Chapter IV

Ethics
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Ethics is the branch of philosophy that in Ayn Rand’s words provide a code of values to guide man’s choices and action – the choices and actions that determine the purpose and course of his life. Ethics is a human necessity and a science. The principles of morality are a product not of feeling but of cognition. The key to the understanding of ethics lies in the concept’s existential basis and cognitive context.

Ayn Rand’s ethics is a direct application of her theory of knowledge about life, morality and values. In Rand’s ethics, life has an ultimate value that cannot be separated from reason, purpose and self-esteem. Rand enunciates both an epistemological and normative principal. For Rand, ethics must begin from self not from society, the mass, and the collective or any other form of selflessness. She believed that her most important job is the formulation of a rational morality of and for man, of and for his life, of and for this earth. Such an ethical achievement was a necessary aspect of Rand’s philosophical project, because it would affirm the possibility of a secular; moral existence free of religious imperatives and categorical altruistic duties.

Beginning with an integrated expansive concept of human reason, Rand attempted to develop and validate a rational code of values. She argued that
there is in fact an awareness of good and evil even on a primitive, sensorial level. In the pleasure pain mechanism, one must become aware of those things, which are for him and against him. One’s sensations and perceptions are the foundation of one’s cognitive and evaluative development. But sensations of pleasure and pain are “an automatized responses”, “an automatized form of knowledge” which a human consciousness cannot avoid experiencing. Our distinctive modes of sensual, perceptual and conceptual awareness are our integrated means of surviving in the world. And since one has free will, one must choose to think and raise one’s mental focus if he has to sustain his life.

Ayn Rand elucidates reason, rationality, egoism, pride, forgiveness, self esteem and honesty are the basic ethical principles a man should follow and attain a non-contradictory happiness in the end. The faculty of reason is man’s basic tool of survival. The primary choice is to exercise this faculty or not. According to Ayn Rand there are three basic values which together are the means to and the realization of one’s ultimate value. She says,

To live man must hold three things as the supreme and ruling values of his life. Reason – Purpose - Self esteem. Reason, as his only tool of Knowledge – Purpose, as his choice of happiness which that 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. These three values imply and require all of man’s virtues. (Leonard Peikoff Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand 220)

Epistemology tells us that reason is valid; it is man’s means of knowledge. If one chooses to live, one must hold reason as a value. The magnificent fire in Ayn Rand’s ethics is her inspiring affirmative of man, the hero, his creative work, selfish joy, individual liberty – all of it is a derivative. The virtue that develops preserves and applies the faculty of reason thereby making possible every other human value is rationality.

Rationality according to Ayn Rand is “the recognition and acceptance of reason, as one’s only source of knowledge, one’s only judge of values and one’s only guide to action.” This means the application of reason to every aspect of one’s life and concerns. It means choosing and validating one’s opinions, one’s decisions, one’s work, one’s love in accordance with the normal requirements of logic, objectivity and integration. Rationality means the acceptance of reason as a principle of human survival and as an absolute. Rationality accordingly is the primary obligation of man; all the others are the derivatives of it. If man needs to choose his actions by reference to principles, this virtue names the root principle indeed; it underlies the very need of moral principle. To act on principle is itself an expression of rationality. It is a form of being governed by one’s conceptual faculty.
John Galt in *Atlas Shrugged* chooses his action with reference to principle. He cherishes a principle that productive minds should not give room for the parasites that flourish by living on these minds and finally punish them for being competent, hard working and productive. So John Galt decides to go on strike and takes all great minds with him. Roark in *The Fountainhead* is also very rational and reasonable. He destroys Cortland. In his trial he says,

I agreed to design Cortland for the purpose of seeing it erected as I designed it and for no other reason. That was the price I set for my work. I was not paid. I did not receive the payment I asked. But the owners of Cortland got what they needed from me. They took the benefit of my work and made me contribute it as a gift. But I am not an altruist. I do not contribute gifts of this nature. (670)

Rationality demands continual mental activity, a regular daily process of functioning on the conceptual level of consciousness. In Ayn Rand’s descriptions it involves,

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. (Leonard Peikoff Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand 222)

Rationality requires a systematic use of one’s intelligence. Ayn Rand’s novels abound in instructive examples of this aspect of virtue. For example, In Howard Roark’s encounter with the Dean at the beginning of The Fountainhead, the Dean tells him that men must always revere tradition. Roark regards this viewpoint as senseless, but he does not ignore it. Roark is not a psychologist nor does the field interests him much but he does deal with men, he knows that there are many like the Dean and he is on the premise of understanding what he deals with. So he identifies the meaning of the event in the terms available to him.

A rational man however chooses his values and their hierarchical ranking not by whim but by a process of cognition. To tell a man to surrender his values is to tell him surrender his judgment, contradict his knowledge, and sacrifice his mind. But this is something a man dare not sacrifice. Roark in The Fountainhead prefers to work in a quarry rather than give up his values and earn money.
There can be no interest greater to a rational being than the interest in his tool of survival, which can function only as his tool of survival, just as the basic value of man’s life requires the ethics of egoism, so does the primary virtue. Rationality requires that a man be able righteously to say that his mind is his means of achieving his goals in accordance with his judgment of fact and value. The most selfish of all things as Ayn Rand puts the point is the independent mind that recognizes no authority higher than its own and no value higher than its judgment of truth.

Evil is irrational, it is that which clashes with the facts of reality and thereby threatens man’s life. Such a principle cannot be upheld as an absolute or practical, without contradiction not if one wish to avoid immediate destruction. Evil has to count on some element of good; it can exist only as an exception to virtue on which it is relying. Evil is not consistent and does not want to be consistent what it wants is to inject itself into the life, sustaining process. To achieve this end, it needs only a single concession by the good, a concession that evil is proper sometimes. Thereafter the irrational is free to set the terms and spread by further whim until the good and man is destroyed. To be good is to be good all the time as a matter of consistent unbreached principle.

The concept of “practical” is not restricted to the field of ethics. It pertains to the adopting of means to ends in any field. If knowledge is one’s
goal, observation is practical. If the conquest of typhoid is the goal, immunization is practical. If human efficacy is the goal, the wheel or the computer is the practical invention. The "practical" is that which reaches or fosters a desired result since the concept denote a type of positive evaluation it presupposes a standard of value. The standard is set by the result being pursued.

By extension one may describe a man as practical, if the actions he takes work to achieve his goals. A man is impractical, if his actions cause him to fail in his endeavors. Moral codes, too, qualify as practical or impractical. Most of those that have been offered to the human race are impractical. These codes prescribe ends or means which clash with the requirements of man's life to the extent that men obey such codes; they are led to contradiction, frustration and failure. The most blatant example is the theory of altruism. If the principle guiding one's action is sacrificed, first to esteem an object and then give it up – one's approach to realm of choice enshrines the antithesis of practicality. Such a life seeks out defeat.

Every man faces a basic alternative: to dedicate himself to the good, the right, the noble, to be an "idealist", in which case he must be unworldly, unrealistic, doomed to defeat – or to pursue success, prudence, that which works, to be a "realist", in which case he must dispense with ideals, absolutes, moral
principles. The alternative is: be good without earthly purpose, or seek ends while ignoring the necessary means. One should commit oneself to virtues and values.

No philosophy can alter the metaphysically given fact that man is not omnipotent. Regardless of a person’s virtue, he may fail in an undertaking through a simple error. Action demands knowledge. If one does not acquire necessary knowledge he cannot avoid suffering the consequences even if he is in no way morally deficient. The concepts of justice and injustice do not apply to the lower forms of life. They apply only to certain choices and actions of human beings.

