Chapter V

 alumnos

 Conclusion
Nathaniel Branden says

In the novels of Ayn Rand, the sense of life projected is conscious, deliberate, explicit and philosophically implemented. It is as unique and unprecedented in literature as the premises from which it proceeds. It is a sense of life untouched by tragedy, untouched by any implication of metaphysical catastrophe, or doom. Its essence is an unclouded and exaltedly benevolent view of existence, the sense of a universe in which man belongs, a universe in which triumph, enjoyment and fulfillment are possible—although not guaranteed to man are to be achieved by the efficacy of his own effort. Ayn Rand shares with romantic novelist of the 19th century the view of man as a being of free will, a being who is moved and whose course is determined not by the fate or the GODs or the irresistible power of tragic flaws but by the values he has chosen. (James P. Draper 296).

Rand was once asked if she was primarily a novelist or a philosopher.

In typically dialectical fashion she responded
In a certain sense every novelist is a philosopher, because one cannot present a picture of human existence without a philosophical framework; the novelist only choice is whether that framework is present in his story explicitly or implicitly, whether he is aware of it or not, whether he holds his philosophical convictions consciously or subconsciously (Chris Matthew Sciabarra 97).

Rand’s literary and philosophical goals were internally related. She could not pursue her literary project without gradually articulating a philosophical framework. She could not apply her philosophy without expressing its values concretely in stories, dramas and novels. As she stated in a journal entry dated 4th may 1946, she had no interest in presenting new discovered knowledge in its abstract, general form. She wished to apply her knowledge in the concrete form of men and events, in the form of a fiction story. Such a fusion of the abstract and the concrete led Rand to wonder if she represented a peculiar phenomenon. Rand believed that she had achieved the proper integration of a complete human being.

Rand’s goal in writing was the projection of an ideal man. This literary portrayal was for her “an end in itself – to which any didactic intellectual or philosophical values contained in a novel are only the means but the ideal man
was not a pure abstraction. He had to be related to “the conditions which make him possible and which his existence requires”. By defining the values such an ideal man could have delineating the social conditions that would make it possible for him to exist and flourish, Rand slowly moved from best selling novelist to public philosopher. She shifted from the specifically anticommunist political themes of her first novel, *We the Living* to the broad metaphysical and epistemological themes of *Atlas Shrugged*.

In writing her fiction, Rand began with real-concrete, that is, with the world as perceived by her in all of its particularity. Through inductive reasoning and abstraction, she broke down the whole into concepts. Her character became through concretes reconstituted on the basis of her abstraction. She stated: “my characters are persons in whom certain human attributes are focused more sharply and consistently than in average human beings.” These characters embody essential principles. Their actions arise from ideas that inform their identity. Rand omits the accidental and contingent from her characterization, while she emphasizes primarily motivations. Rand was “interested in philosophical principles only as they affect the actual existence of men; and in men, only as they reflect philosophical principles and abstract theory that has no relation to reality is worse than nonsense; and men who act without relation to principles are less than animals”.

Rand concretized her abstractions in the character of her creation. In *The Fountainhead*, for instance, she isolated and identified the principles, stages, and variations of what she called the “diseased ego.” Based on this broad abstraction Rand created a range of characters representing “second handers”—those who lived through others, rather than by their own effort.

Rand believed that her literary method was an instance of creative process in general. In her view, “the creative process is, in a way, the reverse of the learning process.” Both learning and creativity constitute a cycle in which there is a movement from the “concrete to the abstract to the concrete.” In creating her characters, Rand first derived abstractions from concrete instances. She then concretized the abstraction in order to achieve [her] own purpose (in the concrete). In her notes for *Atlas Shrugged*, she wrote:

In order to think at all, man must be able to perform this cycle: he must know how to see an abstraction in the concrete and the concrete in the abstraction, and always relate one to the other; he must be able to derive an abstraction from the concrete . . . then be able to apply this abstraction both as guide for his future specific action and as standard by which to judge the specific ideas or actions of others.
In Rand’s view, those who accept one part of this cognitive cycle but not the other are doomed to partiality and distortion. “The cycle is a cycle,” Rand emphasized.

In each of her novels, Rand’s characters are the kind of one sided concrete she wants them to be. In their partiality, these characters interact as constituents of the organic unity that is novel. The logic of the principles motivating each character unfolds through concrete actions, events, and circumstances, through interrelationships and conflicts that Rand created from the synthesis of her imagination.

