

Impact

NEWSLETTER OF THE AYN RAND INSTITUTE

July 1997, Volume 3, Number 7

Essay Contest Winners Selected

ARI's *Fountainhead* and *Anthem* essay contests continue to be one of our primary means to reach young minds. This year, 6,500 high school students entered the contests, many of them reading Ayn Rand for the first time. Thousands more were introduced to the novels and to Ayn Rand through ARI's promotion of the contests.

This year, Jason Crawford, a home-schooled student from Silver Spring, Maryland, wrote the winning *Fountainhead* essay. Jason first read *The Fountainhead* at age 12, when the book was given to him by his father, who had noticed Jason's developing interest in moral issues. Jason has since read all of Miss Rand's works and recently took Leonard Peikoff's "Objectivism Through Induction" course. Jason says that he worked very hard on his essay, knowing that it "must have as much integrity between its theme and its parts as did one of Roark's buildings."

In the fall, Jason enters Carnegie-Mellon University to study computer science. His career track well thought out, Jason plans to become an industrialist in the computer technology industry with the goal of "applying philosophy to the process of hardware and software design the way Roark applied it to architecture."

The sixteen *Fountainhead* winners come from eleven states and one foreign country. A Bulgarian student, for whom English is a second language, reports that her \$500 award will help pay her plane fare to America, where she will attend the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. Ten of the *Fountainhead* winners have read or are reading *Atlas Shrugged*, and one of them plans to start a campus club at UCLA.

This year's *Anthem* winner is Daniel Clemens, a freshman at Claremont High School in California. Although *Anthem* is the first Ayn Rand book that Daniel has read, he is now well into *The Fountainhead*. Daniel wrote ARI that *Anthem* is his "model for clear, beautiful communication and vivid imagery. In addition to discovering a writer of genius, I have learned the profound importance of philosophical ideas and their direct impact on the world of business I love so much." After graduating from high school, Daniel has set his sights on becoming a world-class tennis pro. (He is currently ranked second in the Southern California Boys-14 [age] division.) He says he is then planning to embark on a business career, modeled after investor Warren Buffet. One third of this year's *Anthem* winners wrote their essays as a class assignment.

Despite promotions identical to last year's, the number of entries in both contests was down 9% this year. ARI is considering significant marketing changes for next year's contests, including the first-ever increase in prize money for *The Fountainhead* contest.

In the fall, ARI will mail to high school teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators more than 150,000 essay contest flyers for the 1998 contest.

"Fountainhead" Winners

First Prize—\$5,000

Jason Crawford, home school, Silver Spring, MD

Second Prizes—\$1,000

Melanie Ho, Oak Park HS, Agoura, CA

Mao-Chen Shaw Pong Liu, Lynbrook HS, San Jose, CA

Megan Manchester, Waterville Central School, Waterville, NY

Jennifer McFerran, Madeira HS, Madeira, OH

Margaret Taintor, Holliston HS, Holliston, MA

Third Prizes—\$500

Natalie Carnes, Conroe HS, Conroe, TX

Kimberly R. Carusone, Bald Eagle Area HS, Wingate, PA

Leigh Esposito, Cornelia Connelly School, Anaheim, CA

Rachel Knapp, Blacksburg HS, Blacksburg, VA

Elisaveta Konstantinova Kostova, American College of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria

Lionel Levine, Concord Academy, Concord, MA

Alicia Morgan, John Marshall HS, Glen Dale, WV

Julia C. Platt, Mission San Jose HS, Fremont, CA

Cori Princell, Overland HS, Aurora, CO

Julie Wilensky, National Cathedral School, Washington, DC

"Anthem" Winners

First Prize—\$1,000

Daniel Clemens, Claremont HS, Claremont, CA

Second Prizes—\$200

Barrett Brown, Episcopal School of Dallas, Dallas, TX

Flora Burstein, Milton Academy, Milton, MA

Anthony M. DeGangi, Wyomissing Area HS, Wyomissing, PA

Michele Loos, Medina HS, Medina, OH

Joseph Makin, Notre Dame HS, Easton, PA

John Melillo, Wichita HS South, Wichita, KS

Jennifer Misyak, Mount St. Mary Academy, Watchung, NJ

Karen Shanton, Neenah HS, Neenah, WI

Naomi Sugie, Notre Dame HS, San Jose, CA

Rachel Swift, Classical HS, Providence, RI

Third Prizes—\$100

Jillian Bauer, Seaford HS, Seaford, NY

Jessica Benton, College Park HS, Pleasant Hill, CA

Liz Bishop, Mt. Rainier HS, Des Moines, WA

Jonathan Copeland, Bradshaw HS, Florence, AL

Emily Downs, Scotch Plains Fanwood HS, Scotch Plains, NJ

Adrienne Fowler, George Jenkins HS, Lakeland, FL

Heidi Henrich, Desert Mountain HS, Scottsdale, AZ

Allison Horst, Crown Point HS, Crown Point, IN

Sharon Hwang, Highly Gifted Magnet HS, North Hollywood, CA

Megan Leech, Grand Junction HS, Grand Junction, CO

Sonya Marthai, James Island HS, Charleston, SC

Christopher Smith Matthis, Muskego HS, Muskego, WI

Dan Mohamed, Crown Point HS, Crown Point, IN

Katie Newmark, W.G. Enloe HS, Raleigh, NC

Lisa Niverson, Moses Lake HS, Moses Lake, WA

Nina Paul, Mission San Jose HS, Fremont, CA

Dane Platt, St. Johns HS, St. Johns, AZ

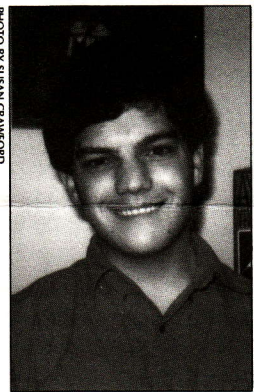
Winning "Fountainhead" Essay

Jason Crawford

Jason Crawford, a home-schooled senior from Silver Spring, Maryland, wrote on the following topic:

The Fountainhead offers a vision of a totally independent man, an uncompromising innovator "standing alone against the world." How do the events of the story dramatize the conflict between independence and conformity? Explain how the novel's message is opposed to the conventional view that life requires compromise.

"It doesn't say much. Only 'Howard Roark, Architect.' But it's like those mottoes men carved over the entrance of a castle and died for. It's a challenge in the face of something so vast and so dark, that all the pain on earth—and do you know how much suffering there is on earth?—all the pain comes from that thing you are going to face. I don't know what it is, I don't know why it should be unleashed against you. I only know that it will be. And I know that if you carry these words through to the end, it will be a victory, Howard, not just for you, but for something that should win, that moves the world..."



Jason Crawford

That thing, which Henry Cameron knew and possessed but could not name, the thing that moves the world, is the creative power of the independent mind. This power and this independence are embodied in the character of Howard Roark. *The Fountainhead* is the story of Roark's struggle, of how he carried those words through to the end, of how he lived by them, fought for them, and won. Its theme is that the independent mind is the fountainhead of all human achievement.

Early in the story, however, it seems that Roark's independence has achieved only his failure. Roark is expelled from the Stanton Institute of Technology. He takes a job with Henry Cameron, who is "lucky if he gets—once a year—a garage to remodel." Roark loses his job when Cameron's firm closes, loses another job with Guy Francon, and loses another job with John Eric Snyte. Meanwhile, Peter Keating seems to be succeeding on the opposite principle: conformity. He graduates from Stanton with honors. Fresh out of school, he goes to work for Guy Francon, and quickly rises to the top of his profession. Soon he is made a partner in his firm.

But while Roark seems to be a failure, he is not—not by his own standards. And Roark lives by his own standards. He is expelled from Stanton for doing projects according to *his* principles, not his professors'; his principles are grounded in reality, in the requirements of a building, not the precedent of the past. When given the chance to return to Stanton, he chooses according to *his* values, not society's; he values his education, not a degree. When he is fired, it is for asserting independent judgment, when he can no longer tolerate working according to anybody's principles but his own.