The moral man’s concept of good is his fundamental standard of practicality. Such a man experiences no conflict between what he thinks, he ought to pursue and what he wants to pursue. He defines all of his goals, fundamental and derivative by reference to reality. As a result, he pursues only objects that are attainable by man, consistent with one another and possible to him. He uses his mind to discover the means necessary to reach these objects and applies his knowledge in action, refusing to evade what he knows are to sacrifice his interest. This in Ayn Rand’s view is the description of human nobility.

To pursue rational goals by rational means is the only way to deal successfully with reality and attain one’s goal. To be moral is to be practical
and it is the only to be practical. If one’s goal in an undertaking involves the cooperation of others, his own virtue cannot ensure success. The ideas, the motivation, the skills, the character traits that he needs in others depend on their choices, not his. An individual in a free society is free to search for the kind of man he wants or try to persuade others to share his ideas. But no act of persuasion however skillful can nullify human volition. One cannot change a man’s mind without his consent.

Virtue is not automatically rewarded. But this does not change the fact that it is rewarded. Virtue minimizes the risks inherent in life and maximizes the chance of success. Morality teaches one how to gain and use the full power of one’s mind, how to choose one’s associates, how to organize society so that the best among men rise to the top. The assessment of a course of action as “practical” or “impractical” can take into account only matters open to a man’s choice. The question is, in such matters does a man act according to the principles necessary to achieve values or does he introduce a breach between his mind and reality. Despite man’s limitations, morality does ensure practicality. Just as moral and practical go together, so do the immoral and impractical. Just as the virtuous is efficacious, so the evil is the impotent.

Whatever the heroes in Ayn Rand’s novels deal with including work, romance, art, people, politics and philosophy; they seek to understand it by
connecting the new to what they do. They are men and women who like and practice the process of cognition. This is why they are usually achieving their values. Their commitment to thought leads them to a sustained growth in knowledge, which maximizes the possibility of successful action. The exercise of reason applies within the sphere of each man’s knowledge, concerns and ability. The reason is everything in reality and is interconnected in logic. Therefore to sustain an evasion on any single point, one would be forced gradually to expand and keep expanding the scope of one’s blindness.

Evasion is a form of non-integration. It is the most lethal form, the willful disintegration of mental contents. A man in this condition no longer has the means to determine consistency or contradict truth or falsehood. In his consciousness, all conceptual content is reduced to the capricious, the baseless and the arbitrary. Thus in the real evader, emotion is not tools of cognition. The corollary in ethics is that they are not guides to action. Ayn Rand defines whim as a desire experienced by a person who does not know and does not care to discover its cause. Such a person does not wish to introspect or to analyse. He does not seek to identify the premises that conform to reality. He simply wants a certain item because he wants it.

Peter Keatings in The Fountainhead wanted a design for the building. He does not analyze or retrospect. He borrows the design for the building,
agreeing that Roark can destroy it, if its design is altered and also promises that its structure will not be mutilated. He cannot keep his promise and this leads to the destruction of the building by Roark.

This is what Ayn Rand calls whim worship. Whim worship is to ethics what mysticism is to epistemology. The two practices are invalid for the same reason and lead to same declarative results. Ayn Rand says the proper approach in this issue is not reason versus emotion but reason first and then emotion. This leads to the harmony of reason and emotion, which is the normal state of a rational man. His feelings accordingly are the opposites of whims; they are consequences of rational, explicitly identified value judgments.

Jim Taggart in Atlas Shrugged is a fine example of an evader. He evades everything; he does not want to take decisions. He does not want to use Rearden Metal for his rails because it was new, he never wants to analyze its merits and demerits, and he penalizes Dagny for using the Rearden Metal for the first time. He says “If it was any good, somebody would have used it and nobody has” How can you be sure? How can you decide? I don’t see why we have to be first ones. I don’t see it at all? Dagny who is not an evader and decision maker says “That it’s a greatest thing ever put on the market because it is tougher than steel, cheaper than steel and will outlast any hunk of metal in existence, when I see things, I see them”.

Jim is an example for the explanation of Ayn Rand's statement that "a concession to the irrational invalidates one's consciousness". The only alternative to the acceptance of reason is emotionalism. Epistemology concludes the explicitly identified value judgments. A man with this kind of psychology and self-knowledge does not repress his desires. To him such a policy is a form of expressing in action the judgment of his mind.

The desires of a rational man are stronger than those of a whim - worshiper. The reason is that the rational man experiences his values in undiluted form. Since he has identified and integrated his mental contents, every aspect of them contributes to his certainty; nothing in his premises or psychology tames the fire of his passion. In ethics as in epistemology between reason and emotion once again the truth is think and you shall feel. The word virtue means the kind of action appropriate in a human being. The action is rationality.

An ethical standard writes Ayn Rand

An abstract principle that serves as a measurement or gauge to guide a man's choices in the achievement of a concrete, specific purpose. That which is required for the survival of man qua man is an abstract principle that applies to every individual man. The task of applying this principle to a concrete, specific purpose
the purpose of living a life proper to a rational being, belongs to

every individual man, and the life he has to live is his own.

(Leonard Peikoff Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand 228)

Each individual must choose his values and action by the standard of man's
life in order to achieve the purpose of maintaining and enjoying his own life.

The concept of egoism identifies merely one aspect of an ethical code.
Egoism states that each man's primary obligation is to achieve his own welfare,
well-being or self-interest. It states that each man should be selfish in the sense
of being the beneficiary of his own moral actions. Taken by itself, this principle
offers no practical guidance. It does not specify values or virtues, it does not
define interests or self-interests – neither in terms of life, power; pleasure nor of
any thing else. It simply states whatever man's proper self-interests consist of,
that is what each individual should achieve.

Egoism like every other principle requires a process of validation and
until now the context needed to prove egoism had not been established.
The validation of egoism consists in showing that it is a corollary of man's life
as a moral, sustaining by an act of choice and as a matter of principle.
To accept anything other than one's own life in this kind of issue – to
incorporate into one's ultimate purpose any variant or tinge of self-denial is to
declare war on life at the root.
Ayn Rand says the purpose of the novel *The Fountainhead* is the defense of egoism in its true meaning. Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead* says, “Men have been taught that the ego is the synonym of evil and selflessness the ideal of virtue. But the creator is the egoist in the absolute sense, and the selfless man is the one who does not think feel, judge or act, These are functions of the self”. (667)

Roark also says,

The egoist in the absolute sense is not the man who sacrifices others. He is the man who stands above the need of using others in any manner. He does not function through them. He is not concerned with them in any primary matter: Not in his aim, not in his motive, not in his thinking, not in his desires, not in the source of his energy. He does not exist for any other man – and he asks no other man to exist for him. This is the only form of brotherhood and mutual respect possible between men. (667)

Egoism is a principle of human survival. It applies to all human beings. Every man should live by his own mind and for his own sake; every man should pursue the values and practice the virtues that man’s life requires – since man survives by thought and production. Every man should live and work as an independent creative being acquiring goods and services from others only by means of trade when both parties agree that the trade is profitable.
This is the principle that the protagonists of Ayn Rand’s novel follow. Roark has a clear principle of constructing and designing buildings. He constructs only for those clients who agree with him. Rearden invents a metal for rails and since his metal is good, many people go in for it and he makes a lot of profit conforming to the norms of trade. When he was penalized for making lot of profit, he says, “Stop the people from using my metal”.

Ayn Rand says Egoism does not mean the policy of violating the rights, moral or political of others in order to satisfy one’s own needs or desires. It does not mean the policy of turning other men into one’s servants. Any such policy is due to the victim but also condemned as immoral, by the very principle of selfishness.

