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Research Article

Pleasure and Happiness

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Abstract

As we search for happiness, we realize how we fully share with humanity's many joys as well as sorrows. What remains central is how to deal with changes -- psychologically, spiritually, economically, and technologically. This paper examines the issue of the individual by Ayn Rand. This work raised questions regarding Rand's philosophy, Objectivism that places the highest value on the individual, with emphasis on reason and freedom. In essence, the human person is considered to be responsible for one's rationality based on one's capacity to choose; with happiness as the moral purpose of life. Following a brief introduction of the theory that focused on the significant impact to the present laissez-faire capitalism, is an analysis of Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of the individual. This article made significant comparisons between Rand and Nietzsche and their justifications of the moral person with special attention to the Apollonian reality. A critical discussion on the implications of the Objectivist arguments to the Filipinos follows by drawing attention to loob that encompassed Filipinos' humanity, personality, theological perspective, and daily experiences. The work proceeds in defining Filipino indigenous thoughts to appreciate culture and how it shapes Philippine history as a nation. More, it aspired to be in harmony with others, and nature to be in union with God. The interior loob underscored the innate goodness; while the holistic concept, the non-dual outlook of the world. Finally, the paper underpinned that despite the prominence of modern science and technology, there is a concern for the inner and personal nature of the self.

Keywords

Happiness, individual, loob, Objectivism, pleasure

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Introduction

Objectivist ethics hold that human good does not require sacrifices and cannot be achieved by the sacrifice of anyone to anyone. The rational interest does not clash, there is no conflict of interest among men who do not desire the unearned. Any altruist approach regarding a person justifying one's existence as self-sacrifice is rejected by Ayn Rand. Many papers have analyzed Objectivism; however, the author will explore the thoughts of Rand regarding the Filipino concept of *loob,* a Christian concept. There is a unified and holistic concept of *loob*; an interdependence of action, thoughts, and words. According to a Filipino counsel "Huwag kang martir." (*Do not be a martyr*.) The preceding statement is abused and does nothing to improve one's sorry state. If a person stands up for his/her rights, he/she is aware of the value of life. Further, since the use of our freedom expresses our opinions, life becomes meaningful (Mercado, 1976).
In the course of history, great men and women sacrificed themselves for self–improvement, but more importantly for the improvement of humanity. Rand (1963) believed that nothing can justify the sacrifice of some persons to others. Rand, however, did not foresee emotion as a potent force that can make people sacrifice themselves: a woman for instance, who works more than twice.
Objectivist ethics is the morality of rational self-interest or rational selfishness. A person's rationality should be open to other ideas and opinions; if one limits one's self to his/her thoughts, he/she deprives himself/herself of further growth and learning. The Objectivist's concept of one's interest as exact and pure (Rand, 1963) is unacceptable (Rand, 1990). We cannot claim that our thoughts are entirely ours. Further, our thoughts are affected and molded by daily experiences, technology, etc. thus, we become truly mature individuals if we widen our views, comprehension, and reason – and when, despite our vast knowledge, we leave room to the beliefs and thoughts of others.

The Individual

In Rand (2014) and Rand (2005b) individualism vis-à-vis the morality of rational self-interest was established. The story shows what happened to the world when the mind goes on strike; when human creative ability in every profession quits and disappears. To quote John Galt (2008) in a certain scene (Rand, 2005b), the leader and initiator of the strikes:

There is only one kind of man who has never been on strike in human history. Every other kind and class have stopped when they so wished, and have presented demands the world, claiming to be indispensable except the men who have carried the world on either shoulder have kept it alive, have endured torture as sole payment, but have never walked out on the human world discover who they are, what they do and what happens when they refuse to function. This is the strike of men (women) of mind.

