people except with a certain sharp focus on a specific trait which gives them a philosophical voice. Rand’s characters are built based on philosophical ideas and axioms, and they keep articulating the philosophical premises ever so clearly with the story’s progression. They either

follow up and build upon the logic of true premises, correct their false premises, or betray their formerly held true premises (Salmieri, 2007).

Every character of *Atlas Shrugged* exists for a specific purpose and with a key role and place in the construction of the novel. The relationships between characters are what incorporates them in the story, as Bidinotto remarks:

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. (Bidinotto, 2007)

The plot in *Atlas Shrugged* is so uniquely inseparable from the themes. To the point where the novel introduced a new concept called *plot-theme*, defined as the underlying philosophical idea that single-handedly drives the story and vice versa, as Bidinotto again states: "Her plot, characters, dialogue, and descriptions all reinforce and advance that theme" (Bidinotto, 2007).

Ayn Rand creates dramatizations of the ideas of *Atlas Shrugged* in actions, but still efficiently utilizes symbolism as an added device. She would initially explain an idea through actions and then employ a symbol to concretize abstract material to tangible plain. The use of irony is also another added literary device. Often, the dialogue will contain statements carrying double or triple meanings that are in opposition to each other, as explained by Bernstein:

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. (Bernstein, 2007)

3.2. Organicity of Art/Philosophy Relationship

To reconstruct thoughts of such conceptual philosophical unpredictability into a work of such dramatic nature is a striking outline of Rand's view that there ought to be no separation between mind and body – between *thought* and *action*. She considered man's deeds to be as physical expression of his metaphysical existence – of his awareness in real life. In this book, Ayn Rand communicates philosophical subject matter in decent aesthetic delineation.

Like her way of thinking, Ayn Rand's artistic technique challenges ruling orthodoxies. Defying Naturalistic customs, in which authors attempt to duplicate all the day-to-day subtleties of everyday life with strict adherence, Rand rather chose the minutiae in her writing by reference to a solitary *plot-theme* consolidator.

Ayn Rand held a perspective on great fiction composing. In *Atlas Shrugged*, her subject is the significance of motivation to human life. So her plot, characters, discourses, and portrayals all fortify and advance that subject. Clashes among and even inside the characters depend on that subject, as well; and the peak of the story – with thoughtless savages frantically attempting to constrain John Galt to think for them – at last exhibits her topic. It demonstrates not just why reason is critical to human life, but also how individual liberty is basic to reason.

3.3. The Balance of Philosophical Content and Artistic integrity

For objectivists, *Atlas Shrugged* accomplished delicate architecture and assimilation in structure. Its three major sections are modelled after Aristotelian dicta, and they achieve thematic success in suggesting notions about the interpretation of the events taking place in each section. In Part One called “Non-Contradiction”, there are in fact many happenings of strange contradictory nature and with no apparent reasonable answer. In Part Two, “Either-or”, inspired by the Law of Excluded Middle by Aristotle, Dagny comes to a vexing fork in the road –to keep fighting to save her company or surrender it. Part Two as well highlights the strife between humanity’s two kinds of people –the leechers and the innovators. Part Three, “A is A”, is an allusion to Aristotle’s Law of Identity, and in where Dagny and Rearden (and the reader as well) discover what is really happening, and distinguish and solve the deadlocks (Minsaas 1994; Bernstein 1995). In Part Three, the reader and characters of the story are able to see the story identify the whole narrative as a rhizomatic network of events. Additionally, the reader finds many embedded strata of meaning in every chapter of the book. Rand designed chapter titles to convey a literal sense as well as a deep philosophical and symbolic sense.

Atlas Shrugged is narrative fiction that makes epistemological progression and hierarchical induction as the literary story moves forward and characters act and interact. Characters, along with an attentive reader, start seeing more and more intricate and far-reaching causal relations, while simultaneously, a fully narrative story is unfolding. These characters initially grasp primitive truths concerning the two different ethical systems of the looters and creators, and later this grasp starts to widen and proceed more in the depth of the philosophical importance of those initial primitive truths. As the story is happening, all the moments of truth and realization that characters experience only prompt more questions, and this drives the plot further and further.

