

MORAL JUSTIFICATION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

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## ABSTRACT

### MORAL JUSTIFICATION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

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In this thesis, I aim at drawing out the moral implications of private property by examining its relationships with some core moral concepts, such as rights, freedom and privacy. Dealing with these relationships, I believe that I am able to reveal the fundamental principle of a practical morality, which is ‘appropriation’. With respect to this principle, I argue that private property’s connection to morality requires the perspective of the appropriation of values. The appropriation of values is my own reading of the Objectivist ethics that is built on the epistemological and ethical principles of Objectivism. Objectivism is the philosophical system invented by Ayn Rand that relies on the pursuit of one’s own rational interests in the achievement of objective values and happiness. However, for the purpose of my thesis, I mainly focus on introducing and improving my own arguments regarding moral justification of private property, which takes its key notions from Objectivism.

**Keywords:** Appropriation, appropriation of values, private property, Objectivism, Ayn Rand

## ÖZ

### ÖZEL MÜLKİYETİN AHLAKİ TEMELLENDİRMESİ

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Bu tezde özel mülkiyetin haklar, özgürlük ve mahremiyet gibi bazı temel ahlaki kavramlarla ilişkilerini inceleyerek ahlaki imalarını açmayı amaçlıyorum. Bu ilişkileri ele alırken, pratik bir ahlakın temel prensibini, yani ‘sahiplenme’yi ortaya çıkarabildiğime inanıyorum. Bu prensibe ilişkin olarak özel mülkiyetin ahlakla bağlantısının ‘değerlerin sahiplenilmesi’ perspektifini gerektirdiğini ileri sürüyorum. Değerlerin sahiplenilmesi Objektivizm’in epistemolojik ve etik prensiplerinin üzerine inşa edilen benim kendi Objektivizm okumamdır. Objektivizm Ayn Rand’ın kurduğu, kişinin objektif değerleri ve mutluluğu elde edişinde kendi rasyonel çıkarlarının peşinde olmasına dayanan felsefi bir sistemdir. Bununla beraber, tezimin amacı doğrultusunda, Objektivizm’in ana kavramlarını aldığı üzere özel mülkiyetin ahlaki temellendirmesine dair başlıca kendi argümanlarımı sunmaya ve geliştirmeye odaklanıyorum.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Sahiplenme, değerlerin sahiplenilmesi, özel mülkiyet, Objektivizm, Ayn Rand

To my grandmother, Peyruze

With love...

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I have never forgotten a word one of my friends has once said: “You has *distilled* yourself and turned it into a thesis”. These words remarks upon the purpose of my thesis, if it has one, and this purpose points out the value of freedom for which I have owed to my mother. So finally, I would like to thank my mother, Nilgün Atıcı, who has always seen the best in me. She has always encouraged me to be myself and to appropriate to my true value within her boundless love.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
ÖZ .....	v
DEDICATION .....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	viii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. FOUNDATIONS .....	7
2.1 The Justification of Private Property .....	7
2.1.1 Property as Self-ownership.....	7
2.1.2 The Right to Private Property .....	9
2.2 Objectivism.....	14
2.2.1 The Morality of Rational Self-Interest.....	15
2.2.1.1 The “Conceptual Knowledge” .....	16
2.2.1.2 Aristotle’s Conception of “Soul” .....	18
2.2.1.3 The Highest Purpose of Morality .....	19
2.2.1.4 The Life of a Rational Being.....	22
2.2.1.5 Self-Interest versus Duty.....	24
2.2.1.6 Rand’s Critique of Kantian Morality as Altruistic .	26
2.2.1.7 Objective versus Intrinsic (Objective Values) .....	31
2.2.1.8 Rand’s Conception of Reason.....	32

2.2.2 The Virtue of Egoism .....	35
2.2.2.1 Rand’s Egoism .....	35
2.2.2.2 Productive Selfishness and the Genuine Form of Responsibility.....	37
2.2.2.3 Relational Egoism (Rational Responding).....	39
2.2.2.4 Compromise versus Sacrifice.....	42
2.2.3 The Appropriation of Values .....	44
2.2.3.1 “The choice to live” .....	45
2.2.3.2 Rationality as a Matter of Choice.....	47
2.2.3.3 Appropriation as Moral Continuity in One’s Life..	49
3. RIGHTS AND FREEDOM.....	54
3.1 Rights.....	55
3.1.1 Natural Rights as Natural Abilities .....	55
3.1.2 Varying Actualities .....	57
3.1.3 Ability and Choice as the Preconditions of an Action.....	59
3.1.4 The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for Rights.....	60
3.1.5 Rights in Egoism.....	62
3.1.6 Rights as the Practical Principle of an Action .....	64
3.1.7 Rights as One’s Properties .....	66
3.1.8 Rights in the Social Context .....	67
3.2 Freedom.....	69
3.2.1 Limitation as the Constitutive Principle of Practical Freedom .....	69
3.2.2 Freedom within a Moral Limitation.....	71
3.2.3 Autonomy and the Inner Principle of Morality .....	72
3.2.4 Autonomy as a Form of Private Property .....	73

3.2.5	Stirner's Egoism .....	75
3.2.6	<i>Ownness</i> as Freedom .....	76
3.2.7	<i>Ownness</i> as Self-Responsibility.....	78
3.2.8	Relational Freedom in the Context of Private Property.....	79
3.2.9	The Inseparability of Freedom from Private Property (A Response to Marx's Conception of Alienation) .....	81
4.	PRIVACY .....	84
4.1	The Distinction between the Private and the Public.....	85
4.2	The Realization of Privacy as Public Self .....	89
4.3	Private in Opposition to Social.....	90
4.4	The Right to Privacy as Distance .....	92
4.5	The Accessibility of Privacy (Private Property as the Social Aspect of Freedom) .....	94
4.6	Private Space and the Principle of Demandability .....	96
4.7	Conditional Freedom of Property .....	99
4.8	Plurality and Individuality .....	102
4.9	Freedom by Distance as both Private and Personal.....	103
5.	PROFESSIONALISM .....	106
5.1	The Virtue of Trade .....	107
5.1.1	Truth in Morality .....	107
5.1.2	The Achievement of Truth via Exchange .....	108
5.1.3	Two Principles of Professionalism and the Harmony between Interests .....	112
5.1.4	The Rational Assessment of One's Work.....	114
5.2	The Virtue of Productivity.....	116
5.2.1	Productivity in Both the Moral and Rational Context .....	116

5.2.2 The Moral Realm of Products and Artifacts .....	117
5.3 Trust.....	120
5.3.1 The Nature of Trust and Its Objectivity.....	120
5.3.2 Trustworthiness.....	122
5.4 Justice .....	125
5.4.1 Justice in the Context of Appropriation.....	125
5.4.2 An Approach to the Problem of Justice .....	127
5.4.3 Justice in Relation to Morality and Law .....	129
5.4.4 Earned and Justified Success .....	132
6. CONCLUSION .....	134
REFERENCES.....	143
APPENDICES	
A: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET.....	148
B: TEZ İZİN FORMU/THESIS PERMISSION FORM.....	161

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis has been truly appropriated by me. If it were not appropriated by me, I would not be able to write, nor defend it. You may wonder what I mean by this statement, or what is meant when one says that “something is appropriated by me”. What does it mean to appropriate something? What is ‘appropriation’ indeed? In what way and in terms of which aspects can and should we understand its nature? I will try to answer these questions throughout my thesis, and hope to reveal the sense of my words.

On our way to attain a comprehensive understanding of appropriation, I shall start with the conception of value. Value, Ayn Rand defines, is “**that which one acts to gain and/or keep**”.<sup>1</sup> This definition implies that actions are necessary for the obtainment of values. Value has also a direct connection with the fundamental principle that underlies each action in the life of a living organism. Living organisms act because they *seek for* the preservation of their own lives and the preservation of life requires values. Thus it seems to us that the conception of value and the preservation of life are intrinsically connected, which is the basic argument of the Objectivist ethics.

To achieve their values, human beings should be the pursuers of their own interests. However, the true kind of interest must be defined as “rational self-interest”, as the Objectivist ethics does not recognize any conception of self-

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<sup>1</sup> Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism* (New York: Signet, 1964), 16. Ayn Rand is known by her own philosophical system, i.e. Objectivism that she first introduced in her most famous work *Atlas Shrugged* (1957) and advanced in her essays collected in the book *The Virtue of Selfishness* (1964).

interest outside of the context of reason.<sup>2</sup> One's life will then be a sum of the actions performed in one's own rational interests in order to achieve a life and appropriate one's values. The appropriation of values is a rational process so long as it has a connection to the faculty of reason in defining one's interests. The appropriation of values through the pursuit of rational self-interest also paves the road for the justification of private property.

Before going further, I should carefully state some important points. In this thesis, I aim at drawing out the moral implications of private property in relation to my own view of the Objectivist ethics, which is the appropriation of values explained in the section "Appropriation as Moral Continuity in One's Life" in Chapter 2. The appropriation of values is my own reading of the Objectivist ethics that is built on the epistemological and ethical principles of Objectivism. Thus these implications involve the main themes and principles of the Objectivist ethics. However, it would be inaccurate to say that the appropriation of values is a direct implication or pure reading of the Objectivist ethics. I do not merely make an examination of Objectivist epistemology and the Objectivist ethics. Rather, I develop some new arguments and establish relationships between private property and some moral concepts, such as rights, freedom and privacy. This is why my thesis is given the title "Moral Justification of Private Property".

What this thesis attempts to do can be understood in the following way: Ayn Rand basically develops a philosophy that gives the account of values that are originated in the choice to live, which focuses on the connection between survival and morality. However my primary concern is to establish the connection between morality and private property, as I rely on the appropriation of values from an Objectivist perspective I maintain throughout my whole thesis. I believe that private property's connection to

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<sup>2</sup> Leonard Peikoff, *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand* (New York: Meridian, 1993), 234.

morality in the perspective of the appropriation of values provides the moral justification of private property.

As you can see, I am not writing this thesis to merely interpret and to give a justification of Ayn Rand's philosophy. For those who are seeking for arguments for a justification of her philosophy at the meta-ethical or epistemological level I recommend to look elsewhere than my thesis, for their quest would be the research topic of another thesis. I assume that Objectivism as a philosophical system is correct and fairly competent to provide the meta-ethical and epistemological basis for my arguments. Leaving aside the discussions regarding the epistemological and meta-ethical foundations of Objectivism, I mainly focus on introducing and improving my arguments in this thesis regarding the moral justification of private property, which takes its key notions from Rand's philosophy.

I begin with exploring Locke's theory of property to understand its implications about the fundamental right to preserve one's own life and existence. In *Second Treatise of Government*<sup>3</sup>, John Locke gives the account of appropriation in terms of the right to property. In the first part of Chapter 2 I am covering his thoughts on the private appropriation of property and its connection to individual responsibility.<sup>4</sup> However, I allocate a wider space to explain and understand the Objectivist theory of value in Chapter 2.

Human reason occupies a crucial role in acquiring one's values. Reason can always be instrumentalized so as to serve one's rational interests and higher moral ends. In this sense, the Randian conception of rationality unites value and purpose in terms of the necessity of moral values in human survival,

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<sup>3</sup> John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. C. B. Macpherson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980).

<sup>4</sup> Locke emphasizes the role of human labor in acquiring property with reference to some limitations that are directly related to one's responsibility for private appropriation of things in nature (Ibid, xvi).

contrary to Weberian distinctions within rationality.<sup>5</sup> The concepts of value and purpose are interdependent in Objectivism.

The conception of value signifies both moral and physical values in the conceptual framework.<sup>6</sup> However, physical values can also be seen as *moral values* so long as they represent the virtue of productivity in the pursuit of rational goals. The values are practically owned through the appropriation of the outcome of one's abilities, which is one of the main themes introduced in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3 I probe the conception of right and liberty of an action in relation to property. As I believe that the conception of right should be connected to a justified moral theory, I try to advance an alternative approach to the concept of right by stressing its connection to the notion of "ability" and appropriation in a rational morality. The appropriation of the outcome of one's natural abilities creates private property as the embodiment of an individual practical morality, which I mainly argue in the first part of the chapter.

Private property must also be seen as the condition of freedom<sup>7</sup>, i.e. the liberty of thinking and action, in order to achieve and truly have a life. In this consideration, Chapter 3 revolves around the conception of moral

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<sup>5</sup> Stephen Kalberg, "Max Weber's Types of Rationality: Cornerstones for the Analysis of Rationalization Processes in History", *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 85, No. 5 (Mar., 1980), pp. 1145-1179.

<sup>6</sup> In "Galt's Speech" Ayn Rand tackles with the conception of value in relation to one's own moral character "that as man must produce the physical values he needs to sustain his life, so he must acquire the values of character that make his life worth sustaining". Ayn Rand, *For the New Intellectual* (New York: Penguin 1963), 130. Some of the references from *For the New Intellectual* are taken from *The Ayn Rand Lexicon* (1988).

<sup>7</sup> By "the condition of freedom" I specifically address the practical field of action that is provided, and only possible, by private property. Besides the exercise of freedom on the condition of private property, appropriation also belongs to human freedom as moral stance.

freedom, which is very important to grasp the connection between one's natural abilities and their appropriation within a responsibility.

In Chapter 3 I also examine the concept of “*ownness*” as a form of property. *Ownness (Eigenheit)* is the term that I have borrowed from Max Stirner to especially denote ‘individual autonomy’ in connection to the appropriation of values. Chapter 3 also deals with the Marxian concept of alienation and tries to provide an answer in relation to the exercise of one's freedom and the appropriation of the outcome of one's abilities to achieve a life in this world.

Privacy is the main topic of Chapter 4. In the social realm privacy is maintained by private property that guarantees one's distance to others through which one can maintain one's privacy and liberty in a relationality of properties, which I discuss in Chapter 4. Distance has two practical roles: Separating one's life and at the same time enable one to be in interaction with others so as to exchange one's values. This is the key principle of securing the life of individuals in the social realm. Thus, the main idea I am defending in this chapter is that distance is guaranteed by only private property, since private property defines the concrete limits of freedom of action in reality. My argument of privacy in terms of distance cannot be seen as a direct implication of The Objectivist ethics; rather it must be evaluated in an original framework of the philosophy of privacy according to which privacy as distance is the moral achievement of private property in the social realm.

In Chapter 4 I also respond to the Marxist understanding of freedom in defense of private property and argue for its necessity for freedom. The Marxist understanding of freedom seems against one's privacy and threatens one's distance to others in the social realm. I believe that the maintenance of

distances in a society is crucial to the life of the individual being, and this is only possible by virtue of private property.

Chapter 5 analyzes the nature of the exchange of values in relation to professionalism. I use “the trader principle”<sup>8</sup> to achieve *truth* as agreement between parties while they trade their values appropriated by and for themselves. Reaching an agreement is possible only when one takes the moral responsibility for being “trustworthy”, which points out the rational characteristic of trust as I argue in the section “Trustworthiness”.

Justice is the other main theme to be examined in Chapter 5. I explore its true meaning in connection to the practice of appropriation and an earned life as I believe that human beings can only be responsible for what they have appropriated and can only have a moral life whenever they justly earn their lives. I also deal with the problem of justice and try to present a solution to it in terms of the exchange of appropriated values and the rational assessment of one’s earned achievements.

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<sup>8</sup> Rand holds the trader principle as “the only rational ethical principle for all human relationships” (Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 34).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **FOUNDATIONS**

In this Chapter, I explore the basic features of human existence and the essential principles of morality that conform to them. The principles I am speaking of mainly belong to the Objectivist ethics, i.e. the morality of rational self-interest and self-esteem. The Objectivist ethics holds that rational self-interest is the fundamental principle of a moral action. It also sees a strong connection between human existence and morality, since human beings need a moral code of values and guiding principles for their survival.

#### **2.1 The Justification of Private Property**

Private ownership, I believe, is also crucial for human life, and, it requires certain moral values to be acquired. Opposing the common belief that property is a social construct, I argue that it must be seen as a moral conception central to human life. In this respect, I shall first examine the concept of property as “self-ownership” to reveal its moral implications.

##### **2.1.1 Property as Self-ownership**

From the perspective of one’s individual achievement of life, the concept of property seems to indicate one’s own being in terms of self-ownership. This is plainly evident in the Lockean conception of property. Locke emphasizes the most fundamental right of human beings by asserting that “every man

has a *property* in his own *person*: this nobody has any right to but himself”.<sup>9</sup> This means that one has the right of self-ownership in one’s own person (and being) to which one only is entitled. This view of property is indeed an ontological result of one’s freedom that “closely” engages one’s self-preservation as inseparable.<sup>10</sup> Therefore property in one’s own person is to be more than only a right –it is natural.

According to Locke freedom is a necessary part of human beings’ survival, as nobody can give a higher power over one’s life than oneself.<sup>11</sup> This means that one can only exercise an individual freedom in one’s own power.<sup>12</sup> Importantly, the principle of “property” or “ownership in one’s own person” as self-ownership implies and entails the fundamental right to one’s own life and to its appropriation within the power of one’s own freedom.

Since self-ownership is a natural aspect of human life, private ownership of property can be seen as fundamental to human nature. As Rothbard says, one of Aristotle’s arguments regarding private ownership is that “private property is implanted in man’s nature: His love of self, of money and of property are tied together in a natural love of exclusive ownership”.<sup>13</sup> I think that the moral significance of property in terms of self-love is also evident

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<sup>9</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise*, 19, §27.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 17, §23.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>12</sup> Locke tells about trade among human beings as an example of “drudgery”, yet it happens in a principle: A master does not have the arbitrary power to kill a slave (*Ibid*, 18). I will return the problem of ownership of a “slave” in the next chapter and deal with it by introducing the concept of *ownness* –as a concept of self-ownership and freedom complete in one’s own power.

<sup>13</sup> Murray Rothbard, *Economic Thought before Adam Smith*, Vol. 1 (Auburn: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2006), 14. Although Aristotle defends a system of private property, he disdains trade and economic exchange; and, what is worse, he declared exchange as immoral (*Ibid*). This may stem from the inconsistencies in Aristotle’s thought, as he was unable to see the moral aspects of economic behavior, as well as the virtues in an economic relationship. The moral virtue of economic achievement can be demonstrated in trader’s activity, which I will depict in Chapter 5.

in the fact that human beings are the pursuers of their own interests to maintain and appropriate a life. The life of a human being involves one's possessions and goods that only belong to one. This means that the conception of property embraces both one's "person and goods", as also stated by Locke.<sup>14</sup> The process of acquiring private property should be an ethical practice that is derived from one's right in one's own person and the virtue of productivity as to enjoy an appropriated life.

Since human beings have the right to their own persons, they can also claim a moral ownership to their existences and the goods they appropriate. From this perspective of moral ownership, human beings are the moral persons who have the capability of producing and appropriating values that are essential for their lives, and furthermore, they have the basic right to self-government as an ability, which is among the other aspects of ownership. These rights and abilities can only be exercised by virtue of private property that is acquired through moral values.

The conception of self-ownership is strongly emphasized in Locke's justification of private property. He gives the justification of private ownership of what is common in terms of the appropriation of resources and the ownership of land through the *limitations* by which human beings are only able to appropriate.

### **2.1.2 The Right to Private Property**

We must obtain food and other things in nature that are essential for our survival. However, to what extent can we appropriate them? Appropriation of fruits or a part of nature that are common to all human beings before they become appropriated by anyone can be seen as a problem. Addressing this problem, Locke tries to give a proper account of private ownership.

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<sup>14</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise*, 90, §173.

According to Locke, things in nature are *given* to humankind in common; yet human beings become able to appropriate them in some ways.<sup>15</sup> He sees a close connection between appropriation and the things that must be appropriated for the purpose of supporting one's life.<sup>16</sup> Appropriation, therefore, seems to be an implication of self-preservation and to have a crucial function in human life. Locke's conception of self-ownership that is expressed by "every man has a property in his own person" involves and expands to the ownership of one's own efforts and actions. Accordingly, one's labor as a result of one's activity should contain the principle of appropriation. Locke, at this point, regards the principal role of labor to be the appropriation of things -that is the labor of one's own body and work of one's hands.<sup>17</sup>

The basis of appropriation is established on the principle of one's mixed or joined labor to that which is common to all human beings before being appropriated by someone.<sup>18</sup> In other words, the laborer whose work makes things useful and fruitful has the right to claim private ownership of these products.<sup>19</sup> One has the ability of removing things from the common state in nature and appropriating them –not only products but also the land- without the consent of others by virtue of one's own labor and one's own work.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless this process of appropriation is not *free* at all in the sense that the right to private ownership of things and natural sources requires some limitations put by Locke.

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<sup>15</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise*, 18, §25.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 19, §26.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 19, §27.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, §28.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 19-0, §28; §30. See also Edward Andrew, "Inalienable Right, Alienable Property and Freedom of Choice: Locke, Nozick and Marx on the Alienability of Labour", *Canadian Journal of Political Science* Vol.18 No.3 (1985): 529-550, 542.

First, human beings can appropriate things as long as they *enjoy* the goods they gather or produce and never allow them to be spoiled.<sup>21</sup> Second, one can appropriate any part of nature only when there must be still “enough and as good left for others”.<sup>22</sup> Third, as I have also mentioned above, human beings can only appropriate things with which they mix their labor.<sup>23</sup> Locke’s conception of limited property implies that the right to appropriation is derived from the consequences of one’s own activities and requires an individual responsibility taken for appropriated goods and lands.

Locke also emphasizes the importance of appropriation and its benefits to human beings. Any part of land becomes available for producing more and better goods, useful and valuable for human beings through its appropriation.<sup>24</sup> The value of the thing that is produced and appropriated is evident in the action of appropriation, i.e. labor. In this respect, it is labor that puts value on products or the land that is appropriated –which is the very reason why Locke’s theory of property is said to be built on the labor theory of value.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, any product can be seen as a value and in this sense values are appropriated through one’s actions and efforts that are also one’s property, as the fundamental right to self-ownership entails so.

Acquiring property is directly related to one’s exercise of freedom in the state of nature. According to Locke, each person is naturally in a *state of perfect freedom*, as possessing the “same advantages of nature” and “the use of the same faculties” as other human beings.<sup>26</sup> In the state of nature human

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<sup>21</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise*, 20, §31.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 21, §33.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 19, §27-28.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 26, §43.

<sup>25</sup> Olivecrona, Karl. “Locke's Theory of Appropriation”, *The Philosophical Quarterly* Vol.24 No.96 (1974): 220-234, 232.

<sup>26</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise*, 8, §4.

beings have the right to preserve their lives freely and equally, which I may call as a peaceful coexistence of free actions. Locke believes that nobody has a liberty to destroy either oneself or others. He advances his point with reference to the law of nature, according to which everyone is *equal and independent*; so that, one should preserve one's life, and that of others too, including their lives and possessions.<sup>27</sup> This means that human beings are freely and equally entitled to the right to their own self-preservation, and their properties that must not be harmed. As it is seen, Locke has a normative conception of natural peace in terms of the law of nature and its rational evaluation regarding the fundamental right to one's self-preservation and self-ownership. It is extremely important to see that no arbitrary power is allowed over the life of an individual being who is born with this fundamental right.

In the state of nature human beings are considered to be rational and moral enough to execute any system based on property, as Macpherson states.<sup>28</sup> The limitations over acquiring property must also be seen as inherent principles of reason and the actions that are performed through reason keeping the peace among human beings. They are capable of engaging in trades and making agreements with each other without any coercive factor such as a higher or governmental institution, since they are "free and rational".

If any attempt to enslave another occurs as a threat to one's own being, then this situation will result in a "state of war".<sup>29</sup> This is because every human being has a natural right to liberty that enables one to govern oneself. Enslavement would cause harm to one's own life that is realized through one's fundamental right to self-preservation and self-government, and it

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<sup>27</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise*, §6.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, xviii. Locke also states that human beings are born free and rational (Ibid, 34, §61).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 14, §17.

would ruin the peaceful coexistence of human beings in nature. When a force against one's preservation is initiated, then one may begin a counterattack against the aggressor as a right to defense—which results in *the state of war*.<sup>30</sup> As we have seen, for Locke, there is a clear distinction between the state of nature and the state of war, which Hobbes does not make. It is one situation in which human beings live in peace and mutual cooperation with each other, and it is another in which they live in “violence and mutual destruction”.<sup>31</sup>

When peace disappears, freedom of *equal* persons is gone; so that property goes under threat. This unintended situation can only be protected by a civil authority (or government) seen as “a proper remedy for the inconveniences of the state of nature”.<sup>32</sup> In the state of war one whose life and property is attacked may not find relief from a higher authority. For this reason, there is a necessity for the government in human society if their natural rights have to be protected as they can appeal to an authority for their injury, so that *relief* is had.<sup>33</sup> Human beings have power over the legislative law, meaning that they can object to authority if legislative power attempts to take their rights away, which is contrary to the Hobbesian conception of absolute authority over individual beings' freedom and apparently their property.<sup>34</sup>

The right to life and the right to private property are inseparable and essential to human freedom in the Lockean understanding. In this sense without

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<sup>30</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise*, 15, §19.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 12, §13.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, §21.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 111, §222. In Locke, the mere function of government is restricted by the protection of property rights. The government, or “the legislative”, may not have an arbitrary force upon one's property and should be limited in its activity by the laws (Ibid, 70-1, §135). Locke basically justifies his political structure on private property and its central role in a free society; however Hobbes highlights the superior power of the state (i.e. monarch) that can be unlimited and infinite dominance over the lives of individual beings—that is an absolutist view of civil society, unlike Locke (See *Leviathan* by Hobbes).

private property there exists no limitation to the use of arbitrary power and there is no way to banish physical force or violence in a society. This thesis will draw on this Lockean insight as it defends that freedom is guaranteed and secured by private property, and physical force can only be prevented by means of the ethics of ownership of objective values that promotes the exchange of objective values to establish a peaceful coexistence among human beings. Objective values must be appropriated by the one who really wants to set one's own life as one's highest value and wants others to respect it as one should protect one's own individual existence in the social world while having relationships with others.

## 2.2 Objectivism

*“The moral is the chosen, not the forced;  
the understood, not the obeyed.  
The moral is the rational,  
and reason accepts no commandments.”  
-Ayn Rand*

Objectivism is the very name of the philosophy invented by Ayn Rand that was first developed in her fictions, and then systematized in her philosophical essays.<sup>35</sup> According to the Objectivist ethics, the moral principle of an action is “rational self-interest”. Objectivism is a rational morality that emphasizes the rational values produced in an objective way, and chosen in their objective essence, as I am quite content to introduce it to be the positive morality of self-ownership. In this section, I fully examine the central conceptions of Objectivism and the Objectivist foundations concerning the obtainment of values, as I hope to present a philosophical justification of the appropriation of values.

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<sup>35</sup> *Atlas Shrugged*, the great novel written by Ayn Rand, was published in 1957 associated with a new understanding of morality, i.e. Objectivism that extols the philosophy of individualism and the moral heroes of reason. Rand also published her philosophical essays in the magazine *The Objectivist Newsletter* during the years 1962–65.