All these choices derive from Roark's fundamental principle: independence. Independence means relying on one's own mind, having one's primary orientation to reality, not to other men. Roark lives by this principle intransigently. He forms his own convictions and pursues his own values. His convictions are based on the facts, not other people's opinions; his values are things in reality, not things that come from others. This independence gives him an unshakable self-confidence. He never waffles on a decision; he simply chooses his highest value in every case. He never doubts his judgment; he knows that nobody else's would serve him better. Keating, despite his "success," does not share this confidence. He is successful by society's standards, not his own. Keating has no standards of his own. Consequently, he is never certain of himself; he is always wondering if the choice that was made for him was the right one. The difference between Keating and Roark is summarized in two lines of dialogue: Keating asks, "How can you always decide?" Roark replies, "How can you let others decide for you?"

After leaving Snyte, Roark opens an independent practice, but receives few commissions and soon is near bankruptcy. His chance to rescue his practice is the Manhattan Bank Building. There is one catch: the board of directors insists that he give a Classic motive to the

building's façade, to preserve its "dignity." Roark refuses, holding the integrity of his plans above all else, though he knows that without this commission, he will be forced to quit architecture for a while—maybe forever.

This is the most dramatic example of Roark's immaculate integrity. He knows that to hold principles without living by them is a contradiction. He knows he must uphold his convictions at any cost; he must hold his truth "above all things and against all men." He has heard that life requires compromise, that nothing is certain, particularly not in mortality. But Roark knows he must hold his principles as *absolutes*, that to betray them in one issue would be to betray his entire soul, that it makes no difference whether one drinks a gallon of poison or merely a glass—the result is the same. In the short-term, Roark's integrity brings him only ruin: he must close his office and go to work in a granite quarry. But this is a small price to pay to preserve his self-esteem. This unwavering commitment to his principles gives him a unique serenity when facing disaster. "I'm not capable of suffering completely," he says. "It goes only down to a certain point and then it stops." He is not indifferent to his own hardship, it is simply that he always retains this deepest value: that he never betrayed his convictions.

In the following years, people begin to discover and appreciate Roark's talents. He builds the Enright House and the Aquitania. Then he receives his greatest assignment: Monadnock Valley, a summer resort. Roark does not know it, but the owners of Monadnock are corrupt; they have oversold their stock; they plan to profit when the resort fails. Yet despite their efforts to make it fail, Monadnock Valley is a phenomenal success. Roark makes money for people who don't want to make money.

Roark's designs have always been lauded for their brilliant logic, their ruthless efficiency, but Monadnock Valley, above all, demonstrates Roark's unparalleled creative capacity. This capacity is caused primarily not by his intelligence, but by his reliance on his own mind. The act of creation requires looking, not at what others have done, but at *reality*—at the facts of a problem. Furthermore, it requires an undying dedication to one's work, a dedication one can have only to one's own standards and values. A man like Peter Keating could never be an innovator; it takes a man like Roark.

The climactic event of the novel is the trial of Howard Roark for the destruction of Cortlandt Homes. Peter Keating, who has lost the grace of public opinion, having no architectural merit with which to hold it, asks Roark to design Cortlandt for him. He admits plainly that he could never design it himself. "I'm a parasite," he says. "In the whole of my life, I haven't added a new doorknob to what men have done before me. I have taken that which was not mine and given nothing in return. I had nothing to give." Even though all the money and prestige will go to Keating, Roark agrees, on one condition: that Cortlandt be built exactly as designed. His motive, he explains, is not money or fame or charity, only the building. "The only thing that matters," he says, "is my goal, my reward, my beginning, my end is the work itself. My work is done my way.... A private, personal, selfish, egotistical motivation."