Since individualism is directed by rationality, reason becomes a guide toward one's own life. Arendt believes that thinking is an activity that probes an event to determine probable causes and thereby, formulate theories. The cause of good and evil is rooted in thinking which distinguishes humanity from animals (Quito 1986: 5). Rand derided anti-intellectualism which relies on some "cracker-barrel sort of folksy wisdom". She argued that rational self-interest is a virtue by itself. As such, by achieving this profound virtue, one is free from being a "scavenger of human souls" (Rand, 2009). Individualism as a virtue becomes a means towards a self-made soul. Individualism alleviates human weakness through knowledge. The gains of humanity were incalculably faced with the vast potential of human knowledge as it expands from one generation to another (e.g. on skill and production) between specialized fields of humans which would lead to greater knowledge (Rand, 1963). As I analyzed Rand's works, I could not help but draw parallelisms of her thoughts with Nietzsche's. Frederick Nietzsche (1844-1900) was born into the family of a Lutheran pastor in Saxony after his father's sudden death in 1849. He went with his mother and sister to live with female relatives in Naumburg. Aloof from most of his schoolmates he acquired a classical education first in the gymnasium and later on scholarships in the famous school at Pforta. His interests were adult and cultural even at such early age as referring to three stages of his thoughts (Hill, 2007). Both Rand and Nietzsche supported individualism. Nietzsche maintained that individualism is the first stage toward the open expression of the will-to-power (Nietzsche, 1968). Both affirmed that humans should be thinkers. In his book *The Joyful Wisdom*, Nietzsche declared "life as means to knowledge" which underscored his high regard for

rationality. He took note that the thinkers of his time are largely academic and admonished them to practice what they preach.

In her new book, *The new left,* Rand (1970) underpinned Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche (1989) identified two physical realities which he aptly patterned from Greek tragedies: (1) Apollo, the god of light, and (2) Dionysus, the god of wine, to that of the drunk, stupor state such as emotions. Similarly, Rand weighed the Apollonian as superior to the Dionysian. More, both Rand and Nietzsche noted the superiority of the ego: both condemned the herd as they expressed their concern over the worthiest few intellectuals who should benefit from the privileges of individualism. Nietzsche deplored the promotion of altruism. As Rand perceived: *Altruism makes suffering the most important in life*. Nietzsche (2018) decried the promotion of the ascetic ideal which is bestowed on attitudes such as submission. Moreover, Nietzsche considered the ascetic ideal as basically self-denying and will-denying. While Rand (1964) considered selfishness as a virtue. In the same manner, Nietzsche (2018) emphasized - *Be not considerate of thy neighbor*.

Both the philosophy of Rand and Nietzsche struggled to become values. Nietzsche (2000) surmised that the will to live comprised the independence of the scientific individual and the emancipation from the unbridled transcendental speculation (Nietzsche, 1989). He thought that it is wrong to deprive a human being of stature and to be remodeled into a characterless uniformity within a system be it theological, philosophical, or scientific. Rand emphasized that people of creative spirit must reject the role of the sacrificial animal and instead, should be self-assertive. The questions of Rand and Nietzsche were valuable for they attempted to elevate humans not as faceless entities but as individuals who could be better and more productive. Church and government are not spared as they probe the individualism of human beings. However, Rand's philosophy became ambiguous as she failed to draw her definition of morality. Individualism in its sense or meaning becomes personally formulated. Thus, human nature is faced with potential impediments or obstructions in its morality. Rand's political leanings could be reflected in her philosophical stand. She strongly implied that communism lacked freedom of speech and freedom of religion and so on because it restricted economic liberty (Teichman & Evans, 1999). For Rand, economic liberty which she identified with individualism comprised the central foundation of capitalism.

Implications of Objectivism

Rand (1963) argued that a person is free to make the wrong choice but not free to succeed with it. I think that a person should learn from one's mistakes. There are times that we commit errors, which is very human, but we must learn to rectify them. The success of an individual does not entirely mean that he/she is always correct, but how he/she exerts his/her efforts to rise from his/her shortcomings and failures. We need others to help one's self up. As a baby learns to crawl, a child learns to walk, so does the community help the individual through encouragement and engagement. Through the encouragement of parents, a person learns to attain goals with the help of the people around him – his wife, children, boss, peers, etc. For instance, a drug addict is consoled by a priest or is aided by a non-governmental organization to rediscover himself and renew his life. Thus, Rand is not completely correct when she said that the end in itself is one's life (Rand, 1963). The individual is not alone in this world but is interwoven within networks of organizations and dynamics of various cultures, beliefs, and ideas of people.

