

A PHILOSOPHY FOR LIVING ON EARTH

Peter Saint-André



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Introduction

What is happiness? The question has exercised some philosophers—and been exorcised by others—throughout the history of ideas. Yet this crucial issue in human life has remained a dark mystery. In general, twentieth-century academic philosophers have not deemed happiness to be a significant topic, or even a philosophical one (worthy exceptions include Russell 1930, Nozick 1981 and 1989, and Nussbaum 1986). The fate of happiness in philosophy is similar, in this regard, to that of art: both have long been considered marginal topics, yet both are deeply important to human beings. In regard to happiness, I believe that there are two main reasons for this state of affairs. One is that happiness is perceived to be an irremediably psychological—and therefore entirely subjective—phenomenon, with no conditions in reality necessary for its occurrence. The other is that the concept of happiness is thought of as tainted by egoism, and therefore as outside the province of morality. In this paper, I shall attempt to address both of these concerns by piecing together the preliminaries of a theory of happiness—one that is based in its essentials on Objectivist ethics, and of course on my own life experience. The theory I propose will, I hope, do justice to what we know and feel about the psychological and moral centrality of happiness in human life, and thereby help strengthen the foundations of what Ayn Rand once called “a philosophy for living on earth” (Rand 1974, 12).¹

The classic philosophical discussion of happiness is Aristotle’s (mostly contained in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, especially Book I.5-7, 1095b14-1098a20). Aristotle begins his discussion by asking: what is the end of living? His answer is that all agree that the ultimate goal of life is eudaimonia (commonly translated as happiness). The next and natural question is: what is eudaimonia? It is the highest good for man—about which many opinions have been expressed: some say it is knowledge, some say it is pleasure, some say it is the esteem of admired others, some say it is wealth or friends or health. Which of these is it? Aristotle’s (mostly) settled opinion is that eudaimonia is not any one of these ends, but a certain kind of life or way of living that integrates all of these goods. This complete good living consists in an active life lived in accordance with man’s “function” or “characteristic activity”—namely reason. For Aristotle, then, happiness is a human ideal of integrated living: a life of reason that, by being active, in-

cludes such goods as wealth, good fortune, friends, health, knowledge, personal excellence, and esteem, and that is attended by a deep pleasure in living (see 1097b20-1098a18 along with 1098b9-1099b8, etc.). Happiness is successful human living.

But what are the constituents, at a philosophical level, of complete good living? What are the essential needs or values of human life? To answer these questions, we need to clarify what we mean by ‘value’—we need to understand the nature of values and their function in human living.

Value and Life

Ayn Rand holds that the phenomenon of need or value² is intimately connected with the phenomenon of life (Rand 1957, 1012-1013; cf. also Eudemian Ethics 1218a27), and that the standard of value in the Objectivist ethics is “that which is required for man’s survival qua man” (Rand 1961, 23). However, the exact nature and content of this standard has been the cause of some controversy. The main dispute concerns the ultimate foundation on which human beings should base their choices about what to have, be, and do in life. One option is the standard of “survival”—a position for which David Kelley argues in his review of Douglas Rasmussen and Douglas Den Uyl’s *Liberty and Nature* (Kelley 1992a), and as is maintained in Khawaja 1992 and Mozes 1992. Another is the standard of “flourishing” (the currently fashionable translation of Aristotle’s concept of eudaimonia, first suggested by Cooper 1976)—a position maintained by Rasmussen and Den Uyl (1991), as well as by Gregory Johnson in his rejoinder to David Kelley’s review (Johnson 1992). A third alternative is offered by the mediate position of Henry Scuoteguazza (1993), who argues for some combination of the two standards of survival and flourishing.

As a start towards clearer understanding in this area, I would like to consider Roger Donway’s claim (quoted in David Kelley 1992a) that “It takes a full life to ensure mere life”, for this formulation seems to be an attempt to bridge the gap between survival and flourishing. There are several senses in which Donway’s formulation is problematical. First, there is of course nothing that can ensure “mere life” (i.e., survival), since life by its nature is conditional—it is, after all, the very conditionality of life that gets ethics off the ground in the first place, according to Rand. Second, many or

even most humans do not live “full lives”—lives consciously organized around goals and purposes spanning a lifetime and chosen in accord with reason—yet these individuals stubbornly persist in their “mere lives”, often to a ripe old age. Perhaps the thrust of Donway’s formulation is that those who are “merely living” lack the foresight and the physical or psychological resilience that would be necessary to ensure survival, or at least make it more likely, if the environment were to change in significant ways (on psychological resilience, see Flach 1988). According to this view, “merely living” individuals are not fit or adaptive, whereas those who live full lives are fit or adaptive—at least in some sense (perhaps even a Darwinian sense) of ‘fit’ or ‘adaptive’.

Yet David Kelley, for one, seems to hold something even stronger. In response to Greg Johnson’s criticisms, Kelley argues as follows:

Since we are conceptual beings, we must guide our actions by principles that identify our needs and the actions necessary to satisfy them. Since we can project the future, we must choose our actions in light of an entire lifespan, not just our survival in the next moment. Since we are not merely physical beings, and since reason is our primary means of survival, we must act to satisfy the psychological needs that arise from the nature of reason, including needs for self-esteem, aesthetic enjoyment, and friendship. (Kelley 1992b, 63; emphasis added.)

Now this, to me, seems a rather peculiar argument—particularly in regard to the word “must”. Does capacity imply moral necessity—does ‘can’ imply ‘must’? Or are these things that one “must” do requirements of “mere living”, i.e., of actual, physical survival? Would one die without living on principle or planning for a lifespan of eighty years, without self-esteem or friends or aesthetic enjoyment? Would one not live as long? Would one even be less likely to live as long? Such would be very broad empirical claims about the survival-value of certain actions, values, and even beliefs, and it is not clear how one would go about proving them. Furthermore, if longevity (i.e., survival over the long haul) is the salient criterion of value, then perhaps our methodology should be to study those who live longest and determine what it is that they actually value (for example, do they have broad networks of friends, and does aesthetic enjoyment play an important role in their lives?).

I would like to present a different angle on the problem—one suggested by an interesting passage on evaluation in Rand’s *Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*

(Rand 1966d, 32-34). There, Rand maintains that a code of ethical principles “grades the choices and actions open to man, according to the degree to which they achieve or frustrate the code’s standard of value” (Rand 1966d, 33). This implies that while the standard of value and the principles of ethics are black-and-white, the actions, choices, and personal or particular values through which one realizes those more abstract values are matters of degree.