### 2.2.1 The Morality of Rational Self-Interest

Rand's unique contribution to moral philosophy is that she successfully established the strong connection between objective values and the facts of life. Morality mainly concerns the motives and certain principles of actions. The motives and reasons of an action should have an objective relation with the world through the objective values that are chosen. In this sense, the Objectivist ethics relies on the conception of "objectivity" –that is "a specific kind of relationship to reality".<sup>36</sup> Rand tackles the problem of the is/ought gap by establishing the connection between "the facts of reality" and moral "oughts":

... let me stress that the fact that living entities exist and function necessitates the existence of values and of an ultimate value which for any given living entity is its own life. Thus the validation of value judgments is to be achieved by reference to the facts of reality. The fact that a living entity *is*, determines what it ought to do.<sup>37</sup>

We can see that there must be an objective standard for moral judgments, as moral judgments require objectivity and objective values.<sup>38</sup> In this sense, Rand argues that moral agnosticism is dangerous to a culture and human's character since it relies on a 'moral tolerance' according to which "one must never pass moral judgment on others".<sup>39</sup> This view of morality is incapable of determining the standard that distinguishes good from evil. The standard that determines what is morally right for human beings is the standard of what is required for human survival –that is *life*.

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<sup>36</sup> Peikoff, *Objectivism*, 111.

<sup>37</sup> Rand, "The Objectivist Ethics", 18.

<sup>38</sup> The objectivity of values is explained in the section 2.2.1.7.

<sup>39</sup> Rand, "How Does One Lead a Rational Life in an Irrational Society", 82. Rand opposes the subjectivist views of moralities as they lack objective criteria including rational values. For an illustration of 'moral tolerance' see Mary Midgley "Trying Out One's New Sword", in *Heart and Mind* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 80-8.

### 2.2.1.1 The “Conceptual Knowledge”<sup>40</sup>

Rand contends that the standard by which values are defined is actually the ultimate value, which is *life* itself.<sup>41</sup> In other words, we need morality because it is inescapably demanded by life itself as “the final goal” -“the standard of value”.<sup>42</sup> Survival is the primary goal for human beings, as well as all living things. Values are obtained through the knowledge that is either already given for some species or must be developed in the case of human life. The process of the obtainment of values requires consciousness.

Consciousness, Rand defines, is “the basic means of survival”.<sup>43</sup> It is evident that different forms of living entities use different means of survival. However, not given the “automatic code of survival”, human beings have to “discover” it.<sup>44</sup> The only way to gain knowledge for them is to learn to use their consciousness. This means that human beings must initiate their consciousness by “choice” and “keep it in constant action”.<sup>45</sup> The crucial point here is that this exceptional characteristic of human consciousness puts human beings in a different situation from other living organisms. Only human beings can choose not to be conscious. However, this would jeopardize human life and logically bring the end of life as human beings cannot avoid the severe consequences of not being conscious.<sup>46</sup> Since life

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<sup>40</sup> In this section, I primarily intend to explain the epistemological role of concepts in the achievement of one’s values and life. The philosophical debate regarding the ontological status of concepts is not in my concern, at least for the purpose of this thesis.

<sup>41</sup> “It is only the concept of ‘Life’ that makes the concept of ‘value’ possible.” (“The Objectivist Ethics”, 18). The original sentence is actually taken from her most famous work *Atlas Shrugged* (First publication date 1957).

<sup>42</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 17.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 20-1.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 24.

requires values, human beings should choose and pursue the right values, if they (want) and choose to live.

The process of gaining knowledge relies on the ability of human consciousness –that is *thinking*. The ability of thinking is exercised by reason that “identifies and integrates the material provided by man’s senses”.<sup>47</sup> Reason works “by means of concepts” and produces “conceptual knowledge” from which “conceptual values” are derived.<sup>48</sup> Therefore the conceptual knowledge that we human beings develop is essential to provide the epistemological basis for our values.

According to the Objectivist theory of knowledge, sense perceptions constitute the huge part of reality for us as they “give us the start of the cognitive process”.<sup>49</sup> Peikoff states that Ayn Rand sees no difference in perceptions regarding the identification of reality: The process of cognition is always the same for human beings regardless of the deficiencies in their sensory organs. This provides the evidence for “existence” as the objective reality.<sup>50</sup> The validity of axioms relies on the concept of existence –that is “identity”, and the observation of entities relies on this identity which proves the main role of consciousness –that is identification.<sup>51</sup> Identity of things denotes their characteristics that are perceivable through the sensations in the first step of knowledge and this evolves into the process of developing the “conceptual knowledge” by virtue of consciousness. Rand defines this process of “conceptualizing” as “an actively sustained process”.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 22.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 21-2.

<sup>49</sup> Peikoff, *Objectivism*, 42.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Rand, “Galt’s Speech”, *For the New Intellectual*, 125.

<sup>52</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 22.

However, again Peikoff states, the process of “conceptualizing” or “concept-formation” takes concrete entities at its basis on the level of perception, which means that we nevertheless realize the similarities and differences in the world perceptually before having a pre-knowledge of mathematical concepts.<sup>53</sup> This is also the principle of abstraction of objects: The concept of an object as an abstracted form actually omits the particular measurements related to the object and they so become irrelevant to the form of the object when it is grasped in the conceptual level. For instance, the concept of “book” omits the particular evaluations of the concrete books and is reproduced as a concept in our knowledge. This, Peikoff defines, is “the essence of abstraction” as human beings “abstract attributes or characteristics *from their measurements*”.<sup>54</sup> This explains why we do not need antecedent concepts to grasp knowledge of the reality, as concept-formation is a process of attaining knowledge by means of sense experience and its abstraction through the faculty of reason, i.e. the conceptual faculty.

#### **2.2.1.2 Aristotle’s Conception of “Soul”**

Aristotle has a great influence on Rand. She built her theory of values on Aristotle’s epistemology of living organisms and human survival. In this regard, the conception of actuality of form, or *soul*, should be examined in comparison to Rand’s thoughts on action that has to be performed to sustain a life.

For all living things, life arises from both the potential existence of the “body” and the activities of the form of the body, namely the “soul”.<sup>55</sup> Aristotle draws attention to the very indications of an “ensouled life”, such

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<sup>53</sup> Peikoff, “Concept-Formation”, *Objectivism*, 86.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 85. Peikoff defines the process as “measurement-omission”.

<sup>55</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, tr. Mark Shiffman (Newburyport: Focus, 2011), p. 50; 413a.

as “intellect”, “perception”, and “movement”<sup>56</sup>, which are also emphasized by Rand within a degree of usage for the different species of living things. Aristotle’s conception of “soul” as “the form of the body” may have a main role in Rand’s ethics for its ethical implications. Rand’s conception of survival can be understood in terms of the Aristotelian conception of *soul* within a range from “automatic functions” to “voluntary actions” –all serving the ultimate end for a living thing, namely “sustaining life” or an organism’s survival as self-preservation. Morality seems to exist on the level of the purposeful consciousness.

In the Aristotelian sense of form, the “soul” may be seen as the basis of all the capacities of a moral consciousness, such as “knowledge” and “contemplation”.<sup>57</sup> However it must be importantly noted that Aristotle grasps the “soul” as a form of a natural body, having “life as its potency”, not as an abstract entity.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, moral knowledge would be as concrete as life, which will denote the particular connection between morality and life, since I am mainly interested in the Aristotelian conception of *soul* by its functional structure in terms of the purposefulness of human consciousness and the highest purpose of morality.

### **2.2.1.3 The Highest Purpose of Morality**

For Aristotle, happiness (*Eudaimonia*) does not refer to temporal pleasures, arbitrary wishes or desires, but indicates “real” happiness “worth seeking or having”.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the conception of happiness as *Eudaimonia* has a

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<sup>56</sup> Aristotle, *De Anima*, 51.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 412a3.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 412b. Aristotle conceives “body” in two kinds of existing substances, which are matter and form.

<sup>59</sup> Rosalind Hursthouse and Glen Pettigrove, “Virtue Ethics”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2016 Edition,

moral importance in human activity. In Aristotle, happiness is brought to one's life through voluntary actions within a "habitual practice" as the whole life of actualized virtues.<sup>60</sup> This conception of happiness concerns one's moral character that is actualized through virtuous actions in a *good life*.<sup>61</sup> Concerning the life of an individual, Aristotle's conception of happiness is compatible with the principles of egoism.<sup>62</sup>

Happiness is the egoistic purpose of the life of a virtuous actor. It may be claimed that this is problematic for the justifiable reasons of a virtuous action and one's goals. However, it may not pose a problem if happiness is understood in terms of the achievement of one's own life. Virtuous actions are performed to serve one's own happiness and they can be still called as *virtues*. We can see this in Objectivism that deals with happiness in a rational morality.

Rand sees happiness as inseparable from one's own life in the sense that "one's own life as one's ultimate value, and one's own happiness as one's highest purpose are two aspects of the same achievement".<sup>63</sup> Rand's conception of happiness is quite interesting. According to Rand, happiness

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<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/ethics-virtue/> (accessed December 12, 2017).

<sup>60</sup> "Learning" or "practice", as a fully conscious activity, is quite essential to happiness. *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, Robert C. Bartlett & Susan D. Collins, trs., (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 17.

<sup>61</sup> In Aristotle's political thought "good life" is generally used to identify a "virtuous" life of an organized society with its class structure. Since morality and politics are interwoven in Aristotle's thought, it is understandable that some conceptions, such as virtue, may have two levels of occurrence, either in individual's life or in a society's life as a "collective" being. Virtue should be taken in the former sense, in terms of the pursuit of individual's interests, to accurately determine its moral significance, as far as I am concerned in the moral life of individual.

<sup>62</sup> For the egoistic understanding of Aristotle's conception of happiness see Erik J. Wielenberg "Egoism and Eudaimonia-Maximization in the Nicomachean Ethics", *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 26 (2004): 277–95.

<sup>63</sup> Rand, "The Objectivist Ethics", 32.

“can properly be the *purpose* of ethics, not the *standard*”.<sup>64</sup> Happiness as the purpose of ethics is compatible with the purpose of morality –defining human beings’ “proper code of values”.<sup>65</sup> The egoistic conception of happiness may pose a problem if happiness is taken to be the *standard* of ethics. However, Rand’s view of happiness is different than this as her conception of happiness correctly defines the rational goals in ethics belonging to the life of a rational being—not the life of a hedonist, which is completely incapable of being considered as *moral*, since it lacks the rational principles of an action and only indulges in pleasures and temporal feelings.<sup>66</sup>

I believe that a virtue serves one’s own happiness and primarily concerns selfish reasons more than anything else. Since one’s own life is put as the ultimate value, one’s virtues must concern one’s interests and hence virtuous actions are those which serve them. A virtuous action must not only be seen as the pursuit of one’s own interests in acting. A virtue is indeed exercised in one’s rational interests that are defined and determined by one’s reason, not by emotions or whims. The nature of happiness seems to belong to one’s own reasons for one’s actions to achieve one’s own goals. This whole-life-activity can only be accomplished by pursuing one’s own rational interests.

Happiness is, therefore, not a temporal feeling but a constant achievement of one’s life. Happiness can only be achieved through one’s rational actions, so that it becomes constant through one’s rational and moral evaluations

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<sup>64</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 33.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> My primary concern is to understand the conception of a constant happiness in one’s own life. In the rational context it has a direct connection with the “Eudaimonic well-being” originated in Aristotle’s ethics. This sort of happiness must be carefully distinguished from the utilitarian moralities lacking the rational and the Objectivist standards for a moral action. For the utilitarian view of happiness as a quantitative aspect of a collective well-being I suggest you to look at Bentham’s thought: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/utilitarianism-history/#JerBen>.

within a moral character. Life is achieved through the virtues and the actions that serve one's own happiness as one's highest ethical purpose.

#### **2.2.1.4 The Life of a Rational Being**

“Self-preservation” is the principle that links survival to the morality of self-interest in the sense that every individual human being has the basic right to preserve and lead their own lives through the pursuit of their interests, which is prior to everything else.

Human beings should act in their own interests to accomplish the goal of survival as self-preservation. The only rational justification for human survival is that human beings must be the primary beneficiaries of the consequences of their actions. When life is put as the standard of morality, then the conceptions of good and evil are applied to human life, as explained in Rand's own words: “Since reason is man's basic means of survival, that which is proper to the life of a rational being is the good; that which negates, opposes or destroys it is the evil”.<sup>67</sup> Reason is the basic instrument of human survival and determines one's interests as to achieve the good, and the only guidance in human life to achieve objective values.

All values are optional with regards to one's goals, yet they all must be in accordance with the standard of value –life. Therefore, action is a matter of choosing, since “the choice to live” is essential to morality, and performing an action is always towards a purpose –that is one's own life.<sup>68</sup> Without positing that one's own life is the purpose of one's moral achievement, and that one is the primary beneficiary of one's own actions, we cannot recognize the function of values and the rationality of the pursuit of interests

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<sup>67</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 25.

<sup>68</sup> Rand sees one's own life and one's own happiness as “two aspects of the same achievement” (Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 33). In this respect I may use “purpose” to also denote one's own life.

to achieve them. Therefore, the practical meaning of rationality is achieving a life of values through the pursuit of self-interests that are defined by one's own reason.

The connection between rationality and self-interest is understandable when values are chosen as objective values. Human life requires objective values which are specifically chosen by reason. One may call this ability "rational thinking by virtue of choice". Thus self-interest must be rational and survival must rely on rational thinking. The actions for survival can only be justified by the claim that human beings should act to serve their own interests, i.e. their rational interests for the purpose of preserving and advancing their own lives. Since human beings must choose the right goals and the right values for their survival, then "every 'is' implies an 'ought'.<sup>69</sup> This is the very answer in regards to the question of "why man needs values", implying that the right goals are the means to "the ultimate goal" of survival and the right values are objective values in a rational morality as "an objective, metaphysical necessity of man's survival".<sup>70</sup>

Human beings should think in order to judge the facts of reality by the faculty of reason. They are also in need of producing their values, since they are not provided them by nature. Human beings have to produce their values by choosing and performing the right actions in accordance with their survival. Therefore, "thinking" and "productive work" are two effective strategies in human life.<sup>71</sup> A proper life to a rational being might be the life of obtaining that which is required for one's survival –namely objective values.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Rand, "The Objectivist Ethics", 24.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 27.

Objective values must serve one's interests as long as they are achieved through rational actions which are productive. Brute selfishness, however, can be destructive and must not be considered as moral since it lacks the rational principle of moral action, namely rational self-interest. It is thus a productive activity of the pursuit of rational self-interest that one can accomplish through only reason and rational actions, not brute force or irrational attempts over others' lives.<sup>73</sup> I will later elaborate this productive activity in the form of 'productive selfishness' as a positive motive for one's actions.

### 2.2.1.5 Self-Interest versus Duty

In the *Groundwork*<sup>74</sup>, Kant deals with the moral motivation of an action – whether it is done from duty or not. He defines two types of actions: Those that are done “in conformity with duty” and those that are “impelled by some other inclination”.<sup>75</sup> For Kant, it is very important to distinguish the concept of duty from the concept of inclination, e.g. self-interest, in order to determine the character of these actions, whether they are moral or not. Kant illustrates the issue by the example of a shopkeeper who does not attempt to overcharge customers and fairly sets prices for everyone. In this case the shopkeeper *seems* to perform the right actions in honesty. However Kant insists that we cannot know for sure that the shopkeeper acts “from duty” and the “basic principles of honesty”, since his advantage (the purpose of self-interest) requires him to act in that way.<sup>76</sup> We must understand that, in

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<sup>73</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 25-6.

<sup>74</sup> Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. & ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 10-1.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 11. In terms of the moral worth of an action, acting “from” duty or “for the sake of duty” is a technical difference in Kant, which seems as a redundant detail for the purpose of my thesis, since I try to explain the general implication of the conception of duty in contrast to self-interest, and whether or not duty can be a moral motivation in a proper ethics for human beings.

Kantian terms, an action can be performed perfectly in accordance with duty but still it can serve one's interests and it is unacceptable to consider it a moral action. Accordingly, the principle of an action "has moral content" as long as we act from duty, not in accordance or fear from it, but only from duty.<sup>77</sup>

In Kantian morality, Rand states, duty is "the only standard of virtue" and the moral motivation of an action is "the devotion to duty for duty's sake".<sup>78</sup> This kind of moral view can only be related to a morality of constraint. The morality of constraint can only be repressive and exploitative, since it does not recognize the values which are properly chosen. It is rational self-interest that endorses the moral responsibility for one's values and moral ends in a productive and progressive morality –such moral ends in morality are original and individualistic, instead of being society-imposed or collectivist.<sup>79</sup> The moral worth of an action does not come from constraints such as duty, rather it comes from the chosen values that make an action morally right while serving one's own rational interests and moral ends that are expressed in the hypothetical imperatives of morality.<sup>80</sup>

Furthermore, duty is a conception of obedience to a higher authority, as Rand points out the original meaning of the term "duty".<sup>81</sup> Such a view of morality is against our essentials, which are liberty of action and genuine

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<sup>77</sup> Kant, *Groundwork*, 11; 4:398.

<sup>78</sup> Ayn Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It* (New York: Signet, 1982), 96.

<sup>79</sup> I believe that Kantian morality is collectivist, which will be deeply examined in the next section.

<sup>80</sup> "There is, however, no duty to survive; morality is based on a hypothetical imperative: if you choose to live, then you must value your own long-term survival as an ultimate end, and morality as a necessary means to it." –the hypothetical imperative on which morality is based. Neera K. Badhwar and Roderick T. Long, "Ayn Rand", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2017 Edition, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/ayn-rand/> (accessed December 11, 2017).

<sup>81</sup> Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It*, 96.

responsibility for the consequences of our actions. Duty is “anti-conception” –as it is anti-life in Randian terms- so that it destroys morality, and puts moral ends “outside of morality” as *amoral*.<sup>82</sup> Kant “alienates” reason by separating it from the pursuit of one’s own rational interests in performing an action, so that reason becomes formal, abstract and altruistic rather than practical and free.

#### **2.2.1.6 Rand’s Critique of Kantian Morality as Altruistic**

An objection may be raised that Rand may have misinterpreted altruism and she may have been unfair to Kant in accusing his morality of being the source of altruistic moralities. Bass first raised this objection by claiming that Rand’s conception of altruism is “fantastic” and cannot be attributed to the thinkers she accuses of being altruistic.<sup>83</sup>

I should deal with this objection by underlining that altruism is the moral structure of collectivism, so that altruism can be accurately assessed as an ethical theory in the way Rand takes it to be against individual’s life and rights. Altruism is the enemy of a genuine rational morality. Again, in a rational morality reason is the only source of value and rational self-interest is the moral principle of an action. However Kant’s formulation of the moral law and his conception of reason are indeed far from being “rational”; rather they are to be included in a system of “rationalization” of a collective form of morality that may be seen as the enemy of a rational morality I have mentioned. First I should discuss why Bass’s objection is untenable. Then I will move on to Kant’s system of rationalization.

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<sup>82</sup> Rand, *Philosophy: Who Needs It*, 97.

<sup>83</sup> Robert H. Bass, “Egoism versus Rights”, *The Journal of Ayn Rand Studies* 7, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 331.

Rand identifies altruism with the sacrifice of the self to the interests of others or to the collective mass and its goals. She states that, in altruism, the “beneficiary is anybody other than oneself”.<sup>84</sup> According to Campbell, it was actually Comte’s altruism which Rand criticized in terms of subordinating the interests of the individual to that of the collective.<sup>85</sup> That one sacrifices one’s values to that of a collective mass means that one should live for others, which is actually Comte’s understanding of altruism.<sup>86</sup>

Kantian morality may not be seen as altruistic since Kant does not think that one should live to serve others’ interests. Kant emphasizes the role of the moral law in guiding one’s actions and declares the moral principle to be the good will. Both the moral law and the moral principle are produced by reason. The concept of “good will” addresses the moral intention, implying that Kantian morality always concerns the motivation behind the act, not the consequences or the outcome (or what the will “affects or accomplishes”).<sup>87</sup> In Kantian morality the moral worth or the “worth of good will” is determined neither by its “usefulness”, nor “fruitlessness”<sup>88</sup>, but only by itself.

Rand is also not a consequentialist since she does not think that a moral action must be evaluated by its consequences, rather by the values that it serves –the values that are chosen by one for oneself. However that does not mean that consequences must have nothing to do with moral action, since one should appropriate the consequences of one’s action that is performed

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<sup>84</sup> The Objectivist ethics, viii. See also “The Ethics of Emergencies”, how self-sacrifice leads to a collapse of a human being’s life.

<sup>85</sup> Robert L. Campbell, “Altruism in Auguste Comte and Ayn Rand”, *Journal of Ayn Rand Studies* 7, no.2 (Spring 2006): 358.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 367.

<sup>87</sup> Kant, *Groundwork*, 8, 4:394.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

in one's own interests in order to achieve one's values. In Objectivism the motives that produce the moral act are said to be one's values that one pursues in their hierarchy, so that one never sacrifices a higher value to a lesser one. This implies that one never should sacrifice one's interests to the common good of the society.

Although Kant always opposes desires and inclinations, it may be argued that his moral theory is not altruistic since it puts emphasis on autonomy and the categorical imperative commands duties to one's self as well as duties to others. However, in his moral thought the moral law is put above the interests of the individual, as the moral action is merely the devotion to duty. I accept Randian critique of Kant in the sense that Kant alienates reason, for his ethics is based on an authoritative power of reason which is highly related to a coercive conception of duty. Even if it is considered as self-imposed, the moral law and the reason that determines it can be said to be external in the sense that it excludes natural self-interest from the field of morality that only recognizes the actions performed from duty.

In Kant, duty always tells us what to do and it is the only source that produces the moral motivation to act. My objection to Kant will be clearer if we realize that his morality must not be understood in terms of actuality, but rather in terms of possibility. This is because the ground of determining the will by reason is based on noumenal freedom. However, the Randian conception of reason is more legitimate and practical and compatible with the conception of freedom as exercising one's abilities which belong to the actors who are the primary beneficiaries of the outcome of the exercise of their abilities. This is what I would call true practical morality.

Duty ethics can be said to be collectivist and may evolve into an altruistic morality, since it only recognizes the devotion to moral law in acting and implies obligations towards others that possibly result in sacrificing one's

own interests and values that are indeed primary and essential to one's life and one's morality.<sup>89</sup> In duty ethics, others' interests may gain a superior position to one's values because it may allow a collectivist morality, and it eventually threatens one's own existence, which is an implication of Kantian ethics. This is why we cannot rely on Bass's objection.

According to Rand, Kant's philosophy is a "systematic rationalization" of "hatred of reality".<sup>90</sup> That is because Kant takes reason to be incapable of knowing reality and has to be related to merely appearances in grasping knowledge.<sup>91</sup> Noumenal reality is therefore unknown to us, but it gains its significance in the field of morality –that is to say Kant believes that moral principles of an action and the laws of freedom are only related to the noumenal world. His epistemology is followed with his moral theory that takes the possibility of a moral action to be found only in the noumenal world, the world of "things in themselves". This understanding of morality lacks practicality in leading a moral life since a moral life must involve one's own goals and interests that are to be the original reasons/motives for a moral action and the right values that guide one's actions to achieve a life.

Responsibility can only be taken for the consequences of an action that are appropriated as one's moral achievement in this world. Kant's distinction of two realities is against such a conception of practical morality and may be labeled, Rand says, as "rationalization of the wish to escape the effort and responsibility".<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, Rand explains the essence of Kantian

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<sup>89</sup> In accordance with the purpose of my thesis, I will later examine the more reasonable and legitimate aspect of moral obligation in terms of exchanging interests between human beings.

<sup>90</sup> Ayn Rand, "Philosophical Detection", *Philosophy Who Needs It*, 19.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

morality to be related to a form of asceticism through her critique of duty as follows:

The moral imperative of the duty to sacrifice oneself to duty, a sacrifice without beneficiaries, is a gross rationalization for the image (and soul) of an austere, ascetic monk who winks at you with an obscenely sadistic pleasure –the pleasure of breaking man’s spirit, ambition, success, self-esteem, and enjoyment of life on earth.<sup>93</sup>

Enjoyment of life is important and should be a fundamental right for every individual being who wants to achieve it for oneself. Duty ethics cannot accomplish it anywhere or anytime. Objectivism regards happiness to be the highest ethical purpose of one’s life and morality should not and cannot be against one’s values in the achievement of life –of one’s own life.

As we have seen duty ethics lacks the original motives of moral action, such as one’s interests, so that it becomes the same as sacrificing oneself to the collective. Kant replaces what is collective with what is objective in the sense that objectivity is essentially collective. This is evident in his epistemology, and his morality as well. Kant’s categories of the mind “collectively” create the phenomenal world where no moral law and action is to be found, since they are only originated in the features of a noumenal world.

Kant says much about the moral law, but not about the moral life. A practical morality requires objective values that are chosen and achieved through the actions that serve one’s own life, not the moral law that is external to one’s life and achievements.

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<sup>93</sup> Ayn Rand, “Philosophical Detection”, 19.

### 2.2.1.7 Objective versus Intrinsic (Objective Values)

Rand's justification of morality has an objective basis, not because values are chosen for their *intrinsic* value, but because of their rational connection to the chosen moral ends.<sup>94</sup> Against the conception of "intrinsic value", that life has an intrinsic value in itself regardless of a choice, Rand advocates the chosen objective values based on the requirements of one's own life.<sup>95</sup> Thus, the objectivity of values is not intrinsic, but relational. In The Objectivist ethics, the objectivity of values is only understandable by their primary function in human life. Values are objective in a relational aspect according to which they must be compatible with the facts of human life, which is why they are objective. Let me explain.

First, Rand's view of existence is based on the facts of reality that are "metaphysically given" as *absolute*.<sup>96</sup> By "metaphysically given" or "absolute", as Peikoff states, we should understand that which is necessitated by the nature of existence"; and hence "unchangeable by human agency".<sup>97</sup> Rand's account of morality relies on the objective values that are chosen in relation to the facts of human life. Values must be objective, not in the sense that they are found in the "intrinsic features of reality", but in the sense that they are chosen in relation to a certain goal.<sup>98</sup> The objectivity of values and of concepts is found in the very relationship between human beings as the choosers of values and their survival as the "standard of value".

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<sup>94</sup> Darryl Wright, "Reasoning about Ends: Life as a Value in Ayn Rand's Ethics", 8-9. Allan Gotthelf and James G. Lennox, eds., *Metaethics, Egoism, and Virtue: Studies in Ayn Rand's Normative Theory* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011)

<sup>95</sup> I will continue to discuss the conception of "intrinsic value" in the section "The Choice to Live".

<sup>96</sup> Peikoff, *Objectivism*, 23-4.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 241.

The objective theory of values, in Rand’s own words, “holds that the good is an aspect of reality in relation to man”.<sup>99</sup>

The good is not intrinsic in any action. If the good is believed to be intrinsic in an action then it will become the tool of force on others who are forced to act in the same way.<sup>100</sup> The good is neither a feature of emotions, nor subjective choice. According to subjectivism, the good is said to be only a product of human mind, “independent of reality”.<sup>101</sup> According Objectivism, on the other hand, the good must be objective in relation to the reality of human beings as “an evaluation of the facts of reality”.<sup>102</sup> Since the good is objective, objectivity of values does not mean the universality of values, but rather a “factual relationship” between the facts of reality and the life of human beings.<sup>103</sup>

Now the essential character of values in the life of a human being becomes clearer. Each moral value has a correspondence in “reality” to be compatible with the chosen moral ends in fulfilling the purpose of life. The life of human beings and the objective theory of values are naturally related. Human consciousness is to recognize this relationship and the necessity of morality for survival.