The principle embodied in this oath is that human sacrifice is evil, no matter which its beneficiary is whether one sacrifices oneself to others or others to oneself – Man everyman –is an end in him. If a person rejects this principle, it makes little difference which of its negations he adopts – whether he says “sacrifice others to you. In either case, he holds that human existence requires martyrs that some men are mere means to the ends of others that somebody’s throat must be cut. Ayn Rand states the point in The Fountainhead, the rational man rejects masochism and sadism, submission and domination, the making of sacrifices and the collecting of them. What he upholds and creates is the self-sufficient ego.
If one lives or deals with other men, their moral character is relevant to one’s own survival and can be an issue of enormous significance to it, for good or evil. To concretize this principle further, one need merely to project the effects on one’s well being that would flow from living in a society made up of men such as John Galt and Francisco d’Anconia in the Atlantis of *Atlas Shrugged*. When men evaluate the moral character of others, they respond emotionally feeling esteem and affection for those individuals whose values they share. The result is the phenomena of admiration, friendship and love which are a crucial aspect of an egoist life, merely because most people happen to want personal relationships but because it is rational to want such, if the value standards involved are legitimate. The egoist is not a man incapable of love; he is the only man capable of it.

To say: *I love you*, as Howard Roark observes,

One must know first how to say *I*. The first right on earth is the right of the ego, Man’s first duty is to himself; this moral law is never to place his prime goal within the persons of others. His moral obligation is to do what he wishes, provided his wish does not depend primarily upon other men. This includes the whole sphere of his creative faculty, his thinking, his work. (668)
Egoism accordingly does not mean that man should isolate himself from others or remain indifferent to them, a proper view of egoism requires that a man identify the role of others in his own life and evaluate them appropriately.

Certain men those who think, live independently and produce are value to one another. They are a value by the standard of man’s life and of each individual’s own self-interest. By the same standard the opposite kinds of men – the evaders, the parasites, the criminals are.

Duty is not a synonym for virtue. Duty, Ayn Rand writes is the moral necessity to perform certain actions for no reason other than obedience to some higher authority without regard to any personal goal, motive desire or interest. Such an approach means the severing of ethics both from reason and from values. Because of the influence of religion, the code of sacrifice has always dominated the field of morality, as far back as historical evident goes. A handful of western thinkers did reject this code. The two with the best and fullest ethical systems were Aristotle and Spinoza, each of whom sought in his own way to uphold the value of life, the virtue of rationality and principle of egoism.

John Galt says in *Atlas Shrugged*

Sacrifice would be proper only for those who have nothing to sacrifice – no values, no standards, and no judgment – those whose desires are irrational whims, blindly conceived and lightly
surrendered. For a man of moral stature, whose desires are born of rational values, sacrifice is the surrender of the right to the right to the wrong, of the good to the evil. (946)

The virtue of independence in Ayn Rand’s definition is one’s acceptance of the responsibility of forming one’s own judgments and of living by the work is one’s own mind. The classic statement of this virtue appears in The Fountainhead when Roark contrasts the creator with the second-hander,

Nothing is given to man on Earth. Everything he needs has to be produced. And here Man faces his basic alternative; He can survive in only one of the two ways – by the Independent work of his own mind or as a parasite fed by the minds of the others. (665)

The creator originates. The parasite borrows. The Creator faces nature alone. The parasite faces nature through an intermediary. The creator’s concern is the conquest of nature. The parasite’s concern is the conquest of men. The creator lives for his work and needs no other men. His primary goal is within himself. The parasite lives the second-hand life. He needs others. Others become his prime motive. The basic need of the creator is independence. The reasoning mind cannot work under any form of compulsion. It cannot be curbed, sacrificed or subordinated to any consideration whatsoever. It demands total independence in function and in motive. To a creator all relations with
men are secondary. The basic need of the second hander is to secure ties with men in order to be fed. He places relations first. He declares that man exists in order to serve others. He preaches altruism.

Peter Keatings is a portrayal of a second hander and a parasite. A parasite borrows; Keating's in *The Fountainhead* borrows designs form Roark. He is incapable of producing something of his own. His concern is always to please people. They become his prime-motive, He pleases Francon for his job, he pleases Toohey so that he will write great about his buildings, he pleases Roark to get the designs though he does not like him. He keeps visiting him often. He places relations with men above all in order to survive.

The presence of other men in the society does not change the nature of man or the requirements of his life. Others can offer many values but they cannot however become one's means of survival or basic frame of reference. A man who survives through others is doomed to destruction. Keating ends up as a failure.

The independent man, Roark says does not function through other men. He is not concerned with them in any primary matter, not in his aim, not in his motive, not in his thinking, not in his desires, not in the source of his energy.

The independent man who lives in society learns from others and may choose to work jointly with them, but the essence of his learning and his work is the
process of thought, which he has to perform alone. He needs others to trade but the trade is merely an exchange of creations and his primary concern is the act of creating, his concern of his own work. He may enjoy receiving approval from others but others are not the source of self-esteem, he esteems himself, and then enjoys receiving approval only when he independently approves of the approvers. This kind of man gains many values from man-kind and offers many values in return but man-kind is not his motor, his sustainer or his purpose. Ayn Rand describes such an individual as the man of self-sufficient ego. The primary in his consciousness that which comes first in any issue is not other men but reality as perceived by his mind. In fundamental terms such a man does not need others.

Rearden in Atlas Shrugged is a man with self-sufficient ego. He creates Rearden metal and enters into transactions with Dagny who really believes that his metal is an excellent metal for the rails. The State Science Institute brands his metal as that which is not worthy to be used, but he does not care since he believes himself. He proves to be successful. Since his metal is really good, he does not care of people whom he does not approve. He values Dagny who has a right perspective.

The opposite policy consists in dropping one’s mind and accepting as one’s guide a different primary people. This type of person is not moved by a concern for logic or truth he is oriented basically not to reality but to other men,
to what they believe, what they feel, what he can wheedle out of or pump into them, what he can do with or for them. The man who acquires his belief by accepting the consensus of others, the man who gains his self worth from prestige, from reputation in the mind of others, regardless of their standard of judgment, the who gets ahead not through work but through pull, the social worker whose function is not to create but to redistribute the wealth created by others, the dictator or criminal who lives by initiating force against others - these are some of the second-handers described in *The Fountainhead*. They are Peter Keatings, Toohey, Wyanad etc.

They are men who live through others, men to whom solitude in principle means death. The second hander is a parasite of his own species. To the second hander whether rational or irrational, true or false, good or evil becomes an equivalent of reality. This kind of individual having detached himself from the realm of existence, has no standard by which to judge others, he has no way to know whose ideas to follow, whose behavior to copy, whose favor to carry, such a person reduces himself to helplessness of having left his life to the mercy of blind chance. The result is most people’s desperate need for an authority, religious or secular that will take over their lives, make their value judgments and tell them what to do. The independent man will refuse any such sale, but the worst second – hander of all, the power luster is eager to accept it. He destroys everyone including himself.
Jim in *Atlas shrugged* is the worst second-hander. He does not have original ideas, accepts the views of Orren Boyle, agrees with destructive norms like Dog eat dog rule, Gift certificate etc. He tells Dagny not to use Rearden Metal because the State Science Institute has condemned it. Keatings in *Fountainhead* requires Roark to survive and finally destroys him and everything.

The independent man understands in some terms that reason is man's means of knowledge; as a result he accepts the responsibility of practicing the virtue of rationality. The parasite cannot justify his own default but he does not want to exert the effort that an independent creative existence would require.

The ego or self, Ayn Rand holds is the mind. The independent man therefore is the only genuine egoist. The second hander whether he seeks to exploit others or to serve them is an opposite breed. In placing people above reality he renounces his ego. Whatever his goal or intended beneficiary, such a man is a literal altruist; he places others above self in the deepest sense and pays the price. The price is the fact that selfless is the mindless. Man's survival depends on the proper functioning of his consciousness.