In her essay “The Objectivist Ethics”, Rand proposes that the ethical standard of “that which is required for man’s survival qua man” involves or implies “the terms, methods, conditions and goals required for the survival of a rational being through the whole of his lifespan” (Rand 1961, 24). As an example of these “terms, methods, conditions and goals”, let us consider politico-economic conditions (dramatized in Rand 1936). Observe that it is not physical survival that is directly at stake here—after all, it is not that an individual cannot survive under socialism, or that laissez-faire capitalism ensures longest life: the life expectancy in communist Eastern Europe, for example, was not significantly below that in market-oriented Western Europe—though, as I have written elsewhere (Saint-André 1992), people in Eastern countries were not happy. The salient evaluation is that laissez-faire capitalism makes possible the best politico-economic conditions (objective law, property rights, stable currency, etc.) for full, rational, human living and planning over the span of a lifetime, and that all other systems of political economy make this possible to a lesser degree. Consider another example: the experience of art. Certainly none would argue that you would die without art in your life. However, by concretizing metaphysical abstractions about the nature of man and the universe, art can so assist you in such important aspects of life as self-knowledge, personal motivation, and the enjoyment of life, that we can plausibly argue that over the long haul a life with art is more complete and more fully human than a life without art. Similar kinds of teleological evaluation apply as well to the other “terms, methods, conditions, and goals” involved in human living (e.g., methods of thinking or decision-making, goals of financial wealth or psychological enjoyment, conditions of physical health, terms of organizational design, etc.)—the end in view is always that of rational human living over the full span of life, in the light of which any given means is to be evaluated.

Permit me to note that, from this vantage point, we can see that for Rand the master science is ethics (or, perhaps, philosophical anthropology)—in contrast to Aristotle, who held the master science to be politics. For Rand, it is the requirements of man’s life and of his nature as a conceptual being that provide the impetus and the starting point for epistemology (the methods of thought proper to human beings), for political

philosophy (the societal conditions proper to human beings), for aesthetics (the standards for understanding and evaluating the concretizations of metaphysics needed by human beings), and for all the special and applied arts and sciences developed by human beings (Jacob Bronowski, too [1971], built his ethical viewpoint on the foundation of man's conceptual nature). A fine expression of this deep human-centeredness—of the centrality of ethics and man's life in Rand's thought—can be found in her novel *Anthem*, where the hero states:

I know not if this earth on which I stand is the core of the universe or if it is but a speck of dust lost in eternity. I know not and I care not. For I know what happiness is possible to me on earth. And my happiness needs no higher aim to vindicate it. My happiness is not the means to any end. It is the end. It is its own goal. It is its own purpose. (Rand 1946, 95)

Granted, this is early Ayn Rand. It may be that her views changed over the years, from an emphasis on the happiness of the individual to an emphasis on the satisfaction of an abstract standard of value (“man's survival qua man”). But I think that Rand would have been frustrated with those who see a dichotomy between man's life as the standard of value in ethics, and happiness as the highest purpose of the individual (for evidence, see Rand 1961, 29—in fact, as I will later discuss, it seems that she believed that to choose life was the same thing as choosing to fight for your own happiness).

Consider, for example, Henry Scuteguazza's argument that achieving that which is good by the standard of “man's survival qua man” will not necessarily make you happy, because the standard is generic while your life is particular (the standard applies to “man as such”, not to you or me as an individual human being with individual talents, potentials, propensities, and desires). Thus, he argues, we need a further principle to supplement the generic standard of value—one that applies exclusively at the level of the individual (namely, the principle of flourishing).

While I sympathize with the direction of his argument, I believe we must tread carefully here. Before introducing a principle of self-fulfillment (flourishing) as against a principle of “man-fulfillment” (man's survival qua man), it would behoove us to explore fully the possibility of a deeply humanistic, naturalistic, individualistic Objectivist ethics. The first step is to absorb the metaphysical point that there is no such thing in reality as Man or “man as such” — there are only human individuals (cf. Rand 1957, 1017 for a reflection of this metaphysical individualism). To presume that “man's

survival qua man” is necessarily and hopelessly generic, and that each individual is some combination of the generic element of man-ness and the particularizing elements of an individual nature, is to accept the false metaphysics of Neo-Platonism — not a good starting point for an Objectivist ethics!

In contrast to the attempt at harmonization offered by Henry Scuteguazza, David Kelley maintains that the standard of survival is the only proper foundation for an ethics of eudaimonia. Kelley argues that “every value and virtue that goes to make up a good life must be shown to have a bearing on survival in one way or another, it must enhance the prospects for self-preservation”—“for only the alternative of existence or non-existence can sustain a nonarbitrary normative judgment that something is good, right, or virtuous” (Kelley 1992a, 58). However, I am not convinced that this is quite the right track, either, for several reasons. First, Ayn Rand's conception of teleological evaluation makes possible for all the “terms, methods, conditions and goals” of human living the kind of argument I adumbrated above for societal conditions and for art—i.e., an argument that appeals not to human existence or non-existence but to the best conditions for human life. (Of course, this kind of teleological evaluation will still depend on a biological concept of value, derived from or corollary to the concept of life.) Second, even though Rand's formulation of the standard of value is “man's survival qua man”, relatively less attention has been paid to the condition that one survive as man than that one merely survive. There seems to be an attempt to have mere survival shoulder the entire justificatory burden, without much attention to the manner of that survival. I would prefer to base many of my arguments on the ground of ethical naturalism and the conditions of human survival, rather than basing all of my arguments on the ground of ethical egoism and the conditions of individual human survival. The issue is one of emphasis, certainly, and I believe that the elements of naturalism and egoism can peacefully co-exist in a fully-developed Objectivist ethics. Indeed, it is the naturalism of Objectivism that makes it distinctive in the tradition of ethical egoism — which has tended toward subjectivism and nihilism—just as it is the egoism of Objectivism that makes it distinctive in the tradition of ethical naturalism—which has tended toward intrinsicism and collectivism. But I think an over-emphasis on one of these aspects over the other can only lead to confusion and to misguided attempts at counter-balance, as witness Henry Scuteguazza's argument that we must supplement the egoistic standard of survival—which tells me to remain in existence as an individual, but which at the same time is hopelessly generic—with the naturalistic standard of flourishing—which refers me to the profound issue of realizing my nature, but which at the same time is hopelessly personal and subjective.

The point is that there is no dichotomy between “survival qua man” and flourishing as an individual—if, that is, we put the necessary effort into understanding what human nature consists of and how that nature manifests itself in the life of the individual. While ethics can have much to say about this task, I believe that it is also, simply, a major constituent of reflective living, which must be engaged in by any individual desiring to live a good life.

While “reflective living” is not something that Ayn Rand speaks of in so many words, I believe that the concept lies just below the surface throughout her ethical writings. For example, as noted above, Rand held that “man’s survival as man” is the standard of value in ethics, by which she meant “the terms, methods, conditions and goals required for the survival of a rational being through the whole of his lifespan”. But she argued that if an individual is to succeed in implementing this principle (i.e., in living according to life as the standard of value), he has to “choose his course, his goals, his values in the context of a lifetime”—he has to recognize and apply personally the principle that “his own life is the ethical purpose of every individual man”. Yet what does it mean to hold your own life as your ethical purpose? In part, it means to “never live for the sake of another man”, to hold your own life as a sacred value, to recognize that your own happiness needs no higher end to vindicate it, to dedicate yourself to “preserving, fulfilling, and enjoying the irreplaceable value which is your life” (Rand 1957, 1014). But these formulations are still highly abstract. What does holding your life as your ethical purpose mean on a more concrete level, on the level of your daily evaluations and decisions? As we have seen, Rand argues that the standard of value in a code of ethics functions as the basis for teleological measurement. However, this implies that it still up to you to “do the measuring”. That is, the job of applying a code of ethics in your own life requires that you intelligently determine and continually refine (over the course of your lifetime) your personal hierarchy of values, and act in accordance with it (Rand 1966d, 34)—in other words, that you live reflectively.