### **2.2.1.8 Rand’s Conception of Reason**

In Kantian morality, reason is absolute and the moral law must be obeyed unconditionally by human beings as the members of a “universal

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<sup>99</sup> Ayn Rand, *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* (New York: Signet, 1967), 14.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Tara Smith, *Ayn Rand’s Normative Ethics: The Virtuous Egoist* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 27.

community”.<sup>104</sup> These principles do not change from person to person. In Kantian morality, human will is determined under the “universal” moral law as a command above all the interests of individual beings. Morality in his view seems only to concern the common good of a collective being. Kant’s understanding of moral law quite resembles Aquinas’ definition of law in terms of the “ordinance of reason for the common good”<sup>105</sup>, which has both collectivist and altruistic themes of an action and the purpose it serves for interests other than those of the actor’s. However the main role of reason is to determine one’s own interests and define them in a rational morality.

In Kant’s moral thought, objectivity is found in the form of moral law prescribed by pure Reason, as transcendental and abstract, which is anti-naturalistic. Kant’s transcendental approach to morality strictly separates *is* and *ought* from each other. He merely establishes the pure principles in a moral formalism. However, morality should concern one’s own life in particular and human survival in general. Thus morality is not about the principles of pure reason, not about law-giving, nor “devotion to duty”; but it is an actual necessity for survival. Reason in its relation with maintaining one’s existence in the world is therefore justified by its epistemological role as “the means of man’s survival”.<sup>106</sup> Reason provides the knowledge that is required for the survival of human beings, as explained in detail before. In this consideration, human beings’ virtue of rationality means accepting reason “as one’s only source of knowledge”, as well as, “one’s only judge of values” and “one’s only guide to action”.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Kant, *Groundwork*, 39-42. In Kant, “universal community” refers to the “Kingdom of Ends”. Human beings freely recognize moral law through respect for it, carried out by the faculty of practical reason which is common to all of them.

<sup>105</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Question 90 Article 4. Received from <http://www.nlnrac.org/classical/aquinas/documents/question-90-the-essence-of-law> (accessed February 19, 2018)

<sup>106</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 22-3.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

Reason is the only source of knowledge because only reason is capable of setting goals, such as happiness, and evaluating them in relation to the purpose of survival. Since the main role of reason is evident in acquiring the survival knowledge and the essential moral values, it may be labeled as “Survival Reason” or “Moral Reason”, instead of *pure* reason. Rand’s conception of reason in ethics is the application of reason to the problem of survival. Its applicability is understood through our very need of morality for survival and it is possible by conceptual knowledge from which “the conceptual values are derived”. This is the objectivity of reason found in both epistemology and ethics that are interdependent in terms of survival.

Kant separates knowledge from the area of morality. According to him, reason is the ultimate source of moral law, which is supposed to make human beings think for themselves to be saved from immaturity, expressed with the motto of enlightenment: *Sapere Aude* -meaning “have courage to use your own mind”. Reason here proposed is the universal reason providing the same moral laws and principles for all human beings who are imagined to be completely independent from any empirical or external factor when constructing universal moral laws.

However the Randian conception of reason as our “basic means of survival” seems advantageous in morals, since it posits rationality to make the connection between the mind and the reality in terms of survival. The Objectivist conception of reason thus exists as one’s individual mind that defines self-interest in terms of one’s own rational interests. Therefore I should replace the motto (i.e. *Sapere Aude*) with the one as follows: *Own your mind*. I admit that it is important for us to have the courage to use our own minds; but, before it, for a proper morality, we should first learn to *own* our minds.

### **2.2.2 The Virtue of Egoism**

Human beings who enjoy their own virtues and abilities have no time to be busy with things other than their business, namely their moral improvement.

By moral improvement I understand the pursuit of one's own (rational) interests and improving one's own well-being and a morality that relies on it. This is a continuous line between the past and the future that recognizes the previous achievements in a conception of progress of life –one's moral success by one's own proud achievements. This is the essence of self-esteem: Building one's own moral character, and to achieve one's own happiness. This happens within a moral responsibility which human beings have for only their own interests.

#### **2.2.2.1 Rand's Egoism**

As I have stated, Rand emphasizes the fact that survival requires every human being to be the primary beneficiary of their own actions. Actions that are performed for only one's own good are not, however, morally justifiable unless they are defined with the genuine moral motivation –that is rational self-interest. In this sense, the form of egoism Rand appropriates must not be seen as unprincipled or immoral. On the contrary, her morality aims at defining the proper values and the proper form of self-interest, i.e. rational self-interest, in an objective and validated morality of human life.

Rand distinguishes her moral theory from other types of egoism. Her morality is against arbitrariness and is advanced as a principled egoism, namely rational egoism, which is different from pragmatic ethics that merely focuses on the *practicality* of an action ignoring the rational standards and

principles.<sup>108</sup> However rational egoism deals with the rational constituents of an action in order to achieve objective values. Therefore, it is crucially important to understand the Randian position of egoism as explained in terms of her original philosophy: Objectivism. Her egoism is strictly bound to her original theory of value that defines an action in terms of its purpose to achieve objective and rational values. Smith insists that a person must be egoistic if Rand's concept of value is true.<sup>109</sup> This means that human beings are considered to be engaging in particular actions which basically serve their need and demand of self-improvement, and self-actualization.

Since the pursuit of one's own interests and the promotion of one's own well-being is a necessity in maintaining life, egoism must be true. However egoism alone cannot be considered a moral theory until it defines an action in terms of "moralized interests". The Objectivist ethics defines the proper form of interest as rational self-interest. It also recognizes responsibility in the form of egoism; that is to say, the only valid conception of responsibility is that which individuals only owe to themselves and their own interests. If one understands responsibility in terms of securing self-interest, then egoism is the course of actions that are performed in accordance with one's chosen values –since I am the owner of my values, then I am responsible for them; in other words, I can only be responsible for what I appropriate.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Rand criticizes pragmatism for its epistemological approach to *reality*, especially the view that truth "can be judged only by its consequences" (Rand, *For the New Intellectual*, 34). The pragmatic theory of knowledge especially that of Dewey has also implications on ethics. See Leonard Peikoff, "Kant versus America" in *The Ominous Parallels* (New York: Meridian, 1982). Besides, for the pragmatic approach to rationality and objectivity in relation to the *hierarchical* division between different worlds see Richard Rorty, "A Pragmatist View of Rationality and Cultural Difference", *Philosophy East and West* 42, no. 4 (Oct., 1992): 581-96.

<sup>109</sup> Smith, *Ayn Rand's Normative Ethics*, 24.

<sup>110</sup> The conception of (moral) responsibility in terms of the pursuit of one's interests and one's appropriation of the outcome of one's actions will be elaborated in detail in the next chapter.

The only moral responsibility that we should have is for the pursuit of our own interests and our chosen values. I believe this understanding of responsibility implies a ‘productive selfishness’, which is the term I prefer to use to signify the genuine form of responsibility.

#### **2.2.2.2 Productive Selfishness and the Genuine Form of Responsibility**

Productive selfishness relies on the conception of self-value as the moral standard of egoism: Human beings are the owners of themselves. The conception of self-value implies that value exists because of the existence of the one who is capable of choosing it as a value. It is the same person who is also capable of acting to achieve values. The conception of self-value has great importance in morality; without it no value can be possible.<sup>111</sup> Human beings are able to achieve their lives as the ultimate value of morality if they hold self-esteem as the main value of a productive selfishness. As the main actors and builders of their own lives, human beings possess their own self-accomplishment that makes the central point of a productive selfish morality. Such a self-accomplishment indicates the true meaning of responsibility.

Morality cannot be thought without the conception of responsibility. This is because responsibility is essential to the liberty of action, and thus it makes one’s actions worthwhile for the achievement of life. To be responsible for an action, human beings should be the beneficiary of their actions, including their abilities, which means that they should appropriate the outcome. Since an action is performed to achieve values, appropriating the outcome of an action first entails the appropriation of values within one’s own moral personality and one’s own life. The appropriation of values concerns

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<sup>111</sup> The conception of self-value may be identified with the purpose of morality, since Younkens states that it also “has to be earned”, as well as other values rely on one’s self-value, which seems quite compatible from the aspect of the theory of value. Edward W. Younkens, *Philosophers of Capitalism: Menger, Mises, Rand, and Beyond* (Lanham, MD: Lexington 2005), 101.

individual responsibility. The only genuine form of responsibility can be as follows: My responsibility is defined to be the beneficiary of the outcome of my own actions and the pursuit of my own interests.

Responsibility could be understood in two views. The common view of responsibility is said to be focusing on some moral obligations to other human beings, taking their benefits into account, connected to mostly duty. The other view of responsibility may be associated with the pursuit of one's own interests, and concerns one's own welfare to be achieved through one's actions, related to a productive and moral selfishness.

The former view is derived from the actions performed to fulfill a duty towards another. This principally supposes the notion of externality to individual's life as it excludes the individual's interests. In such a view of responsibility one believes that duty to others is the moral value. From the aspect of self-preservation, it is impossible and contradictory to demonstrate such a responsibility towards others with the connotation of duty, just because human beings should primarily value their own lives as their survival requires their lives to be secured and hence their own interests. In this consideration, the latter view of responsibility is thought to be the genuine form of responsibility. It represents the internal mechanism of an individual, assigning a kind of usefulness or function to responsibility in terms of securing self-interest, and one's own life. Responsible actions are therefore considered to be the instruments one uses in order to obtain what one wants to promote one's own existence.

The genuine form of responsibility that I am defending is stimulated by selfishness. However, selfishness cannot exist at the cost of others' lives, since it merely concerns one's actions in the sense that one rationally acts to realize one's abilities and talents in order to improve one's own welfare and

trade with others on the ground of promoting self-interest –which is productive and moral.

### **2.2.2.3 Relational Egoism (Rational Responding)**

The course of egoism must not be taken to be at the expense of other human beings' lives. This is compatible with the idea that human beings neither sacrifice their lives for others, nor demand others to do it for themselves in the promotion of their own interests.<sup>112</sup>

Kant asserts that human beings have an intrinsic value -as end-in-themselves<sup>113</sup>, so that we must do morally right to them. However, Rand has a more interesting view of the value of others in the form of egoism. One's own life is not only the source of one's values, but also one's "capacity to value".<sup>114</sup> According to Rand, the value that is granted to others is merely "a consequence, an extension, a secondary projection of the primary value" which is oneself.<sup>115</sup> This is an important perspective of value in the sense that each human being's life is seen as individual and distinct, meaning that they are not to be changed or replaced for another's life. Each life is unique and owned uniquely. This egoistic form of value is only achieved through the actions that are performed in one's own interests.

The Objectivist ethics defines interests in terms of rational self-interest, which, I believe, also renders egoism relational, either between one and the world or one and the others. I will try to explain the several aspects of

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<sup>112</sup> Expressed in the remarkable words by Ayn Rand in *Atlas Shrugged* (1957): "I swear by my life and my love of it that I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another man to live for mine."

<sup>113</sup> Kant, *Groundwork*, 41.

<sup>114</sup> Rand, "The Ethics of Emergencies", *The Virtue of Selfishness*, 53.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

relationality in different sections during my thesis. In this section I deal with ‘relationality’ in its two understandings: One of which concerns the responses given to one’s achievements by the world, and the other of which involves the principle of a communication as to the exchange of values. In both understandings of relationality one’s rational interests play the main role to form moral and just relationships.<sup>116</sup>

When an action is performed in one’s own rational interests, the world is expected to give a rational response to the action. This demonstrates the moral aspect of selfishness in a reciprocity between the world and the moral existence of the individual. The responses that the world is expected to give are related to the outcome of the action that is appropriated by the one who is the primary beneficiary of one’s own actions and one’s abilities. The outcomes of one’s abilities as one’s achievements are recognized by the world as long as they are the result of the pursuit of one’s rational interests. A product or a master’s thesis, let’s say, can be considered to be an outcome of one’s abilities and talents that is related to one’s virtue of productivity, and hence belongs to the one, i.e. the producer, the actor, who appropriates it as beneficiary and owns it as one’s unique achievement. The success of a thesis primarily depends on one’s interests which are evaluated rationally, and its appropriation as a rational process of performing the right actions. Human beings have the right to see their productive efforts actualized in the world as the world gives responses to their actions. Appropriating the outcome of one’s actions and the world’s recognition of the work created are in a reciprocal relationship, which is rational and moral.

Happiness can also be understood from the perspective of the same relationship in which the world responds to one’s rational and virtuous actions accordingly, for true happiness can only be achieved through reason.

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<sup>116</sup> Regarding the exchange of values, relationality will also be discussed in connection to the achievement of agreement and will be expanded into a specific understanding of justice. These are the themes which will be explored in Chapter 5.

It should be grasped in terms of a rational selfishness that perfectly combines the rationally principled action and the best possible responses given by the world as to actualize one's own moral responsibility. A moral interaction, therefore, occurs between the actor who rationally acts and the world that recognizes the outcome of the action –such a recognition as the achievement of values and happiness in life. This means that I appropriate my actions as the primary beneficiary of their consequences, and, as a result, I expect the world to recognize my effort and achievements through the responses it gives to them. Such actualization of appropriation in the world may be called as justice in a rational perspective, and it brings deserved happiness.

When this happens between two moral persons, it concerns the exchange of values between them. This is only possible on the basis of a voluntary reciprocal agreement between interests, i.e. rational interests, of human beings who are willing to develop trust in each other. The developing trust between moral persons implies the values of ownership, particularly rational selfishness, and the relationality of human beings through the exchange of values, for there is no clash between “rational interests”.<sup>117</sup> In a communication, human beings take the responsibility for trading their values by recognizing their rational interests, which is essential to egoism. I argue that relational egoism is a certain form of communication in which human beings are capable of remaining separate but at the same time communicative as they exchange their values.

The essence of a relational egoism is the exchange of values and the mutual recognition of rational interests. Here I have to clarify a specific issue: The primary role of self-interest in performing an action does not need to result in serving the interests of others, nor does it mean to sacrifice others to one's own interests in the case of trade. The pursuit of self-interest in a relationship

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<sup>117</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 34. A just relationship should be understood in terms of the exchange of values between human beings who appropriate the outcome of their abilities and talents. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

can take the form of trade in which individual beings participate equally and voluntarily. The primacy of interests therefore coexists with the act of trade without subjugating any one of the parties to the interests of another. Trade in this way is accepted to be one of the fundamental constituents of promoting self-interest mutually, which is a relational egoism.

We can better understand that the relational aspect of egoism does not contradict the goal of promoting one's own well-being; on the contrary it seems to embrace the *social* principle of The Objectivist ethics according to which human beings must live for their own sakes, neither sacrifice themselves to others nor sacrifice others to themselves.<sup>118</sup>

#### **2.2.2.4 Compromise versus Sacrifice**

Anything that can be a threat to one's existence is considered as immoral, such as sacrificing a value for others' interests. In this sense, human beings should refuse to surrender their moral values, which is expressed by this *maxim* of action in Rand's words: "Always act in accordance with the hierarchy of your values, and never sacrifice a greater value to a lesser one".<sup>119</sup> The basis for the pursuit of the hierarchy of one's values is one's self-esteem.

The term 'sacrifice' in the strict sense points out the lack of self-esteem when one begins to act to benefit others at the risk of one's own well-being. Rand's egoism only accepts the actions which are performed in accordance with "the hierarchy of values". In this consideration, Rand strongly rejects altruism that is against one's own interests and well-being, and hence one's self-esteem that is the source of virtuous actions performed in one's interests. Altruism means that one sacrifices one's values for the sake of

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<sup>118</sup> Rand, "The Objectivist Ethics", 30.

<sup>119</sup> Rand, "The Ethics of Emergencies", 50.

others' well-being, and ceases to be the primary beneficiary of one's actions, which would cause incapability to achieve values, and ineffectuality in their exchange in a relationship.

In some interpretations of Rand this definition of sacrifice is understood in a loose and relative sense to bring a *virtuous sacrifice* into account.<sup>120</sup> According to this view of Rand's morality, any endeavor to reach an end should always serve one's own interests, though it includes some sacrifices –as Swanton gives the example of endurable pain for the sake of a “virtuous productivity”.<sup>121</sup> But what Swanton is missing is that those sacrifices are not made in favor of a lesser value. On the contrary, they are related to the whole process of virtuous activity and of the achievement of a higher value. Therefore, it is not proper to identify them as “sacrifice”, in Rand's sense; otherwise we would miss the point of their significance in the achievement of higher values.

Therefore, I suggest that, instead of being called sacrifice, these actions should be defined as “compromises” that always serve the purpose of achieving higher values and obtaining higher moral ends. Compromise would be a much more relevant term to be properly in relation with the pattern of Rand's egoism to maintain the pursuit of rational self-interest in performing an action.<sup>122</sup>

Compromise in relationships is perfectly compatible with the pursuit of one's interests and purposes. Compromising of some values would not

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<sup>120</sup> See Christine Swanton, “Virtuous Egoism and Virtuous Altruism”, in *Metaethics, Egoism, and Virtue: Studies in Ayn Rand's Normative Theory*, eds. Allan Gotthelf and James G. Lennox (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 131-142.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, 133.

<sup>122</sup> Compromise, however, may be a problem if it will be done against private. In the moral understanding of my thesis within the principles of Objectivism, it is always true that private should never be sacrificed to public, as the same for privacy too.

necessarily mean sacrificing higher values to lesser ones. Self-esteem contradicts sacrifice, however it agrees with compromise, since compromising is compatible with the pursuit of one's own interests and the exchange of values with others. Compromise actually adjusts a measurable distance to others in a relationship and helps human beings to realize their moral ends through making developments and improvements in their relationships. When applying the *social* principle of the Objectivist ethics<sup>123</sup>, compromise can be made by virtue of voluntary agreement between individual beings who selfishly pursue their own rational interests.<sup>124</sup>

### **2.2.3 The Appropriation of Values**

Values required for survival directly concern one's own interests, so that the first question of morality should be: “*Why* does man need a code of values?”<sup>125</sup> This is a question to which no previous philosopher had given a “rational” and “objectively demonstrable” answer, as Rand claims.<sup>126</sup> Without understanding the original reason why we need morality, it is unlikely to define values properly. Objectivism can plausibly be classified as a value ethics, giving the finest definition of value.

In The Objectivist ethics values are seen to be essential to human life, and their essential role in human life is understood in the chief goal of life – survival. Human beings should act in their own interests and they must be the primary beneficiaries of their own actions to gain and keep their values required for their survival (as demonstrated). Survival is associated with the conception of self-preservation in the sense that one's own interests and

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<sup>123</sup> See the previous section for the detailed explanations regarding this principle.

<sup>124</sup> I also suggest you to read “Doesn't Life Require Compromise?” by Ayn Rand.

<sup>125</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 14.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

values should serve this chief goal of life. At this point, Rand raises the question concerning the interest of an action and the role of values in one's own life: Value to *whom* or for *what*?<sup>127</sup> Moralities against self-interest, such as altruism, seem to lack defining moral values. Altruistic moralities only rely on the beneficiary criterion to define a moral action, according to which an action is considered to be moral when performed in the interests of others, not the actor.<sup>128</sup> Altruism surely confuses what is good and what is evil because of considering the selfish motive as evil. However, as we have seen, pursuing one's own interest cannot be separated from the desire to live—the tendency towards self-preservation.<sup>129</sup>

Human life should be seen as a moral life, since it integrates the goal of survival and the morality that is necessary for its accomplishment. The course of human existence cannot be separated from virtues and values that would together bring a “moralized” life to achieve moral ends set by the actors themselves. Life begins by choice, which is central to morality and moral values.

### **2.2.3.1 “The choice to live”**

Rand states that life can be held as a value only when it is chosen.<sup>130</sup> If one chooses to live then the necessity of values become evident in the achievement of a life. The choice to live is indeed to form the relationship between morality and life, since it means to recognize the necessity of values for survival. The recognition of necessity of values in life is the moral

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<sup>127</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 16.

<sup>128</sup> Rand, “Introduction”, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, viii.

<sup>129</sup> “The terminology of self-preservation is not applicable when the self has disappeared.” states Peikoff as he emphasized the importance of value in one's life while making decisions for one's own interests. (*Objectivism*, 317-8)

<sup>130</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 25.

responsibility that is actualized through the practice of appropriation: I appropriate values, I keep them for myself since I have recognized their necessity through my choice to live.

A choice can either be *necessary* or voluntary. In this sense two characteristics of the choice to live can be examined. One of them is a necessitation or *duty* of the choice to live, which is particularly defended by Rasmussen. He contends that “life is a moral choice we ought to make” –the “choice-worthiness” of life.<sup>131</sup> Rasmussen’s view leads us to praise life as though it has an intrinsic value. This reading will contradict Rand’s conception of value, according to which life becomes a value just because it is chosen.

Therefore, it will be more consistent with Rand’s theory of value to claim that this choice should be understood as a possibility of a life. The possibility of life is inherent in its being a choice and can be actualized within the capability of choosing and appropriating values. In this consideration, Peikoff characterizes the choice to live as “pre-moral”. However this does not mean that the choice to live is arbitrary. On the contrary, it is more than to be “not arbitrary”, it is, as Peikoff suggests, a “precondition of criticizing the arbitrary”.<sup>132</sup> The choice to live results in accepting the necessity of morality, which means that values cannot be chosen on arbitrary wishes, but on objective basis.

Rand’s naturalistic account of morality recognizes the conception of choice with reference to a particular understanding of human nature in terms of a volitional consciousness and its abilities in the achievement of life.<sup>133</sup> I

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<sup>131</sup> Douglas B. Rasmussen “Rand on Obligation and Value” pp. 173-85. Younkins, Edward W. *Philosophers of Capitalism: Menger, Mises, Rand, and Beyond*. Lanham. MD: Lexington Books, 2005.

<sup>132</sup> Peikoff, *Objectivism*, 248.

believe that this conception of choice is compatible with the idea that exercising natural abilities is originated in the conception of possibility. Possibility always implies an appropriation of a higher level of current situation as a progress in life –a life which is meant to be appropriated, improved and flourished as a true moral life. To comprehend the inextricable link between choice and appropriation, one should follow this argument: Choice brings appropriation –I choose that which is to be appropriated. Since I act to serve my own interests and I am primary beneficiary of my own actions, I choose to appropriate the outcome of my actions. Thus the choice to live results in the appropriation of my whole life as it is actualized through the appropriation of values.

The choice to live is also the appropriation of one’s moral self. By choosing life human beings are able to choose to actualize their own moral beings in the practical realm. In this sense, a choice is first a potency inherited in a possible life. When a choice turns to be practical, it means that one exercises one’s abilities and appropriates the outcome in a moral practice.<sup>134</sup>

### **2.2.3.2 Rationality as a Matter of Choice**

Life as the foundation of all values becomes the ultimate value when it is chosen, as stated before. To achieve this ultimate value human beings must choose their goals and actions rationally. In Rand’s own words:

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<sup>133</sup> I accept that “human nature” is ambiguous and so difficult concept that is hard to describe or investigate by a clear way of reasoning, but often leads us to metaphysical delusions. However I use term as referring to some certain abilities and capacities that many would agree with me from the perspective of survival tools, and some distinct characteristics of human beings, such as rationality and productivity having the great importance in the Objectivist ethics. I have already discussed the role of rationality in one’s life. Productivity in both the rational and moral context will be discussed in Chapter 5.

<sup>134</sup> The exercise of one’s abilities and the right to appropriate the outcome will be the main topic of the next chapter in terms of the exercise of one’s freedom.

Man has been called a rational being, but rationality is a matter of choice –and the alternative his nature offers him is: rational being or suicidal animal. Man has to be man –by choice; he has to hold his life as a value –by choice; he has to learn to sustain it –by choice; he has to discover the values it requires and practice his virtues –by choice. A code of values accepted by choice is a code of morality.<sup>135</sup>

The idea that “rationality is a matter of choice” is understandable when the essential role of morality is justified in human life. The rationality of choice is taking the responsibility for choosing one’s own values based on reason in accordance with the purpose of value –that is one’s own life. Choice is made as long as it decreases the possibility of other choices removed in favor of the choice made. This process of making choice is actually the rational use of mind: Eliminating some other factors which may affect the beneficial and rational choice in negative way, and defining the course of rational evaluation by positively delimited choices in terms of one’s own interests.

To clarify the relationship between rationality and choice, we must also pay attention to the difference between “standard” and “purpose”, as Rand carefully distinguishes them from each other. Standard refers to an abstract principle as a “measurement” like “that which is required for man’s survival *qua* man”.<sup>136</sup> This principle is applied to a “concrete, specific purpose of living a life proper to a rational being” -the life one has to live in *one’s own*.<sup>137</sup> Human life as the “*standard* of value” involves the ethical purpose of achieving one’s own life, namely “the purpose of living a life proper to a rational being”.<sup>138</sup> Since interest is defined in terms of “rational self-

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<sup>135</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 24-5.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. The Objectivist ethics defines standard as “that which is required for the survival of man *qua* man” and purpose as its application to every individual human being.

interest”, the values that are essential to human life must be chosen rationally.

The Randian view of morality is quite similar to the Aristotelian conception of the good and the highest moral purpose of human life that could be possible within a proper functioning of consciousness: To have a look at life as a whole and to flourish within a moral integrity, i.e. one’s completeness and perfection by exercising one’s virtues. Moral action should therefore have a purpose, not in the mere consequentialist fashion, but in achieving a life of objective and rational values. The achievement of values requires the performance of rational actions, which are in the power of one’s choice. The choice to live, from the perspective of the Objectivist ethics, means to choose actions, value and goals “by the standard of that which is proper” to human beings.<sup>139</sup> The choice to live, thus, means to act rationally and, as a result, to achieve the rational values required for human survival.

### **2.2.3.3 Appropriation as Moral Continuity in One’s Life**

Action is necessary for the achievement of values and life. The reasons for an action must be rational, since the only legitimate form of self-interest is rational self-interest, as I have discussed. An action is performed after a process of thinking and a rational deliberation, so that it can be appropriated in the truest sense. This implies that one must take the responsibility for the process of thought, and the action as well, which means appropriation of an action is also the responsibility taken for the action. Therefore, an appropriated action is performed in one’s responsibility that is realized through the knowledge of guiding principles and the rational foresight of the action. Let me clarify my point.

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<sup>139</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 27.

The character of an action is found in its conscious nature that necessarily involves the purposefulness –the purpose of an action. The consciousness of an action is directly related to the reasons of an action, such as achieving moral values, for the definition of value<sup>140</sup> requires so. Accordingly, an action must not be understood by only its physical effects in the world, but also by its purposeful content that involves the initiating factors of an action. Therefore an action is performed by the choice of one’s mind. Without the purposeful content which characterizes the reasons for an action human beings are not considered to act, and may only be seen to exhibit some behavior instead of it. When compared to an action, a behavior seems not to have a qualitative difference from other unconscious appearances in the world. The nature of an action lies in its purposeful content, and hence its appropriation as a moral action.

To make my point clearer, I shall tell more on the distinction between a moral action and a social behavior. It is true that both an action and a behavior produce effects in the world. However, one can be responsible only for the consequences of an action that is appropriated as a purposeful action –such an action which is deliberated and chosen in accordance with one’s values and rational interests. Thus, one can perform a moral action, and appropriate it as long as the action serves one’s rational self-interest and one’s chosen values. However, a behavior can change from a social context to another. This means that a behavior is merely adopted, mostly through the conventional values, and not truly appropriated, since it has not an evaluative content of rational thought and the guidance of chosen values. A social behavior is therefore only adopted and not much evaluated in a truly appropriated morality as a unique form of responsibility.

