

Ellsworth Toohey

“A world of obedience and unity. A world where the thought of each man will not be his own, but an attempt to guess the thought of the brain of his neighbor who’ll have no thought of his own.”

Toohey used to seem like a far-fetched villain. And maybe he is. Maybe all of those impulses and traits cannot exist in a single body to such a degree. But Toohey definitely exists, even if in aggregate, and has become one of the dominant forces at war in this world.

The total sublimation of self into an infinite regress of what each person imagines the next person wants sounded crazy too me until 2020.

The deliberate destruction of beauty and propagation of ugliness sounded too much until the bulk of critically acclaimed art and advertisement in the last half decade or so.

I don’t know if there are singular Tooheys behind these shifts, but the spirit of the character has definitely taken hold.

The only way to fight it is as Roark did. Not with Twitter call-outs and exposes. By ignoring it and building the beauty you want in the world.