But Rand realized that her frictional depiction of the truth of certain ideas was no substitute for fully articulated thought guiding efficacious social action. Since the artist creates and the responder experiences art in terms of sense of life, it is the sense of life that must be understood and, ultimately, influenced. Unlike the Russian Symbolists, Rand proposed a cultural revolution would require philosophical articulation.

For Rand, concept formation, emotions, sense of life, and even our habitual methods of thinking are based on subconscious integrations of which one is largely unaware. But such processes are not the only means by which the mind functions. Rand argued that there is an inescapable human need for philosophical articulation.
Philosophy, she maintained, holds the key to such articulation. To live, human beings must act efficaciously. To act, they must choose. To choose, they must define a code of values. To define values they must know their own natures and the nature of the world around them. No one can escape from this need to act, choose, value, and know. Rand argued that for the individual the only alternative is whether the philosophy guiding him is to be chosen by his mind or by chance. The only alternative is whether to act on the basis of rational conviction and articulated understanding or on the basis of raw emotion and tacit sense of life. In Rand's view, an articulated philosophy is necessity for efficacious living. It is the foundation of science, the organizer of man's mind, the integrator of his knowledge, the programmer of his subconscious, the selector of his values.

How could Rand make this statement when she had already acknowledged that most people are moved by tacit factors they have never fully grasped or articulated? If people begin by acting on subconsciously held metaphysical value judgments, is the formation of explicit philosophical convictions nothing but an exercise in rationalizing the implicit? No. For Rand, articulation is not rationalization. Our core evaluations of ourselves, of others, and of the world may be wrong, but by not relying on the conclusions of our conscious minds, we are left at the mercy of inarticulate impulses that are largely the result of emotional and perceptual associations. Appropriate,
efficacious action is based on the integration of the conscious and sub
conscious premises or, alternatively, in the explicit philosophical principles we
have accepted. As Rand put it "One has no choice about the necessity to
integrate one's observations, experiences, knowledge into abstract ideas, i.e.,
into principles....A philosophic system is an integrated view of existence. As a
human being, one has no choice about the fact that one needs a philosophy.
One's only choice is whether one define one's philosophy by a conscious,
rational, disciplined process of thought and scrupulously logical deliberation ---
or let one's sub conscious accumulate a junk heap of unwarranted conclusions,
false generalizations, undefined contradictions, undigested slogans, unidentified
wishes, doubts and fears, thrown together by chance, but integrated by one's sub
conscious into a kind of mongrel philosophy and fused into a single ,solid
weight, self doubt, like a ball and chain in the place where one's mind's wings
should have grown.

As people learn to define the fundamental principles of their actions,
they begin to accept a philosophy by choice .Their conclusions; convictions
program their subconscious minds, rather than being mere rationalizations for
the values they have accepted tacitly. Those who are led by conscious thinking
are more aware of their values and the premises of their emotions and are far
more likely to lead integrated .efficacious, and empowering lives. This does not
mean that every person must be an intellectual innovator. But it does not, mean
that each individual must judge ideas critically and choose appropriately correct courses of action. The nature of the conceptual faculty is such that we are not equipped to survive without some kind of comprehensive view of our existence. Whatever the level of our intelligence, we need to integrate our knowledge, project our actions into the future, and weigh the consequences contextually.

Rand argued that throughout human history this need was served by religion. The necessity for a comprehensive understanding of existence led even the most primitive peoples to embrace some form of religious belief. And yet no form of faith or mystic revelation could take the place of rationally dictated principles. Although religion attempted to fulfill this need, its very methods and many of its teachings undercut the ability of people to live and act in a moral and rational manner. Rand's rejection of religion is not a repudiation of ethics. It is an affirmation of a supremely secular need that people have to make their lives knowable, understandable and efficacious.

Rand gives an explanation to the men of genius; they never allow themselves to be held down by received wisdom. She is capable of modifying Aristotelian conception of man and the modification is possible with a heavy emphasis on the creative power of the human mind. It is the motive force of all human progress in her fictional and nonfictional writings. Rand equates stagnation to death. Progress of human creativity naturally overcomes stagnation. Only
capitalism could sanction and encourage human creativity and progress. Human rights have to be recognized and capitalism alone could recognize and protect human rights. She attributes metaphysical nature to human life maintaining a connection between man’s survival and his use of reason. She also argues that the violation of rights results in death. She further consolidates that negation of man’s rights is innocuous and against life. She affirms “any group, any gang, and any nation, that an attempt to negate man’s rights is wrong which means evil, which means anti-life”. Man has to have his rights recognized, he has to apply his reason for progress, he has to have free judgment to work and the work makes him produce things of progress and they help him survive in the world.