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<sup>140</sup> Rand defines value as “that which one acts to gain and/or keep.” (Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 16).

Appropriation must not be confused with adoption in terms of a genuine morality: Appropriation does not mean adoption –i.e. adoption of values. Appropriation is directly related to one’s genuine moral character and it is practiced through a moral deliberation and reasoning to be worthy of a moral practice. On the other hand, adoption (of values) merely indicates one’s social self that is not appropriated, but *approved* through following the customs and values of a collective mass, or society; thus it does not possess a genuine moral responsibility, particularly defined in terms of self-esteem.

One performs (and consequently appropriates) an action as a result of a rational evaluation, which is very clear. An action possesses a content of thought, including one’s higher ends which it finally serves. An action, is therefore assessed not by its consequences or effects in the world, but by its conceptual content and moral engagements kept by the actor who is the primary beneficiary of the action. This distinct nature of action allows us to separate a moral action from a behavior: A moral action is appropriated in the sense that human beings as free moral agents can be the beneficiaries of their actions provided that they freely choose their values and think how to act as a result of a rational deliberation.

In order to grasp the true meaning of morality that is required by survival, it is crucially important to understand that morality is necessary not only because our survival requires us to have values, as objectivism declares; but also human survival demands a continuity that is ensured through one’s actions. The consequences of an action is uncertain and unachieved for us until we appropriate them –until we appropriate the consequences of our action to see its long-term benefits in the rational aspect. If an action is right for achieving the values that concern one’s whole life, then it is worth redoing it –since an appropriated morality of values would direct the course of such actions in a constant effort. In this sense, moral continuity in one’s

life may denote an appropriated morality through the actions by which one has a right to own a life; a right that is realized in the choice to live.

The choice to live requires values to be necessarily chosen. Choosing is not merely selecting some values among others. Otherwise it would be adoption of them. One's values must be appropriated through one's own actions, which means that one chooses one's own values to achieve them in a constant and rational use of one's abilities. As it is seen, values must be appropriated in order to be truly achieved as one's own. In this regard, a possible future is built at the moment by the principle of appropriation. I understand this way of appropriation in the sense that I can achieve a (future) life by what I appropriate now. This indicates the connection between my lifetime values and my present accomplishments. I appropriate my thesis in the sense that I appropriate the results of my productive work (my effort) and I have the right to see it as a concrete success of my moral perfection in accordance with my values and my future goals –as long as I deserve it as my own. This may define the rational foresight (and success) of my effort in terms of a rational deliberation and a *conscious repetition* of my actions for lifetime in connection to my achievements of values.

To put it differently, my accomplishments will be related to my values in a rational foresight of my actions, and hence in a moral continuity between my actions, which will eventually result in the appropriation of a life. The rational foresight of actions seems the only valid approach to one's exercise of freedom, and one's achievement of values, again, by the choice to live. Choosing a life means to appropriate a (moral) life. In light of this understanding, the appropriation of values can validate the fundamental aspects of a moral life for human beings –that is my own view of the Objectivist ethics.

I believe that the Objectivist ethics accurately captures the moral essence of private property by recognizing the main values of “reason, purpose and self-esteem.”<sup>141</sup> These values are quite essential for human action in achieving a life. By the help of the Objectivist account of value, I plan to go beyond Rand’s philosophy and creatively attempt to develop some distinct arguments as to the achievement of these objective values. In this respect, I primarily focus on the appropriation of values, which I have introduced as my own view of the Objectivist ethics and explained in this section. To explain it better, I continue to develop my other arguments in the following chapters of my thesis on the basis of appropriation, and explore the practical aspects of the appropriation of values, especially regarding rights and privacy, by revealing its implications in a moral account of private property.

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<sup>141</sup> The primary values of the Objectivist ethics, as mentioned in Galt’s Speech: “To live, man must hold three things as the supreme and ruling values of his life: Reason—Purpose—Self-esteem”. Rand, *For the New Intellectual*, 128.

## CHAPTER 3

### RIGHTS AND FREEDOM

In this chapter I deal with the concepts of right and freedom in the practice of appropriation of values. Remember that the appropriation of values requires one to take the responsibility for one's choices and the consequences of one's actions in order to achieve (and hence appropriate) a life, as explained in the previous chapter. In this sense, I develop my conception of right in terms of the responsibility for the free exercise of one's abilities. I argue that the moral criterion rendering a right as a moral exercise of abilities seems to lie in the responsibility taken for the outcome of one's abilities, which is discussed in the first part of this chapter.

The moral exercise of abilities is indeed the realization of freedom. We continually *own* the outcome of our abilities, so that the actualization of our freedom becomes an expression of our own moral being and our moral responsibility that is objectified in the result of this practice as private property, which is the main theme of the second part of this chapter.

### 3.1 Rights

*"I am only one, but I am one.  
I cannot do everything, but I can do something.  
And because I cannot do everything,  
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."  
-Edward Everett Hale*

My suggestion is to view the concept of right in relation to a possible life. It follows this logic: I may have a right to build a life, since it is possible to build a life. Building a life is possible through the exercise of one's abilities. Thus, the possibility of life may embrace the concept of right in the sense that the right to build a life is exercised through one's abilities.

I know it is a difficult task to justify rights in terms of one's abilities. Dealing with this difficulty, I plan to introduce some principles and examine the necessary and sufficient conditions for claiming a right through my own view of the Objectivist ethics. But first, in light of the argument of the possibility of life, it is important for us to note that there seems to be a connection between the possibility of building a life and the right to build a life in terms of one's natural abilities. In this sense, natural rights may be interpreted as natural abilities, which I will explain.

#### 3.1.1 Natural Rights as Natural Abilities

In the history of philosophy the justification of natural rights can be traced back to Aquinas. He established his theory of natural rights on the realization of natural law under the divine plan. He regards a connection between human nature and divine authority as to derive the source of natural rights. Therefore the justification of natural rights relies on the metaphysical doctrine of human nature that says that human action is governed by the divine law. In other words, his understanding of human nature in terms of a divine essence results in a metaphysical explanation of natural rights.

However, there may be a way to save us from this metaphysical argument of natural rights. It is the concept of ability that can provide a basis for rights. I believe that the concept of ability can successfully avoid the metaphysics of the supernatural in providing an account of natural rights.

First, action is essential for human survival in the pursuit of one's own interests and goals. As we have seen from the previous chapter, the pursuit of one's own rational interests is the only legitimate course of an action in order for human beings to accomplish the goal of survival. An action is said to be performed only through one's abilities. Since the right to build a life is possible through the exercise of one's abilities, then a truly *natural* conception of right must be directly connected to one's natural abilities. Therefore natural rights can be considered as natural abilities in the sense that the fundamental right to life requires one to exercise one's abilities and perform actions at one's freedom.

This understanding of right in terms of natural abilities would warrant an ontology of human existence that is compatible with the main features of human survival in relation to the basic capacities of human beings, such as thinking and performing an action. These distinct capacities of human beings can be justified in one's life through the exercise of natural abilities. Therefore, I believe that the conception of right based on the exercise of natural abilities has a more intelligible position than the natural law doctrine by simply sweeping out the redundancies of the supernatural. Natural law doctrine necessarily calls on the authority of a supreme being such as the *law giver*.<sup>142</sup> However, natural abilities rely on the basic facts of human

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<sup>142</sup> The term "law giver" indicates God as the source of natural rights in Aquinas' thought. The concept of ability and the free exercise of abilities can provide a more sufficient and a valid argument of right when compared to the natural law and natural rights doctrine, especially that of Aquinas. I will reveal my argument in detail by introducing the necessary and the sufficient conditions for right in the following sections. Thus, we can save ourselves from the doctrine of natural law in giving an account of rights, and there will be no need to appeal the authority of a *law giver*.

survival and the main capacities of human beings, which enable us to derive the conception of right through examining them.

I take natural abilities to be the main powers and capacities of human beings as to build and achieve a life in their power of action. The liberty of action is indeed the free exercise of these natural abilities. The conception of right may be justified in relation to the free exercise of (natural) abilities in the achievement of a life. Natural abilities are therefore seen to be essential for human survival, as well as for one's actions which are supposed to serve one's own interests.

In this consideration, natural abilities are said to be the source of any possible action. The ontological argument behind this reasoning –that ability is required for any action- is that possibility precedes actuality, which I am about to discuss in the next section.

### **3.1.2 Varying Actualities**

Regarding the relationship between actuality (reality) and possibility, I find quite interesting Leibniz's view. In his own words:

If one tried to reject absolutely the pure possibles, one would destroy contingency and liberty. For if there were nothing possible except what God has actually created, whatever God created would be necessary.<sup>143</sup>

According to Leibniz's logic, whatever God has created must first be seen on the level of possibility before their existence; otherwise God's creation would remain as necessary, and in this case, God's choice and his will becomes meaningless. As I understand from the quotation, "pure possibles" implies "possible existences" that are to be realized. These possible existences become real as their possibilities precede their actual forms. Why

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<sup>143</sup> Edmund H. Hollands, "Possibility and Reality", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 16, No. 6 (Nov., 1907), pp. 604-615; p. 608.

I am interested in this logic is because I believe that possibility should be grasped as the basis of that which is actual, as well as liberty and contingency. This argument of possibility as a precondition of actuality seems to present the ontological basis for the exercise of abilities in relation to the choice to live and a possible moral life.

Possibility should not be grasped as an abstract conception of metaphysics, rather it should be understood in terms of different actualities varying in a realm of possibilities. When seen from this perspective, any realization is said to *have* the unrealized types of its actuality as a possible alternative. That is to say, every event as a realized possible situation inherently possesses its possible alternatives within the same existential pattern. Therefore I am able to derive my argument as follows: If the alternate variations of reality exist before any realization of a possibility, than it means that things also can happen in another way. Facts and events may be understood in the sense of a contingency, as they “can be or can happen in another way”. This argument is important to understand the nature and the ontological condition of an action.

From the perspective of possibility as the precondition of actuality, it is also interesting to see that actuality can always change, since it possesses a variety of possible situations in the same existential pattern with itself. To be more accurate, that which is actual already exists as a form of possibility. Therefore, in accordance with this understanding, an action can vary in a realm of choices, which is inevitable for morality. Choice becomes the essential condition of action in such a morality, for choice implies the possibility of an action and the possibility of a life to be achieved. To prove choice as an initiator of an action, I use the argument of the possible variations of reality that relies on the ontological primacy of possibility over actuality.

### **3.1.3 Ability and Choice as the Preconditions of an Action**

Now I can explain how choice can be the precondition of any action. The possibility of a moral life relies on the contingency and liberty of an action. An action is performed by the moral agency who has the capacity for making choices. In other words, I perform a certain action, because I can also act in another way. This understanding of action on the basis of possible alternatives may shed light on the argument that an action is only performed if one is able to perform it through a choice. Just as possibility precedes actuality, choice precedes action –that is choice must be grasped as the precondition of an action.

Realizing oneself is always a possibility, which integrates a moral content of abilities with human action in terms of a chosen and deliberated moral life. Through the exercise of my natural abilities I can always have the possibility to develop a better personality, a moral world, and a better life of my actions. A possible moral life thus can be realized through the free exercise of one's abilities. We must see that possibility implies the principles of an action, namely choice and ability. Choice and ability are the essential properties of an action.

We can understand that “things can also happen in another way” through our daily experience, while making choices and contemplating possible alternatives of our actions. An action is possible as it can be performed in a specific way because it is chosen to be as such. Ability and choice together determine the course of an action, particularly a moral action, which is the point that I want to emphasize.

### 3.1.4 The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for Rights

An action is deliberated, chosen and appropriated by the actor through the exercise of abilities. Thus ability sets the ontological condition for an action. This is how an action is actualized. We can see that ability together with choice is necessary for actions to be performed.

A right is also claimed through the exercise of one's natural abilities. Right should not be considered as "independent of natural abilities"<sup>144</sup> and natural abilities cannot be separate from possibility –at least in terms of possibility of an action. Thus ability is seen as the ontological condition of an action and natural rights are defined as the exercise of one's natural abilities. Ability must also be the necessary condition for right, as the claim of a right is possible by the exercise of natural abilities.

However, a moral account of rights cannot be given merely in terms of natural abilities. I should link natural abilities to a moral conception, since natural ability is not itself a moral conception. This moral conception can provide the sufficient condition for rights to be counted as the moral exercise of natural abilities. This conception of right must also be compatible with the moral principle of appropriation, i.e. responsibility taken for the outcome of one's abilities. Thus, responsibility for what is appropriated defines the character of the moral exercise of abilities as a moral conception. The argument goes like this:

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<sup>144</sup> Gary B. Herbert, *A Philosophical History of Rights* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002), p. 29, "Ancient Rights".

1. The achievement of life requires the exercise of abilities.
2. I can exercise my abilities as long as I appropriate the outcome of the exercise of my abilities.
3. Therefore I must appropriate the outcome of the exercise of my abilities to achieve a life.
4. I am only responsible for I appropriate.
5. Therefore I am only responsible for my appropriated abilities and their consequences while exercising them.

When I have chosen life, it means that I have chosen to exercise my abilities. This is intelligible when one conceives of the fact that life requires action, and an action can only be performed through the exercise of one's abilities. Therefore chosen life means chosen action, and hence chosen abilities. In the achievement of life, one must exercise one's chosen abilities. However, an ability is considered to be exercised when its outcome belongs to the actor. This is also understandable from the perspective of self-preservation according to which one must be the primary beneficiary of one's own actions. Thus, one must appropriate the outcome of the exercise of one's abilities in the achievement of a chosen life. That I am the primary beneficiary of my own actions implies that I must be responsible for the outcome of the exercise of my abilities and my actions that are chosen. I am responsible for the results of my abilities for 2 reasons: I have chosen to exercise my abilities and my abilities are exercised as long as I appropriate the results of my actions. This responsibility produces the sufficient reason why an appropriated ability should also be considered as a right: I claim a right to an action since I -the chooser of my life- have chosen to be responsible for the results of the exercise my abilities. I must be responsible to claim a right to an action, otherwise it would not be meaningful to be beneficiary of my actions and to appropriate their outcome. Appropriation seems to require the responsibility especially for the effort that is directly related to my goals to be achieved. My life, i.e. my natural own being,

becomes my property as I have the right to appropriate the outcome of the exercise of my abilities for the purpose of survival. The exercise of abilities must therefore be understood as the achievement of life and its responsibility as a result of a productive effort is to have the right to appropriate one's abilities.

It is vital to provide a justification of right as to show that how reasonably it renders an action actual within a morality that assumes values to be the essential requirement of a truly appropriated moral life. I appropriate my natural abilities and I become responsible for them in this practical morality. The conception of right as a moral exercise of abilities within a moral responsibility of what is appropriated demonstrates the appropriation of values in the sense that one can achieve one's values through the exercise of one's own abilities and the outcome.

An ability becomes moral when connected to value, and the exercise of abilities becomes moral when connected to the responsibility for what is appropriated –for the outcome of abilities. Thus right becomes a moral term to be grasped within this understanding of moral responsibility, and can be defined as the “moral exercise of one's abilities”.<sup>145</sup>

### **3.1.5 Rights in Egoism**

The liberty of an action should be seen as indistinguishable from the responsibility taken for the appropriated consequences of an action –which is the implication of right in moral terms. According to Smith, right and liberty of action have a close relationship in the sense that the conception of right requires liberty of an action that is claimed by the actors.<sup>146</sup> Smith also

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<sup>145</sup> The definition of right I have introduced as the ‘moral exercise of one's abilities’ becomes more relevant to the moral justification of private property when I link it to the achievement of trust and justice in its intimate connection to the Objectivist principles of professionalism in Chapter 5.

develops an argument of individual rights that relies on the ability for action that is specified as productive effort.<sup>147</sup> Rights can be considered as the properties of human beings, for they are defined in terms of the exercise of one's abilities and liberty of action.<sup>148</sup> The productive effort or the productivity of an action is connected to the liberty of action within the fundamental right to one's own life. The right to life means "the right to engage in self-sustaining and self-generated action"<sup>149</sup> –which is liberty of action, implying the connection between rights and the appropriation of the outcome of one's actions.

As it has been widely argued throughout the social contract tradition, rationality and self-interest are also what makes social agreements possible on the basis of the pursuit of one's own interests.<sup>150</sup> However, as I have stated before, only rational self-interest can establish a society of cooperation and peace in the long term. Rational and principled egoism is the true form of egoism that justifies the exercising of rights through *respect* for other right holders, when correctly understood.<sup>151</sup> In a rational and principled egoism, respect for others' rights is realized within an individual exercise of liberty. In other moralities, such as altruism, the protection of rights is controlled by external factors (i.e. the institutions of state) since human beings are treated as "enemies" of each other and hence they are believed to be deprived of a rational morality and unable to establish peace

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<sup>146</sup> Tara Smith, *Moral Rights and Political Freedom* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), 18.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 33. Smith basically derives her ideas from the main virtues of objectivism, such as conceptual knowledge and productive work as one's creative ability on purpose to achieve a life (Rand, "The Objectivist Ethics", 29)

<sup>148</sup> "The concept of "right" pertains only to action -specifically to freedom of action." (Rand, "Man's Rights", 110)

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Smith, *Moral Rights and Political Freedom*, 62-3.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

by their own actions. However, respect for others' rights cannot be a duty, nor does it come from an external source; but is an objective value appropriated in the agreement between moral persons who only pursue the advancement of their own interests.

As egoism promotes, individuals engage in a social community where they interact with others as long as they take advantage of these interactions for the improvement of their own well-being. *Eudaimonia* or one's own well-being is about the experiences that would internally provide a good life that must be earned for oneself, for happiness is personal and "must be self-generated".<sup>152</sup> Individual effort is essential to one's moral practice, and it begins with the "choice to live" that implies the "desire to good life".<sup>153</sup> Life and good life may not be considered as separate but being towards the "same goal".<sup>154</sup> Good life, for Smith, is an adequate foundation for rights, since it is the fundamental value<sup>155</sup> –the idea she has taken from Rand. The good life is attained through the exercise of one's natural abilities by morally responsible persons each of whom is considered as the owner of chosen values to guide their actions.

### **3.1.6 Rights as the Practical Principle of an Action**

Right should be conceived as an essential principle of actions and liberties. This may be understood in two ways: Right can be considered as the ontological condition of an action as defining its possibility (=the ability to act), and can also be grasped as a moral principle of an action as denoting the moral exercise of abilities. I will try to make my point clearer by giving

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<sup>152</sup> Smith, *Moral Rights and Political Freedom*, 69.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 47.

two examples of violation of rights and how these situations result in contradiction in terms of these aspects of the conception of right.

Take, for example, freedom of speech. Suppose that the rulers of a country attempt to pass a law of restraining human beings from freely expressing their opinions in the way they wish. This is only possible if these rulers are able to violate both the liberty of action and the right to freedom of speech for themselves too. However, they seem to exercise the freedom of speech through their attempt to pass a law. Thus we have this result: Imposing the actual restriction of freedom of speech would cease their action as imposing the restriction of freedom of speech would be against the preconditions of their exercise to pass a law as an expression of freedom of speech.

An action is performed on the basis of the liberty of action. However liberty of an action should be possible both practically and morally as they are connected to each other in the conception of possibility. In the case of the restriction of freedom of speech, rulers' action cannot be justified in this understanding, therefore leads to a contradictory result: As if the rulers are able to attempt such an act that they could remove the principles of their action. Further, a right exists as the liberty of action, and accordingly it may be considered as the basis of the action itself. The action of speech no longer has basis to become actual due to the removal of the possibility of exercising the freedom of speech by the rulers, which contradicts to the nature of possibility –looks like the rulers attempt to destroy the exercise of the ability by exercising it, which is unintelligible because of self-destruction.

Another example can also be given in terms of private property: The right to private property, according to this reasoning, seems to be the ontological condition of acquiring property. By this understanding of reality, the right to property is that which guarantees the actual properties of human beings, including those of the one who attempts to violate it. Just as preventing

someone from exercising freedom of speech contradicts the basis of the action of preventing itself, stealing or attacking one's property would contradict the right to property and the right to liberty of action that allows the action of the attacker. Since right to property is actually the liberty of action, any violation of right to property would result in removing the principle of performing a free action. Therefore the primacy of right over action and its essential role in realizing abilities as liberty of action must be comprehended in the same way that possibility is the precondition of that which is actual.

### **3.1.7 Rights as One's Properties**

Rand emphasizes the necessary relation between one's own life and the basis of rights as the fundamental right to property: "Once you have established that a man is the owner of his own life –that his life is his to dispose of and does not belong to anyone else –you then have the base from which all other rights are derived."<sup>156</sup> As we can see, one's life must be considered as one's property as to derive other the rights. Rights seem to play their crucial role in one's life as they are produced from the principle of ownership of life, including the ownership of abilities to achieve the purpose of survival.

Rand also completely shares the Lockean view of self-preservation in terms of the basic premise of the "right to one's own life", and believes that this is only possible on the basis of the right to property: "The right to life is the source of all rights –and the right to property is their only implementation".<sup>157</sup> Since right denotes the liberty of action, these actions are considered to be the expressions of human beings' right to property, just because "no human rights can exist without property rights."<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Marlene Podritske & Peter Schwartz, eds., *Objectively Speaking: Ayn Rand Interviewed* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books), p. 47.

<sup>157</sup> Rand, "Man's Rights", 94.

Rand explains the relationship between right and owning property in terms of gaining and appropriating the outcome of an action deservedly:

Bear in the mind that the right to property is a right to action, like all the others: it is not the right *to an object*, but to the action and the consequences of producing or earning that object. It is not a guarantee that a man *will* earn any property, but only a guarantee that he will own it if he earns it.<sup>159</sup>

As I have also discussed in the previous section, “right to action” can be considered in terms of the possibility and the liberty of action –which is indeed the practical (ontological) condition of action. Since actions are appropriated through the exercise of abilities, right can be seen as one’s property in the sense that the exercise of abilities is indeed the liberty of action. Survival requires one to have the right to be beneficiary of one’s abilities and to own the outcome. During their survival, human beings become fully able to take the responsibility for what they have earned through the continued exercise of abilities, which is indeed the practice of appropriation.

### **3.1.8 Rights in the Social Context**

Appropriating the outcome of the exercise of one’s abilities entails assuming moral responsibility for the outcome of these abilities, and hence the appropriation of rights. The appropriation of rights in connection to the fundamental right, i.e. “man’s right to his own life”, is noticeable in all the aspects of human survival, particularly in the achievement of values. In this respect, the right to property can be taken to be the basis of human existence and property itself can provide the basis of a moral life. If we accept this, it then follows that for a society to be just and moral, the right to property should be introduced as the ground of its organizational structure with all

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<sup>158</sup> Podritske and Schwartz, *Objectively Speaking*, 87; “The Objectivist Ethics”, 36.

<sup>159</sup> Rand, “Man’s Rights”, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, 110.

political institutions, particularly private property rights. Thus, the political structure can have its moral character in relation to individuals' rights that are essential for society. Again in Rand's words:

“Rights” are a moral concept -the concept that provides a logical transition from the principles guiding an individual's actions to the principles guiding his relationship with others -the concept that preserves and protects individual morality in a social context -the link between the moral code of a man and the legal code of a society, between ethics and politics. *Individual rights are the means of subordinating society to moral law.*<sup>160</sup>

Right, I believe, is a moral concept and must be justified in terms of morality. In the social realm, as Rand emphasizes, “rights” are the guarantor of individuals' interests and properties in social interactions, which means that individuals' lives are secured through rights. In other words, rights identify a priority of individuals' lives before the society, or a political organization. This priority is the priority of an individual being's moral existence that should be secured before engaging in any action in the political realm.<sup>161</sup> This also means that the exercise of abilities in the moral context is recognized by each person's liberty of action to be protected in a social context.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Rand, “Man's Rights”, 108.

<sup>161</sup> This will be extensively discussed in the next chapter “Privacy” by referring to Arendt's ideas regarding the political realm, the realm of action and speech.

<sup>162</sup> Another perspective to the relationship between rights and morality may be found in the “capability approach” developed by Amartya Sen (*Development as Freedom*, 1999). However, I shall carefully distinguish myself from Sen's thought, or any perspective of distributive justice, in the sense that my argument of right is mainly related to the ethical principles of Objectivism. I believe that justice in a society primarily concerns the principles of a rational morality, instead of social justice or opportunities provided by the social institutions. This will be discussed in connection to the ‘problem of justice’ in Chapter 5.

## 3.2 Freedom

*“Freedom is to have will to be responsible for one's self.”*  
–Max Stirner

The Anglo-Saxon understanding of freedom is characteristically related to negative freedom –according to which human beings are free only if they are free from external constraints. The emphasis on freedom from “external constraints” is quite important to morality. Nevertheless, liberty or freedom of action must primarily be grasped in terms of an integrated morality from which an individual responsibility is directly derived, especially in a morality of rational self-interest –the pursuit of rational and objective values. Thus the genuine motivation and the source of a moral action rather than external limitations will be important when understanding the concept of freedom.

### 3.2.1 Limitation as the Constitutive Principle of Practical Freedom

Coercion or constraint seems obviously to be an anti-conception in a morality of freedom, as they are against the liberty of action. Yet, contrary to common belief, there should be a conception that is compatible with freedom and the conditions of its exercise, which is limitation. Freedom, if it would be actualized in the world, should take place among limitations surrounding human beings and influencing their choices. Human beings can exercise their freedom as long as they engage in plenty of options that are presented in many aspects of the world. Human beings feel free when they think that they are engaging in such a world where they can exercise their choices and preferences through the liberty of action. Thus they perceive the liberty of action be their power of choice in a conditioned and limited world of preferences. By this perception of liberty, the conception of limitation can positively constitute the actuality of freedom in the world. Therefore,

freedom is actual only if there exists the possibility of choice, and freedom is possible only if human beings think they are free in choosing, indicating that freedom is a conscious action within a limitation.

From the perspective of negative freedom, the actualization of freedom can be intelligible when the world is empty of external constraints. However it is hard to imagine such a world. Then how can be freedom actualized? The answer lies in the difference between coercion and limitation: Coercion is against freedom, as it erodes the liberty of action, whereas limitation is among the conditions of freedom, i.e. ability and choice. Coercion is not in one's control, but limitation within one's power of action. Human beings can take the responsibility for what is in their power of action, whereas coercion and constraints do not require any moral responsibility that is essential to the actualization of freedom. Freedom can be realized when one takes the responsibility of freedom, which is possible on the condition that one acts from inner principles and motives.

Negative freedom is not sufficient to give a complete explanation regarding the inner principles of morality. The concept of negative freedom and an adequate focus on self-reliance and self-esteem are essential to one's moral ownership and the exercise of freedom. A proper and true morality primarily lies in the relation of self with self without coercion: Self-love as self-respect. However, the practical application of such an individualistic morality within social interactions requires the use of additional concepts: Mainly property and autonomy. The development of ethical principles through one's own abilities and talents requires appropriation and positive freedom as to have the capacity to act from inner principles.

### **3.2.2 Freedom within a Moral Limitation**

Freedom, contrary to what Hobbes claims, is not boundless or limitless. Freedom, since being a moral conception, must be understood within a scope of limitation in its connection to responsibility. Freedom makes sense only within the responsibility that is assumed through the practice of appropriation of values. This means that freedom is actual to the extent that one takes the responsibility of freedom while exercising one's abilities. An actualized freedom is therefore to appropriate what one earns throughout this practice. Human beings are the free agents who freely choose and appropriate values for themselves. Thus, as free agents, human beings become also responsible for that which they earn as they exercise a moral freedom. This explains why freedom and responsibility should be taken as inseparable from each other and must be grasped in the pursuit of self-interest.