As to the task of “doing the measuring”, Rand notes that in the economic realm there is a ready unit of measurement for expressing one’s evaluations: money (on value hierarchies in the economic realm, see Menger 1871 and George 1993). In the spiritual realm (the realm that determines one’s choices in the economic realm), Rand argues that “the currency . . . is time, i.e., one’s life”. “It is a part of one’s life that one invests in everything one values. The years, months, days or hours of thought, of interest, of action devoted to a value are the currency with which one pays for the enjoyment one receives from them” (Rand 1966d, 34).

On a simplistic interpretation, of course, this position is absurd. I have almost certainly spent more time in my life brushing my teeth than reading *The Fountainhead*. Does this imply that brushing my teeth is more important to me than the experience of metaphysical joy that I receive from seeing the kind of world I deeply value made real in fiction? To choose another example: is sleeping more important or meaningful to me than writing essays on philosophy?

No. Rand makes quite clear that the distinguishing characteristics of any psychological process, including that of evaluation, are its content and its intensity (Rand 1966d, 31). Thus the place of any specific value in my value hierarchy is determined by the “content” of the time I devote to it and by the felt intensity of that time, as well as by how much time I devote to it. I certainly sleep more than I write, but writing is an experience that is much more full to me than sleeping, both in its content and in the intensity of concentration and “psychic energy” I devote to it (after all, while sleeping I am unconscious). The same considerations apply across the board—which is why rote, automated activities like brushing my teeth are not as high in my hierarchy of values as reading *The Fountainhead*. In other words, how I spend my time (content and intensity), and how much time I spend on which activities, express what it is that I value in life.

However, the question addressed by the debate between flourishing and survival as competing standards of value is not “What is it that I should value?” As David Kelley has pointed out (Kelley 1993c), those who hold survival to be the standard of value still believe that flourishing or eudaimonia is the ideal way of life. The point at issue pertains to the objective justification for a life of eudaimonia: is the ultimate standard of value survival or flourishing?

In order to decide the issue — or to find a third way — it is necessary to understand more clearly what a standard of value is and how it functions in human life. According to Rand, a standard of value in ethics serves two purposes. One is as the ultimate end of action — the “ultimate activity”, as it were (Rand 1961, 17).³ The other is as the basis for teleological measurement, for a code of ethical principles, and for determining one’s hierarchy of values (Rand 1966d, 33). I will address each of these in turn.

The standard of value for Rand is life. To express it differently, we can say that life is the ultimate end of action, or the ultimate value (Rand 1961, 17). In ethics, Rand states that the standard of value is “man’s life”. But what is life? Rand’s concept of life, and of value as the corollary of life, is, at root, biological: she ties the concept of value to life as such (not limiting it to the human realm, which is unique not in the exis-

tence of values but in man's need for a conceptual code of value principles). Unfortunately, Rand, though perhaps a biologically-oriented or "bio-centric" philosopher in her ethics, was not biologically-knowledgeable, and did not flesh out her concept of life in great detail. However, there is one biologically-knowledgeable philosopher whose insights sound remarkably Randian in these matters, and that philosopher is Aristotle.

Aristotle's concept of life is usually expressed in Greek by the word *bios*, from which we get the word biology. However, the *bios* of an animal is not its mere metabolic functioning: it is its characteristic way of living (on the concept of *bios*, see Aristotle *Historia Animalium* I.1 487a10-488b10, VIII.1-2 588a16-590a18, and VIII.12 596b20-28, as well as Kosman 1987, 378-379). Thus Aristotle can talk about the life of a beaver involving the making of dams, or the life of a stork involving making nests and feeding in a certain way that is determined by its physical makeup (long legs, spoon bill, etc.) and the environment in which it lives. A beaver prevented from making dams or a stork prevented from making nests and feeding in its characteristic way is not really living as the animal it is—it is not living its (distinctive form of) life.

When it comes to the human animal, Aristotle does not often use the word *bios* to talk about its characteristic way of living — though he does use the word *zoe*, which refers to life generally or to the means of life, rather than *bios*, which refers more properly to manner of living; see for example *Nicomachean Ethics* 1097b33-1098a17 and 1100b33. More significantly, Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* talks about the *ergon* (the "function") of man, which is man's "job" or "work" or characteristic activity in life (see Brakas 1993). The characteristic human activity, Aristotle argues, is reason. Thus Aristotle maintains that there is a characteristic human way of living, and that it consists in (or significantly involves) acting in accordance with reason.

But there is more to human life than just reason. We are, after all, rational animals who must survive in the world. The way Rand puts this is to state that, though reason is man's "way of survival" (Rand 1957, 1014 and Rand 1973, 205), the standard of value for humans is "man's survival qua man" and the ethical purpose of each individual is "his own life". In other words, the job of survival is not solved simply by thinking rationally—man must also apply the knowledge he gains about reality to specific projects and, given that he always lives in the society of other humans, to the challenges of human relationships (on this last, see M.F. Enright 1991).

The Cardinal Values of Human Living

To further explicate the conception of "life" that is involved in saying that the standard of value in ethics is man's life, I would like to spiral back to Rand's concept of teleological measurement, and relate it, as Rand does, specifically to ethics:

...a moral code is a system of teleological measurements which grades the choices and actions open to man, according to the degree to which they achieve or frustrate the code's standard of value. The standard is the end, to which man's actions are the means.

A moral code is a set of abstract principles; to practice it, an individual must translate it into appropriate concretes—he must choose the particular goals and values which he is to pursue. This requires that he define his particular hierarchy of values, in the order of their importance, and that he act accordingly. (Rand 1966d, 33)

Rand goes on to point out that determining one's personal hierarchy of values is a difficult task, involving many uncertainties and ambiguities. As noted above, Rand, to concretize the matter, draws an analogy between the material currency (money) and the "spiritual currency" (time) that one spends to pay for one's values in life:

On any level of income, a man's money is a limited quantity; in spending it, he weighs the value of his purchase against the value of every other purchase open to him for the same amount of money, he weighs it against the hierarchy of all his other goals, desires and needs, then makes the purchase or not accordingly.

The same kind of measurement guides man's actions in the wider realm of moral or spiritual values... But the currency or medium of exchange is different. In the spiritual realm, the currency—which exists in limited quantities and must be teleologically measured in the pursuit of any value—is time, i.e., one's life.

