

Works

- *Fountainhead* (1943)
- *Atlas Shrugged* (1957)
- *The Objectivist Ethics* (1961)

Definitions

- Objectivism – As a philosophy. One of several doctrines holding that all reality is objective and external to the mind and that knowledge is reliably based on observed objects and events
- Metaphysical - Rand uses this term differently as that which pertains to reality, to the nature of things, to existence

The Objectivist Ethics

- Morality – A code of values to guide man’s choices and actions. As a science ethics deals with discovering and defining such a code
- Declared that no philosopher had given a rational, objectively demonstrable, scientific answer to the question of *why* man needs a code of values.
- Humans discover the concept of ‘**value**’ by means of the physical sensations of *pleasure* or *pain* (**The pleasure-pain mechanism- the guardian of the organism’s life**)
 - Pleasure –the organism is pursuing the right course of action
 - Pain –the organism is pursuing the wrong course of action
- Consciousness is the basic means of survival
 - Simpler organism can survive in their environment - but cannot *obtain* food
 - Higher organisms require a range of actions proportionate to the range of their consciousness
 - The lower of the conscious species possess only the faculty of sensation
 - Higher organisms possess the faculty of retaining sensations
 - An animal is able to learn certain skills to deal with specific situation: hunting or hiding –teach these to their young
 - Man requires the guidance of conceptual values derived from conceptual knowledge
 - Conceptual knowledge - Man’s sense organs function automatically; the brain integrates his sense data into percepts automatically
 - The process of integrating percepts into concepts **is not automatic**
 - Reason is the faculty that identifies and integrates the material provided by man’s senses – must exercise it by choice
 - Focus his mind to a full, active, purposefully directed awareness of reality
 - Or unfocus and let himself drift in a semiconscious daze

- Man has to initiate thought, to sustain it and to bear responsibility for its results
He has to learn:
 - To tell what is true or false and how to correct his own errors
 - To discover how to validate his concepts, conclusions, knowledge
 - To discover the rules of though laws of logic to direct his thinking
- Man needs a code of ethics to determine the right goals for him to pursue and the values his survival requires

Objectivist Ethics

- Maintains a man's life as the standard of value – and his own life as the ethical purpose of every individual man
- Method of survival proper to a rational being require: thinking and productive work
- Value is that for which one acts to gain/keep – virtue is the act by which one gains/keeps it
 - Three cardinal values: Reason, Purpose, Self-Esteem
 - Three corresponding virtues: Rationality, Productiveness, Pride
- Social principle of the Objectivist ethics is that just as life is an end in itself – every living human being is an end in himself –not the means to the ends or the welfare of others
- Emotions are estimates of that which furthers man's values or threatens them
- Man is born with an emotional mechanism, just as he is born with cognitive mechanism
 - Both are “tabula rasa” at birth - man's cognitive faculty, his mind, that determines the content of both
- The Objectivist ethics advocates and upholds rational selfishness
 - Human good does not require human sacrifices and cannot be achieved by the sacrifice of anyone to anyone
 - Principle of trade – the only rational ethical principle for all human relationships: personal and social, private and public, spiritual and material – principle of justice
- Benefits of human society
 - Knowledge – every man benefits from the knowledge discovered by others
 - Division of Labor – enables a man to devote his effort to a particular field of work and to trade with others who specialize in other fields
- The Political principle: no man may initiate the use of physical force against others
 - Have the right to use physical force only in retaliation and only against those who imitate its use
 - Proper, moral purpose of a government is to protect man's rights
 - Ayn believed that pure, uncontrolled, un regulated laissez-faire capitalism – with separation of state and economics
- Objectivist ethics is the morality of life