It is commonly accepted that morally wrong actions can be prevented by controlling the scope of the liberty of action by a higher authority. This higher authority can be considered either to be in terms of a political state or a moral constraint such as duty before one's own interests. Controlling the liberty of action and narrowing the field of action in favor of the external rules imposed by an authority, however, is the negative approach to one's right to act. Further, it contradicts the rational principles of an individual morality according to which the liberty of action should be exercised by one's individual autonomy and one's responsibility.

Moral rightness and the moral exercise of freedom must therefore be relied on one's moral freedom as the moral exercise of abilities that can only provide the positive meaning of a moral action in one's own responsibility

and one's own field of appropriation as a conditional freedom.<sup>163</sup> This conditional freedom denotes a moral limitation that allows one's individual exercise of abilities by one's power of action. This understanding of freedom favors the positive approach to a moral action and the scope of one's self-government.

### **3.2.3 Autonomy and the Inner Principle of Morality<sup>164</sup>**

Autonomy is the central point in understanding the nature of positive freedom. Positive freedom is the freedom that is exercised by individuals who are considered to have the ability to choose their own values and achieve their own goals by virtue of autonomous actions. To be able to exercise a positive freedom, in terms of an individualistic morality, one must determine one's moral purposes to be achieved in a life that is appropriated. This individualistic concept of positive freedom is compatible with the principles of objectivism, in terms of:

- i. The power and the capacity one has to own and control one's life as one's property
- ii. The respect not to violate others' property rights and not to infringe personal zones.

The conception of property seems to have an intimate connection with positive freedom, and therefore with autonomy. Marxists also advocate positive freedom as the only form of liberty. As I have said, positive freedom requires the principles of an individual autonomy, namely appropriating one's person and one's life. However, socialism contradicts these principles,

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<sup>163</sup> I find it quite interesting to understand freedom in limitations as a conditioned freedom that is actualized in the form of property. I will again discuss such a conception of freedom in the next chapter in the section "Conditional Freedom of Property".

<sup>164</sup> The inner principle of morality signifies appropriation through the pursuit of one's own interests.

since such a collective political structure threatens the lives and properties of individuals. Positive freedom can be justified from the perspective of an individual autonomy that is exercised by virtue of chosen and appropriated values. The appropriation of values concerns one's liberty of action in relation to the power or capacity of choosing these values. I take positive freedom as human beings' capacity to choose their values and achieve a life through appropriating their chosen values, which denotes the Objectivist ethics in the way I am defending. Individual autonomy is the very character of positive freedom and, because of its intimate connection with property, it can only exist when private property is secured.

The realization of an individual autonomy also promotes the moral relationships between human beings. Moral relationships involve the principles of a rational morality, mainly the rational self-interest and the rational values that are objectively recognized by each individual being. These relationships can be set through a network of properties. The network of properties signifies the actual connections among properties that are achieved through the pursuit of rational interests and rational values.<sup>165</sup>

### **3.2.4 Autonomy as a Form of Private Property**

The principles of a moral action must be determined freely and objectively. They must be determined freely because morality gains its meaning only in freedom. In this sense, freedom can also be conceived as moral responsibility. The principles of an action must be also objective, because an action is performed for the purpose of achieving the objective values. Thus, the criterion to freely and objectively determine the right principles of a moral action must be the individual autonomy. Autonomy, from this reasoning, is to determine the principles of freedom by the moral agent who

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<sup>165</sup> These claims will be clarified in the last two sections of this chapter in very connection to the relational understanding of property. I also intend to explain it in the next chapter with reference to 'private spaces' in the social world.

assumes the responsibility for these principles. Then there is one more and fundamental criterion to set these principles in terms of responsibility: Ownership of these principles. To see what I mean by the ownership of moral principles, the close link between autonomy and property should be comprehended, which I am about to explain.

Autonomy requires these principles to be owned by the moral agent. The basis for the ownership of moral principles can be the individual autonomy that is exercised on the principle of property, or, the principle of self-ownership. In this understanding, autonomy becomes an aspect of private property. Let me explain my point.

To begin with, private property must not be taken only as a material object. Besides its material existence, private property has a key moral implication of exercising an individual autonomy that is inherently connected to property –as argued in the previous chapter. In this respect, private property can be said to contain the capacity for moral ownership allowing one to exercise one’s moral freedom.

Private property is acquired through the liberty of action. This is based on the right to own one’s life. Freedom in this sense is to be linked to oneself and this corresponds to the highest purpose of morality: Achieving one’s own moral being. One’s own moral being is realized in the practical realm through the exercise of freedom and appropriating its outcome. The exercise of freedom in terms of autonomy requires the objective principles that are chosen freely. As these principles are owned and appropriated while performing an action, freedom as autonomy should be grasped in the context of appropriation. Thus, freedom becomes one’s own property and autonomy acquires its full meaning through the conception of private property. To understand the relationship between freedom and property I find quite

interesting to examine Max Stirner's egoism and his conception of "ownness".

### 3.2.5 Stirner's Egoism

In his famous work *The Ego and Its Own*<sup>166</sup>, Stirner defines egoism in its relation to the conception of property. In Stirner, egoism, contrary to self-interested action, is much related to such a value in one's own being as *ownness* -that is self-mastery and the autonomy of the individual.<sup>167</sup> The autonomy of the individual in Stirner, unlike the Kantian understanding of autonomy, means neither self-authorization under the objective moral law, nor self-imposed obligation. From the perspective of an owned freedom, any implication of duty results in a denial of one's freedom. The demand for *ownness* thus means not to recognize any duty and hence any law.

However, egoism can pose a problem in determining the proper condition of acting, if it is evaluated under the view of one-sidedness. For Stirner, any person who subordinates the principle of egoism to one and single motive, even self-interest, would inevitably sacrifice oneself in this "narrow" course of action.<sup>168</sup> This may however not be true when evaluated from the perspective of a relational egoism that I have already discussed in the previous chapter. The trade of values is the essence of a moral relationship

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<sup>166</sup> Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, ed. David Leopold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, xxii.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. Stirner's account of egoism should be distinguished from the conventional form of egoistic moralities that relies on merely self-interested action. Since Stirner is a critique of one sided and narrow egoism and identifies selfishness with it, he brings about a new form of egoism, yet allows "unselfish" actions that may still be egoistic (John P. Clark, *Max Stirner's Egoism*. London: Freedom Press, 1976, p. 39). Besides, Locke's account of individualism relies on not merely "narrow, mundane self-interest" but involves a moral aspect in an advancement of his theory around natural law and some religious points on a morality such as "divine legislation". See Steven Forde, "Natural Law, Theology and Morality in Locke", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 45 No. 2 (April 2001), pp. 396-409.

and it is compatible with the moral principle of egoism, namely promoting one's own welfare through actions one performs and appropriates.

The portrait of egoism is created by its “openness”, for Stirner too, so that one is able to exercise one's freedom in accordance with the principle of individual autonomy. The openness of egoism can be achieved in a morality in which human beings objectively and rationally choose their moral values to be exchanged in their relationships. I do not see the need to discuss this issue again, since I have examined in depth the relational character of egoism in Chapter 2.<sup>169</sup> In accordance with the view of relational egoism with others, self-interest may satisfy the criterion of openness when defined in terms of “rational self-interest”.

### **3.2.6 Ownness as Freedom**

Stirner explores the most fundamental aspects of human experience in an egoistic fashion. His egoism is directly related to his unique understanding of freedom. However, he demands “more than” freedom; it is not enough for us to only be “free”, but we should also be “owners”.<sup>170</sup>

According to Stirner, freedom is quite important, but not in the historical (particularly Christian) way it is understood. He states that freedom means to “get rid of” something unwanted.<sup>171</sup> However, such a freedom continually puts us in a position that we would always be in need of creating “new tasks” to save us from things, to get rid of them. During the process while we think we gain our freedom, we will inevitably face new limits to reach beyond. Freedom cannot be gained truly and wholly, Stirner emphatically agrees. Thus freedom defined in terms of *getting rid of* something unwanted is

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<sup>169</sup> For the relevant section see Chapter 2, 39-2.

<sup>170</sup> Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, 142.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

inadequate and incomplete in one's life as long as *ownness* is not taken into account in this understanding. This understanding of freedom does not explain, for example, why it is better to be free than a slave. Although a slave is not "free" from the master's whip or his torture, some may argue that a slave can be regarded as free "inwardly", perhaps in the realm of mind.<sup>172</sup> At this point, Stirner admits that this would not be a real freedom.

However *ownness* always remains with us, belonging to our complete existence mentally and bodily, or "inwardly and outwardly", even for the slave –which means that *ownness* has preeminence over freedom as it belongs to one's existence inseparably.<sup>173</sup> Therefore, *ownness* must be regarded as the basis of one's existence. One's *ownness* is absolute in the sense that nothing one owns and has owned can be taken from oneself. In Stirner's own words:

Ownness, on the contrary [to freedom], is my whole being and existence, it is myself. I am free from what I am rid of, owner of what I have in my power or what I control.<sup>174</sup>

This is actually a positive transformation of freedom from self-denial to self-esteem, encouraging *selfishness* on the basis of one's *ownness* that is inherent in one's ability to free oneself from anything outside one and to own oneself. This freedom is only "the description of *owner*".<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, 143.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. A slave could be subjected to the torture of the master, however master cannot appropriate any part of his body –it is complete in the existence of slave. As an example, this reminds me a scene from the movie Kill Bill 2(2004): The Bride is brought to the house of Pai Mei –the Chinese master of martial arts- by Bill himself to be trained. At their first meeting during a fight, she once attempts to attack the master from behind with a stone. In return the master quickly catches her arm. Putting her in an extreme pain by twisting her arm so badly, he says "I own your arm and I can do whatever I want". Truly, he is not the owner of her arm. Her arm is inseparable from her *ownness* –as it is inseparably vital with the whole body. Thus, he can only prevent her from using her arm but he cannot cut it off, he cannot make it his own and he cannot appropriate it.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 154.

Stirner rejects any higher truth above one's *ownness* –because he thinks that 'truth' should be subordinated to 'I' and must lose its privileged position above one's own individual existence, which is true even and especially for "the essence of man". At this point, Stirner makes an objection to Feuerbach's thesis. Feuerbach claims that human beings have a common essence based on a material nature and this is identified in terms of the natural essence of a species.<sup>176</sup> Stirner argues that this view is no different from the doctrine of Christianity in the sense that the individual is still subordinated to an essentialist view. The materialist doctrine of human nature, according to Stirner, merely replaces the Supreme Being with the "nature of man" as a transformation of authority above the individual.<sup>177</sup>

For Stirner, as long as human beings are identified with a certain type of essence or nature, it makes no difference whether this identification is assessed in physical or spiritual realm –both are "the realm of essences" and against the individual's *ownness*. Stirner seems satisfied by depicting such an exceptional concept of the independency of individual in terms of *ownness* signifying the unique character of the existence of each human being.

### **3.2.7 *Ownness* as Self-Responsibility**

*Ownness* has a deep connection to moral responsibility in terms of rational interests. The most important thing with moral responsibility is the capability of freedom by which human beings become free choosers of values and also moral ends. As I have argued before, each chosen value and each moral end should be grasped in terms of a morality of rational self-interest. In pursuing rational interests, each outcome of action is directly

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<sup>176</sup> See *The Essence of Christianity* (1841) by Feuerbach.

<sup>177</sup> "I am neither God nor *man*, neither the supreme essence nor my essence, and therefore it is all one in the main whether I think of the essence as in me or outside me." Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*, 34.

linked to a moral responsibility by which moral actors become aware of their rational ends in achieving the highest purpose of morality. In this sense human beings are considered to be the primary beneficiary of any performed action in their own rational interests.

This fact leads us to the selfish conception of responsibility towards oneself as a moral actor and owner of one's moral values. This explains why morality cannot be based on coercive factors or an unconditional imperative. Morality should rely on self-responsibility that is recognized by the moral awareness of one's practice of ownership. This moral knowledge is grasped through the capability of action and the actuality of freedom. Freedom as a moral conception is now understandable in its relation to one's own being within the responsibility of the moral exercise of one's abilities –and its ownership.

Appropriated values and the responsibility for the exercise of abilities serve one's own interests, which can be conceived as acquiring private property, for private property is the direct result of the actualization of freedom. Private property is the embodiment and the objectivity of one's moral ownership in the world. Thus, if freedom (or liberty of action) would be actual in the world, then it should become a concrete expression of one's self-responsibility. Freedom should only be grasped as one's use of abilities, indeed the moral use of abilities, which defines being responsible for such a freedom connected to an appropriated morality and its embodiment private property.

### **3.2.8 Relational Freedom in the Context of Private Property**

The responsibility of freedom is also the main principle to actualize a relational freedom in the social realm. I also define it as 'relational aspect of property'. I have such an approach to relational freedom: Freedom should

be relational when it concerns social relationships in which human beings exchange their appropriated values and also assume the responsibility for this exchange. Relationships are established by the individual beings themselves and they first have their own beings as self-ownership during their practice. The trade of values entails separate spaces in the public realm kept between individuals who have chosen and appropriated their own values individually, and come to exchange them for their own profit, implying a moral consciousness not found in relationality but in their own moral self. The relational aspect of property denotes the relationships between properties of human beings including their social interactions and private spheres that are essential to relationships.

The relational understanding of property I am arguing here addresses the moral interactions between individuals each of whom has a right to exchange on the principle of voluntary agreement. Relationality of properties is basically egoistic in the sense that each person is interested in maintaining and improving their own lives. This has a very important role in arranging the moral principles in the social realm where each individual has private rights and personal space to be respected that are privately owned by each person. That is easily understandable from the perspective of individualism and its proper moral philosophy based on the conceptions of property and privacy. In connection to privacy and its protection in the social realm, relationality of properties will be more elaborated later.<sup>178</sup>

But in the economic framework, productive work brings freedom in a relational ontology of private property: The property belongs to the producer, as long as all other values undergoing the process of production are acclaimed by the producer. The right to keep it or transfer or sell it again is the producer's own right. Relational property is practiced in the network

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<sup>178</sup> See the section 4.6. On the interactive constitution of freedom you might also want to look at Hegel's "reciprocal recognition" (See Winfield, *Reason and Justice*, "Freedom as Interaction", 160-5).

of production and exchange of business, and private properties; human beings produce values and exchange them, the world of physics, materials or world of objects in economics. These objects can be materials, physical objects or products, which are all in relation with the forms of mind whose ability is creating and transforming matter into valuable objects for human beings.

### **3.2.9 The Inseparability of Freedom from Private Property (A Response to Marx's Conception of Alienation)**

Marx argues that private property should be abolished in order to accomplish human freedom and justice among human beings. His ideas regarding modes of production must be understood in terms of freedom, since he evaluates modes of production on the basis of the concept of private property and freedom, rather than justice.<sup>179</sup> Although in his philosophy moral values are hardly emphasized, since he has no moral theory, Marx's ideas should be assessed in terms of morality, since his critique of private property is based on considerations of freedom.<sup>180</sup> His idea about human emancipation may be defined as "return to man's natural essence –social".<sup>181</sup> The system of private property, in this respect, would result in alienation -the conception that he introduces to describe the society deprived of freedom of work and causing a loss of relationship to products.

*Alienation* is an ethical conception in its roots, as Platonists first introduces this conception on the basis of Plato's thoughts. According to them, before

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<sup>179</sup> Brenkert, George G. "Freedom and Private Property in Marx", *Philosophy & Public Affairs* Vol.8 No.2 (1979): 122-147; 143

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 127. Also see Marx, Karl. "Private Property and Communism", *Karl Marx Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, URL=<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/comm.htm>. Section 4 (accessed March 14, 2018).

falling from grace and moral highness, human beings live in an original stage of existence. But in this world, the purpose of human life is to make their way back to this stage of existence –to lead a journey throughout which they must discipline and cultivate their souls. In this sense, *alienation* seems to concern a moral practice in which human beings actualize their freedom to reach a higher position.

This philosophical doctrine of alienation is also influential on Marx.<sup>182</sup> However for Marx the actualization of freedom must be in this world. Again for Marx, private property is a major cause of alienation, and to overcome alienation private property must be abolished.

I believe that the problem of alienation refers to determine the purpose of the exercise of freedom. In my understanding, human beings are identified with their natural abilities. Freedom can be actualized by the exercise of these abilities and appropriating their outcome, i.e., only by acquiring property. From the perspective of the Objectivist ethics, the overcoming of alienation as to realize a practical freedom in the achievement of an existence cannot be about abolishing private property, as opposing Marx. On the contrary, alienation, in this perspective, can only be overcome by recognizing the true significance of private property in its relation to one's freedom and the values in the achievement of a life, and by acknowledging the private ownership of property as the outcome of a continuing moral activity. Not to mention that the right to private property is fundamental for freedom, by which life can be built. Private property can only guarantee freedom in public realm, so that freedom cannot be separated from property especially in the social context.

The relational understanding of property is thus a solution to the problem of alienation since it reveals the key aspects of a moral relationship that are

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<sup>182</sup> Rothbard, "Natural Law", *Economic Thought Before Adam Smith*, 5.

proposed by this thesis. In this sense, abstraction of private property can be a problem, not private property itself. Human beings interact with each other as they exchange their moral values by means of the properties that they have achieved as the outcome of the exercise of their abilities. Thus private property must be seen as the actual and long-term outcome of a continuing moral practice. If we isolate its connections with values and the cooperative elements of human survival, such as abilities and the virtue of productivity, and disregard its moral aspects, then the moral implications and significance of private property cannot be truly grasped. If we cannot correctly grasp the significance of private property, then we cannot make sense of our individual existence and freedom in the moral context. Further, private property has a great role in human life, including our private spheres and private actions, which is another crucial aspect of appropriation. More on this issue will be discussed and clarified in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### PRIVACY

*“After all, human beings are like that.  
When they are alone they want to be with others,  
and when they are with others they want to be alone.”  
-Gertrude Stein*

The need or demand for privacy indicates the particular concern of individual beings to maintain and protect their own individual existence. For example it may be one’s desire either to be alone or to keep one’s personal information off others. In this way, privacy appears to be in relation to one’s demand for freedom. According to *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, privacy is defined as “freedom from unauthorized intrusion”, which indicates both social and political aspects of privacy.<sup>183</sup> Thus the term privacy has a direct relation with freedom. Since practical freedom is necessarily tied to property, as discussed in the previous chapter, privacy can only be secured by property in the public realm where human beings realize their freedom. In other words, privacy can practically be sustained in a society by virtue of private property.

Privacy is maintained by one’s moral distance to others. Distance may denote the limits by which one is able to preserve one’s own individual existence either in an interaction or in society. In both cases, privacy is argued to be guaranteed practically and objectively by private ownership of property—which is the main argument I try to develop throughout this

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<sup>183</sup> The definition is received from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/privacy> (accessed April 03, 2018).

chapter. In order to achieve a society of moral distances we should rely on private property.

#### 4.1 The Distinction between the Private and the Public

Arendt explores the conception of privacy by referring to the very distinction between the private and the public realms, and how they are related to freedom. In *The Human Condition*<sup>184</sup>, she reveals how the meaning of the term “public realm” has changed from ancient thought to modern times in its relation with the terms “political” and “social”.

In ancient thought, especially in Aristotle and Plato, the term “social” relates to human life to the extent that the social togetherness of human beings is actually necessitated by their biological facts as a species –belonging to our animal nature.<sup>185</sup> This is not obviously what is distinctive about human beings. Human beings have also politically organized as we can see, for an example, in the form of city-states. The *city-state* in Ancient Greece is the political structure by which human beings enter into a realm of “action” and “speech” –two main characteristics of the human world, as Arendt points.<sup>186</sup> Living in such a political system, human beings experience the freedom of action and speech as they exercise their reason publicly.<sup>187</sup> Thus the difference between “the political” and “the social” depends on the

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<sup>184</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, 24.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid*, 25.

<sup>187</sup> When I see from the perspective of the Objectivist ethics I associate the capabilities “action” and “speech” with the central abilities of human beings, i.e. “thinking” and “productive work”, mainly related to the faculty of reason. Therefore, they must be considered as the capacities of the human mind not only to be associated with the public realm but also the aspects of human survival –accordingly, the emergence of public realm can be a result of the faculty of reason and a representation of the ethical merging with the political. However, it must be stressed that in Arendt’s own conception, action and speech are kept strictly apart from instrumental reason and concerns of survival; hence this appropriation of Arendt’s ideas here significantly depart from her own theory.

establishment of these political institutions, and the term “political” reflects the human capacity for freedom.

The distinction between the private and the public is sharp in this political structure of the ancient world. The private realm is defined with the household sphere in which the members of the family live together as they are “driven by their wants and needs”.<sup>188</sup> A household is run by the master of the household, who rules the slaves to serve the needs of the family. The realm of household as “private” is distinguished from the realm of city-state as “public” in the sense that in the private realm human beings are driven by their necessities, whereas in public realm they are able to realize their freedom. Thus, in Arendt’s thought, the distinction between the public and the private can be seen as the distinction between freedom and un-freedom, since freedom is only located in the public realm where everyone is “equal” as citizen.<sup>189</sup>

However, the distinction between the private and the public seems to be disappearing in modern times, as Arendt states, when the political structure evolves into the form of a nation-state in which the social realm seems to be ruled in a way similar to the household, but this time society is organized as “one super-human family” called as “the nation.”<sup>190</sup> In this situation, Arendt observes that the distinction between “the political” and “the social” is also erased since politics becomes “a function of society”.<sup>191</sup> Arendt sees this functional character of society as a risk to the political realm which is characterized by freedom by virtue of action and speech. In Ancient Greece it is understandable that these capacities cannot be actualized by the one who lives only a private life. In modern thought privacy has gained a rich content

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<sup>188</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 30.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid*, 31-2.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

in our lives so that we do not think of it as a “deprivation”<sup>192</sup> of such capacities or freedom, not like the ancient privacy. This is because modern individualism enunciates privacy in its relation to freedom, as we understand it today. Thus, “modern privacy” represents an improvement in the life of an individual as it protects the privacy of individual beings from the intrusion of society. That is to say the distinction is not between the private and the political in modern world, but between the private and the social.

According to Arendt, it is historically evident that “private sharply opposes social” to secure “the intimate”.<sup>193</sup> In the modern understanding of privacy, that the private becomes the opposite of social could mean that it becomes highly relevant to the modern idea of freedom, which I particularly appreciate. At this point, for the purpose of my thesis, I take privacy as against the social realm indicating the individuality<sup>194</sup> of human beings as their individual existence, which also proves the moral implications of the “private” in a broad sense.

The main character of morality is individually owned values within a moral self that is appropriated, which has emerged in modern understanding with the proper meaning of privacy in its true function. Therefore, for the sake of a true moral understanding of human character and human life, we should intentionally hold the distinction between the individual and the social, which is necessary for us to understand the significance of privacy in moral terms. Though Arendt primarily focuses on the “political realm”, I focus on the significance of the distinction between the private and the social lives of

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<sup>192</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 38.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 38. Arendt discusses the significance of privacy in its connection to intimacy, with also references to Rousseau. See more in 38-9.

<sup>194</sup> Here I basically take the modern understanding of individuality in terms of the connection between privacy and freedom as I plan to develop an argument of privacy based on private property and its role in realizing one’s freedom, which I make clearer in the next sections.

human beings, two aspects of existence, regarding the moral principles of human life, including the moral values and purposes, as far as I am mainly interested in the moral implications of privacy. However, I do not attribute a different ground to politics or political action other than a moral basis of one's own interests and goals, which is found in a rational morality. The origin of political action concerning right and the liberty of action, I believe, should lie in the moral exercise of natural abilities –as I have argued in the previous chapter. This is highly related to the moral freedom which is described through modernity<sup>195</sup> as moral freedom is exercised in the life of individuals who are able to hold and pursue their own values within the social realm –which is possible only by virtue of the recognition of unique abilities of individuals by each other as private persons in their existence to maintain their values. Whenever this leads to a tension between an individual and society the importance of privacy in moral terms will be submitted as the ground of any possible moral freedom to take action in the actual world shared by each individual.

As we have seen, in the modern understanding of privacy, the private is taken to be the “opposite of the social” as it reiterates the importance of freedom, particularly in terms of the maintenance of the life of the individual in terms of an appropriated self and its moral practice in the public realm through the exercise of freedom by virtue of property. Arendt's criticism about the modern conception of society is that it removes the private sphere and encompasses it through a collective whole. However private property is that which saves us from being dissolved in this collective whole and it allows us to have our privacy (i.e. our individuality) by creating moral

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<sup>195</sup> Modernity is basically conceived as “the occurrence of novelty” in the present time. And whatever new is, it does actually refer to the distinct character of individual activities in the exercise of a moral freedom having a potentiality to “change” the route of morality. Hence, if there exists any sign of modernity, then it will occur in the acceptance of individually chosen values which should be conceived as the character of “novelty” against the “present” time –that shows modernity always implies the future of moral development within a voluntary agreement among individuals who have the new experiences and fresh vision of the world.

distances to each other and to freely exist in the world, since it secures our private spheres in a society –which I am going to argue in the following sections.

#### **4.2 The Realization of Privacy as Public Self**

For Arendt, action is only possible within the “constant presence of others”.<sup>196</sup> Arendt seems quite fair in assuming that action or any deed cannot be performed purely in privacy and requires the political realm, which she defines as “presence of others”. This may be true for a specific meaning of action. However, performing an action may also be possible, and indeed free, if we understand privacy in terms of property and its relational aspects.

At this point, I want to emphasize the twofold aspect of privacy; 1) one’s “closedness” that may be considered as one’s inner self or private self, and 2) one’s relationality, being *social*, as public self that engages in communication with others. In the social realm or the world as we know it (to use Arendt’s expression “the world into which we are born”<sup>197</sup>), it seems impossible to say ‘I exist as myself’ in it in the first sense of privacy (1) as it would not be an action. In the latter aspect of privacy (2), action is performed through communication between public selves by way of their appropriated values –as they are able actualize their freedom through interaction by these values and maintain their privacy at the same time. Action in such an understanding becomes possible if the social realm is characterized by moral interactions that rely on relationality of properties.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 22-3. Regarding the capabilities of human beings, Arendt makes a categorical distinction between action as what is truly human and the activity of labor that is *animal* part of us (Ibid, 7).

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>198</sup> In this perspective action relates to one’s appropriated values and their interaction in the social realm. See also the previous chapter section 3.2.8.

The link between the private self and public self seems to be evident in that privacy turns into the exercise of one's liberty of action.

The exercise of one's liberty of action requires the principle of individuality of action. Individuality of action can be fostered in connection to the "presence of others": Human beings realize their moral personalities among other persons as free individual actors who are supposed to appropriate the same objective values –the values that are recognized by individuals in moral interactions. Therefore, privacy can make an action possible in the social realm, as long as it is understood to be one's public self in communication by way of property. Action thus denotes the realization of one's public self by way of property in social sphere in a civilized world.<sup>199</sup>

I accept that action requires the "presence of others", which is indispensable, but action is performed as long as it holds the principle of individuality – namely property as to protect one's privacy and maintain one's individual existence in the social realm. From this moment I may use the term "social" interchangeably for the term "public" –since I have stated that privacy is taken to be in opposition to society, and the social sphere as the "public" can represent the "presence of others" in this sense.