Since a value is that which one acts to gain and/or keep, and the amount of possible action is limited by the duration of one's lifespan, it is a part of one's life that one invests in everything one values. The years, months, days or hours of thought,

of interest, of action devoted to a value are the currency with which one pays for the enjoyment one receives from them. (Rand 1966d, 33-34)

I believe that the above passage sheds light on Rand's conception of human life by suggesting what the characteristic activities or cardinal values are that significantly constitute life for humans. For it appears from this passage that the spiritual value one "pays for" in life is the enjoyment one receives from living (cf. Rand 1961, 29, "It is by experiencing happiness that one lives one's life, in any hour, year, or the whole of it", and Rand 1957, 1014, "The purpose of morality is to teach you, not to suffer and die, but to enjoy yourself and live").⁴ The way one pays for the value of enjoyment is through the investment of three forms of spiritual currency: one's thought, one's interest, and one's action. Now, one's thought is an expression of one's mind and is aimed at understanding reality. One's interest is an expression of one's values or one's soul, and is aimed at selectively giving one's attention (based on one's values and by means of one's free will) to those aspects of reality one finds most important, as manifested in the objects on which one focuses one's thoughts and actions. One's action is an expression of one's material nature or (broadly construed) one's body, and is aimed at implementing one's values through actual achievement, through the actual creation of value.

Further evidence that such are the characteristic activities or cardinal values of the Objectivist ethics comes from a discussion in Rand's 1974 essay "Philosophy: Who Needs It". There, in the context of describing the link between metaphysics and ethics, Rand raises several questions in metaphysics whose answers lead to fundamental positions in ethics (this kind of answer is what Rand called a "metaphysical value-judgment"; cf. also Rand 1965, 19 and Rand 1966a, 28). I believe that the issues raised in these "metaphysical value-questions" of Rand's get to the essence of happiness, and are linked directly to the issue of human cardinal values:

Is man a rational being, able to deal with reality—or is he a helplessly blind misfit, a chip buffeted by the universal flux? Are achievement and enjoyment possible to man on earth—or is he doomed to failure and disaster? Depending on the answers, you can proceed to consider the questions posed by ethics: What is good or evil for man—and why? Should man's primary concern be a quest for joy—or an escape from suffering? Should man hold self-fulfillment—or self-destruction—as the goal of his life? Should man pursue his

values—or should he place the interests of others above his own? Should man seek happiness—or self-sacrifice? (Rand 1974, 4)

Similarly, in her 1966a, 28, Rand mentions as metaphysical value-questions the following: "whether the universe is knowable or not, whether man has the power of choice or not, whether he can achieve his goals in life or not". In another passage, Rand remarks that the question "What is possible to me?" is the key one to ask in determining what to value in life (1966c, 51; cf. Rand 1963, 170). But that which is possible to me depends on the capacities or causal powers that constitute the essence of my nature as a human being—which David Kelley has identified as the causal powers of conceptual consciousness, volition, and agency (Kelley 1993c). Based on these considerations, on Rand's phrasing of the metaphysical value-questions, and on their stated consequences in ethics, I unpack and paraphrase Rand's metaphysical value-questions as follows:

1. Is human consciousness efficacious—is it possible for me to understand reality conceptually, or am I doomed to a life of doubt and ignorance?
2. Is human volition efficacious—is it possible for me to base my thoughts and actions on what I find important about reality, or is my life determined by forces outside my control?
3. Is human agency efficacious—is it possible for me to create value and achieve my purposes in reality, or am I doomed to a life of failure and defeat?
4. Is there any emotional reward for causal efficacy—is it possible for me to find joy in my life, or am I doomed to suffering and misery?

I believe that these four "metaphysical value-questions" are directly connected to four basic "characteristic activities" or essential life-principles of human beings, and that these characteristic activities are the four cardinal values of the Objectivist ethics—namely: conceptualization; self-direction;^{4a} achievement; and enjoyment.

By saying that these four are the cardinal values of Objectivist ethics, I do not mean to denigrate Rand's triad of "Reason, Purpose, Self-Esteem", which she characterized as follows: "Reason, as [man's] only tool of knowledge—Purpose, as his choice of the happiness which that tool must proceed to achieve—Self-Esteem, as his inviolate certainty that his mind is competent to think and his person is worthy of happiness, which means: is worthy of living" (Rand 1957, 1018). However, this triad (which might be better characterized as reason, happiness, and self-esteem) cannot, I believe, effectively function as a set of principles guiding choice and action. After all, reason is a faculty,

happiness is a state (or purpose is a choice), and self-esteem is a belief. By contrast, conceptualization, self-direction, achievement, and enjoyment can all be characterized as forms of “cardinal human activity” that are essential to and that together constitute the “ultimate human activity” of living.⁵

That conceptualization, self-direction, achievement, and enjoyment are the cardinal values of Objectivism is hinted at in several other places in Rand’s corpus. For instance, in a passage from Galt’s Speech (Rand 1957, 1026), Rand states of man that “all the cardinal values of his existence” are “reason, morality, creativeness, joy”—cardinal values that she connects with the human activities or characteristics of mind, values, work, and love. In *The Fountainhead* Rand states that “To think, to feel, to judge, to act are the functions of the ego” (Rand 1943, 737; cf. 739), functions which I see as equivalent to the foursome of thought, enjoyment, interest or attention, and action in Rand 1966d and of reason, joy, morality, and creativeness in Rand 1957. Similarly, David Kelley notes about Rand’s *The Fountainhead* that the three values celebrated therein through the moral ideal of Howard Roark are independence of mind, egoism with regard to one’s values, and the creation of value in one’s work, which together result in an intense passion for, and joy in, life (Kelley 1993b).

Further corroborating evidence comes from the trio of essays in which Rand introduced and first explicated her concept of “metaphysical value-judgments”: “The Psycho-Epistemology of Art”, “Philosophy and Sense of Life”, and “Art and Sense of Life” (Rand 1965, 1966a, and 1966b). There, Rand makes careful distinctions between three significant ways of looking at reality. One of them proceeds according to the question “What is true?” or, as Rand also phrases it, “What is essential?”, and leads to what Rand calls cognitive abstractions (Rand 1966b, 36)—the realm of consciousness concerning the essential nature of things in reality, which is directly connected with the cardinal value of conceptualization, of understanding reality by means of the faculty of reason. The second perspective asks “What is good?”, and leads to normative abstractions — the realm of consciousness concerning norms or standards for action, which is directly connected with the cardinal value of achievement through the exercise of one’s power of agency.