Intellectually, independence to repeat Miss Rand's words is one's acceptance of the responsibility of forming one's own judgment. It is one's recognition of the fact that the mind is an attribute of the individual and that no person can think for another.
Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead* says,

But the mind is an attribute of an individual. There is no such thing as a collective brain. There is no such thing as a collective thought. An agreement reached by a group of men is only a compromise, or an average drawn upon many individual thoughts. It is a secondary consequence. The primary act – the process of reason must be performed by each man alone. (665)

An intellectually independent man processes perceptual material by the use of his own rational faculty. In dealing with any question, whether fact or value, end or means, philosophy or science, he follows the method of objectivity. A second hander by contrast is a parasite of cognition that accepts the ideas of others on faith. He is the man, who says that he does not care whether others have reason for their conclusions or not. If an idea is good enough for his neighbours, it is good enough for him. The conclusions of the other man are accepted without regard to facts, logic and understanding. This is the State of dependence and of non-thought.

Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead* says,

The man who attempts to live for others is a dependent. He is a parasite in motive and makes parasites of those he serves – The relationship produces nothing but mutual corruption. It is impossible
in concept. The nearest approach to it in reality – the man who lives to serve others is the slave. The conquered Slave has a vestige of honor. He has the merit of having resisted and of considering his condition evil. But the man who enslaves himself voluntarily in the name of love is the basest of creatures. (666)

Even if the conclusions thus accepted happen to be true, they are of no cognitive value to the parasite. In his consciousness, those conclusions are not truth but the arbitrary. A rational man does not treat independence as the validation of an idea. He does not say as certain subjectivists do, I myself accept this idea; therefore it must be true. On the contrary, he is independent precisely in order to be objective. He says “This idea is true in reason, therefore I accept it. Similarly, independence is not the assertion of one’s own feelings, regardless of the reasons behind them. Independence is a trait applicable not to emotion but the function of the mind. If a person accepts ideas because he has looked at reality first hand then he is an independent man regardless of his feelings, no matter how similar they are to those of other men. By the same token if he turned his soul over to society to program, then he is a dependent, no matter how unique any of his feelings happen to be.

Roark has a clear frame of mind and chooses his action. He asserts his action with regards to reason. He is expelled from the university, he is asked to
leave the office, and he refuses excellent opportunities for building because it
does not conform to his principles. He never regrets or feels sorry for all these
disasters because he has independent thoughts with formed ideas based on
logical reasons.

Intellectual independence is a product of the choice to think, it is an
attainment open to everyone. A man can be cognitively helped or hampered by
his environment. But he cannot be turned into a thinker or robot without his
own consent. A thinker therefore deserves moral credit, regardless of his
parents, his teachers, his society and a robot.

In *Anthem* Ayn Rand portrays Equality 2571 who invents electricity in a
society, which does not use the word ‘I’. Human beings are classified and
allotted jobs in this novel. Equality 2571 a thinker in the true sense perceives the
greatness of his invention and escapes out the society to live a life of his own.

He says,

Neither am I the means to any end others may wish to accomplish
is I not a tool for their use. I am not a servant of their needs. I am
not a bandage for their wounds. I am not a sacrifice on their
altars. (110)

If life is the standard, man must think in order to gain knowledge, and
then he must use his knowledge to guide him in creating the material values his
life requires. This means he must be a self-supporting entity. He must finance his activities by his own productive effort; he must work for a living. Since man is an integration of two attributes, mind and body, every virtue reflects this integration. The dependant in the spiritual realm creates no wealth since he does not think. He becomes thereby a dependent in matter. The dependent in the material realm makes the actions of others his means of survival. If a man is to be a first hander, he must begin by reaching independent conclusions. Then he must accept the responsibility of implementing his conclusions in practice. He must be self-reliant in the mental world and in physical world.

Rearden in *Atlas Shrugged* creates wealth by inventing the metal. He is an independent man. Peter Keatings, a dependent survives using the designs of Howard Roark. Individuals who trade their own creations are not parasites. The dependent among men in this issue are the non-creators some of them do not care to perform any kind of work but plead for unearned support from others in the terminology of *Atlas Shrugged*, these are the moochers. The largest sub-category are the people like Peter Keatings who hold a legitimate job but drift through it out of focus, exercising no judgment, reaching no conclusions merely imitating the motions of those around them. All of these types are fed by the minds of the others in the literal sense of fed. All want the effects of reason without the need of exercising the faculty. All seek not to practice virtue or abolish it but in Ayn Rand’s eloquent phrase to be ‘hitch hikers of virtue’.
Existential independence according to the ethics means supporting oneself by using a first handed approach. This means performing one’s work with an active mind, on the premise of understanding the job and finding ever better ways to do it turning out standard products superior ones. Every job requires innovation; what innovation requires is however a worker in focus. Ready to throw aside routine, ask questions; challenge tradition and if necessary suffer opposition when the drones around him see that their lethargy is being disturbed. This type of worker on any scale of endeavour is the creator of wealth, through whose effort all the non-creators live. He is the individual who fulfils the second half of Ayn Rand’s definition of independence. He lives by the work of his own mind.

The role of independence in human life is large for all to see in the lives of great creators but all the great creators by definition are independent men at least to the extent of their creativity. These are the men who achieve great things. Whoever takes a great step leaves a chasm behind. The fate suffered so often by geniuses, inventors and innovators are not only hatred, ridicule, persecution, martyrdom but the necessity to spend one’s life and precious hours fighting against their root against mental passivity, slothful ignorance, willful deafness, enshrined falsehood. Roark in Fountainhead says “But the men of unborrowed vision went ahead. They fought, they suffered and they paid. But they won. No further argument for the virtue of independence should be necessary not if man’s life is the standard of value.
Integrity is loyalty in action to one's convictions and values. This virtue is one's recognition of the fact that man is an integrated being, a unity made of matter and consciousness. As such, he may in Ayn Rand's words "permit no breach between body and mind, between action and thought, between his life and his convictions. It is not a breach of integrity, but a moral obligation to change one's views, if one finds that some idea he holds is wrong. It is a breach of integrity to know that one's right and then proceed to defy the right in practice. To do this, a person must willfully brush aside his knowledge, he must blind himself to what he already sees and pretend that he does not think what he knows, and he does. This Ayn Rand calls faking one's consciousness.

To avoid any breach between action and thought, a man must learn the proper principles, and then follow them methodically; despite any unwarranted pleas demands from any source, inner or outer. Integrity isolates these aspects of moral life; it is the virtue of acting as an absolute on principle. It is the principle of being principled.