All the while, the story is abstracting itself more and more, giving the characters and reader to learn abstract formulation that they can use to draw conclusions on the entire plot.

Conclusion

It is clear how the likes of Younkins and Bernstein viewed Rand as demonstrating literary virtuosity in the novel. They maintained that her way of telling a story with the intentionality to communicate philosophy and worldview is unparalleled. In light of their insights, our discussion investigated Ayn Rand's approach to plot and characterization and identified her theory of operation in both, as well as describing said theory in the practice thereof. Then, we endeavored to unravel what makes the idea and the fiction built around it and in service of it function organically and towards the author's set goal. Finally, we uncovered the very mechanism which serves to balance philosophy and art in the novel, which the correlating relationship where the development of the ideas directly accompanies plot elements in the story's progression, and where said development is articulated in the realizations the characters make as the story unfolds.

General Conclusion

In this research, we set out to answer the main question: Is a balance between art and philosophy achieved in *Atlas Shrugged* without one compromising the integrity of the other?

To answer this question, we started by introducing the philosophical side of the problem. In the first chapter, we tried to answer the question: What are basics of Objectivism and is observable in *Atlas Shrugged*? To achieve this, we described and attempted to draw the reader a comprehensive picture of the historical and cultural context surrounding the book's publication at the time, with a brief portrayal of the state of culture and public intellectualism. After that, we moved towards Ayn Rand's philosophy of Objectivism, wherein we tried to outline the basics of the objectivist philosophical system as pertaining to known areas of philosophy. Lastly, progressed to extracting notions of Objectivism from *Atlas Shrugged* by delineating its presence in the novel as observed in all elements of the story.

On the other hand, the second chapter of this research was dedicated to the literary prospect of the research problem, and it sought to satisfy the question of what characterizes Ayn Rand's literary style, and how is it exercised in *Atlas Shrugged*. To accomplish this, we first reflected briefly on Ayn Rand's literary history and her Hollywood background in order to gain insight into her creative and artistic roots. Secondly, we proceeded to break down her techniques with respect to their relevancy and use in the novel. Finally, we attempted to provide a qualitative account of literariness and literary quality in *Atlas Shrugged*.

In the third and final chapter, we sought to answer the final question: How does Rand adapt the philosophy into the narrative organically? Does she maintain philosophical proficiency in balance with artistic quality? Beginning with an analysis of the use of specific literary devices in

the novel, and citing major Ayn Rand and Objectivism scholar, afterwards the discourse moved to tackle the task of providing a clear description of the organic relationship, if any, between art and philosophy. Finally, ending with an examination of the prospect of balance achieved between art and philosophy to address the main problematic of this research.

In *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), Ayn Rand introduces her original, controversial philosophy of Objectivism in narrative form. Not just a great drama, but also a communication of a new philosophy with impressive transparency. This novel presents an intricately developed philosophical system that is articulated aesthetically in the narrative.

It is the finding of this investigation that by achieving a delicate balance of appealing artistic quality with heavy dosed philosophical subject matter, Ayn Rand succeeded in finding an organic combination of both in her skillful integration of deep and far reaching themes in an amusing dramatic form.

The combination is distilled in the original and unique concept of *plot-theme* which was the key to the success of the task that Ayn Rand took on when she wrote this book. As Andrew Bernstein surmises: “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” (Bernstein, 2007). *Atlas Shrugged* now represents a model in integration of literary elements with a unifying underlying philosophical idea, therefore completing a seamless merge of the two undertakings.

Atlas Shrugged’s huge success is not inexplicable. The book is appealing on so many levels, for “it’s a moral defense of capitalism, political parable, social commentary, science fiction tale, mystery story, love story, and more” notes Younkins (2011).

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