A third perspective consists in asking “What is important?”, and according to Rand leads mainly to aesthetic abstractions. However, the realm of abstractions of importance is wider than the realm of aesthetic abstractions: it includes all of the abstractions included in one’s sense of life (Rand 1966a, 28). Rand quotes a dictionary definition of “important” as denoting “a quality, character or standing such as to entitle atten-

tion or consideration”; and she goes on to say that the most fundamental thing which is entitled to one’s attention is reality (Rand 1966a, 28). Thus the realm of abstraction involved here is that of consciousness of aspects of reality as “important to me” (Rand 1966a, 27-28). Rand calls such generalizations “emotional abstractions” because they are initially formed on the basis of one’s emotional responses to the people and events of one’s life (Rand 1966a, 27). However, they might be better labeled evaluative abstractions, since they concern the evaluation of aspects of reality as important to the individual (cf. Rand 1966b, 36: “selection constitutes... evaluation”). I think that this more general description coheres quite well with the fact that the human power of volition concerns itself at root with the decision whether to think about something or not, and with the turning of one’s attention to those aspects of reality which one finds most important—and thus with the cardinal value, as I have characterized it, of self-direction.⁶

Another way to explicate these four cardinal values is to look at each cardinal value as a special kind of relation to reality—a relation which a living entity acts to acquire or maintain by applying some essential attribute of itself.⁷ Thus, we can characterize conceptualization as a relation (of knowledge) to reality that I act to acquire and maintain by making the exercise of conceptual consciousness a way of life; Self-direction as a relation to my own identity and values (of commitment to their realization) that I act to acquire and maintain by making the exercise of volition a way of life; Achievement as a relation to my intended future that I act to acquire and maintain by making the exercise of agency a way of life; and Enjoyment as a relation to my causal efficacy (of positive feedback concerning my thought, interest, and action) that I act to acquire and maintain by making the emotional experience of joy a way of life.

From the inner perspective, the value of understanding reality through reason consists in the attitude “I am going to think, I am going to understand reality”—guided by the question “What is essential?” or “What is true?”. The value of achievement consists in the attitude “I am going to take action and create value in the world”—guided by the question “What is good?”. The value of self-direction consists in the attitude “I am going to think and act according to what I value in life, I am going honor that which I find of interest in reality”—guided by the question “What is important?”. The value of joy consists in the attitude “I am going to do all of this for my own sake, for the sake of my own enjoyment”—guided, not by any question about reality, but by what Rand called a person’s “inviolable certainty that... his person is worthy of happiness” (Rand 1957, 1018).⁸

Much of Ayn Rand's work in philosophy and in literature was directed at defending the role of reason in human life—what she once called “the cognitive efficacy of man's mind” (Rand 1990, 3). The existential expression of this cognitive efficacy is the cardinal value of conceptualization, which consists in the activity of using one's consciousness to gain knowledge about reality (this is the “detection” part of what David Kelley characterizes as the “detection and selection” functions of consciousness, “selection” being the activity of making decisions about action; see also J. Enright 1991, 49). Given that reason is man's basic way of life or “way of survival”, one needs to act on the basis of conceptual knowledge, which means that one must gather such knowledge in order to be able to act in a human manner. But it is not the case that such knowledge is gathered only early in life, after which time reason may be dispensed with. The following passage from Ayn Rand well expresses the nature and scope of conceptualization in human existence:

The process of concept-formation... consists of a method of using one's consciousness, best designated by the term “conceptualizing.” It is not a passive state of registering random impressions. It is an actively sustained process of identifying one's impressions in conceptual terms, of integrating every event and every observation into a conceptual context, of grasping relationships, differences, similarities in one's perceptual material and of abstracting them into new concepts, of drawing inferences, of making deductions, of reaching conclusions, of asking new questions and discovering new answers and expanding one's knowledge into an ever-growing sum. The faculty that directs this process, the faculty that works by means of concepts, is: reason. The process is thinking. (Rand 1961, 20)

Furthermore, conceptualization is always the activity of an individual mind. In answer to the question “Whose reason?”, Rand answers emphatically: Yours.

No matter how vast your knowledge or how modest, it is your own mind that has to acquire it. It is only your own knowledge that you can claim to possess or ask others to consider. Your mind is your only judge of truth—and if others dissent from your verdict, reality is the court of final appeal. Nothing but a man's mind can perform that complex, delicate, crucial process of identification which is thinking. (Rand 1957, 1017.)

Self-direction can be characterized as making one's volition efficacious through consciously choosing one's values and honoring one's interests in life. Rand has an interesting discussion of the place of volition in human life in her essay “What is Romanticism?”, where she argues as follows:

In forming a view of man's nature, a fundamental question one must answer is whether man possesses the faculty of volition—because one's conclusions and evaluations in regard to all of the characteristics, requirements and actions of man depend on the answer (Rand 1969, 99). If man possesses volition, then the crucial aspect of his life is his choice of values... if man does not possess volition, then his life and his character are determined by forces beyond his control... then the choice of values is impossible to him (ibid., 100).

Self-direction is necessary because of the conceptual nature of human consciousness, which gives rise to the phenomena of self-awareness and of inner life—to a deep and true individuality. We are the only animals that need a code of value principles—a consciously determined hierarchy of values and a consciously understood outlook on life. This hierarchy is the exclusive possession and dominion of the individual, and includes such intensely personal psychological needs as those for art and inspiration, for spiritual growth and self-expression, for self-respect and self-confidence, for self-knowledge and self-trust, for the exploration of the inner life. The Romantic sense of life that Rand projects in her novels and in her discussions of art and ethics expresses what she called “the fire of self-assertiveness” (1969, 115; cf. 121) and “the battle for [your] right to individuality” (105)—“a rational, benevolent, value-oriented sense of life” (102) which recognizes that the value of your own life is something that must be created by you, and that you owe “no allegiance to men (only to man), only to the metaphysical nature of reality and to [your] own values” (118). It is this involvement of your self in all of your life pursuits, this “fight for your own happiness” (Rand 1957, 1059), this passion to determine the course of your life and to honor your own true interests, that gives your life its felt intensity.

Rand argues that a commitment to choosing your own values, honoring the true interests of your soul, doing justice to what you find important in reality, and directing the course of your life exhibits itself in two spheres: in thought and in action. “The faculty of volition operates in regard to the two fundamental aspects of man's life: consciousness and existence” (Rand 1969, 100). Both of these are arenas open to achievement by

ma—for “if he chooses values, then he must act to gain and/or keep them”, and “if so, then he must set his goals and engage in purposeful action to achieve them” (ibid.). A commitment to achievement in existence means a commitment to the active creation of value in existence, to making one’s chosen values real in the world. A commitment to achievement in consciousness means what Rand once called “moral ambition”—a recognition that “of any achievements open to you, the one that makes all others possible is the creation of your own character... that as man must produce the physical values he needs to sustain his life, so he must acquire the values of character that make his life worthwhile” (Rand 1957, 1020)—which values include for Rand, as they did for Aristotle, excellences both intellectual and spiritual. Commitment to achievement in the realms of thought and action means commitment to “the irreplaceable value which is your consciousness and the incomparable glory which is your existence” (1957, 1021).

Obviously, existential achievement at some level is necessary for mere survival. If one achieves nothing at all, then one cannot remain in existence. In this sense, achievement must be a way of life. But does this imply that all my projects and relationships—all my pursuits, whether related to consciousness or existence—need to be directed at the creation of value in the world? I believe the answer is yes. One cannot “take a break from purpose”, just as one cannot “take a break from reason” (not without serious consequences, that is). Of course, it may be the case that the reasoned purpose of an activity is relaxation or what one might call “doing nothing”—but the situation of having as one’s chosen purpose “doing nothing” is vastly different from the situation of having no rationally chosen purpose whatsoever in one’s activities. Doing nothing is healthy, at least at times. Not knowing or caring why one is doing what one is doing—having one’s actions be utterly unintegrated with one’s thoughts and interests—is lethal.