Keating agrees to Roark's condition, but cannot fight the bureaucracy that wants to allow other architects to "add" to the design, and Roark's plans are compromised. Just as with the Manhattan Bank, the slightest change in his plans is an adulteration, especially in plans designed specifically for economy. Roark dynamites the building. He would not have done so, had his plans been scrapped and replaced by a different design. But to see his plans *compromised*—to see his structure and his principles supporting purposeless additions and senseless architectural blunders—is more than he can bear.

When on trial, he defends himself on *moral* grounds, in the name of *selfishness*. He declares that a man's life and work are his own, that they are his by right. He opposes altruism, the morality of sacrifice. *Sacrifice* is the principle behind all second-handedness, be it the social worker who sacrifices his happiness for a bum, the intellectual who sacrifices his convictions for a professorship, or the architect who sacrifices his integrity for a living. Society had demanded that Roark make a sacrifice, that he surrender his work without even seeing his building erected as designed, that he accept the need of the poor as a claim on his life and his mind. In refusing to make this sacrifice, he explains, he committed no crime; he merely took back that which was his. "I do not recognize anyone's right to one minute of my life," he says. "Nor to a part of my energy. Nor to any achievement of mine. No matter who makes the claim, how large their number or how great their need...."

am a man who does not exist for others." Roark is judged "not guilty."

At the end of the novel, Roark has clearly won his battle. He has his highest value: "My work done my way." Greater still, he has an unshakable self-confidence, caused by a lifetime of independent judgment, an immaculate self-esteem, caused by a lifetime of loyalty to that judgment, and a boundless capacity for joy, caused by a lifetime of egotistical selfishness.

The Fountainhead is the story of how an uncompromising independence triumphs over all obstacles and all opposition. It is the story of Howard Roark—as a creator, as an ideal and as a hero.

Winning "Anthem" Essay

Daniel Clemens

Daniel Clemens, a freshman at Claremont High School in Claremont, California, wrote on the following topic:

Anthem depicts a world of the future, a collectivist dictatorship in which even the word "I" has vanished. Discuss the hero's struggle to free himself from collectivism. What makes his victory possible?

President John F. Kennedy is a revered and beloved icon of the 20th century. Virtually every American student can repeat verbatim the much-quoted passage in his inaugural address: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." No one debates or discusses the content of the ideas contained in the quote; they only argue about the origin of the words. And yet this statement is the intellectual foundation of collectivism. Kennedy's immortal statement could have been emblazoned in the totalitarian world of *Anthem*.

The underlying philosophical premises of Kennedy's statement must be confronted, fought and conquered before the hero of *Anthem* is victorious. A brief examination of the statement can elucidate the issues at stake.

Neither half of this statement expresses a relationship between the citizen and government that is worthy of the ideals of free men in a free society. The paternalistic "what your country can do for you" implies that government is the patron, the citizen the ward, a view that is diametrically opposed to the free man's belief in his own responsibility for his own destiny. The organismic "what you can do for your country" implies that government is the master

or the deity, the citizen the servant. To the free man, the country is the collection of individuals who compose it, not something over and above them. The free man will ask neither what his country can do for him nor what he can do for his country.

Furthermore, the great advances of civilization, whether in architecture or painting, in science or literature, in industry or agriculture, have never come from centralized government. Newton and Leibnitz; Einstein and Bohr; Shakespeare, Milton and Pasternak; Whitney, McCormick, Edison and Ford; not one of these opened "new frontiers" (to quote President Kennedy) in human knowledge and understanding, in literature, or in technical possibilities in response to governmental directives. Their achievements were the product of individual genius, emanating from the ego, the independent mind, which is the basis of all human progress.

At the end of Miss Rand's prose poem, Prometheus concludes that the history of men is essentially a long and valiant struggle for freedom: "But then he gave up all he had won, and fell lower than his savage beginning. What brought it to pass? What disaster took their reason away from men? What whip lashed them to their knees in shame and submission? The worship of the word 'We.'" Surely President Kennedy's famous statement is an adoration and commandment to worship 'we.'