In dealing with other men as with his own emotions, the man of integrity is an absolutist. In cases of disagreement or conflict, he is willing to listen to others, certain others and up to a point to gain their co-operation but he is not willing to bargain about morality, being an extremist he rejects attack on integrity, the creed urging the essence of virtue, the practice of compromise.
John Galt in *Atlas Shrugged* says:

All thinking is a process of identification and integration. Man perceives a blob of colour; by integration the evidence of his sight and his touch. No concept man forms are valid unless he integrates it without contradiction into the total sum of his knowledge. (934)

A compromise is an adjustment of conflicting claims by mutual concessions. In reason, the validity of such a procedure depends on the kind of concession a man is making. If a man makes concessions in regard to concretes within the framework of rational moral principles that both the parties accept, then his action may be entirely proper but not if he compromises moral principles themselves. Ayn Rand writes, “In any compromise between good and evil it is only evil that can profit. In Ayn Rand novels her heroes are uncompromising. In ‘We the Living’ Kira never compromises and becomes a communist. Roark never compromises in his ideals with architects. John Galt never compromises with the beaurecrats who live as parasites on the productive people. In *Anthem*, Equality 2571 never compromises with the executives and he tells them not to destroy his discovery and he leaves the place and moves on to create his own world.
Honesty is the refusal to fake reality. It can neither erase an existence nor create one. The virtue of honesty requires that one face the truth on every issue and one deals with the truth, the whole truth and nothing but truth. In regard to consciousness, honesty consists in taking the process of cognition seriously. This requires that one reject any form of intellectual pretence whether in relation to method, motive or content. Intellectual honesty means developing an active mind, as Ayn Rand puts it, knowing what one does know, constantly expanding one’s knowledge and never evading or failing to correct a contradiction. No matter what his beliefs he is not pursuing knowledge, but taking its pursuit. Intellectual honesty means seeking knowledge because one needs it to act properly. Such a person intends to practice any idea he accepts as true. The alternative is the interest in ideas as a form of role – playing usually for the purpose of impressing others. Peter Keating in The Fountainhead forms ideas to impress people. He forms ideas to please Francon, Toohey and the clients and ends up as a failure.

The intellectually honest man refuses to fake in his own mind any specific item – any fact field or value. If one is guided by reason and motivated by the need of action, he does not lie to himself. He has no use for rationalizations, mystic inventions or any other version of rewriting reality. He does not take science by pretending that approval from others proves values. He does not fake morality by feigning anyone’s right to receive the
unearned or anyone’s duty to give it. He is not a mediocrity eaten by envy that feigns greatness or a genius hungry for popularity that feigns mediocrity. The honest man may commit errors but he does not indulge in illusions. He does not pretend anything. Roark in *The Fountainhead* does not crave for popularity. He wants only to construct designs of his own; he does not want to construct to gain popularity or to make money. He gives his designs to Peter Keating and he gets a promise from him that his building should not be mutilated.

Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead* says,

No creator was prompted by a desire to serve his brothers, for his brothers rejected the gift he offered and that gift destroyed the slothful routine of their lives. His truth was his only motive. His own truth and his work to achieve it in his own way. A symphony, a book an engine, a philosophy, an airplane or a building – that was his goal and his life. He held his truth above all things and against all men. (664)

Virtues as Socrates held is one; to cheat on any of its aspects are to cheat all. The dishonest man is not only dishonest in Ayn Rand’s views but also betrays every moral requirement of human life and thereby systematically courts failure and destruction.
Justice is the virtue of judging men’s character and conduct objectively and acting accordingly, granting to each man that he deserves. In order to achieve one’s goals in any field, one must choose among alternatives which require that one know the things around one and judge rationally.

Roark in The Fountainhead says, “A man’s spirit however is his self. That entity which is his consciousness - to think, to feel, to judge, to act are functions of ego”. (664)

Morality is concerned with a man’s fundamental values, moral judgment which enables one to know the essence that actuates him, and it identifies the principles shaping one’s character and conduct. Moral judgment distinguishes the men who choose to recognize reality from the men who choose to evade it. Such knowledge is necessary on practical grounds in order to plan one’s actions and protect one’s interests. If a man is good, if he is rational, honest, productive, then other things being equal, one can expect to gain values in dealing with him.

In Atlas Shrugged Rearden, a man of values discovers an excellent metal; Dagny who manages Transcontinental uses his metal for the rails and gains a lot by using his metal.

If a man is evil, however if he is irrational, dishonest, parasitical, one can expect from such dealing not value but loss. The refusal to judge is taking a
profoundly immoral stand. Ayn Rand says that as long as men have to make choices, there is no escape from moral values, so long as moral values are at stake, no moral neutrality is possible. To abstain from condemning a torturer is to become accessory to the torturer and murder of its victims.

Only the good, Ayn Rand writes, can lose by a default of justice and only the evil can profit. Justice does more than guard a man in his direct dealings with others, whether one personally deals with another man or not, his virtuous traits are a value to one if not directly then indirectly or at least potentially. The principle of justice therefore protects one’s survival more broadly. Justice works to sustain all the men who think and who supports human existence, while chastening and counteracting their antipodes. The principle of injustice achieves the opposite result in one form or another; it works to sustain the destroyer among men while undermining the thinkers and procedures. Justice is the policy of preserving those who preserve life. It is allegiance to those who have sworn allegiance to life. It is therefore a virtue fundamental to the morality of life.

John Galt in Atlas Shrugged says,

Justice is the recognition of the fact that you cannot fake the character of men as you cannot fake the character of nature, that you must judge all men as conscientiously as you judge inanimate
objects, with the same respect for truth with the same incorruptible vision by as pure and as rational process of identification – that every man must be judged for what he is and treated accordingly, that just as you do not pay a higher price for a rusty chunk of scrap than for a piece of shining metal, so you do not value a rotter above a hero – that your moral appraisal is the coin paying men for their virtues or vices and this payment demands of you as scrupulous an honor as you bring to financial transactions – that to withhold your contempt from men’s vices is an act of moral counterfeiting and to withhold your admiration from their virtues is an act of moral embezzlement – that to place any other concern higher then justice is to devaluate your moral currency and defraud the good in favor of the evil, since only the good can lose by a default of justice and only the evil can profit – and that – bottom of the pit at the end if that road, the act of moral bankruptcy, is to punish men for their virtues and reward them for their vices that is the collapse to full depravity, the Black Mass of the worship of death, the dedication of your consciousness to the destruction of existence.(937)

The science that defines a criterion for evaluating volitional beings is morality. To be able to deal properly with men, therefore it is essential that one
determines their relationship to the laws of morality. It is essential that one pronounce moral judgment which enables one to know the essence that actuates him; it identifies the principle shaping his character and conduct. Such a judgment penetrates to the root principle, the one covering a man’s primary use of his faculty of volition.

Moral judgment distinguishes the men who choose to recognize reality from the men who choose to evade it. Such knowledge is necessary on practical grounds; in order to plan one’s actions and protect one’s interests. If a man is good, if he is rational, honest then other things being equal, one can expect to gain values in dealing with them. If a man is evil, however if he is irrational, dishonest, parasitical, one can expect from such dealing not value but loss. In *The Fountainhead* Roark’s dealing with Keating who is dishonest and evil culminates in destroying the building and facing trail.

The policy of pronouncing moral judgment is like a policy of human prospecting. It is a process of methodically seeking out and cherishing the virtuous traits one needs in others such as effort, courage and idealism. The man who adopts policy of moral neutrality, refraining equally from praise or blame does not wipe out the moral facts thereby, what he accomplishes instead is to blind himself to the role of morality in man’s life, subvert his own character and lose the ability to deal with other men on the basis of objective principle. The result among other
things is to consign his human relationships to the realm of chance and to do even worse, willfully to deprive the good among men of his sanction and support, while becoming an ally of the evil. He becomes an ally in the sense of leaving that evil unopposed free to continue its course of destruction.

The concept of *Atlas Shrugged* defends this argument. The inefficient bureaucrats exploited the productive people and so the productive people were asked to join the strike and leave the place by John Galt.

Roger Plunders the money paid by Reardon to the bureaucrats and returns it to Reardon because he does not want to become an ally of the evil. John Galt says in *Atlas Shrugged* “All the men who have vanished, the men you hated, yet dreaded to lose; it is I who has taken them away from you. Do not attempt to find us. We do not choose to be found” (929). Ayn Rand questions when one’s impartial attitude declares in effect that neither the good nor the evil may expect anything from one, whom do one, betray and whom one encourage.