The happy consequence of this line of argument—the flip side of saying that each of your life-pursuits must involve conceptualization, self-direction, and achievement—is the necessity that each one of your life-pursuits be a source of joy in your life: that enjoyment, too, be a way of life. Enjoyment is captured by the *Oxford English Dictionary’s* secondary definition of happiness: “The state of pleasurable content of mind, which results from success or the attainment of what is considered good.” This is the value that all your efforts go to pay for—the “cash value” of honoring your true interests in thought and action. If conceptualization, self-direction, achievement, and enjoyment are truly the cardinal human values, then they must attach to each and every human pursuit—if that pursuit is to be called human. Each pursuit must have its reasoned

pleasure (in the widest sense), just as each must have its reasoned purpose (and the two are not unconnected, of course, as such phenomena as creativity and peak experiences attest).

The Specter of Hedonism

I should here address the questions that might be raised about the validity of enjoyment as a cardinal value, especially given Objectivism’s historical antagonism towards hedonism. What is the nature of enjoyment for human beings that it should be a cardinal value of human living? Rand argues as follows:

Just as your body has two fundamental sensations, pleasure and pain, as signs of its welfare or injury, as a barometer of its basic alternative, life or death, so your consciousness has two fundamental emotions, joy and suffering, in answer to the same alternative. Your emotions are estimates of that which furthers your life or threatens it, lightning calculators of your profit or loss. You have no choice about your capacity to feel that something is good for you or evil, but what you will consider good or evil, what will give you joy or pain, what you will love or hate, desire or fear, depends on your standard of value. Emotions are inherent in your nature, but their content is dictated by your mind. (Rand 1957, 1021)

In a similar manner, Eric Mack argues that pain is a “cost” and pleasure a “benefit” of living to those creatures who have the capacity to experience these affects—that is, that the capacity for pleasure and pain constitutes an “alternative evolutionary strategy” which proves viable because it “introduces benefits and costs not previously present and these benefits and costs influence the behavior of the entities subject to them”, presumably in a way that conduces to survival (Mack 1984, 142). Mack goes on to argue that experiencing “satisfaction” and “dissatisfaction” (equivalent to Rand’s concepts of “joy” and “suffering”) concerning the completion of personally important projects constitutes a further alternative evolutionary strategy—one innovated by human beings (142-143).

My position on this issue takes as its starting point that the experiences of pain and pleasure are unique forms of experiencing knowledge about reality—that they constitute forms of awareness. Consider existents at the vegetative level of life and the sensory level of cognition. As far as we know, such creatures do not experience the affects of pain and pleasure: when they are injured or come in contact with something that is beneficial to their survival, they experience a chemical

or bodily sensation or reaction, probably without concomitant awareness. Beings on the animal level of life and the perceptual level of cognition experience pain when they are injured and pleasure when they come in contact with something beneficial. As Thomas Szasz puts it in relation to the experience of pain:

Neither the “mind” (or “psyche”) nor a physical event responsible for injury are “causes” of pain. Rather the sensation is our way of apprehending and describing a particular pattern of events. (Szasz 1988, 48; emphasis added.)

This explanation hits very close to the mark, I think. Pleasure and pain are forms in which animals above a certain level of consciousness experience certain aspects of reality. To paraphrase David Kelley: the way a thing feels is its effect on a being with a specific nature (cf. Kelley 1986, 110).

Human beings, who function on the conceptual level of cognition, can experience pain and pleasure on a higher level than that experienced by perceptual-level animals—we can experience pleasant and painful emotions, which Rand calls joy and suffering. Humans experience pain or suffering in bodily damage, in unsatisfied need, in the loss of or separation from valued objects or persons, and in particular negative states of human relationships; we experience pleasure or joy in the reduction of physiological needs, in contact with or in the acquisition of valued objects or persons, and in particular positive states of human relationships (see Szasz 1988, 82-104 and 196-204 for phenomenologies of these affects). Thus, I see joy and suffering as ways of experiencing (and even gaining knowledge about) reality—as distinct and important forms of awareness—and as valid bases on which to seek conceptualization in the realm of human values, especially in regard to our projects and relationships.⁹

This claim may sound strange in the context of what is usually taken to be Ayn Rand’s view of emotions. Eric Mack, for instance, notes that Rand was loath to sanction pleasure as a value because to do so “would be to claim that people should be motivated by the desire for pleasure and happiness and that this commends a fruitless hedonism” (Mack 1984, 136). And Rand was adamant about claiming that “emotions are not tools of cognition”. However, it is clear that Rand believed emotions to be forms of consciousness or awareness of reality. She states that “an emotion is a response to a fact of reality, an estimate dictated by your standards” (Rand 1957, 1033), and she discusses the capacity for pleasure or pain and the capacity for joy or suffering as kinds of consciousness in several passages (Rand 1961, 17-18 and 27-28). Thus, I would argue that pain and pleasure are perceptual (interoceptive or

psychosomatic) forms of experiencing certain aspects of reality, and that joy and suffering are more complex kinds of awareness open only to beings of higher or conceptual consciousness. Further, I see nothing inherently dangerous in this approach. Of course, pleasure or pain and joy or suffering as forms of experiencing reality are relative to the individual and may need to be subjected to conceptual judgment before being accepted as valid. However, the same is true even of the direct perception of external reality (cf. Kelley 1986, Chapter 7).

Because pleasant or painful sensations and emotions are forms of being aware of reality, they can play a crucial role in the three conceptual realms of abstractions of the true, the important, and the good discussed earlier—not as tools of conceptualization, but as data that must be taken into account in such conceptualizations.

That emotions can be important data for our cognitive abstractions is shown for instance by Rand’s discussion of the concept of love in her 1966d. There, Rand states that forming the concept of love involves in part “isolating two or more instances of the appropriate psychological process, and then retaining its distinguishing characteristics”, which are: “an emotion proceeding from the evaluation of an existent as a positive value and as a source of pleasure” (Rand 1966d, 34; cf. also Rand 1990, 228-229).

The involvement of emotions with what I have called evaluative abstractions is more direct. Indeed, Rand argues that such generalizations, which comprise the core of one’s sense of life, are formed on the basis of one’s emotional reactions to the events of one’s life, and labels them “emotional abstractions” (Rand 1966a, 27). Certainly there are nuances involved here: things can be classified according to subtle emotional reactions such as adventure or boredom, for instance. But the fundamental tone of an emotion is either positive or negative, either pleasurable or painful, and the aspect of reality in question is experienced as important or unimportant through being a source either of joy or of suffering (in whatever of their forms and in whatever degree—measurements of form or degree being substantially omitted in the process of forming such emotional generalizations). Thus it seems that positive or negative sensations and emotions are involved in the realm of evaluative abstractions as well.