#### **4.3 Private in Opposition to Social**

Privacy, when understood as a kind of property, can exist in the practical world by way of property relations; human beings become moral actors in communication in the public sphere. In the public or social sphere, human beings' lives are determined by the rules of political organizations. This

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<sup>199</sup> Considering the civilized modern individual against the savage who is purposely appreciated by Rousseau in order to criticize rationalism, Rand expresses the theme of privacy within a genuine form of self-determination during the history of mankind, as follows: "Civilization is the progress toward a society of privacy. The savage's whole existence is public, ruled by the laws of his tribe. Civilization is the process of setting man free from men." Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* (1943).

process of “normalizing” means actually a standardization of action and values in moral terms, as well as violating the privacy of individuals. While Arendt also emphasizes this fact, she seems to be indicating the danger of levelling that society imposes, as it inevitably results in the loss of freedom in action, which, according to Arendt, happens in modern society.<sup>200</sup> Privacy must be preserved during a communication, which is crucial to one’s existence.

I consider relationship with others as a communication carried out through the principles, such as voluntary agreement and exchange of ideas, designating the goals of communication. These ideas are expressible through “appearances”. I understand by ‘appearance’ the same thing that Arendt does: That which is visible or perceivable by our senses and cognition by virtue of speech and action –the two achievements “constituting reality”.<sup>201</sup> Accordingly, one’s existence in the social realm actually corresponds to the fact of becoming publicly visible through means of speech and having interactions.

The social realm where we become “visible” can be seen as the opposite of privacy. However, seen in terms of relationality (2), privacy can attain a socially relatable form and meaning by virtue of private property. In this sense, privacy is recognized and protected by virtue of private property in reality<sup>202</sup> as the outer space of the pure private self, for property guarantees all the rights and moral values that are also maintained by privacy. Private property provides the ground of actions and communications between human beings as they interact with each other within the boundaries of properties that create distances among human beings, which protects their

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<sup>200</sup> Arendt, *Human Condition*, 40.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 50. “With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world”, as Arendt points the free characteristic of action (Ibid, 176).

<sup>202</sup> The reality, as Arendt perfectly describes, that is constructed by means of communication, indicating publicity as “appearances” (Ibid, 50)

individuality. Private property is thus the very condition of separating the private realm from the common realm. The main principle of separation between the private and the common lies in the certain conception of distance. Further, distance is the standard by which a relationship should always be defined, which is also valid for *intimate* forms of relationships that are even to be evaluated by rational criteria.

By distance I understand the space between two human beings or two moral spheres of properties, and any distance can be controlled by means of voluntary actions, intentions and rational interests that could be encountered in an intimate relationship. An intimate relationship, must also be a part of a rational morality in terms of appreciation moral virtues, which is “the emotional response of one man to the virtues of another”.<sup>203</sup> In scope of the moral understanding improved throughout my thesis, it is appropriate to see intimate relationships as “*spiritual payments*” as a result of voluntary agreement and exchange of values which are essential to the nature of a just relationship.<sup>204</sup>

After all, I think that the constant and necessary existence of distance or space between people is the key factor of any possible interaction in terms of retaining moral integrity of each person –as much as defining the conditions of presence in a relationship.

#### **4.4 The Right to Privacy as Distance**

The distance or space that defines the nature of relationships can only be justified and grasped through the conception of property which identifies each person as an individual in one’s privacy and personal space. The

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<sup>203</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 35.

<sup>204</sup> An intimate relationship, contrary to the usually assumed belief, has no a specific nature or inner core other than rational principle of exchange to be always definable in terms of a morality based on rational self-interest.

appearance to others is made possible via private property which delineates the freedom that is exercised by one's public self. In the common realm each person is characterized by one's privacy and consent to interaction. In other words, relatedness in separation of properties in the common realm relies on the consent of free individuals. In this respect, society, or the social world, is the coming together of human beings who are essentially property owners in their own personalities to the extent that they demand privacy in order to control the distances they keep from each other. From this view point it is understandable that the "public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other".<sup>205</sup> This is because our privacies are guaranteed by the distances that we constantly keep between each other.

Observing the fact that a rapidly expanding society results in complications of gathering human beings together. Arendt indicates "the weirdness of this situation by referring to the metaphor of a table."<sup>206</sup> Arendt uses the table metaphor to represent the concrete space between people, which creates a distance to maintain a proper communication. I want to borrow and use the same table metaphor to represent the presence of a peaceful discussion between human beings who negotiate and exchange their demands and expectations to achieve an agreement. By virtue of the table as the concrete space between parties it is possible to keep the dignity of agreement in which the table protects their privacies during the communication. The real mediator between human beings is the distance kept between them out of their privacies.

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<sup>205</sup> Arendt, *Human Condition*, 52.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid*, 53.

#### **4.5 The Accessibility of Privacy (Private Property as the Social Aspect of Freedom)**

Privacy as one's inner self has no actual function in social life or the public sphere unless brought into the realm of relational properties. This non-functionality of privacy is defined as "one's closedness", that means something one completely has/owns within one's existence. In practical terms, privacy is disclosed as liberty of action within the space provided by private property, which proves my specific conception of privacy in relation to private property. The privacy of the moral self in its internality (i.e. on the level of inaction) is infinite; so that, it is impossible to limit privacy in moral terms.

However, privacy is positively limited in practice through private property. Privacy is protected by this limited sphere of private property which can also be defined as the openness of privacy. Privacies of individuals become relatively external to each other in the practical realm by virtue of private property and this explains the relationality between distances. Distance is the moral factor that keeps human beings in a just, and a livable and peaceful community, for it guarantees privacy and arranges the relationships between human beings in a way that they can trust each other and are able to exchange values. The only way to keep distance between moral persons is private property. Therefore privacy becomes functional by virtue of private property as the embodiment of appropriation that secures one's privacy and 'private actions' in public. Private property here is to be understood as the condition of the accessibility of privacy into the public realm by virtue of distances.

It should be remembered that Arendt focuses on the meaning of privacy as "deprivation of reality".<sup>207</sup> However, this meaning of privacy may not pose a problem for my argument if we carefully make a distinction: Privacy can

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<sup>207</sup> Arendt, *Human Condition*, 58.

be understood as a quality of either the self or the actions of the self. Privacy may define one's desire to be alone, for instance, and it may will correspond to a withdrawal from reality in quest for an inner freedom, But the term 'private' can also apply to one's appropriation of oneself and one's property. Thus, 'privacy' refers to the moral self and private property is the objective indication of privacy. Through private property as the concrete indication of privacy, one can grasp privacy not as deprivation but as a grasping of reality. This is what I mean by 'private action': The transition from "deprivation of reality" to the 'grasping of reality'. Thus, when analytically examined, privacy and private property are still conceptually distinct. In either case, the demand for privacy is the demand for freedom. Let me explain.

We can dwell on morality and freedom by considering the following two approaches: One focuses on the action and relationality with the world and others as representing the 'outwardliness' of the moral self; and the other implies a withdrawal from the world into one's inner privacy as representing the 'inwardliness' of the moral self. Throughout my thesis I mainly focus on the morality that concerns the relationship between chosen ends and actions, between the moral self and the world, in favor of providing an explanation for how values play an active role in action. Thus regarding the connection between one's self to freedom and morality, the continuity of an action for one's survival indicates a dynamism as the essential feature of a moral life.

However, I believe that the morality related to one's inner privacy defines the eternal serene freedom. Such freedom is not to be understood only as an abstract freedom but as standing for the *possibility* of moral practice. Yet such freedom remains non-functional in the actual world unless it is brought into the public sphere within the limits of property. At this point, private property will be taken as the embodied privacy in action and represents the 'outwardliness' of one's self. Private property becomes the significance of

the appropriation as a practical continuity in leading a life originated in moral deliberation before the world of “chaos”.

The demand for privacy is thus the demand for freedom to the extent that privacy is considered as not “social”. At first glance, privacy means an existence in self, preceding an action in appearance –the pure moral self in the private sphere. In the public realm, privacy and individual freedom are secured by private property (whether it be physical or intellectual property). It is, therefore, quite correct to conceive of private property as the social, and privacy as the mental aspect of freedom. Therefore, the demand for privacy is said to be the most fundamental aspect of a genuine and free life, not to be satisfied only in private, but especially in common. The realization of freedom in practice occurs in its direct relation to private property<sup>208</sup>, which is now a practical form of privacy that creates a certain moral distance to others as one’s individual freedom and space in the social realm.

#### **4.6 Private Space and the Principle of Demandability**

In the public realm we seek ways of securing and maintaining our privacies and private zones. Privacy is always demanded in one’s life and especially in a relationship with others. Distances harmonize these relationships and social interactions among human beings by preventing them from infringing on each other’s privacies or private spaces. In this context, a moral action must be understood as a response to any demand, particularly the demand for privacy.

We can recognize and respond to another’s demands, only because we have appropriated them as moral values for us. Thus, recognizing the demandable and responding to the demands, instead of performing *duties* to each other, becomes the essence of moral interaction in the world where appropriation

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<sup>208</sup> I have already discussed the realization of freedom in the practical aspect of appropriation in the previous chapter.

is the principle of morality and private property is the concrete result of appropriation of values. In other words, it is not my duty to respect others' private spheres or liberties; rather, I respond to them because they are recognized by me as demands, and also because I have first appropriated the same objective values for myself. By virtue of appropriation, I become able to recognize the demands for the same objective values in an encounter with others. For example, since I have appropriated privacy for myself as an objective value, then I am able to recognize and respond to the demand of the same objective value -that is another's privacy. What makes it different from duty is that I am free to recognize the objective demands as they are appropriated by me as a free moral person –I am not obliged to do anything, I am only responding. The motivation for responding to a demand is basically the appropriation of that which is demanded. Thus, respect freely and objectively emerges in a moral interaction as a reciprocal exchange of values in such a way that an objective value is appropriated and demanded at the same time.

Values in relationships are exchanged by free individuals who appropriate the same objective moral values and arrive at agreements through distances that are secured by their properties. In this regard, the principle of appropriation can be understood as distance that is continually appropriated and appreciated (by others) in the public space while exchanging values. This may require compromising interests or values to some degree but, remember, always to be actualized within one's own power and one's moral integrity in one's property, without sacrificing any values or moral self; and without violating the principle of moral relationship as the pursuit of one's rational interests.

In addition to appropriation of values, the other basis for recognizing a demand is rational self-interest in the exchange of values between human beings. Besides the exchange of values, rational self-interest also provides

reasons for responding to a demand. As an example, take the relationship between nature and us. One may claim that we have moral duties towards nature. I believe that this cannot be true according to the principle of demandability. To begin with, the essence of our relationship with nature can be understood in terms of promoting our interests and fulfilling our purposes in producing or appropriating natural sources. What I am arguing is that we do not have any “duty” towards nature. We actually produce things by using natural resources for our own interests, which will realize the protection of nature, again in terms of providing benefit and serving our purposes. In this respect, the moral position that is intelligible towards nature can only be responding to nature’s demands for the purpose of continuously and effectively continuing production, and hence providing benefits for both human beings and nature in a relational actuality between them. It is not our duty to protect nature; on the contrary, it is “nature’s demand” for protection or preservation that we respond to on the purpose of reproducing and turning it to our good, which is in our rational interests. When applied to nature, the principle of demandability explains the relationality between nature and us in terms of nature’s demands and our voluntary response to them in a rational context.

To conclude, a demand can only be responded to when it is appropriated or in connection with one’s rational interests. The principle of demandability explains the responsive character of an action within a choice-based morality against the obligatory view of an action by coercive and duty-based moralities. At this point I suggest to replace normativity with the principle of demandability as an alternative understanding of moral obligation that gives the reasonable explanation of the right to privacy and moral relationships by means of distances in accordance with the principles of voluntary act and relational egoism. Distance does not merely denote the adjustment of distances among human beings; rather, distance signifies the

knowledge of which values could be traded. Only appropriated values can be traded and distance is actually to know this nature of trade.<sup>209</sup>

More importantly, the moral significance of appropriation in public realm is evident in the moral relationship between human beings while they recognize and respect their demands. This explains how one's moral responsibility occurs in the interaction with others. The true sense of moral responsibility lies in the principles of appropriation and demandability. The only legitimate conception of responsibility, as I have argued in the previous chapter, is the moral responsibility for what is appropriated. I'm basically concerned about my own interests to be pursued and my individuality secured by private space in the public realm. Since morality concerns one's own individual practice, and morality is about an individual responsibility, namely my own responsibility for what I have appropriated, I always focus on my *ownness*, my actions, my rights and my property -which leads me towards my own moral development and my own moral freedom. There are no moral duties for me other than *obeying* my own interests and values appropriated by and for myself. In this sense, I only perceive my private space and this naturally establishes a proper and a moral distance to others whose distances make me aware of them. Relationality is thus maintained by recognition of personal spaces through distances. Each moral person realizes their freedom by private property as the solid basis of privacy in moral relationships.

#### **4.7 Conditional Freedom of Property**

Freedom and privacy require boundaries, i.e. personal space, and a property zone that private property determines. In this sense morality can address a "practical domain of distances" especially regarding the relationships between human beings, who should always be sure that they own their

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<sup>209</sup> That only appropriated values can be traded and the relationship between appropriation and trade will be clearer in Chapter 5.

properties, that they are owners of what belongs to them, and be content enough that their properties are respected by others through keeping and arranging a field of distances in social interactions. This explains the practical freedom, performing action in terms of property that involves the ethical values of individualism.

The moral course of life is not about having an accommodation in the social realm but about maintaining a constant presence in one's *ownness* as property. However the accommodated self in the social realm and the moral self in its *ownness* must be in connection when freedom is exercised in the actual world. The case for providing such a connection is a limited and conditional freedom in the social realm, which is merely possible through property zones that are defined in terms of distances among individuals.

In Kant, and some other thinkers like Rawls, freedom is treated as unconditional (or transcendental) according to which the moral agent is imagined to be fully capable of deriving all moral principles and laws from practical reason, for they are inherited in practical reason and discoverable in isolation and totally independent from all conditional aspects of the world behind the “veil of ignorance”<sup>210</sup>, including possessions and private properties. This view of freedom and universality of practical reason, especially in terms of the Categorical Imperative, as described in Kant, seems to be non-functional in actuality, i.e. in the social or political realm where action is necessarily public.<sup>211</sup> Moreover, such pure rationality is ineffective to drive moral values which should be appropriated through the

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<sup>210</sup> John Rawls, *Theory of Justice* (1971). Rawls sees the original position as “the source of normative principles” (Winfield, 107), and as “the idea of equality among participants” (Mathias Risse, *On Global Justice* p.14). Justice is discussed within an individual morality regarding the purpose of my thesis, so that it much concerns property rather than *equality* in egalitarian sense, which will be the topic of Chapter 5.

<sup>211</sup> That is actually Hegel's criticism of the functionality of the categorical imperative as practical morality (“Reason and Justice, 100-2). Winfield, Richard Dien. *Reason and Justice*. Albany: State University of New York, 1988.

exercise of one's freedom. Thus, from the perspective of a practical morality, the necessity and efficacy of values are evident in the conception of property. The abilities and properties of moral persons determine the conditions of morality with which any moral value can be justified as a necessary means for one's achievement of a life –that is the concreteness of a proper morality. In this sense, privileges of human beings, either personal or social, and mostly the abilities, and thus the differences one naturally has -to be considered as one' property- have a great importance in exercising one's moral freedom in the most ethical way.

Human beings are free to decide how to act and what to choose. As the potentiality of achieving a life, freedom must be explained in accordance with the character of publicity as actuality. Actualization of freedom is possible as action through the public exercise of one's reason. At this point, freedom and its actualization in the public realm is my main concern. I suggest that the freedom that we are seeking for *inwardly*, in its genuine sense, can be actualized outwardly, as we want it to be, and regain its true meaning by property. Private property as the practical outcome of the exercise of one's abilities also conditions its exercise. This means that freedom is purposely conditioned by its consequence that is appropriated as a result of the same freedom. I appropriate freedom as I actualize my freedom by acquiring private property as the concrete result of the exercise of my abilities. Freedom is thus a moral practice that is also conditioned by its practical outcome, which reveals the particular purpose of the exercise of freedom in the public realm as understood in terms of property.

Private property is therefore the link between individual freedom and the public exercise of one's reason and abilities. A public action can become free only on the principle of property, only when an action is free from any other condition except the one that is truly and morally appropriated by the individuals themselves through exercising their own abilities. In this

understanding of freedom, it is possible for moral agents to shape their lives as well as make things as their own by virtue of private property. Possessions and private properties are therefore achieved through the abilities and their moral use serving as a true moral practice indeed –namely appropriation of values.

Freedom is possible in its conditional character, in two ways: Conditioned by the moral values to be appropriated and conditioned by relationality of properties. Property, in the very truest sense, as belonging to my thesis topic, implies one's self-ownership, and this is actualized through the individual practice of appropriation of values in favor of one's own being. However property should also be taken as a conception of relationality in which human beings are to be in interaction with each other through their properties. Property is the condition of both separation as individuality and connection as agreement in the public realm, according to which any form of interaction including social relationships is defined.

#### **4.8 Plurality and Individuality**

Plurality warrants individuality in the public realm, as long as property is introduced as the principle of engagement with a society where individuals must remain separate from each other but be able to make communications by means of private property –which I name the principle 'separate but communicative'.<sup>212</sup>

Property as the realm of freedom corresponds to the distinctive personality and particular life of individuals in society or social groups. This distinctness of individuals is both a moral virtue and the capacity of moral acting in the political realm. It is thus the condition of plurality is also a moral and political value. Arendt understands the significance of plurality in

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<sup>212</sup> For more details on the concept of relationality see the section 2.2.2.3.

developing a theory of action which proves the uniqueness of human beings -“not living the same life”.<sup>213</sup> This uniqueness, by which plurality can be acknowledged, corresponds to individuality, an individual and unique life of each person based on their moral character as property. Individuality is the condition of plurality since plurality depends on individual understanding of acting, action as a property of the actor who is the beneficiary of the consequences and products of one’s own actions. However the capacity for action is the condition of communication, “without the intermediary of things”, living among men.<sup>214</sup> Individuality as distinctness is applicable to the shared world only if human beings are considered as properties in themselves as different and distinct individuals.<sup>215</sup>

Privacy of property is said to have an actuality in the world where property as private realm has a meaning in the “plurality” of reality or the common world. Arendt, however, contends that living in a private realm has a risk to “be deprived of reality” that is shared by all human beings.<sup>216</sup> This is true as long as privacy has no relation to reality, and becomes “absence of others”. That may however be considered as a reasonable demand to be satisfied when really needed, which can only be provided by private property and this is all human.

#### **4.9 Freedom by Distance as both Private and Personal**

Private property and freedom are inseparable from each other –there must not be any kind of freedom that is not private; and no freedom which is not exercised through private property as the existential connection to the world

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<sup>213</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 28.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>215</sup> Arendt also explains the twofold character of human plurality, as “equality and distinctness” (*Ibid*, 175-81).

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid*, 58.

and to others. We are only free within the boundaries of our properties, and freedom is eventually returning to one's privacy –we should understand. Privacy is realized through private property which is the appropriated outcome of one's actualized freedom –as I have explained.

In practical life, the realm to which an individual's morality is applied, moral principles are disclosed and conveyed by private property: Personal space and privacy-in-practice, freedom of speech and action. Property is both privacy (explained on the previous pages), a moral self who has appropriated one's values in one's own consciousness, and private property as physical existence, including one's possessions, but more importantly one's abilities, body, and mind, and the personal use of freedom.<sup>217</sup>

For Marx personal freedom is possible only through the “community”.<sup>218</sup> However, I believe, his view of freedom undermines the moral understanding and engagements of the personal use of freedom appreciated and defended as a highest value in my thesis, particularly in terms of the individual exercise of abilities and individuality of action. It may be a misrepresentation to say that Marx does not give any importance to the individual. However, in Marx's writings, the individual is always understood in terms of a dialectical relationship with the universal, meaning that it cannot make sense of ‘separateness of individual interests’. Marx's view of community seem to have no space for privacy since it removes the separation between the private and public realms in favor of one communal realm as a whole entity.

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<sup>217</sup> Regarding the relationship between property and wealth, contrary to Arendt (*The Human Condition*, 61), there exists such connection, and still it is possible to define property in moral terms, and the connection between property and wealth encompasses the moral implication of private property as wealth, when understood individually not state or nation, for it is embodiment of appropriated values and acquired by the moral virtues such as “productive work” and “rational endeavor” in relation to this appropriation -the virtues mentioned are introduced by Rand (“The Objectivist Ethics”, 26)

<sup>218</sup> Brenkert, “Freedom and Private Property in Marx”, 126.

Each human being has the fundamental right to pursue their own interests and achieve their own lives. This is possible only by private property that allows one to achieve one's own life as one's "ultimate value". In this consideration, privacy should be held as one's own moral self and dignity. Privacy requires distance to be maintained in the public realm; freedom can be attained or protected not through the "community" or "other human beings", but through distance and private spaces only. Marx's conception of community overlooks the fundamental principle of freedom as distance in the public realm. Human beings are able to exercise their freedom only through distances that are appropriated as moral space between them. Further, the exchange of interests in social interactions is also made between separate individuals by distances -distance as the main principle of separation between two and as one's individual moral space denoting one's appropriated moral values. Thus, "separateness of individual interests" must be held in a moral relationship in which privacy is held as self-respect of each individual being by virtue of distance.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROFESSIONALISM

*“It is not a guarantee that a man will earn any property,  
but only a guarantee that he will own it if he earns it.”*  
-Ayn Rand

Professionalism in general terms can be understood as a set of principles and arguments regarding both social and economic relationships based on the voluntary consent of individuals exchanging their values. The exchange of values is the main form of relationality between individuals who establish professional communications. In the very first section of this chapter, I start with an inquiry of the nature of the exchange of values by which we are able to establish a practical morality to be continuous and rational.

A practical morality is highly related to the concepts of trust and justice. These concepts mainly characterize a professional relationship based on the pursuit of rational self-interest and the exchange of appropriated values. The exchange of values is expected to establish a just organization in which no one demands unearned, and the earned effort is recognized and celebrated by all. Justice is therefore settled in an understanding of relationality according to which one's works deserve rational evaluations as long as truly appropriated.

## **5.1 The Virtue of Trade**

### **5.1.1 Truth in Morality**

Truth in a practical morality may be defined as the achievement of trust through the responsible actions and the exchange of appropriated values. In the history of philosophy, the concept of truth is indeed overwhelmed with the debates in the fields of both epistemology and metaphysics. However the exact reason why I choose to use the word “truth” to develop my conception of agreement and the exchange of values is that I want to maintain and strengthen the link between the nature of a practical morality and Objectivist epistemology. Trying to understand the nature of agreement is highly important for determining the character of a practical morality.

The nature of agreement can be grasped in two ways. One is the achievement of one’s responsibility so as to be in agreement with the objective moral values. This concerns one’s individual existence and mostly privacy. Another way conceives agreement as relationships between human beings, which happens in the social realm. Relationships between human beings can be seen as a trade of appropriated values. Agreement between individuals should arise from trade. In this respect, the source of an agreement is actually trade that reflects the origin of morality as the beginning principle –that is responsibility. Thus trade implicitly conveys the notion of *truth* as agreement.

As examined in Chapter 2, the conception of responsibility belongs to the conception of property and one’s appropriation of what one accomplishes in the most proper understanding. As I have coherently explained, the only justifiable responsibility is that which one takes for the pursuit of one’s rational interests. This means that one can only take responsibility for what one appropriates and owns. This provides the rational basis of moral

responsibility in the sense that one takes the responsibility for one's actions to achieve a life of one's values. That which exists constantly in one's life is that one acts to gain one's values and this process requires one to be the beneficiary one's own actions, and responsible as well. The achievement of truth in morality therefore concerns individual responsibility in terms of building one's own moral self and trust in relationships that involves one's appropriated moral values.

Truth, in the philosophy of morality, may be recognized as the highest achievement of a moral life –in practice and in one's personality or one's moral character. The achievement of truth in one's moral character is completely about building a moral self for the purpose of honestly owning a life, which indeed requires and implies the morality of appropriation and its rational principles. In practical terms truth can be achieved through applying these principles to one's life and one's social relationship with others. In both ways of understanding truth, the achievement of truth concerns the genuine principles of professionalism, such as trust and agreement on rational goals. Thus a relationship can be said to have become a professional relationship, which means that professionalism does not concern only business but also the interactions with others in any aspect of a communication.

### **5.1.2 The Achievement of Truth via Exchange**

In the social realm, I address by truth the moral interaction that is achieved through applying the objective principles of a rational morality into social relationships. One can speak of "truth" in a communication when it is rational and honest through the appropriation of values between the parties. These chosen and appropriated objective values are mutually exchanged in a moral relationship that requires agreement. However, a communication may be understood in terms of involving either the contrasts between the

interests of human beings, or similar principles of promoting interests. At this point the concept of agreement can refer to one of the two: A *dialectical reconciliation*, which I take to be a negative version of agreement or an ethical agreement on principles.

If an interaction takes place in a dialectical way, then it captures the negative nature of agreement. In a dialectical movement the condition of existence depends on the continual preservation of opposition of the points of views as they remain opposite to each other. The struggle between points of views merely produces gaps between them that grow forever. As it seems, antagonism is the only valid principle of existence in such a dialectical way of interaction between parties. In this negative approach to agreement, a struggle between opposite points of views continually arises, which would result in a permanent strife in which a very little hope to reach an agreement could ever arise. This means that no positive change and no real improvement can be made due to the absence of agreement. The achievement of truth thus seems to be quite impossible through continuing conflicts in a dialectical movement.

The conception of freedom is also important in the achievement of truth whether or not it allows human beings to remain separate and also communicative. As an objection to the separateness of freedom, Hegel sees ethics and freedom as a matter of mutual recognition and “mediated autonomy”.<sup>219</sup> In Hegel, the actualization of freedom in ethics is merely possible through recognition between human beings. For Hegel, “recognition is a relation that plays out between two self-conscious beings”<sup>220</sup>. In his understanding of ethics we must notice that recognition does not mean building an agreement between individual beings but rather

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<sup>219</sup> Robert R. Williams, *Hegel's Ethics of Recognition* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 6; for the description of mediated autonomy see the page 37.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid*, 51.

introduces an interdependent conception of freedom that sees human beings as ontologically dependent on each other. Inseparableness of human beings is however unacceptable because it threatens human beings' privacies, their ownership of their minds and their actual freedom. Freedom can be actualized through one's exercise of abilities in order to achieve and appropriate values, which requires an individual autonomy that can be the only form of the actualization of freedom in morality, which has been already discussed.<sup>221</sup> Hegel may be right that he sees the importance of a social context in ethics, but we need the positive conception of agreement, instead of a dialectical method, in relation to individual responsibility and appropriated values in a moral practice in its true meaning which I will reveal.