In Ayn Rand’s words “Judge and be prepared to be judged”. If man’s life is one’s standard, one must identify the moral status of every person, issue and event within the field of his concerns, then within the limits of his power, he must guide his actions, accordingly dealing with and sanctioning only men who are virtuous while shunning and condemning men who are vicious. This is the mandate of the virtue of justice.
John Galt says in *Atlas Shrugged*

Are you seeking to know what is wrong with the world? All the disasters that have wrecked your world, came from your leaders attempt to evade the fact that A is A. All secret evil you dread to face within you and all the pain you have ever endured, came from your own attempt to evade the fact that A is A. The purpose of those who taught you to evade it, was to make you forget that Man is Man. (934)

Moral judgment is not the only form of evaluating men. Moral values are fundamental values of their basis; many specialized kinds of value are defined, including intellectual value, esthetic value and economic value. Such values too must be judged objectively and their creators or possessors treated appropriately. The virtue of justice thus has many applications that do not involve moral appraisal as such. But the precondition of all such derivative evaluations is moral evaluation, which latter also indicates the pattern of a just process in any of its form. Moral judgment does not include psychologizing. The facts that one seeks in order to reach a moral assessment are those within a man’s conscious control, his convictions, his statements, and his actions.

Morality is man’s motive, power, there is no spiritual reward one can offer as consequential as one’s moral sanction and no spiritual deprivation as harsh as withholding it. The conventional view is that justice consists primarily
in punishing the wicked. This view stems from the idea that evil is
metaphysically powerful while virtue is merely 'impractical' idealism. Vice is
the attribute to be scorned as impractical; therefore the order of priority is
reversed. Justice consists first in acknowledging the good.

Intellectually, judging is reaching an objective moral verdict, then
existentially defending the good and speaking out, making one's verdict known
and championing publicly the men who are rational. What counts in life are the
men who support life? They are the men who struggle undeviatingly often
heroically to achieve values. They are the Atlases whom mankind needs
desperately and who in turn desperately need the recognition to which they are
entitled. They need to feel while carrying the world on their shoulders that they
are living in a human society and that burden is worth carrying. Otherwise like
the protagonists of Ayn Rand's novel they too probably will shrug.

Just as character traits must be given a deserved response, so must a
change in traits. If a good man turns bad, one acknowledges reality by
reversing one's former estimate of him. The same applies when bad man turns
good. Just as love must be earned, condemnation and forgiveness must also be
earned. Forgiveness in moral issues is earned, if the guilty party apologizes to
his victim, assuming this is applicable and then demonstrates objectively
through word and deed that he understands the roots of moral breach, has
reformed his character and will not commit such wrong again, forgiveness is unearned if the party wants the victim simply to forget the breach and forgive without cause or if he offers as cause nothing but protestations of atonement, which the victim is expected to accept on faith. In The Fountainhead Roark does not forgive Keating’s who breached the agreement. In Atlas Shrugged Galt does not forgive the incompetent beauracrats.

Forgiveness, which is legitimate, when earned must be distinguished from mercy. If Justice is the policy of identifying a man’s acting accordingly, mercy is the policy of identifying them, then not acting accordingly, lessening the appropriate punishment in a negative case or failing to impose any punishment. Mercy substitutes for justice, a dose of the undeserved and does so in the name of pity, his pity is not for the innocent among men or the good, but for the perpetrators of evil. The innocent man asks for justice, not mercy. He wants what is coming to him. In We the Living Kira pleads for justice, she is declined an engineering seat because she is not a communist, Leo is declined a place in a tuberculosis Sanatorium because he is not a communist.

There is a saying, ‘requiring evil with good’ works to meet the heart of the wicked. There is no evidence to support this claim. To require evil with good does not mean to strengthen the white element of a morally gray man by an act of deserved kindness directed to his better nature but the policy consists
in rewarding the black. The essence of the black however is the attempt to cheat and sneak, the attempt to evade moral principles and get away with it – which is precisely what mercy or unearned forgiveness permits and encourages. No evildoer can be melted so long as his victims compete with one another in offering him their favors, their sanction and their other cheek.

Egalitarianism repudiates justice. Egalitarian does not mean that men should be equal before the law. Nor does it mean that men should be granted equal treatment in the sense of principal treatment as against the injustices that flow from a double standard. It means that equality supersedes justice. Every person in between should share equally in every value, from love to prestige, to money to important jobs, to college degrees to newspaper, political power, regardless of what any individual deserves or earns or has or has not done regardless of his character, his achievements, his ability, his talent, his flaws, his vices, his virtues. It is obviously impossible to Him and his own soul. Just as he has to produce the Material values he needs to sustain his life, so he has to acquire the values of character that enable him to sustain it and that make his life worth Living. He has to...... survive by shaping the world and himself in the image of his values.

John Galt in Atlas Shrugged says,

Pride is the recognition of the fact that you are your own highest value and like all of man’s values, it has to be earned that of any
achievements open to you, the one that makes all others possible
is the creation of your own character. (938)

Live by such a philosophy, since men could not survive if the reward of
virtue were methodically, siphoned in this way into the lap of undeserving, the
egalitarian proposal can have only one purpose and result, destruction.
The purpose is not to benefit the evil but to smash the good. This is the
particular form of injustice that John Galt has in mind when he refers in his
climatic speech to “the collapse to full depravity, the Black Mass of the
Worship of death, the dedication of your consciousness to the destruction of
existence. ‘Egalitarianism is the act of kicking the scale from the hands of the
statue of the justice while stripping off its blindfold, leaving men to be ruled
not by ordinary prejudice which would be bad enough, but by the most virulent
kind, the prejudice that Ayn Rand identifies as hatred of the good for being the
good.”“Pride is the commitment to achieve one’s own moral perfection”.

Ayn Rand says,

Moral perfection is an unbleached Rationality not the degree of
your Intelligence, but the full and relentless use of your mind, not
the extent of your knowledge, but the acceptance of reason as an
absolute perfection so conceived is not possible but also
necessary; it is necessary to a person for the same reason that a
code of morality is necessary. If man's lie is the standard by reference to which virtue is defined then vice is not a temptation or a tolerable option, but a moral threat. Moral imperfect in any area means movement toward destruction. (Leonard Peikoff Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand 304)

Moral concepts, including right, good and perfect are norms formulated to guide human choice. Such concepts can refer only to that which is within the power of choice. There is no excuse to flaws in his character. Like all virtues the process includes both an intellectual and existential component. Intellectually, pride requires that one work issues, rather than settle for invalidated bromides or feelings. The proud man deals with moral issues explicitly and objectively using the method of logic, a code of objective principles, a code based on the facts of nature and of human nature can be adhered to consistently without opposition from reality. If one starts, ethics by rewriting reality, then moral perfection is out of question, if one demands that a virtuous act be devoid of personal motive or that man be emotionless or that he be bodiless then one will be led to condemn human being for the fact of existing. Any variant of this primary of consciousness negates the purpose of ethics.

Once one knows the right moral principles, the next step is to build them into one soul by repeated rational action. One must make these principles, second
nature in the Aristotelian sense of the term by practicing them as an absolute. The man of pride despises breaches of morality, which do involve evasion. The moral man may lack a piece of knowledge or reach a mistaken conclusion but he does not tolerate willful evil, neither in his consciousness nor in his action, neither in the form of sins of commission nor of sins of omission. He does not demand of himself the impossible, but he does demand every ounce of the possible.

Howard Roark in The Fountainhead arrives at a mistaken conclusion of taking up a job in Franco’s office. He listens to the advice of Peter Keatings who is a parasite. He quits the job finding that it does not conform to his ideals—Reardon in Atlas Shrugged takes a wrong decision of signing the gift certificate. He joins the strike with Galt.

The essence of pride is moral ambitiousness. If man is a being of self-made soul, then pride is a process, the morally gray does not practice the virtues selectively; he observes every moral principle on principle. That is why Ayn Rand describes pride as the sum of all virtues. Aristotle similarly calls pride the crown of the virtues and notes that it presupposes all the others.