Equality 7-2521's most difficult challenge is the rejection of the collectivist moral code: that man exists to serve other men and concurrently his struggle to identify and name the concept of "I." While the hero initially accepts the collectivist morality and definition of "sin," he is also fully cognizant that reality exists independent of anyone's beliefs, feelings, wishes, judgments or opinions and that reason is fully competent to understand the facts of reality and to assess all claims to truth.

He is aware of having a superior intellect, of thinking "forbidden" thoughts and wishing for things "...which men may not wish." Equality 7-2521 does not resist the thoughts or desires and is resigned to being "...not like our brothers." He has a driving thirst to know the "Science of Things," to follow his own dreams and aspirations. His inquisitive mind provokes a myriad of questions about the earth. He knows he wants to choose his own career for his own selfish pleasure and happiness. With the discovery of the tunnel and train tracks, the hero confirms reality and the truth that "...those Times had been, and all the wonders of those Times."

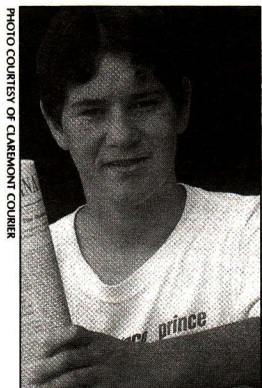
The hero comes to the realization that productive achievement is our noblest activity: "Nothing matters save the work...our precious work." He is disciplined and dedicated, working three hours per night for two years, studying and experimenting. He knows that knowledge, discovery and creation are of incalculable value for their own sake: "We wish nothing, save to be alone and to learn, and to feel as if with each day our sight were growing sharper than the hawk's and clearer than rock crystal." His sense of life is joyful and fearless and the world has given him the "first peace" of his life. Ultimately, when he discovers the electric light, "the greatest power on earth," he recognizes that his individual genius does know more than the collective of "scholars" with ostensibly "greater wisdom": "We made it. We created it. We brought it forth from the night of the ages. We alone. Our hands. Our mind. Ours alone and only."

The hero comes to know that happiness is man's highest purpose. Not only has Equality 7-2521 found a kindred mind and spirit in International 4-8818, but he has discovered a unique woman among women—a beautiful, strong woman with eyes reflecting "...no fear in them, no kindness and no guilt." Her presence alone brought fear and pain for the first time in his life. Liberty 5-3000 has re-enforced his vision that "...the earth is good and that it is not a burden to live," a concept that alien to his culture. The hero names her "the Golden One," his "dearest one," while she reciprocates in calling him "the Unconquered." They have defined and separated each other from all others and together discovered a knowledge of what "...joy is possible to men," "...one ecstasy granted to the race of men." Gaea has earned the love of her heroic man. Before escaping the city, the hero is aware that his sense of life is totally different than his "brothers'." He sings for no reason except that he is "...glad to be living," while they live in perpetual fear, "...fear without name, without shape." In the Uncharted Forest, the hero learns what it truly means to laugh, to experience the lushness and bounty of nature, and the power and beauty of one's own body and face. Ultimately, he realizes that "My happiness is not the means to an end. It is the end. It is its own goal. It is its own purpose."

Even from the beginning, the hero demonstrates an innate understanding that the organizing principle of a moral society is respect for individual rights, and that the sole appropriate function of government is to act as guardian and protector of individual rights. He claimed the tunnel as his own private property and "...to no other men on earth," and was willing to die to defend it. He was unwilling to "share" his Golden One with others at the Palace of Mating and knew he would prevent it from happening. In claiming ownership to the ancient house, Prometheus declares: "We shall not share it with others, as we share not our joy with them, nor our love, nor our hunger."

The hero offers his greatest treasure as a gift to men. He discovers in the Council's condemnation of his invention that evil, by its nature, is impotent. Only the good, the rational, can ultimately triumph. Evil can destroy, but it cannot build, it cannot create. He also understands that "We have lied to ourselves. We have not built this box for the good of our brothers. We built it for its own sake. It is above all our brothers to us, and its truth above their truth."