If it is not possible to produce truth in a dialectical way, then a transcendental morality may also be seen as a solution to grasp truth in morality, by which truth will be "discovered" or constructed by the moral agent who recognizes the universal law of morality –that mainly concerns Kantian ethics. This ethical way of agreement necessarily depends on the "external" principles that are not to be appropriated, but imposed upon one's self through the "devotion to duty". The original motivation of an action however must come from the actor's interests, which can only be justified by rational self-interest in the achievement of one's values. In this sense, promoting one's own rational interests is the ethical condition of exercising moral freedom within an individual responsibility. As I have discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the exercise of freedom is not the recognition of moral law, but appropriation of values. Values are gained only through the right actions performed in one's rational interests. Contrary to this, duty merely concerns the moral law more than one's appropriated moral personality and moral values that are essential in morality. Truth can be achieved through reason but as a means of survival,

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<sup>221</sup> For a detailed discussion on individual autonomy see the sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 in Chapter 3.

not as a higher authority.<sup>222</sup> In a nutshell, the problem with Kantian understanding of morality is that it lacks the genuine principle of a moral action and of relationality, so that it seems to put truth outside of the context of agreement.

Reaching an agreement and truth in morality is neither dialectical nor transcendental but practical, and is found in the nature of a professional relationship. In this practical way that I suggest agreement is made by recognizing rational interests and as a result exchanging appropriated values. The practical notion of rationality lies in the functionality of values in terms of survival. Although rationality has primarily a practical role in human survival, it also refers to a conception of possibility in agreement, in the sense that rational values make a relationship possible. The agreement achieved through the exchange of the appropriated rational values in its practical understanding can be defined as professionalism. Since values are essential to one's life and they are appropriated by the one who is the primary beneficiary of one's actions, then the achievement of values in morality must directly be related to self-actualization by performing actions in one's own rational interests. These rational interests are exchanged in a business relationship as an example of a professional relationship, and, originally, a relationship.

A business relationship that is maintained by business interests in the achievement of profitable results perfectly illustrates how a communication should be established between human beings with these two essentials: The exchange of values and voluntary action. Exchange as a form of reciprocity comes from the voluntary actions that are performed in one's own rational interests.

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<sup>222</sup> The role of reason is epistemological in achieving values for survival –not determining such an unconditional law, which means that a practical morality and Objectivist epistemology are substantially connected.

The two central aspects of professionalism, namely the exchange of values and voluntary action, are revealed in a relationship based on the principles of consent and trust. This particular form of relationship in which human beings participate voluntarily and peacefully implies two basic principles of a moral relationship. In Ayn Rand's philosophy these are called "the trader principle" and "non-aggression principle".<sup>223</sup>

### **5.1.3 Two Principles of Professionalism and the Harmony between Interests**

The image of a relationship in a rational morality is indeed *the trader*. In a trade, human beings exchange their values as equally participating individuals –as they offer a value for a value. This peaceful nature of a relationship depends on a principle of a trader's action. A trader is the one "who earns what he gets and does not give or take the undeserved".<sup>224</sup> Let me elaborate.

A trader never forces anyone to sell goods or never attempts to demand what he does not deserve. The moral nature of a trader's actions thus lies in the principle of exchange, which is voluntary and peaceful as it serves the purpose of promoting the interests of human beings. This mutual interaction between human beings requires chosen actions, and an action is chosen to be profitable in terms of advancing their rational interests. Therefore, the purpose of trade serve their rational interests, as human beings should treat each other as traders.<sup>225</sup> It is when human beings perform actions to achieve rational goals that they can reflect the rational nature of trade.

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<sup>223</sup> For detailed descriptions of these principles in the context of moral-political system see Podritske & Schwartz, *Objectively Speaking*, 15; 186; 190. In Rand's ethics, these are the principles that connect morality to politics.

<sup>224</sup> Rand, "The Objectivist Ethics", 34.

<sup>225</sup> Podritske & Schwartz, *Objectively Speaking*, 224.

The principle of trade is also the principle of a just relationship that is completely anti-force. A just relationship in which individuals equally participate never allows force to take place. Physical force is banished in a voluntary interaction that illustrates the non-aggression principle –“no man or group may initiate the use of physical force against others”.<sup>226</sup> Together with the trader’s action, the principle of non-aggression denotes a just and rational cooperation between human beings who are able to perform voluntary actions. Only these principles can guarantee the peaceful agreement of interests, by endorsing the mutual benefit of individuals who have the natural right to pursue their own interests and freely exchange their appropriated values voluntarily.

Every individual being has a natural right to act for their own good and improve their own welfare. The right to act in one’s own interests is supposed be in harmony with others’ interests. The basis for this harmony between interests is set in the exchange of objective values. When these objective values are appropriated by voluntary and rational actions, human beings may foster a harmony among each other as they rely on their rationality in trading. This rationality, Rand defines, is “the ability to recognize the objective value” of one’s work.<sup>227</sup> Correspondingly, the principle of trade is essential to respect others, which means that it is not justifiable to treat others as a means. Instead, human beings should treat each other as equally rational beings to participate in a fair trade.

However, it should be remembered that morality is not a result of consensus, nor does it concern a social contract. In other words, the moral principles cannot be derived from consensus, due to the fact that morality is a necessity for human survival and objective values are only chosen by one’s own

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<sup>226</sup> Rand, “What is Capitalism?”, 10.

<sup>227</sup> Rand, “The ‘Conflicts’ of Men’s Interests”, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, 60.

individual mind in relation to the facts of reality.<sup>228</sup> Every individual human being chooses the right and rational values in their own rational interests which determines the objective principles of a rational morality.

According to the trader principle of the Objectivist ethics, human beings are supposed to cooperate with each other since their actions are guided by objective values. This principle also requires each individual human being to evaluate their actions in a rational manner such that they are responsible for making a just and objective assessment of their abilities while pursuing their own interests. The rational nature of such assessment should also apply to their objective achievements in *reality*. In other words, besides their choices and decisions, human beings should also assess their work in terms of an objective judgment that is made by their own reasons. In this way they become able to see the objective standards of their work in the harmony of their rational self-interest with that of others –which implies that their work is to be also recognized by others objectively.

#### **5.1.4 The Rational Assessment of One's Work**

In order to make a rational assessment of their works human beings should first determine the right sources of their knowledge and their judgments. A validated objective judgment can only rely on reason; in other words, one should rely on one's reason for one's judgments, since reason is the only source to justify them. Human beings should be guided by their thinking, and therefore reason, not their feelings or desires. Desires or emotions are deficient to be the standard of moral judgment, since they lack providing knowledge and rational values.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> This natural character of morality as a necessity for human life is fully discussed in the previous chapters, especially in Chapter 2, that originally belongs to Rand and her philosophy –Objectivism.

<sup>229</sup> Rand, “The ‘Conflicts’ of Men’s Interests”, *The Virtue of Selfishness*, 57-8.

A rational assessment of one's interests is indeed identifying one's desires and goals through a process of reason. It is not morally justifiable that something is good just because it is wanted or aimed. If one wishes to satisfy a desire then one must be "able rationally to validate it in the full context of his knowledge and of his other values and goals".<sup>230</sup> Rand claims that the desires and interests of human beings would not be in conflict as long as they are guided by their reason. If one thinks that interests can come in conflict with each other, then it means that one has a concept of interest in terms of anything except rationality. As Rand points out:

When a person reaches the stage of claiming that *man's interests conflict with reality*, the concept 'interests' ceases to be meaningful –and his problem ceases to be philosophical and becomes psychological.<sup>231</sup>

A desire alone only represents a psychological state of mind, not a moral judgment of reason that is essential and achieving the satisfaction of desires in accordance with *reality*. Moral evaluation of desires should always be rational, meaning that the pursuit of a desire should always be compatible with one's achievement of values in the long term.<sup>232</sup>

The life of a rational being is a life of "effort" in which cooperation with others, particularly in terms of trade, and relationships are important in the achievement of one's goals. The achievement of goals may be attained either directly or indirectly. A goal is pursued directly in the sense that one relies on one's effort while creating a valuable work, and can be pursued indirectly in the sense that one's valuable work is to be objectively evaluated by others.<sup>233</sup> A rational and objective assessment of one's work actually reflects the deservedness of one's effort.

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<sup>230</sup> Rand, "The 'Conflicts' of Men's Interests", 58.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, 60.

## 5.2 The Virtue of Productivity

### 5.2.1 Productivity in Both the Moral and Rational Context

*“Productiveness is your acceptance of morality,  
your recognition of the fact that you choose to live.”  
-Ayn Rand*

Rand holds that productive work is “the central *purpose* of a rational man’s life, the central value that integrates and determines the hierarchy of all his other values”.<sup>234</sup> As promoted by the Objectivist ethics, productiveness is one of the crucial abilities of human beings in its relation to acquiring the knowledge and the values that are essential for their survival. Productivity represents the most important aspects of human life in the achievement of values: “Creative ability” and “ambitiousness” are among them as Rand states.<sup>235</sup> In this sense, productiveness and productive work requires human beings to purposefully use their minds to achieve the long term goals –to forge a career and a reputation that are deserved. Productivity should be considered as a possible ability exercised in order to “own” a life –as to actualize one’s freedom. Therefore, Productivity is one of the central aspects of human survival, and hence morality.

Productive work is a concrete result of one’s effort and it should have its objective value in the economic world. However, the phrase “economic world” should not be understood merely from an institutional perspective; further, as Rothbard states, it should not be treated only from a historical perspective, either. The economic world as an “institution” concerns the practice of economics. Theoretical economics, on the other hand, is the science of economic activities and relationships. Rothbard points out this distinction by separating the systematic theory of economy from economic

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<sup>234</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 27.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 29.

institutions that are to be examined only in the historical context. He illustrates it by stating that “economic thought” or economic theory originated only in Ancient Greece, and did not arise in other civilizations that maintained economic practice and whose economic institutions were even more advanced than those of Ancient Greece at that time.<sup>236</sup> Thus, as a science of economics a theory of economy can be useful for us to have a rational approach to productivity and to explore its moral implications.

Rothbard also indicates the connection between the “universal truths” of philosophy and the fundamental principles of human action in terms of rational economic theory.<sup>237</sup> A productive effort can be rationally evaluated in terms of these principles of human action which also reveal the rational characteristic of economic thought. The virtue of productivity and the exchange of values, including goods and services, should be seen as the vital aspects of human life in terms of a rational morality, and the economic theory that explains them should reveal their rational nature, besides merely studying them in an institutional and historical framework of economy.

### **5.2.2 The Moral Realm of Products and Artifacts**

By virtue of productivity human beings create physical values that are produced for the achievement of their lives. Thus productivity is taken to be the crucial aspect of human survival in a practical morality –as also discussed in the previous section. Productivity can also be said to be the distinct ability of human beings by which they become able to “transform” nature so profoundly that they can provide great benefits and improve their condition in this new “artificial” world surrounding them. In this world they establish relationships with these products as they encounter different aspects of survival. At this point, it can be argued that there exists a ‘moral

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<sup>236</sup> Rothbard, “The Collapse after Aristotle”, *Economic Thought before Adam Smith*, 18.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid, 19-0.

interaction' between human beings and the products that are considered to be both as a produced value and as an object of consumption. To understand this moral interaction, it must be stated that human beings and artifacts as products are connected to each other in a moral way that concerns the appropriation of physical objects. The appropriation of physical objects can be either by means of production or by means of consumption. Both correspond to the appropriation of the objective value of products as they are valuable to our survival. Their objective value is determined by the distinct quality of human reason –that is the purposefulness of the human mind.

The purposefulness of the human mind can be understood in two ways: 'Productivity' in the achievement of one's values; and 'morality' through the discovery of the objective values of things. In this sense, the main argument I here present is that human beings are in a continual process of rendering the world moral by their abilities of thinking and productive work. Human beings exercise these abilities by exercising their minds' capacity upon matter in terms of the production and transforming of 'nature' in their own rational interests. The purposefulness of the human mind thus gains its meaning in terms of the morality of the world produced and hence appropriated through thinking and productive work.

Productive work creates a world in which the existence of human beings is surrounded by things that are produced by the ability of productivity, and, that also "constantly condition their human makers".<sup>238</sup> According to Arendt, these artifacts have the character of creating the condition for human beings as they are substantially related to human life.<sup>239</sup> Evaluating this in terms of the Objectivist ethics, I see artifacts as products exhibiting the moral aspect of human action, i.e. the virtue of productivity. Then being

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<sup>238</sup> Arendt, "The Human Condition", 9.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

conditioned by them should actually signify a moral relationship in which human beings take part voluntarily.

In fact, the world human beings produce, which in turn becomes the human conditioner, expands the realm of morality for human beings into a network of producers and their products. This network can be defined in terms of an interaction between the actors and the things produced. From this perspective, that human beings are conditioned by the world of products seems to create a moral sphere of human existence. The world of objects created by human productivity and purposeful action thus acquire a moral character in the image of appropriation.

Here is a ground for the objectivity of values: Things enter a relation with human existence, which can be material, such as food and water; or artifacts; or thoughts and beliefs representing one's approach to the world in terms of an ethical philosophy. In this sense, I find the term "conditioned men" very interesting, pointing to a positive aspect of human life and the ability of productivity. Arendt says that objects made by human beings are conditioners of human beings, and the human ability to produce them is the condition of their existence, proving a dependent relationship between human beings and the world. This world becomes a moral realm in which rational principles and chosen values could and should shape the world through the artifacts or products. This situation is a self-made condition, the embodied reality of the "central purpose of human life" as productivity. Productivity can be regarded to be the condition of a practical morality in terms of human beings' relation to the world that is to be produced by the natural abilities of human beings.

The things created by the virtue of productivity as the conditioners of human existence are the moral aspects of the human world and the appropriated

values. Human existence would be “impossible” without them, which must be particularly emphasized.

## **5.3 Trust**

### **5.3.1 The Nature of Trust and Its Objectivity**

In the social realm each individual necessarily or contingently engages in different forms of communications. The real cause of many different problems occurring in social communication (friendship, family, love affairs, sex etc.) is due to lack of trust; “failure of trust”. In other words, the principle that explains all the problems occurring in the social realm is distrust. In a relationship, it is not sentimentality that human beings would demand, but honesty indeed; and not love, but the relationship of trust.<sup>240</sup> This is the scent of all interactions between individuals. In this respect, trust is fairly said to be the most important moral concept that inherently forms social interactions, or, more specifically, the principal constituent of relationships between human beings. As the character of trust is put in this way, the nature of trust should be closely related to rational self-interest, which plays the central role in building relationships, too.

To begin with, I describe trust as ‘seeking for a possible future in which our expectations and demands will be realized and satisfied’. How should this possibility be understood; how can it be raised –that is the question. The possibility of a reliable future in the sense of a trustable relationship (or a trustable agreement) lies in the origins of the morality of rational self-interest.

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<sup>240</sup> Love is “response to values” –on that I agree with Rand, and this I believe actually denotes the demand of trust in moral terms (Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 35).

Trust begins within communication as voluntary agreement based on a principled morality. The practical nature of a voluntary agreement is defined in the form of trade in which human beings as moral persons exchange their values through the pursuit of rational self-interest. Thus, only the rational self-interest and the values that are chosen honestly and justly within an appropriated moral character, can make a communication moral, and thus, trustable. In this sense, trust is in a direct connection with moral responsibility: Human beings are responsible for their own words and actions which project the future of a relationship based on a certain moral code they embrace and appropriate, again, on their own. In this consideration, responsibility should also be seen as a transmitter between what is private and the social realm; transmitting the moral principles to moral interactions as realizing an appropriated moral self in a practical world: How to actualize an appropriated “truth” in the social realm, not just in private.

Appropriation of truth refers to the credibility a moral character of chosen and appropriated values -the principle of a genuine moral self. The privacies of human beings become open in their interaction with each other through the exchange of values so as to maintain a communication in a relationship. The aim of a communication is agreement through exchange, and as a consequence building just and trustful relationships, which indicates the essential link between trust and responsibility. Just as we build relationships, we need to “build trust”; and trust must be understood in this sense with its connection to moral individualism.<sup>241</sup> Moral individualism, as I strongly argue, can work merely through agreement and exchange of values by virtue of the appropriated principles of a relationship. The appropriated principles are therefore the inevitable ground and root of moral individualism.

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<sup>241</sup> Robert C. Solomon & Fernando Flores, *Building Trust in Business, Politics, Relationships and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5.

However any contract or agreement can fail, unless trust is built rationally and objectively.

To build trust objectively in a relationship is a question in relation to the problem of “objective confirmation” of trust. To understand its development in a practical way, we should first determine the origins of trust in one’s moral character as one’s appropriated moral self. Then we can see how it is realized in communication. Solomon states that the confirmation of trust depends on merely subjective means.<sup>242</sup> This can be true to the extent that one’s moral personality defines an appropriated moral self. However in the practical way trust can only be guaranteed by the exchange of values between moral persons. The exchange of values establishes the objectivity of trust practically in the sense that human beings trade with each other what they have appropriated in their own person. Appropriated values are traded among the owners of these values when the moral persons assume the responsibility for both appropriating and trading their values. Therefore, assuming the moral responsibility for what they have appropriated is the moral principle for forming the connection between responsibility and the objective character of trust that is to be realized through it.

### **5.3.2 Trustworthiness**

Is trust built through its original sources and principles, or through overcoming distrust? According to Solomon, trust in its authentic form concerning relationships “must overcome distrust”.<sup>243</sup> I regard overcoming distrust as a negative aspect of building trust, which means trust is developed through removing the negative factors that creates distrust. Solomon defines this process by stating that trust begins by trusting another.<sup>244</sup> Regarding

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<sup>242</sup> Solomon and Flores, *Building Trust*, 31-32-33.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid, 32

how trust is built in relationships, Solomon strengthens his argument by addressing the connection between trust and being trustworthy, as follows: “Most human beings respond to trust by being trustworthy.”<sup>245</sup> Why human beings respond to trust in this way, to prove that they are trustworthy, is a question here which concerns the motivation behind being trustworthy. Is it enough to be trusted to be worthy of this trust? This pragmatic view of trust results in a circular relation between being trusted and being worthy of trust, which I find inadequate and useless actually, when considering the true meaning and role of trustworthiness in terms of a genuine moral self that appropriates trust as it appropriates truth in a relationship –which I call the positive aspect of building trust.

In order to give an account of the motivation behind being trustworthy, we need more than the factor of reaction. An authentic source of motivation to be trustworthy relies on the principles of the morality of rational self-interest. Now the idea I will primarily defend is that without the concept of ‘actor beneficiary’ who acts from rational self-interest, it is unintelligible to understand why human beings respond to trust by being trustworthy. Cooperation is important to build trust<sup>246</sup>; but there must also be an inner motivation that constructs a trustful relationship on a reciprocal basis: It is not the relationship or the principle of reciprocity itself that could produce a genuine moral action, but an appropriated moral code that one builds for oneself –for one’s rational goals. It is rational self-interest that leads a moral action in an authentic way (rational and free) and this is totally individual. The formula must be like this: One would trust me if I deserve to be trusted. This means that I appropriate my values that determine the moral motivation of trustworthiness that I can apply to any form of my relationship with other human beings. Indeed, there is no gap between the act of trust and the object of trust (the trusted person) as being trustworthy, such that it is a rational

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<sup>245</sup> Solomon and Flores, *Building Trust*, 33.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.* Trust is constructed and produced as a form of sustainable relationship.

agreement, contrary to what Solomon proposes<sup>247</sup>, when one sees the situation within this understanding of “objectivity”: I too believe trustworthiness means nothing in isolation, but has an objective meaning in practice.

I understand that trust should be reciprocal in practice; however as I have defined trust as agreement on a possible future, human beings should clearly present their expectations and demands and always communicate to make them more clear at the beginning of and during any cooperation, which makes us see that trust is possible as a rational relationship and as a possible future of a relationship –future always begins and exists by now. But at the very origin trust is about an appropriated morality in a moral self: Trust requires commitment to one’s own values as morality requires a consistency in principles and moral values, creating a habit in one’s actions. It is not only that trust brings trust; a commitment to chosen and appropriated values precedes action, and action precedes trust in relationships. Trust begins with a strong, committed and honestly appropriated moral self.

Trustworthiness can be defined in terms of a moral credibility that depicts the morality of appropriated values, which proves its direct relation with self-esteem. In relation to trustworthiness, trust requires ethical deliberation and becomes evident within a process of ethical decision; the relationship is actually this process of decision: Trust always concerns the appropriated moral self that indicates the virtue of trustworthiness as loyalty to one’s moral principles, since one is the beneficiary of their outcome.

In practice, trustworthiness reveals itself through actions, again based on one’s appropriated values and a true moral responsibility that is related to the right to be the beneficiary of one’s own actions. Trust consists in this responsibility, which is indeed moral ownership. A trustworthy person

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<sup>247</sup> Solomon and Flores, *Building Trust*, 78

deserves respect in return for one's well-reasoned, reliable and strong morality; which means trustworthiness is valuable and trust is a value, to be exchanged and deserves to be recognized as a moral value identifying the integrity of an appropriated moral character.<sup>248</sup>

## **5.4 Justice**

The most central concept in both ethics and political philosophy is the concept of justice; actually the only concept that can merge them into one system of a society of rights and freedom. Thus the importance of justice is highly crucial in the human world, especially in connection to the life of an individual and the justly deserved life. Before discussing this, I should first distinguish the ethical understanding of justice from the political framework, and examine the concept of justice in terms of their different types of approach to justice.

### **5.4.1 Justice in the Context of Appropriation**

In *Anarchy State and Utopia*<sup>249</sup>, Robert Nozick defines justice as “acquiring wealth or appropriation in just ways”. Apparently, it is important to state that justice concerns actions, whether or not they are performed in a righteous way, particularly in the context of appropriation. A large literature that concerns the norms of the establishment of justice mainly deals with justice through the social and political institutions, according to which “appropriation” seems to have direct and indirect relations with the distribution of wealth—either by voluntary redistribution of wealth or by the state via taxing and social services. It is true that the debates regarding the

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<sup>248</sup> In Aristotle, a moral character is also a result of cultivated moral skills, one of which is trust.

<sup>249</sup> Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 2013).

issue of justice have been stirred between the egalitarian views and their opponents.

However performing actions in a righteous way and the appropriation of the outcome of an action mainly concern one's exercise of abilities in one's own moral responsibility. In this perspective, the concept of justice regarding the actions of individuals must be against the idea of equality<sup>250</sup> or equal distribution of wealth. To begin with, justice contradicts equality, simply because human beings have different qualities, capabilities and possibilities of actions. Understanding justice, we should take into account the different abilities of human beings and their exercise in the achievement of a life. Different ways of achieving lives can be justified under one specific condition, the moral factor, which is ability and its moral use as right in accordance with one's own interests.<sup>251</sup> Thus the demand for equality is not identical to the demand for justice. Justice can only be justified on the condition that it is evaluated in terms of different abilities and their moral exercise, which is the ethical approach to justice which is mainly related to my argument on right presented in Chapter 3.

Accordingly, justice, in the public realm, can emerge from the relations that are justly established through the exchange of values as voluntary agreement –which is the relationality of the exercise of abilities. Through this relationality, one's abilities are recognized and justified in the achievement of justice among human beings. This is possible with the moral code of an appropriated morality of values: Voluntary interactions between free individuals whose actions are guided by objective values as they exercise and appropriate their abilities.

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<sup>250</sup> I here take equality as a conception of egalitarianism.

<sup>251</sup> Such a conception of right directly concerns my arguments that are discussed in Chapter 3.

#### 5.4.2 An Approach to the Problem of Justice

The problem of justice may be defined as whether or not a “political agreement between citizens viewed as free and equal persons” can be secured.<sup>252</sup> Rawls contends that justice as fairness is actually a political conception and the aim of justice is practical.<sup>253</sup> Since determining the applicable principles of justice is a practical task, Gray states, in the Rawlsian method, political philosophy is distinguished from other branches of philosophy such as epistemology, metaphysics and ethics, and it focuses only on practical solutions to the question of justice.<sup>254</sup> However, although the task or aim of political philosophy is to be accomplished at a practical level, it requires a basis of moral philosophy that provides a justification of political conceptions that are about to be applied to the problem of agreement –such as the conception of human being and the moral principles that play a role in social interactions.

To begin with, justice is a moral conception and should be taken into account for the purpose of morality. Within the practical realm in a society, justice directly concerns the moral interactions between human beings who are seen as individuals in their self-ownership and have their right to property and privacy. I believe that Rand’s conception of rational self-interest that defines the voluntary agreement between free individuals is the solution to the problem of justice: The moral philosophy that would make a fine basis for a just society is the morality of rational self-interest, which provides the principle of agreement.

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<sup>252</sup> See *Justice as Fairness* (2001) by John Rawls.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> “Political philosophy is an effort at finding a basis of agreement and not a search for truth”. John Gray, “Contractarian Method, Private Property, and the Market Economy” in *Markets and Justice*, 19.

The agreement of interests as promoting mutual benefit may exhibit a similarity with the contractarian view of morality. However I do not consider that the agreement of interests is the source of morality, which distinguishes my position from contractarian approach towards the essence of morality. I am defending the same thesis with the Objectivist ethics that states that morality consists in the objective values that are chosen by human beings. Securing private property is the very condition of justice in this sense, as it involves the chosen values conveyed and traded through an agreement according to which human beings are viewed as moral beings. The two essential principles of professionalism, namely trader's principle as the exchange of values on a free and voluntary relationship and the non-aggression principle as the absence of physical force and right to disagreement establish justice in society.

Professional values are capable of creating a just well-ordered society. The rational principle to provide justice in a free society is basically the virtue of the trader's activity that primarily concerns the peaceful way of exchanging values. In this sense, securing property and freedom to action as a right to property is also the main condition of promoting justice. As I have stated before, human beings have the fundamental right to build a life on their own interests and chosen values that are appropriated. However the relationship between the distributive state and justice is somehow related to the question of the morality of individualism and self-interest –whether or not we should allow individuals to freely pursue their own interests while they exercise their abilities in their own responsibility.

My approach to this problem is similar to Nozick's in the sense that justice cannot be established through the actions of the state, since private property and individual earnings are justified as long as they are acquired through the moral practice of appropriation. However, it differs from Nozick's in that Nozick's theory of entitlement falls short of being a theory of right. This is,

I believe, because his concept of entitlement alone has no moral connotation. Right, on the other hand, is a moral conception as I have extensively discussed in Chapter 3, since it is connected to the moral use of abilities and individual autonomy.<sup>255</sup>

Justice is strictly bound to morality and to explain the relationship between justice and right, there must be a connection between justice and desert –that is evident in the exchange of rational values and recognition the objective value of efforts. Desert is highly related to the conception of right rather than entitlement in terms of morality.

### **5.4.3 Justice in Relation to Morality and Law**

I believe that justice concerns morality more than it does politics or law, i.e. positive law, as the earthly order of morality.<sup>256</sup> Is justice the goal of morality or positive law? These two fields must be separated as they exhibit different features that make us able to put them into two different categories in approaching to justice. If justice is a problem or goal of morality, then it must concern some ethical conceptions such as moral good or moral worth. How property ethics deals with it is an issue to be discussed. I argue that justice can be provided only by means of ethics, not positive law, since morality is the basis of justice, not positive law.

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<sup>255</sup> For details on individual autonomy in relation to right and property see Chapter 3.

<sup>256</sup> Each political concept primarily concerns an ethical problem in terms of human nature, and each of them seems to be sourced in one central concept: Property. According to Locke, the political institutions, as well as positive law, are established on the principle that private property should be protected –as he sees government (state) essential for the protection of property. It is plainly seen in Locke or modern political thought that the government is an agency to be appointed, through political institutions, to secure distances between human beings in protection of private property as a fundamental right. Arendt also draws attention to the very relationship between morality and politics, the difference between “the public and private realm”), and points out the necessity of government by references to the thinkers of modern politics (*The Human Condition*, 110).