The purpose of science of economics is to identify how the principles of a proper politics actually work out with regard to men’s productive life. Politics tells us that man has the right to property. By defining the laws of a free market, a proper economist answers all such questions; in regard to the virtue of productiveness, he explains why nothing but good can come to everyone from the principle of freedom. In essence, he completes the case for man’s rights by showing that here as elsewhere the moral is the practical.

In Atlas Shrugged Rearden says that He had acquired the conviction that one had to concern oneself with the rational and not the insane that one had to seek that which was right, because the right answer always won
The science of economics is derivative which succeeds philosophy since economics presupposes politics, it also presupposes morality and beneath that, metaphysics and epistemology. That is why economics cannot alter philosophic truths and why an economist without the philosophy is doomed to failure; such a man can neither identify economic laws nor predict a country’s long range economic future. Ayn Rand offers a philosophic analysis of capitalism. Capitalism involves philosophic and moral principles. Capitalism by contrast may not be defined as the system of competition. Competition exists in most societies including totalitarian ones. Capitalism does involve a unique form of completion along with many other desirable social features.

Future needs and valuations, the reaction of men to changes in conditions, future scientific and technological knowledge future ideologies and policies can never be foretold with more than a greater or smaller degree of probability. Every action refers to an unknown future. Galt declares that he wins by means of nothing but logic and he surrenders to nothing but logic. This is the capitalists approach to novel things.

Frederick Mayck an Austrian school economist says

If we start out from a given system of preferences and if we command complete knowledge of available means, the problem which remains is purely one of the logic.... Peculiar character of
the problem of the rational economic order is determined precisely by the fact that the knowledge of circumstances of which we must make use never exists in concentrated or integrated form but solely as the dispersed bits of incomplete and frequently contradictory knowledge which all the separate individuals possess. (Ayn Rand Capitalism: The unknown ideal 155)

The essence of capitalism is the separation of government and economics, the total liberation of trade and production from any kind of extrinsic political restraint. True capitalism is inevitably laissez faire capitalism, any thing else is a mixed economy that is a mixture in carrying degrees of freedom and controls of voluntary choice and government compulsion of individualism and collectivism. In the similar sense, it is absurd to talk about the distribution of social surplus of goods which is necessary to achieve some sort of hypothetical norm of material prosperity. All collectivist systems are fundamentally self-fulfilling. They are designed to create precisely those symptoms of social pathology which are necessary to justify and sustain their own existence. In Atlas shrugged Ayn Rand depicts about a bill called equalization of opportunity. The bill was to stop one man hoard several business enterprises, leaving others no chance, and it was the duty of the society to see that no competitor ever rose beyond the range of anybody who wanted to compete with him; this bill is passed to curtail the individual and sustains the incompetent collective.
Rand’s essentially Aristotelian conception of man is modified by her heavy emphasis on the creative power of the human mind. Since human beings are not infallible their success in life depends upon their ability to increase their knowledge the degree to which one’s knowledge increases is a function of one’s ability to effectively solve the problems confronted. There is no static set of rules that if followed will lead automatically to new insights into a given problem. The creative mind is one that looks beyond the common understanding. Men of genius in both the sciences and arts are those who do not allow themselves to be held down by received wisdom.

Productivity is one of the cardinal virtues of Ayn Rand. Productivity is given impetus by a competitive and free market. It is promoted by rational self-interest and achievement. The process to achievement promotes innovation and hardworking. The society must recognize and accelerate productivity. Capitalism is a system directed towards achievement.

Rand advocates that capitalism is the system of wealth. It does not foresee any competition in the achievement of material abundance. She defines profit as a payment earned by the moral virtue, the virtue of the specific group within the economy. It is a payment for the thought and the initiative and the long-range vision the courage the efficacy of an economy’s prime movers.
Capitalism is the system of code of morality, which recognizes man’s metaphysical nature and needs which is based on reason and reality. Rand demonstrates through her story in *Atlas Shrugged* that the basic conflict of our age is not merely political or economic but moral and philosophical that the dominant of our age is a virulent revolt against reason. It is only the Philosophy of the reason – individualism capitalism axis that can save and carry humanity.