Are emotions properly involved in forming normative abstractions, which comprise the standards that guide one in one’s actions? It is here that the most strenuous objections to the role of joy can be expected, since the perceived problem with hedonism is that it sets up pleasure as a standard for guiding action. What is more, both Ayn Rand and Nathaniel Branden argue that pleasure is “the reward and consequence of suc-

cessful action” (Branden 1964, 61), which seems to imply that joy and pleasure are epiphenomenal, that they occur merely after the fact, and that they are effects of which successful activity is the cause. It may seem to follow from this that enjoyment cannot be a cardinal value (or, even, a value), that joy occurs automatically on the achievement of “real” values like reason, purpose, and self-esteem, and that enjoyment is not something to itself be sought in life. Yet I see no reason why joy cannot be an important value in life, even a cardinal value, simply because it is primarily an effect of activity—the distinction between cause and effect does not speak fundamentally to whether something is or is not a good in human life. As to the second point: there are many people for whom the achievement of desired ends brings no joy whatsoever. This phenomenon makes it clear that the enjoyment of life does not follow automatically from the accomplishment of values, and is something that must be actively pursued or focused on in life, or at least “allowed into” one’s life.

By stating that joy can and should be a goal of action, I do not mean to imply that pleasure or enjoyment is the standard of value in ethics—which is the hedonist position. An objective ethics of happiness must be based on that which conduces to happiness given the nature of human beings, and thus on the standard of human life. And as I have argued, human life consists essentially in the exercise of the causal powers of consciousness, volition, and agency. But feeling, too, is one of the “functions of the self” (Rand 1943, 739)—and there is little point in realizing the causal efficacy of your consciousness, volition, and agency if the resulting life brings you no joy. What human beings need and desire is efficacy and enjoyment: the integration of joy into life.

But in order to integrate joy into your existence, you must hold it as a cardinal value in your own life. The other cardinal values are often experienced as rather universal or impersonal. The value of enjoyment, by contrast, is inherently personal—one cannot imagine an impersonal joy. Joy in living is an expression of one’s personal values, one’s sense of life, one’s deepest personality. This is why what are perhaps the two most personal expressions of one’s sense of life—love and art (Rand 1966a, 32-33)—are such great sources of joy in life. To follow your own joy in life is much of what particularizes the pursuit of conceptualization, self-direction, and achievement. There are, for example, many careers that could satisfy those more abstract needs, but it is the element of joy that enables you to choose the life’s work that will lead you to fulfillment. The pursuit of joy is a manifestation of the “fire of self-assertion” and “battle for individuality” that lie at the base of Rand’s ethical vision.¹⁰

In general, then, I hold that enjoying is just as much a

characteristic activity and cardinal value for humans as conceptualization, self-direction, and achievement. The key to avoiding the trap of hedonism that Rand, Branden, and Mack all warn against is to avoid making joy the standard of value in ethics, while recognizing that the four cardinal goals of conceptualization, achievement, self-direction, and enjoyment must be pursued and realized in an integrated fashion. And this integration is at root metaphysical: the integration of the fundamental aspects of the individual (consciousness, volition, and agency), and the experience of this integration as causally efficacious and valuable through states of joy, and especially the state that Rand called “metaphysical joy” or “love for existence”.¹¹

Happiness Revisited

It is clear that Rand held her ethics to be an ethics of happiness. For example, Rand maintained that “his own happiness is man’s only moral purpose” (Rand 1957, 1021—cf. also Rand 1964a, 5 and Rand 1957, 1014). This might seem to imply that hers is simply an ethics of emotional satisfaction. However, by happiness Rand does not mean mere subjective well-being, for she holds that happiness has certain objective requirements. This is illustrated by a parallel strand in Rand’s thinking on the central purpose of human life, which holds that “His own life is the ethical purpose of every individual man” (Rand 1961, 25; cf. Rand 1957, 1014)—a view that might seem to imply an ethics of self-preservation. However, Rand seems to have considered these two strands of pleasure and self-preservation to be two sides of the same coin:

The maintenance of life and the pursuit of happiness are not two separate issues. To hold one’s life as one’s ultimate value, and one’s happiness as one’s highest purpose, are two aspects of the same achievement. Existentially, the activity of pursuing rational goals is the activity of maintaining one’s life; psychologically, its result, reward, and concomitant is an emotional state of happiness. It is by experiencing happiness that one lives one’s life, in any hour, year or the whole of it. And when one experiences the kind of pure happiness that is an end in itself—the kind that makes one think: “This is worth living for”—what one is greeting and affirming in emotional terms is the metaphysical fact that life is an end in itself. (Rand 1961, 29)

The glue holding happiness and survival together in Rand’s ethics is the fact that the characteristic activities of the human individual are conceptualization, self-direction, achievement, and enjoyment. The key to Rand’s ethic is that it is at root one of self-fulfillment—of the integrated fulfillment of all the essential “functions of the self”: thinking, evaluation, action, and feeling. For it is by fulfilling the cognitive,

evaluative, active, and emotional sides of your human nature in an integrated manner that you both preserve yourself in all your complexity and seek your joy on this earth.¹²

The wisest thinkers have always held happiness to be the ultimate goal of living. But the “naked” pursuit of happiness has always raised the specter of hedonism—and rightly so. What is desperately needed is a moral individualism: a naturalistic ethics that elucidates and justifies human, value-based goal-seeking and the full flowering and vitality of the whole individual in harmony with others. I believe that, properly understood, the Objectivist vision of integrated self-fulfillment provides the best framework for constructing just such a “philosophy for living on earth”. This paper is my first attempt at the elucidation of that philosophy.¹³

Notes

1. On “doing justice to what we know” (and feel) as an important task for philosophy, see Wang 1986. The current paper was originally inspired by a reading of Reuben Fine’s *Love and Work: The Value System of Psychoanalysis* (1990). Many of the issues I address here, and aspects of the conceptualization I offer, derive their importance in my thinking from the work of Ayn Rand and from the work of David Kelley in extending and clarifying many of Rand’s insights; and in part from work that I did with Jim Bird in developing The Life Management Program, a management training program. However, the philosophical considerations that I go into here extend well beyond Life Management, and my presentation differs in crucial respects from those of Rand and Kelley. Needless to say, the views expressed herein are solely my own.

2. I do not make a distinction in this paper between needs and values. It seems perhaps that psychologists are more comfortable speaking of needs and philosophers of values, but that the two words are roughly equivalent (except that the connotations of ‘need’ seem to be more objective—a biological or psychological necessity, as opposed to a value, which is chosen). The issue of animal needs vs. human wants or values, or of existence-needs vs. rational desires, manifests itself at Binswanger 1992, 87. Rand seems to hold that living life means achieving one’s goals and realizing one’s own values, since one must live as an individual (Rand 1957, 1059, etc.).

3. Rand defines value as “that which one acts to gain and/or keep” (Rand 1961, 34; cf. also 1957, 1012), though I find it helpful to put this in terms of final causation, so that it is clearly understood that a value is an end or goal (as Aristotle might have put it, a value is that for the sake of which one acts). I believe that Rand’s phraseology in “The Objectivist Ethics” and

elsewhere indicates that she held the ultimate value to be a form of activity: “life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action” (Rand 1957, 1013, emphasis added). It is partly because of this that my list of and characterization of the cardinal values differs from Rand’s.