The rewards of the virtue of pride are all values that a proper moral character makes possible. In particular, pride leads a man to the third of supreme values, self esteem. Unbleached rationality produces self-confidence in a man. Since his policy is to recognize reality, he has sense of efficacy a
conviction of his power to deal with reality and achieve his goals. In addition, the moral character he creates is admirable. So the proud man has a sense of his own worth. This sense includes the feeling that he has a right to be the beneficiary of his actions that he is entitled to the attention which self-sustenance demands that he has earned the position of being his own highest value.

Self-esteem is a fundamental positive moral appraisal of oneself of the process by which one lives and of the person one thereby creates. It is unconcerned with moral issues and cannot question its own action but man who survives by a volitional process needs a moral code and the awareness that he is conforming to it. He needs the knowledge of how to live and the knowledge that he is living up to this knowledge. In Ayn Rand’s formulation man knows that he has to be right, to be wrong in action means danger to his life, to be wrong in person is to be evil, means to be unfit for existence. Self-esteem or its absence is an individual’s verdict in this fundamental issue, ‘Esteem’ is a type of evaluation and evaluation presupposes a standard of value. The state of man’s self-esteem therefore depends not only on his moral practice, but also on his moral theory and it depends on the standard that he uses rationality. Since the self is the mind, self esteem is mind esteem. In Ayn Rand’s definition it is reliance on ‘one’s power to think’ …..A man suffering from invalid standards of self esteem whether irrational or honest, needs to change his moral ideas. He must learn to judge himself not by his knowledge but by his
maintenance of a certain mental state, one that depends on nothing but his own will, the state of being in full focus. In other words, he must learn to gauge his self esteem by the standard of moral perfection as conceived by ethics.

Like any moral attribute, pride and self-esteem are open to everyone. The heroes of Ayn Rand’s novels possess a superlative intelligence but they are still normal men, human beings and not another species with ‘human’ meaning rational. Unfortunately, owing to false philosophy, many people think attaining rationality is impossible. It requires however a functional intelligence on any scale. What a functional intelligence then needs in order to function is liberation by the proper moral code.

In our culture every moral requirement of intelligence is relentlessly attacked. Rationality is castigated as heartless, intellectuality arid, egoism exploitative, independence as anti-social, integrity as rigid, honesty as impractical, and justice as cruel, productiveness as materialistic. The sum of this approach is the tenet that pride is evil.

In *The Fountainhead* a western city completed plans for a world’s fair to be held next year, an international exhibition to be known as “The March of the centuries”. The committee of distinguished civil leaders in charge of the project chose best architects to design the fair. Howard Roark was one of the eight architects chosen. Roark explains to the council.
“If you want me, you’ll have to let me do it all alone. I don’t work with councils.” (The Fountainhead 500) Mr. Ellsworth Toohey, a second hander comments,

The incident illustrates to perfection, the antisocial nature of Mr. Howard Roark’s egoism, the arrogance of the unbridled individualism which he has always personified”. Just as pride is the dedication to morality, so humility is the obliteration of morality – not only in practice of morality- but also in theory. An ethics that extols humility is a self-contradiction. It is the advocacy of code of behavior along with the demand not to practice it fully. Such an approach throws out moral principles and condemns any man who respects them. But it offers the perfect loophole for any who would be a sinner, the escape. It offers license to any whim – worshiper, the license is ‘If you try to be too good, that makes you bad’. (The Fountainhead)

The greatest eras of human history have already been the freest. Science art, invention and every other expression of fresh human thought fail to arise or vanish in dictatorship. Just as man cannot abuse his own mind with impunity, just as he cannot work without wrecking his cognition, he begins to evade, accept the arbitrary, default on integration, and defy his sense perceptions. So he cannot escape the consequences when others seek to force his mind the same abuses.
An eloquent example of the relationship between force and thought is offered in the climax of *Atlas Shrugged*. John Galt, the leader of great minds who have gone on strike cannot come up with any plan to save the country, he cannot, eventhough a gang of thugs, terrified that their statist regime will collapse is screaming for such a plan and seeking to extract it from his brain by force. They trap Galt to a torture machine. By Galt’s knowledge, there is no way to achieve prosperity under a dictatorship and neither torture nor death threat can alter this fact. Galt accordingly does not change his convictions. He does not consider them from some new angle or try to think up any new ideas to satisfy his torturers or look for a compromise. He cannot reject his own convictions nor will the thugs let him apply them. He has no alternative therefore but not uses his conceptual faculty, further in regard to the issue. He does not use it because he cannot, nothing will make the political goal of these brutes practicable and he knows it. The brutes therefore are left helpless. An irrational man functions differently under the rule of force. Through evasion and rationalization he can comply mentally with just about any decree of others, he can bring himself to believe any contradiction he chooses. But this sort of inner state flows from rejection of reason.

Force is the antithesis not only of the primary virtue, but also of every virtue. The brute attacks in his victims every aspect of the moral life, while at the same time rejecting each in regard to his own life. In unleashing a process
of force, he tries to nullify his victim’s independence—while himself becoming a second—hander whose concern is the conquest not of nature, but of men. He orders his victims, when he feels like it to accept and pass on to others anything he commands. As to the virtue of moral ambitiousness, to quote Ayn Rand “Morality ends where a gun begins”.

Ayn Rand says,

An attempt to achieve the good by physical force is a monstrous contradiction which negates morality at its root by destroying a man’s capacity to recognize the good, i.e., his capacity to value. Force invalidates and paralyses a man’s judgment, demanding that: the act against it, thus rendering him morally impotent. A value which one is forced to accept at the price of surrendering one’s mind, is not a value to anyone, the forcibly mindless can neither judge nor choose nor value. An attempt to achieve the good by force is like an attempt to provide a man with a picture gallery at the price of cutting out his eyes. Values cannot exist outside the full context of a man’s life, needs, goals and knowledge. (Leonard Peikoff Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand 316)

A dictatorship provides the most obvious concretization of the above. The citizens own understanding of reality, along with their own value
judgments is irrelevant to their lives; state force, not individual cognition, is the principle governing their actions. To the extent than an individual is moral, therefore is rational, independent! Uncompromising, purposeful, proud—his life becomes unendurable. Such an individual has only three alternatives which are in Ayn Rand’s *We the Living*. He may attempt to flee the country as Kira did. He may kill himself as Andrei did or he may try to make the conflict between force and mind endurable as Leo did by nullifying one of the two clashing elements, the only within his power. This means drowning his mind through promiscuity—drugs alcohol or some equivalent. To the extent that a person succeeds in this endeavor he becomes the living dead, who loses the capacity to know any longer what is being done to him or to care. No course of action that such a person takes can be right.

Ayn Rand says, “Wealth is a moral value”. But this does not imply any categorical imperatives such as “Amass as much money as possible or the richer you become, the more virtue you are”. A given individual may choose for good reason to pursue a line of work that brings in little money. This is an optional matter as long as the individual does have a good reason. The reason might, it offers him the fullest scope for the creative use of his mind.

As with virtue, so with vice, one cannot judge its consequences properly if one takes a short-range viewpoint. The unjust employer or any irrationalism
need not reap the whirlwind the day or year he starts his course. The Fountainhead provides eloquent illustrations. If one reads the book only halfway through, then ask whether Keating is the practical man, one may be tempted to decide in favor of Keating. At that point, Roark is friendless, unrecognized, condemned to work in a quarry, while Keating is at the top of his profession and surrounded by admirers. But in the end, Roark who holds positive values triumphs and Keating's fail. No thought, knowledge or consistency is required in order to destroy writes Ayn Rand, she says,

Unremitting thought, enormous knowledge and a ruthless consistency are required in order to achieve or create. Every error evasion or contradiction helps the goal of destruction; only reason and logic can advance the goal of construction. The negative requires an absence (ignorance, impotence, irrationality) the positive requires a presence, an existent (knowledge efficacy, thought).