Throughout his struggle against the collectivist moral code, Prometheus searches for the Unspeakable Word "I" and the most sacred word "Ego." He knows that thinking is the highest virtue, that consciousness is the source of all meaning and glory. Prometheus understands that a human being is an end in himself, not a means to the ends of others—that each one of us has the right to exist for our own sake, neither sacrificing others to self nor self to others.



Daniel Clemens

Alexandra Skwara, Academy of Our Lady of Peace, San Diego, CA
Jesse Sternberg, Saranac Lake HS, Saranac Lake, NY
Michelle Wang, Mid-Pacific Institute, Honolulu, HI

ARI Launches New Project

Target: High School Debaters At the recent national high school debate tournament in Minneapolis, ARI's David Bombardier inaugurated a new Institute project: promoting the use of Objectivism in high school debate.

ARI is always seeking new ways to reach the nation's brightest, most articulate, and most intellectual students. High school debaters fit this description perfectly, and they often become the country's opinion-makers.

In Minneapolis, Mr. Bombardier established contact with many of the country's best high school debaters and their coaches, who were enthusiastic about ARI's presence at the tournament. The national coordinator of high school debate, an Ayn Rand fan, is interested in helping us accomplish our goal of educating these bright young minds about Objectivism.

Peikoff Radio Show

1-900-PREMISE Hotline ARI supporters who want to hear excerpts from recent broadcasts of Leonard Peikoff's radio show, "Philosophy: Who Needs It," can obtain them by dialing 1-900-PREMISE. Recent excerpts have included Dr. Peikoff's thoughts on the development of infant intelligence, the collapse of the Republicans, and the mass suicide in San Diego—and a current listing of excerpts is now maintained on our Web site (www.aynrand.org). Excerpts range in length from two to four minutes. Callers must be 18 years old or older, must use a touch-tone phone, and will be charged \$1.49 per minute. The length of the average call is four minutes. Revenue from the hotline supports ARI projects.

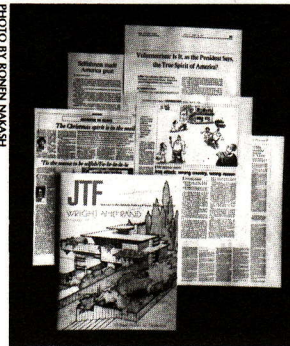
General News

ARI Office Move In order to accommodate a steady growth in ARI projects, the Institute moved to larger office space on June 14. We remain in the same building; our suite number is now 406. ARI's full-time staff now totals nine:

Michael Berliner (executive director); David Bombardier (campus clubs and high schools); Michael Flood (mailroom); Scott McConnell (Op-Eds, archives, and Impact); Ronen Nakash (fundraising); Richard Ralston, (development and broadcasting); Julie Repass (administration); Larry Salzman (database); and Jason Swihart (OGC, Web site, and campus speakers). The new office also provides more space for our numerous part-time employees and volunteers. The part-timers include Jeff Britting (archives) and Katherine Cross (planned giving). The ARI Board of Directors and staff would like to thank our contributors, who have made possible the increased activity that necessitated this move.

Evening of Ayn Rand's Foods and Writings ARI will hold a fundraising picnic featuring a variety of foods from Ayn Rand's personal recipe collection on August 15 in Orange County, California. Attendees will receive a "recipe booklet" of photocopies of recipes from Miss Rand's collection. During the evening, actress Janne Peters will read recently discovered letters and other unpublished writings of Miss Rand. Invitations will be mailed to ARI's Southern California donors and attendees of Lyceum's upcoming summer conference. If you wish to receive an invitation, please call ARI.

Major Donor Perks ARI periodically sends "thank you" perks to its major donors (\$500+ a year) in appreciation of their support of our programs. Last fall, all major contributors received an assortment of Christmas cards incorporating an Ayn Rand quote. This May these contributors were sent a set of reproductions of some of our editorials recently published in major newspapers across the United States. In addition, sustaining donors (\$1,000+ a year) received a special issue of the *Journal of the Taliesin Fellows*, which included major articles about Ayn Rand and Frank Lloyd Wright (pictured at left).



Address Correction Requested

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