4. Evidence for the central role of enjoyment in the perceived value of life comes from the phenomenology of suicide—the causes that lead to the only clear-cut instance of choosing death over life. There has been some controversy in Objectivism over whether the choice to live, which provides a foundation and starting-point for ethics (Rand 1957, 1018; Rand 1970, 118), is arbitrary. However, since it is in the power of almost anyone to take his or her own life at any time, the fact that the overwhelming majority of people do not commit suicide implies that almost every human being chooses, in some sense, life. One who explicitly chooses death by committing or attempting suicide does so, it seems, for one of two reasons: either that person’s life is tremendously painful, with little or no chance of improvement (as in the case of patients in chronic pain), or that person’s life appears in prospect to be utterly and hopelessly bereft of joy and pleasure (as in the case of extremely depressed individuals). This etiology indicates that what one chooses when one chooses life is the possibility of experiencing joy, which in turn implies that enjoyment is precisely the kind of “payback” from life that Rand maintains it is. My thanks to David Alway for making some of these points to me. See also M.F. Enright 1991, 86-87.

4a. In the version of this paper printed in *Objectivity*, I used “self-determination”; I have come to prefer “self-direction” as both more precise and more colloquial.

5. A slightly less radical approach would be to retain Rand’s three cardinal values while positing conceptualization, self-direction, achievement, and enjoyment as the “life-principles” that best guide one’s activities in pursuit of those cardinal values (or, at least, in the pursuit of happiness). I believe this tack has its merits, but I have not pursued it here.

6. This connection may shed light on Rand’s conception of Romanticism in art, defined by Rand precisely according to the power of volition. Rand’s definition of Romanticism has been criticized by Lou Torres and Michelle Kamhi in their essay on Rand’s philosophy of art; they see Rand’s concept of Romanticism as applying only to fiction, since only fiction can show action through time and thus show, in the subject of the artwork, the causal efficacy of volition (Torres and Kamhi 1991, 5). However, seeing volition fundamentally as the power of selection concerning one’s attention to what is important in reality makes it clear that Rand’s concept of Romanticism can apply not just to literature

but to all the arts, since art by its nature is a way of selectively guiding perception and thought to those aspects of reality that the artist deems important. The problem with this view is that Naturalism, which Rand defines as art that denies volition, would therefore appear not even to be art (indeed, Rand's diction is full of such an intimation, for instance when she claims that Naturalistic art is "journalistic" and devoted to the mere reporting of current reality). However, even Naturalistic art is selective (Rand 1969, 117)—it simply denies or attempts to deny the fact of its selectivity.

7. This formulation was suggested to me by David Kelley's conception of the metaphysical categories: Kelley reduces Aristotle's many categories to four: entity, attribute, action, relation (Kelley 1992b). The first three of these are mentioned by Rand (1957, 1016).

8. This "inviolable certainty" is one aspect of self-esteem as characterized by Ayn Rand, an aspect often labeled "self-respect"; the other aspect, often labeled self-confidence, is the certainty that one's "mind is competent to think". Certainly much good work remains to be done on the nature of self-esteem. For example, a fuller account of self-confidence might include aspects relating to the efficacy of your power of agency or ability to achieve, and of your power of volition or ability to determine the course of your life, in addition to that aspect relating to your power of conceptual consciousness or ability to think. However, it seems that self-respect forms the bedrock for all these varieties of self-confidence, in that what you are honoring in being true to your own thoughts, interests, and actions is your self — and you can only honor your self if you cleave to the inviolable certainty that your person is worthy of happiness, i.e., of enjoyment.

9. The area of human relationships is stressed by Szasz, that of projects by Mack. The foregoing discussion is an adumbration of what might be called a realist theory of emotion, a project that I plan to pursue in future work. By focusing here on what might be called the reliability of emotions and other affects, I do not mean to slight their other important aspects, such as their immediacy and their motivational power (thanks to Michael Young for making this point to me).

10. In addition to the passages on self-assertion cited above, see also Rand 1957, 1025-1028. In critiquing the morality of self-sacrifice, Rand charges: "Damnation is the start of your morality, destruction is its purpose, means, and end" (Rand 1957, 1025). By damnation here, Rand means especially self-damnation; by destruction, self-destruction. In the context, it is clear that Rand is offering her "philosophy for living on earth" as an ethic of self-fulfillment based on the assertion of the needs of the self—in direct opposition to the ethics of duty and self-abnegation.

11. For "metaphysical joy" and "love for existence" as equivalent, see Rand 1963, 170; for the importance of love for existence in Rand's thought, see Rand 1957, 1028, 1058, 1067, 1068—cf. also Rand 1957, 1009, 1013, 1028, 1052, as well as Rand 1961, 29. The concept of love for existence, and especially of love for one's own existence, can be found at least as far back as Aristotle, in his conception of megalopsuchia or "greatness of soul"—cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.4, 1166b19 and IX.9 1170a25-b13. Aristotle's ideas in this regard had an important influence on Nietzsche's conception of nobility — see commentary by Kaufmann (1974, 382-384) and passages such as *The Gay Science* §98, §338 and *Beyond Good and Evil* §212, §287. This last section contains Rand's deleted epigraph for *The Fountainhead* that "The noble soul has reverence for itself", a quotation which she stated "projects . . . a magnificent feeling for man's greatness" and "communicates the inner state of an exalted self-esteem" (Rand 1968, 422). For other passages indicating the influence of "greatness of soul" on Rand's thought, see Rand 1957, 1020-1021, 1060, and 1069.

12. A full theory of happiness must address the flourishing—the full vitality—of mind, emotions, body, and soul. Indeed, if life is the ultimate value, then the full vitality of the full human being is the "ultimate excellence". (In a similar fashion, we might say that there are four cardinal virtues or excellences corresponding to the cardinal values of understanding, self-direction, achievement, and enjoyment—though it is hard to know what to name them: perhaps rationality, passion, creativity, and joyousness?) Part of this fusion involves the harmonization of the individual's conscious beliefs or explicit philosophy of life with the individual's subconsciously integrated view of existence or emotional "sense of life" (formed through early experience, especially in the context of your family, and later transferred to the emotional evaluation of adolescent and adult experience). Part involves helping the individual gain a healthy integration of deeply-held values and practical necessity in the selection and pursuit of a career. Part involves the long-overdue unification of the secular and the sacred in everyday living (see Fingarette 1972). And part involves understanding how your values are inextricably bound up with all the areas of your life, and the resultant cultivation of a passion for living. These are among topics for further investigation.

13. I would like to thank David Alway, Stephen Boydston, Shikha Dalmia, Randall Dipert, Ilana Dover, Murray Franck, Elisa George, Donald Heath, David Kelley, Irfan Khawaja, Mark Saint-André, Chris Sciarra, and Michael Young for their comments.

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