Rand indicates that ‘a change in a country’s political ideas has to be preceded by a change in its cultural trends; a cultural movement is the necessary precondition of a political movement. Rand’s writings made an impact on the American culture. The United States subjugated society to moral law. A true recognition of man’s individual rights is the surest guarantee against statist abuses. The United States is the first moral society in history.

Freedom for Ayn Rand is the freedom from the coercive power of the state – and nothing else. It is not the freedom from the landlord or freedom from the employer, of freedom from the laws of nature. Political freedom serves to guarantees intellectual freedom. A true free society performs a valuable epistemological function, for it ensured unhampered pursuit of truth in any area of inquiry.

Rand feels that the “Government is the means of placing the retaliatory use of physical force under objective control”. The criminal does not err against the state but the individual. The state must ensure the rights of individuals.
Rand argues that the altruist-collectivist code permits a man to suppose that he could provide security at the expense of others. Nathaniel Branden states that ‘an unearned forgiveness of evil . . . is a shrug of indifference toward the pain of the innocent.’

Political freedom requires economic freedom. Freedom is a necessary condition for man’s fullest fulfillment. For Rand, capitalism is basically a moral issue. Capitalism is the only system based on objective theory of values. In a capitalistic society all human relationships are voluntary and based on mutual interest. Rand’s Atlas Shrugged is called ‘a moral defense of capitalism’. The novel propounds the tenets of capitalism. Capitalism is the only system where men are free to function, where progress is accompanied, not by forced privation, but by a constant rise in the general level of prosperity, of consumption and of enjoyment of life. Capitalism never advocates self-denial. It is incompatible with altruism. Altruism can claim ‘the common good’. But capitalism does not attribute moral justification to the claim of altruism. For, an individual’s work others need not enjoy the progress, creativity and achievement. Private individuals own production and others have no right or intrude to enjoy the benefits of production. Capitalism is the economic system characterized by justice and honesty.
In capitalism, there is freedom to hold and control property. No rights can exist without the right to translate one’s right onto reality – to think, to work and to keep the results – which means the right of property values is expressed in property relationships. Human rights are in consonant terms with rights of property. Rand indicates that there is no such dichotomy as ‘human rights’ versus ‘property rights’. No human rights can exist without the property rights. To deny property rights means to turn men into property owned by the state. Rand believes that all properties are different forms of wealth and they are produced by man’s mind and labor. One cannot own wealth without intelligence. Rand grants that the task of political philosophy is only to establish the nature of the principle and to demonstrate that it is practicable. She sees that it is practicable only in a free society.

Rand defines socialism as a merely democratic absolute monarchy – a system of absolutism without a fixed head, open to seizure of power by all comers, by any ruthless climbers, opportunists, adventurers, demagogues or thug”. In socialism production is owned by the state and it is the property of all. Rand feels that one who has not used reason, not applied the reason to produce has no right to enjoy the fruit of the labor and reason of another individual. Socialism regards individual good as the public good. One who has not contributed to the production has no right to enjoy for his own good. There can be no mixed ideas. Either individual rights are recognized or they are not
recognized. A society that intrudes in an individual's production to make it for public good is not a capitalist society. Interference in the free market will result in political intervention aggravating problems for the individuals. Individuals lose human rights over their properties — production created by reason, intelligence and labor. It amounts to human rights violation.

Rand indicates that a system of pure, unregulated laissez faire capitalism has never existed anywhere — America was the freest country on earth, but elements of statism were present in our economy from the start. Capitalism did not create poverty — it inherited it — the living conditions of the poor in the early years of capitalism were the first chance the poor had ever had to survive.

Ethics is the knowledge of how to attain maximum productive reasoning — it is an objective necessity. Such knowledge is an objective metaphysical necessity of man's survival. Concern for others is not the rational code of morality. Personal happiness is the ultimate value of life. The good of the individual depends upon the attainment of a life fully realized through the maximum development of productive rational action. Reason is the proper standard for determining moral behavior. Man's reason is his moral faculty. Moral behavior is the fullest realization of objective individual values. The good of the society depends on the good of an individual. It is the prerogative of the individual to decide when or whether they should help others. The society has no right to decide on it.
In Rand’s view, people have tacitly obeyed these cultural and moral ideals. They have divided themselves into masters and slaves, while being united by their reciprocal dependency. She proposed to transcend such dualism by looking at the fact value distinction. She did not envision the absorption of all values into facts, or all facts into values. She argued instead that values are a kind of fact emerging from an objective relation between existence and human consciousness just as she preserved the internality of fact and value. In both the cases, she emphasized the primacy of existence and the primacy of fact, which leads to the necessity for values she says:

The objective theory holds that the good is neither an attribute of things in they nor of man’s emotional states but an evaluation of the facts of reality by man’s consciousness according to a rational standard of value. The objective theory holds that the good is an aspect of reality in relation to man and that it must be discovered not invented by man. (Chris Matthew Sciabarra 242)

Values cannot be separated from the valuer and the valuer’s purposes. Conventional ethics fracture the relationship between actor and beneficiary Rand sought to unite these elements, reasserting the right to a moral existence. She argued that only morality can serve as a guide to a achievement of one’s ultimate goals. For Rand, we must be the beneficiary of our moral actions because it is only through such principles that we can survive and flourish as human beings.
As the foundation of her ethical system, Rand remained true to her dialectical roots. She traced an internal relationship between life and value such that neither phenomenon is possible in the absence of the other. The pursuit of values is not possible without the context provided by life, which is both the existential basis and the ultimate value—constituting the relationship. While preparing Atlas Shrugged, Rand wrote in her journal, that we are born as abstractions with our reason serving as our guide. Our lives are a process in which we concretize and create ourselves through our own efforts.” For Rand, life and self-preservation were synonymous. Since everything in the universe has identity, a person’s nature encompasses capacities and needs that are specific to human character.

To perform the activity of living as human beings, preservation by the means is distinctly available to us. The individual must live consciously, Rand explained since the essence and tool of his life in his mind. Thus an epistemological insight serves as the departure for ethical theory. Rand argued that in the history of normative philosophy the primary question of ethics has usually been: what values ought one to pursue? But for Rand to begin ethical inquiry with this question is to commit the fallacy of reification. Rand explained that most philosophers have taken the existence of ethics for granted, reifying the historically given codes of morality but never considering their existential foundation.

Ethicists cannot debate the value of alternatives without asking a more fundamental question why are values necessary for human existence. Rand began
her investigation by exploring the epistemological roots of the concept of value. She defined a value as that which one acts to gain and or keep. The concept itself is not axiomatic; it is both relational and contextual. It requires an answer to the two fold question of value to whom and for what? The concept presupposes an entity capable of acting to achieve a goal in the face of an alternative where no alternative exists; no goals and no values are possible.

The basic alternative that every living organism must face is its own existence or non-existence. The sustenance of life requires activity on the part of the organism. Life as such is a process of self – sustaining and self generated action. It is only the concept of life that makes the concept of value possible. It is only to a living entity that things can be good or evil.

In this formulation, Rand traced the internal relations between three conceptual couplings, life and value, life and action, value and action. Just as life and value entail each other, so too do life and action. Not only is the survival of life contingent upon the action of an organism, but also action is itself conditional upon life. A dead organism cannot act. This same reciprocal dependency is noted between the categories of value and human action. As Nathaniel Branden argues that value and action imply and necessitate each other. The achievement and maintenance of a value requires a specific course of action, while the motive and purpose behind a consciously initiated action is the achievement and maintenance of a value.
Rand transcended the fact-value dichotomy by claiming the fact that a living entity is, determines what it ought to do. Rand affirmed the Aristotelian belief that actuality precedes potentiality, what a thing determines is what it can and will become. Just as Rand’s ontology dictates that ‘to be’ is ‘to be something’. So her ethics demand that for something to be’ it must act in accordance with what it is that is in accordance with its specific nature. And as Rand’s epistemology views human beings as entities possessing free will, so her ethics demand that for human beings ‘to be’ human beings, they must choose to act rationally.

Thus the science of ethics is an objective, metaphysical necessity of survival. It satisfies a practical need that we cannot avoid. By accepting a code of principles to guide our actions, one consciously tacitly accepts a code of morality. In Rand’s system a genuinely objective moral code emerges from ontological and epistemological premises. The standard of an objective morality is man’s life or that which is proper to the life of a rational being is the good; that which negates opposes or destroys it is the evil. Just as Rand proposed an expansive concept of reason, so too she proposed an expansive concept of what it means to live as a rational being.

Thus this work consolidates Ayn Rand’s views on Capitalism, Individualism and Ethics.