Pleasure serves as a reward and an affirmation of one's work. Further, pleasure serves as an emotional fuel of the ego. Therefore, pleasure, *vis-à-vis* a work is not a luxury but a psychological need. However, Plato thought that pleasure is not only a determinant of a good life but of itself which constituted a good life. Freud, on the one hand, regarded pleasure as more intense than unpleased. The majority of the mental processes would have to be accompanied by pleasure.

Even though I agree with Rand that the self should be guided by reason, the individual is alone before the world and with the idea of value (happiness/pleasure), for the author, unless the self recognizes others and relationships with others, the self is incomplete; imperfect, dissatisfied. The "I" if isolated, deprives its growth because of its puritanism.

For Rand (1967), happiness is the basis of one's moral integrity. More, happiness could not be the sole basis of one's morality. However, what if happiness rests on taking drugs? Will this habit make one a moral person? If one rationalizes that taking drugs makes a person stronger, more confident, and worry-free being, does his/her reasoning alone justify one's state of happiness? Rand opined that *No man has the right to initiate the use of physical force, against another man*, will this, for instance, apply to be a drug user, and even though he has not hurt anyone (though there is a

possibility)?
Rand (1963) argued that the end in itself is one's life. However, the individual is not alone in this world but is interwoven within networks of organizations and dynamics of various cultures, beliefs, and ideas of people. There is nothing wrong with reasoning. However, one could not fully set aside other faculties such as feelings and beliefs. If we eliminate these factors, our reasoning will be incomplete. The author realized the "burden" of responsibility which an individual has to carry. One's actions put the entire responsibility on one's shoulder and no one else. The "I" however, becomes a recluse to the larger reality. In a spatiotemporal context, the globe is shrinking; national become interdependent. A nation could not completely isolate itself from the rest of the world (Miranda, 1989). In the same manner, the "I" should be affected by the others; for the "I" to expand, it should be responsible for itself and the others with which it exists. One could not truly remain objective. The feelings, the psyche, the psychological framework of an individual comprise thinking which influences one's decisions.
For example, take a Filipino working in a foreign country amidst abuse and maltreatment of her employers just to be able to send money back home or, a soldier who faces death in war. In these scenarios, both sacrifice themselves not out of a whim or temporary insanity but out of love, similar to a mother for her children, as well as courage, which a man feels for his country in times of tribulations and sacrifices. They are not deplorable especially they reached their ideals, exceeding their self-limitation, and thus, find strength in their capabilities (Alejo, 1990). Sacrifices, whether big or small, enlighten people that this world could be a better living place. If there is no sacrifice, there will be no heroes, role models, farmers, soldiers, and scientists who will devote their time and resources, and if necessary, give up their lives for the welfare of many. A scientist, for instance, sacrifices hours of trial and error in working off an invention that will inevitably benefit humanity's progress. Compared to the great heights and ingenuity humanity is capable of, to simply achieve one's happiness as a moral purpose of a person (Rand, 2005a) is a flimsy view.

Conclusion

The philosophy of Rand on self explicitly describes that each person is responsible for one's individuality. What we are, each of us is determined by ourselves. The aim of Rand's rational selfishness is for the individual to gain further knowledge and greater achievements. One must live a life of reason to find its completion and its fulfillment to attain personal happiness. Equally, for existentialists, "We are responsible for more than what becomes of us; we are also responsible for what becomes of others." In this vein, the paper emphasized the social responsibility as well as *kasarilihan* ***(independence or autonomy)*** of the Filipinos.
Finally, by examining the similarities of Rand and core concepts of Filipino indigenous thinking in terms of independence, responsibility, and knowledge, this paper offers a basis for understanding the moral significance of happiness and human actions.

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