(Leonard Peikoff Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand 331)

Evil men though impotent can disappoint, deceive and betray the innocent; if they turn to crime they can rob, enslave and kill. This is one reason that man needs to practice the virtue of justice, to distinguish between the good and the evil. It is also a reason why man needs to live in a proper society, one designed to protect individual rights.
In the ethics that so far rules the world, the transfusion of value from the deserving to the undeserving is regarded as the essence of virtue, and the virtuous man by definition must work to bring about the success of parasites. This theory is the demand for arming of evil. In Ayn Rand’s historic identification, it is the demand for the sanction of the victim. The sanction of the victim means the moral man’s approval of his own martyrdom, his agreement to accept in return for his achievements curses, robbery and enslavement. It means a man’s willingness to embrace his exploiters to pay them ransom for his virtues, to condone and help perpetuate the ethical code which feeds of those virtues which expects them and counts on them at the very moment it is damning them as sin and condemning their exponents to hell fire. This is the moral issue in John Galt’s strike, to say no to this code for the first time – Galt refuses to sanction the immolation of the creators. He withdraws the power of the good from the hands of the evil. He quits the world and lets the evil confront the full reality of its own impotence. Ayn Rand demands of men unbreached integrity, justice and selfishness. This demand is not too extreme. Nothing less will put an end to the obscene blood transfusion that has wrecked most of human history.

‘Happiness which Ayn Rand destines as a state of non-contradictory joy is the ultimate value in life. Pleasure for man is not a luxury, but a profound psychological need. It is a metaphysical concomitant of life, the reward and
consequence of successful action-just as pain is the in sigma of failure, destruction and death. Happiness, not pain or mindless self-indulgence is the proof of one’s moral integrity, since it is the proof and the result of one’s loyalty to the achievement of values. There is no moral substitute for happiness and true happiness requires the most stringent kind of rational discipline. Virtues have no intrinsic value. They possess value solely because they lead to the realization of the self by augmenting productive life-experience. Life is the reward of virtue and happiness. It is the goal and the reward of life. Virtue is always a means to the end of the value. Happiness is always a personal happiness. Happiness is the successful state of life; suffering is the warning signal of failure or death.

In the novel *Anthem* Equality 7-2521 says,

> I know not if this earth on which I stand is the core of a speck of duct 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. (109)

Ayn Rand says the maintenance of life and the pursuit of happiness are not two separate issues. This is the fallacy inherent in hedonism in any variant of ethical hedonism personal or social, Individual or collective. Man’s life is the standard of morality but one’s own life is its purpose. A being that does not
hold his own life as the motive and goal of his actions is acting on the standard of death. Such a being is a metaphysical monstrosity. Life is an end and never a means. An organism’s life is its standard of value that which furthers its life is the good, that which threatens it is evil.

Ayn Rand’s ethics holds man’s life as the standard of value and his own life as the ethical purpose of every individual man. Happiness is the effect of two objective causes, man and the world in proper relationship. It is invariably the objective product of rational behavior. “Happiness is a state of non-contradictory joy which is possible only to a rational man; the man who desires nothing but rational goals seeks nothing but rational values and finds his joy in nothing but rational actions. Happiness occurs when one realizes values.

A morality, which advocates a voluntary renunciation of happiness also indirectly, advocates a renunciation of the conditions necessary for happiness – that is realism, rationality and active life involvement. Every man exists for his sake as an end in and of realizing his own happiness. A morality that dares to tell one to find happiness in the renunciation of his happiness – to value the failure of his values – is an insolent negation of morality. It gives one death as the standard.

In essence then Rand’s basic theory of value may be outlined as; happiness is predicted on a fully realized life. A fully realized life is in turn based on an accurate perception of reality and an accurate perception of reality
grows out of the acceptance of certain basic assumptions about the underlying nature of reality. Therefore happiness is contingent on the nature of behavior, which is in turn contingent on the nature of belief Ayn Rand says,

Happiness is a state of non-contradictory joy – a joy without penalty or guilt, a joy that does not clash with any of your values and does not work for your own destruction not the joy of escaping from your mind but of using your mind’s fullest power, not the joy of faking reality, but of achieving values that are real, not the joy of a drunkard but of a producer. Joy of this kind involves the achievement of values. It demands values: a passion to attain goals one is convinced are right, in a word purpose. The rational man fulfils this requirement. Ayn Rand says morality is a means to survival and the goal of life as Ayn Rand points cannot be attained by the zero seeking method. (Leonard Peikoff Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand 338)

Achieving life is not the equivalent of avoiding death. Joy is not the absence of pain, intelligence is not the absence of stupidity, light is not the absence of darkness, and an entity is not the absence of non-entity. Existence is not a negation of negatives. Evil not value is an absence and a negation. Happiness is not an absence nor is it some guilty pleasure that serve merely to lessen anxiety.
Happiness, the rewards of life, is an aspect of life. It too requires values and therefore a functioning mind. Metaphysical pleasure depends only on one’s own choices and actions. Virtue therefore does ensure happiness, not the full happiness of having achieved one’s values in reality, but the premonitory radiance of knowing that such achievement is possible. This state is represented by Roark at the end of the novel standing triumphant at the top of the Wynand building looking down at Dominique. The other is Roark at the start and throughout even when toiling in the granite quarry.

Happiness is properly the purpose of ethics but not the standard. One must choose values by reference not to a psychical state, but an external fact, the requirements of man’s life in order to achieve the state of enjoying one’s life. It is self-defeating to counsel the pursuit of pleasure as a primary ethical guide because only the pleasure attendant on the achievement of one’s values leads to happiness. Happiness sometimes a moral does not reach professional or romantic fulfillment like Roark or Galt at a point when he is alone against the world barred from his work, destitute. In existential terms, such a man has not achieved his values he is beset by problems and difficulties. Nevertheless, if he is an Ayn Rand hero, he is confident at peace with himself, serene; he is a happy person even when living through an unhappy period. He does experience deprivation, frustration, and pain but in Ayn Rand’s
memorable phrase, it is pain that goes only down to a certain point, beneath which are the crucial attributes such a man has built into his soul, reason, purpose and self-esteem.

A man of this kind has achieved his value not his existential values but the philosophical values that are their precondition. He has achieved not success but the ability to succeed, the right relationship to reality. The emotional leitmotif of such a person is a unique and enduring form of pleasure, the pleasure that is derived from the sheer fact of a man being alive, if he is a man who feels able to live. This emotion can be described as an in Ayn Rand’s definition “is that state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one value” this does not mean it follows from the gaining of any ends, rational or otherwise. If a man holds and achieves rational values he will be happy as a result and his happiness will reflect the fact that his course of action’s pro-life.

John Galt in Atlas Shrugged says,

By the grace of reality and nature of life, man – every man is an end in himself, he exists for his own sake and the achievement of his own happiness is his highest moral purpose. But neither life nor happiness can be achieved by the pursuit of irrational whims. Just as man is free to attempt to survive in any random manner,
but will perish unless he lives as his nature requires, so he is free to seek his Happiness in any mindless fraud, but the torture of frustration is all he will find, unless he seeks the happiness proper to man. The purpose of morality is to teach you, not to suffer and die but enjoy yourself and live. (932)

Thus Ayn Rand expounds ethics and values through her novels in a vivid and realistic manner appealing in every way to the nature of human beings. She elucidates a philosophy for the mankind to live.