As I have stated, justice mainly concerns the right (moral) ways of appropriation and the just acquisition of property. That which is earned is actually what is deserved, explainable by the conception of right as moral use of one's abilities. It is expressed by the trader principle in which an individual as the producer of values has "a right to demand payment for his values".<sup>257</sup> Payment for one's values denotes the recognition of the work and implies a moral response in this sense. In this sense, a trader never attempts to obtain what is undeserved. Also it has implications on relationships: Whether or not an action is responded to in a just way, in exchanging values, within the harmony between individuals' rational interests. This leads us to "the only rational ethical principle", which is "trader principle" in any relationship<sup>258</sup>, which is understood in the form of a rational network of trade of values, the actual "justice" in society.

Justice, according to Rand, is provided through economic relations, particularly in trade, which is evident through the actions of trader. Rand demonstrates how the principle of justice is established with the occasion of trade, as follows: "A trader is a man who earns what he gets and does not give or take the undeserved. He does not treat men as masters or slaves, but as independent equals."<sup>259</sup> Aristotle believes in the equation between goods if they are to be traded; yet, the true principle of a trade must be "the inequality of values", according to which producers are able to trade the goods with each other.<sup>260</sup> It is "the inequality of values" that allows them to engage in just moral interaction as the balance of value exchange –which is mostly related to the subjective evaluation of goods.

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<sup>257</sup> Peikoff, "Objectivism", 287.

<sup>258</sup> Rand, "The Objectivist Ethics", 34.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, 34-5.

<sup>260</sup> Rothbard, "Austrian Perspective"; p. 17. On the differences of values and the judgment of their exchange value in selling and buying see also *Marxism Unmasked*, 6<sup>th</sup> lecture "The Making of Modern Civilization: Savings, Investment, and Economic Calculation", by Ludwig Von Mises.

Both Rothbard and Mises mostly deal with the concept of “inequality of values” in terms of subjective evaluation in estimating the value of goods that are traded. However, from a philosophical viewpoint of value it is important to link the value of products to a specific conception of objectivity, which I see to be evident in the situation of exercising different abilities and so creating the variety of products by individual producers. Thus, the inequality of values may also be seen in terms of why human beings differ in producing and exercising their abilities.

It is also specialization that makes producers capable in producing different goods. Specialization means that human beings have various abilities in regards to having the capacity of producing and trading different values as goods and products. The objective principle of trade lies in this differentiation in the criteria of producing –in other words, values can be traded as long as they are estimated by their objective value which can vary in degrees. The goods attain their value through the different qualities that go into process of production, which I see to be related to the objective value of products and the objective principle of justice. These inequalities must be seen as superiorities of individuals differing in productivity, use of abilities, talents and the creativity that brings them together in the outcome of one’s exercise of freedom that is appropriated. As long as one appropriates what is earned, the actualization of freedom brings the responsibility for realizing one’s highest potentials, and one becomes able to trade one’s appropriated values through just and moral relationships. Justice therefore is the appropriation of what is earned through specialization as the form of professionalism and the rational communication in ethics.

This conception of justice also explains why some deserve more than others, in terms of work performance –against communal property and egalitarianism. The evaluation of the performance of individuals determines the objective basis of justice in a society: “Justice is the application of

rationality to the evaluation and treatment of other individuals.”<sup>261</sup> As Smith states, the demand for justice is satisfied through individuals’ honest assessments about others and the recognition of what is deserved in their persons.<sup>262</sup> Smith illustrates this situation in terms of one’s competency, talents and their rational assessment.<sup>263</sup>

#### **5.4.4 Earned and Justified Success**

Appropriation must not only be taken as simply appropriating the outcome of one’s actions. Appropriation has indeed moral engagements with the outcome of the action –that is the appropriation of what is earned, which is the moral essence of appropriation. Locke defines the limitations of appropriation in terms of leaving enough and as good for others in common. However, from the perspective of my thesis, the real measure of the limitation should be the moral exercise of one’s abilities and the appropriation of what is earned in the process –which is the true meaning of individual responsibility in the practice of appropriation. Individual responsibility is thus inseparable from what is justly appropriated. It may be a product, a distance or an entire life as the object of appropriation. However in all these achievements, the purpose is not the success itself. The purpose indeed is to produce values to be worthy of such a success that is worthy of being appropriated.

The triumph or the achievement of a certain goal at the end of a struggle is actually deserved afterwards. A human being who has made an effort to fulfill an aim and obtain the outcome of this process must not yet be considered as the ‘winner’; rather one acquires such reputation as being successful in a struggle, by improving and adding to one’s successes during

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<sup>261</sup> Smith, *Ayn Rand’s Normative Ethics*, 135.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid*, 137-8.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid*, 139-0.

one's ongoing life. One understands what one has accomplished indeed and whether or not one has deserved the outcome of one's struggle during the time one continues to make improvements after one's accomplishments. This actually means that achievement or success or victory lies always in the future, showing that a successfully or justifiably achieved life always remains as an 'ideal story' as much as it is also experienced as an 'actual story' in the present moment; such an ideal that *exists* in the future and the future is also present at this moment.

A complete success or the highest ideals and purposes must always be understood as possibility<sup>264</sup>. A successfully and justifiably achieved life and the victory continue as a 'possible story' which is also the very condition that makes a moral life possible: Morality is possible because the future is possible, since a purposeful mind exists to recognize the moral responsibility by projecting the future either as trust or a single moral purpose as happiness in each action.

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<sup>264</sup> "Purpose" as the hope and trust in the possibility of future existing in present moment.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

My thesis presents a moral justification of private property. To do it, I have examined and dealt with some important moral concepts in relation to private property and, especially, the conception of property. These relationships can be seen as the implications of one fundamental principle and a fundamental argument: That is appropriation and the appropriation of values.

My arguments must be considered in a close and direct relationship with Objectivism, the philosophical system invented and advanced by Ayn Rand. Her philosophy has influenced me in such a way that I can truly understand the fundamental principles of human survival. More importantly, her epistemology provides a factual account of morality in its essential connection to the life of human beings in which the objective values and their achievement play the main role.

Morality, Rand defines, is “a code of values to guide man’s choices and actions –the choices and actions that determine the purpose and the course of his life”.<sup>265</sup> We need the guidance of moral values to make the right choices and perform the right actions to achieve our goals. To achieve our goals we should act in our interests. Rand believes that the proper form of self-interest to human life is rational self-interest. Thus, human beings must

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<sup>265</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 13.

be the beneficiary of their actions and must act for their own rational interests.<sup>266</sup>

Her morality defines the proper values and the right actions that are required for human survival. Human beings as the primary beneficiaries of their actions become able to submit genuine and moral reasons for their actions in order to pursue the values of a rational morality. Only a rational morality can define the true function of values in one's life –that is guiding and achieving a life as one's and only one's own.

Action is necessary for human life, which is evident in the definition of value. Rand defines value as “that which one acts to gain and/or keep”<sup>267</sup>. It is important to draw the connection between value and rational self-interest in understanding the nature and functionality of moral values. Rational self-interest is the only genuine motive of an action to gain the objective values that are essential for us. A rational morality that is crucial for human survival consists of the rational actions performed by one's own reason. Accordingly, an action is considered as moral when it serves one's own rational interests and values are functional when they serve the achievement of one's own life.

The egoism that the Objectivist ethics introduces and advocates is “rational egoism”.<sup>268</sup> Human beings can truly take the responsibility for an action as long as they assume the significance of reason in determining their self-interests to guide their actions. Therefore, the moral responsibility taken for an action is related to one's right to be the primary beneficiary as one appropriates the outcome of the action performed in rational self-interest.

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<sup>266</sup> *The Virtue of Selfishness*, “Introduction”, x.

<sup>267</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 16.

<sup>268</sup> Smith, *Ayn Rand's Normative Ethics*, 23-5. What has been discussed on Rand's egoism can be found in the section “2.2.1” in Chapter 2.

An action is said to be appropriated “in one’s responsibility that is realized through the knowledge of guiding principles and the rational foresight of the action”.<sup>269</sup> An action must be rationally evaluated and chosen in accordance with one’s values so as to achieve one’s goals. This is a lifetime view of morality by which the highest purpose of morality can be justified –that is happiness as a result of a “rational, virtuous living.”<sup>270</sup> One sets one’s goals as rational goals through one’s own reason to achieve and *appropriate* happiness.

In relation to a morality of rational self-interest, the appropriation of values can be defined as one’s achievement of values by exercising and appropriating one’s (natural) abilities. One’s survival therefore can be rationally justified by virtue of the appropriation of values through the exercise of one’s *moral freedom* in which “freedom and responsibility should be taken as inseparable from each other and must be grasped in the pursuit of self-interest.”<sup>271</sup> The appropriation of values is thus the moral practice based on the actions performed in one’s rational interests, revealing the responsibility of one’s moral ownership. Values can fulfill their function in one’s life only when they are appropriated for oneself –which I find a very fertile argument as to derive the implications of a true morality, human life and happiness.

In Chapter 3, I have developed an argument of right in two steps: I have argued that the basis of rights is natural abilities and the criterion that makes the exercise of these natural abilities moral is the responsibility for the outcome of the exercise of one’s abilities. In this sense, I have defined right as “moral exercise of one’s abilities” which gives a more comprehensive

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<sup>269</sup> See the section 2.2.3.3 in Chapter 2.

<sup>270</sup> Smith, *Ayn Rand’s Normative Ethics*, 31.

<sup>271</sup> Chapter 3, 69.

account of the conception of right in terms of a practical theory.<sup>272</sup> The argument goes like this: I exercise my abilities to gain values to achieve a life. To exercise my abilities is to appropriate their outcome. I am responsible for what I appropriate. Therefore I am responsible for the exercise of my abilities and its outcome: that is the moral exercise of abilities. We realize our freedom when we assume the responsibility for the exercise of our abilities. An actualized freedom is to take the responsibility for our appropriated abilities. Without being the beneficiary of their own actions, actors would not see any occasion for taking responsibility for their actions.

I have stated that the basis of a possible action can be choice –which is found in “the choice to live”. In Objectivism, the choice to live is to form the relationship between morality and life, since it means to acknowledge the necessity of values in life. The recognition of the necessity of values in life is the moral responsibility that is actualized in an appropriated morality: I appropriate the objective moral values, I *own* them for myself, because I have recognized their necessity in my life no more than the necessary relation between survival and morality. The requirement of morality is set out by the choice to live. However the choice to live itself is not “necessary” in the sense that this choice is a “pre-moral” choice. That this choice is “pre-moral” does not mean that the values are chosen on the basis of arbitrary wishes. It means that they are chosen only by reason, which admits the necessity of morality in one’s life when life is chosen.<sup>273</sup>

Morality is a necessity in our lives, we should understand –which is the most important contribution of The Objectivist ethics to moral philosophy whose principal aim should be giving a proper account of human survival. Rand’s

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<sup>272</sup> I have compared the practical theory of right to Aquinas’ natural law doctrine, see the section 3.1.1 in Chapter 3.

<sup>273</sup> For details on the discussion on the choice to live I refer you to Chapter 2, section 2.2.3.1.

moral philosophy is original at the meta-ethical level in that it combines morality and values with the facts of human survival –implying that knowledge is inseparable from a rational morality that is proper to the life of a human being. We need to use our reason in order to develop conceptual knowledge from which values are derived.<sup>274</sup> However, it is not enough to use one’s own mind, but one should also learn how to *own* one’s mind and to take the responsibility for such appropriation.

Responsibility begins in thinking. We have the chance to understand and evaluate our actions through their consequences and hence can objectively determine our moral ends to make them profitable for the purpose of the achievement of our values. This is the point that distinguishes Objectivism from Consequentialism. In consequentialism, the appropriation of an action merely depends on the consequences, whereas in Objectivism, one can appropriate the consequences of one’s action as long as one has appropriated the moral principles and values that have guided this very action.

From the perspective of Objectivism, the appropriation of life continues in every present moment and also in the future. The choice to live eventually brings a possible future within a moral responsibility beginning from now. Choice to live means the choice to exercise one's own abilities to achieve a life. I do not imagine any life other than a moral life: Morality is the essential requirement of one’s life, since life begins with choice and choice means morality.<sup>275</sup>

A chosen life must be appropriated, as property is a key concept in such a morality that is related to human survival. Property in essence can be defined through one’s “self-ownership”. Self-ownership is understood in two ways: 1) every human being’s right to own themselves, appropriate their own being

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<sup>274</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 21.

<sup>275</sup> See "The Choice to Value" (1990), by Allan Gotthelf.

as they have “a property in their own person”<sup>276</sup>; 2) every human being’s right to be the beneficiary of their own actions and act in their own interests, as they should appropriate the outcome of their actions, which is defended by The Objectivist ethics. Self-ownership is thus a concept that links Locke’s justification of property with the Objectivist ethics. However the crucial role of morality and the moral emphasis on property is much more evident in Objectivism, i.e. Rand’s philosophy, which leads us to grasp the theory of value in terms of the appropriation of our values.

The appropriation of values is indeed the appropriate the outcome of the exercise of one’s abilities and hence actualizing one’s freedom. The actualization of freedom in the public realm is one of the main issues in my thesis. There is a direct relationship between acquiring property and the actualization of freedom, I have argued. The argument goes like this: Actualization of freedom is to exercise one’s abilities, and to exercise one’s abilities is to appropriate the outcome of these abilities –that is private property. Accordingly, if we take the actualization of freedom in terms of acquiring private property, this actualized freedom will be conditioned by its consequence, meaning that freedom is actualized through an individual autonomy in its true meaning. In such individual autonomy, one’s individual actions result in the appropriation of the outcome of an actualized freedom. This actualized freedom is also the conditioned freedom that concerns relationality among individuals as it allows individual beings to establish communications in the social world.

According to my argument of right, the earned property is first appropriated in the exercise of one’s abilities: Private property is the concrete result of one’s moral freedom to the extent that it gains the significance of exercising abilities and of taking the responsibility for what one produces. Life is

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<sup>276</sup> Locke, *Second Treatise*, 19, §27. Property as self-ownership is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

achieved through one's moral freedom in which individual actions are performed by one's own abilities and talents. If the realization of freedom defines the life that I appropriate then I assume the right to have it as my own, then my rights are truly said to be my property within the capacity of exercising my abilities and the moral responsibility I take for my own actions. Without responsibility freedom is nothing. Appropriation of values that is achieved through the exercise of abilities is a continuing moral realization of the 'I' in the social realm through a distance to others as the objective condition of communication and relationality.

In connection to the appropriation of values, I have mainly focused on the four practical aspects of relationality, namely the exchange of values in communications, the world's responses to one's achievements, maintaining distances in the common realm, and the rational assessment of one's works either by oneself or by others. These aspects of relationality are understood as the practical implications of appropriation, which is evident in the objective results of private property in the social realm.

The practical understanding of relationality is properly grasped through the conception of distance which allows us to see privacy in a practical context. By means of distance one is able to perform private actions and can make communications with others in the social realm. In this practical understanding of privacy one exercises one's liberty of action in the social realm by way of one's public self. Communication essentially requires distance between human beings and there is one objective principle to keep distance in the common realm, which is private property. In a nutshell, private property is the objective ground for one's privacy to be actualized in the public realm, and it is by property that human beings can maintain their privacies and freedom in public realm. Property establishes the objectivity

between individuals to be considered as a moral network and the public realm of distances and relationality of properties.<sup>277</sup>

The very relationship between privacy and property is evident in the idea that privacy, in practical terms, indicates the private space of individuals and the distance to others secured by private property. The realization of one's public self is the actualization of privacy. Its actualization is made possible when private property transforms privacy into its actual form. Private property as the embodiment of appropriation secures one's privacy and private actions in public. Public exercise of reason becomes evident in private property and appropriated objective values. The argument is that one is able to actualize one's freedom as a private individual being only by virtue of private property –to be able to remain as an individual in a society.

I must state that I do not consider individuals as existing in a vacuum as pure rational souls. I accept that human beings are born into certain social and historical conditions and are surrounded by them. However what interests me is that one's life can still be one's own individual achievement and can be attained through constituting and building a moral personality. This is, as I name, the practice of appropriation, a continual process in which individuals deal with their conditioned environment, their relationships with others and the real core of their personalities. Having been born into the realm of existing social values has little to do with a moral life, but to choose, appropriate and earn one's values is what morality and the actualization of freedom requires from us: To own a life in one's individual responsibility of appropriating one's chosen values and to live in the world with others as moral persons who are willing to recognize and exchange their values.

Private property is also held to be objective condition for establishing communications by way of exchanging appropriated values. The main

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<sup>277</sup> See the section 3.2.8 for the relational aspect of property.

characteristics of an exchange or trade may be considered as trust and justice, which are illustrated in “the trader principle”.<sup>278</sup> Each moral person in an interaction takes the responsibility for what they have appropriated and earned as values. The individual moral responsibility has therefore a connection to the world (to the social realm) in the sense that it defines the character of a moral relationship in terms of achieving trust and justice between human beings.

After all, private property is the practical consequence of the achievement of *reality* in one’s own image. This is a moral apprehension of the world that belongs to one who chooses life –such a life not to be lived by “chance” but to be produced by reason- and gradually explores the meaning of this choice through the practice of appropriation.

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<sup>278</sup> Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics”, 34.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

‘Sahiplenme’ tezimin birincil ve temel meselesi olarak öne çıkıyor. ‘Sahiplenme’nin ahlaki çağrışımlarını düşündüğümde ise<sup>279</sup>, onun özellikle bir kavram ve nesneyle ilişkilendiğini ve bu sayede anlamlı hale geldiğini görüyorum: O da mülkiyet kavramı ve özel mülkiyetin kendisi.

Dolayısıyla tezim özel mülkiyetin ahlaki temellendirmesi olarak ortaya çıkıyor diyebilirim. Bunu yaparken bir takım ahlaki kavram ve meselelerin özel mülkiyetle ilişkisini ele alıyorum. Bunlar arasında haklar, özgürlük, mahremiyet, güven ve adalet var. Mülkiyetin tüm bu ahlaki kavramlarla ilişkisine baktığımda temel bir prensip ve onunla ilişkilendirdiğim ahlaki bir perspektif ileri sürüyorum: Bu temel prensip ‘sahiplenme’ (appropriation)<sup>280</sup> ve bu prensiple ilişkilendirdiğim ahlaki perspektif ise ‘değerlerin sahiplenilmesi’ (the appropriation of values).

Değer nedir? Ama ondan önce ahlak nedir, ne için vardır sorusunu soruyorum. Ahlak bir değerler sistemidir. Peki, neden değerlere ihtiyacımız olsun? Aslında bu soruya kendi ifadesiyle belirttiği üzere ondan önce hiçbir düşünür “rasyonel, nesnel olarak gösterilmiş ve bilimsel” bir yanıt

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<sup>279</sup> Felsefece önemsedığım, ya da bir şeyde felsefi ima gördüğüm şey onun doğrudan ahlakla bağlantısıdır.

<sup>280</sup> ‘Appropriation’ için daha sonraları ‘kendine mal etme’ ifadesini de kullanacağım, sorumluluk imasını daha iyi verebildiği üzere. Bunu bir karşıtlık üzerinden anlamak da mümkün: Topluma mal olmak ya da kendine mal etmek karşıtlığında düşündüğümüzde aslında neye karşı sorumlu olduğumuzu da belirtmiş oluyoruz. Bu sorumluluk konusuna ilerde geleceğim.

vermemiştir. Bu iddianın sahibi, tezimde öne sürdüğüm fikirlerimin ve düşüncelerimin büyük ölçüde ilham kaynağı olan Ayn Rand'dır. Ayn Rand Objektivizm felsefesinin kurucusudur. Aynı zamanda Objektivist etik olarak bilinen kendisine ait değer felsefesiyle anılan çağın önemli bir düşünürüdür. Tam bu noktada belirtmeliyim ki tezimde merkezi konumda tuttuğum ve tezimde geliştirdiğim argümanlarımın içinde görülebileceği ahlaki perspektif olan değerlerin sahiplenilmesi benim kendi Objektivizm okumamdır. Dolayısıyla tezimin Ayn Rand'ın felsefesinin doğrudan bir anlatımı ya da açıklaması olmaktan ziyade, onun yarattığı felsefi sistem olan Objektivizm'in epistemolojik ve metaetik prensiplerini temel alan özgün bir okuma ve ona bağlı bir ilerleme şeklinde görülmesi uygun olacaktır. Bu doğrultuda, Objektivizm'in epistemolojik ve metaetik temellerinin tartışılmasını bu tezin kapsamı dışında tuttuğumu ve Objektivizm'i tezimde ileri sürdüğüm argümanlarıma temel aldığım ölçüde yetkin ve doğru kabul ettiğimi ifade etmem yerinde olacaktır.

Objektivizm 'de değerler ve ahlak insan hayatının vazgeçilmez unsurları olarak ortaya konmuştur. Hata daha ileri giderek diyebiliriz ki insan olmanın değeri insan hayatının ona uygun bir ahlakla doğrudan ilişkisinde ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu anlamda da felsefeyi yaşamdan, insan yaşamından ayrı tutmak pek mümkün değil, şöyle düşünersek: İnsan felsefeye ihtiyaç duyar çünkü değerlerini ve ahlakını üretmelidir. Bunun en açık nedeni "hayatta kalmak"tır (survival). Demek oluyor ki hayatta kalmak için değerlere, yani ahlaka yani felsefeye ihtiyacımız var. Ayn Rand'ın felsefi sisteminin en belirgin ve ayırt edici özelliği budur. Bunu biraz daha açalım.

Ayn Rand ünlü romanı Atlas Silkindi (1957)'de evrende yalnızca bir temel alternatif olduğundan bahseder: Bu temel alternatif varlık ve yokluktur. Madde her zaman vardır ancak canlılık ya vardır ya da yoktur. Buna göre, hayatını sürdürmek için tüm canlı organizmaların eyleme ve eylemleriyle elde edecekleri değerlere gereksinimi vardır.

Ancak insan için hayatta kalmak sadece hayatta kalmak ve diğer canlılarda olduğu gibi içgüdülerini ve verili bilgiyi takip etmek demek değildir. Dolayısıyla insan için hayatta kalmak, ‘hayatını elde etmek’ demektir. İnsan hayatını elde ederken değerlerini de elde etmelidir. Dolayısıyla insanın hayatını elde etmesi, aslında insanın amaçlı ve bilinçli eylemleriyle değerlerini üretmesi ve hayatını inşa etmesi anlamına gelmektedir.

Görüldüğü üzere bu bir seçimdir: **İnsan hayatta kalmayı ve yaşamayı seçer.** İşte felsefe ve ahlakın temel rolü hayatta kalma amacı doğrultusunda açığa çıkar: Hayatta kalmayı ve yaşamayı seçen insan değerlerini de seçmeli ve elde etmelidir. Bunu bir tek şeyle yapabilir: En belirgin ayrıcalığı olan ve insanı tanımlayan yetiyle; Akılla yapabilir. Demek oluyor ki insan hayatta kalmayı başarmak ve bunun için ona gereken değerlerini elde etmek için aklını kullanmalıdır. Ve daha önemlisi insan hayatta kalmanın bilgisini üretmek durumundadır.

Ayn Rand’a göre yaşamın bilgisi diğer canlılarda olduğu gibi insana hazır verilmez. İnsan bu bilgi edinme sürecini “aklı” ve “kavramlar” yoluyla gerçekleştirir: Yine Ayn Rand’ın tanımlarıyla, akıl “duyulardan gelen malzemeyi tanımlar (identifies) ve kavramlar yoluyla birleştirip bütünleştirir (integrates).” Adına “kavramsallaştırma” (“concept-formation”) dediği bu süreç aslında “düşünme”nin kendisidir (thinking). Ancak belirtmek gerekir ki bu yalnızca masa sandalye tarzında soyutlamalar yapmak anlamına gelmez. Rand bu sürecin “nesnelere arası ilişkiler kurmak, farkları benzerlikleri tanımak, yeni kavramlara ilerlemek, çıkarımlar yapmak, sorular sormak ve yanıtlar keşfetmek” şeklinde bilincin aktif bir eylemi olarak ele alınması gerektiğini söyler. Yani bilinçli yapılan bir eylemdir düşünmek ve bütün bu bilgi süreci.

Objektivizm'in epistemolojisinden kısaca bahsetmiş oldum.<sup>281</sup> Bunun önemi şu ki insanın hayatını inşa edip, onu elde ederken aslında bilgiyle nasıl iç içe olduğunu anlıyoruz. Dolayısıyla Ayn Rand'ı ayrıcalıklı kılan noktalardan biri bilgi ve ahlak arasındaki bu doğrudan bağlantıyı kurmasıdır –bu aynı zamanda değer yargılarının ve olgusal yargıların birbirlerinden ayrı olma problemine bir yanıt olarak da görülmelidir: Ayn Rand'a göre her “dir/dır”(“is”) bir “meli/malı”(“ought”)dir; çünkü değerler insan yaşamının olgularıyla ve gerçekliğiyle uyumlu olmak durumundadır. Objektivizm'e göre insan zihniyle gerçekliği dilediği şekilde düşünerek belirleyemez, o verilidir ve zihinden bağımsızdır. İnsan ancak gerçekliği ona uygun düşünme ve kavrayış yollarıyla keşfedebilir, bu bilgi edinme sürecinde değerlerini de keşfettiği gibi.<sup>282</sup> Bu değerler hayatta kalmayı ve yaşamı elde etmeyi seçen insan için nesnel ve aynı zamanda rasyoneldir. Aklın insan hayatındaki merkezi ve can alıcı göreviyle birlikte ele alındığında insan yaşamı için “hayatta kalma-ahlak-rasyonalite” üçlü bağlantısını rahatlıkla fark edebiliriz.

Değerlerin rasyonel olması ne demek? Rasyonalite ne demek? Bu sorulara bahsettiklerimiz ışığında yanıt arayalım. Rasyonaliteyi değer tanımıyla birlikte düşünmeyi öneriyorum: Ayn Rand'a göre değer “kazanmak ve/ya da korumak için çalışılan şey”dir. Değer tanımından baktığımızda iki önemli ima göze çarpar: İnsanın eylemlerinin sonucundan öncelikle fayda sağlayanının kendisi olması, dolayısıyla eylemlerinde kendi/bireysel çıkarlarının peşinde olması ve eylemlerinin bu doğrultuda kendisine yarayacak şekilde amaçsal olması. Bu dolaylı bir çıkarım gibi görülebilir,

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<sup>281</sup> Objektivizm Epistemolojisinin Aristoteles epistemolojisiyle ortak ilke ve kavramlar içerdiği görülebilir. Ayn Rand felsefi sisteminde yalnızca Aristoteles'e borçlu olduğunu ancak geri kalanını kendi aklıyla ürettiğini belirtmiştir.

<sup>282</sup> Değerlerin keşfedilmesiyle değerlerin seçilmesi Objektivist ahlak açısından aynı şeydir: İnsan aklıyla gerçekliğe uyumlu olarak değerlerini seçer, çünkü yaşamı seçmek hayatta kalmak ve hayatı inşa etmek için gereksinim duyduğu ve gerçekliğiyle uyumlu değerleri de seçmesi demek olacaktır.

ancak deęerlerin insan hayattaki fonksiyonuyla dūşünüldüğünde doğrudan ve basittir. Açıklamama izin verin.

İnsanın hayatta kalma bilgisini üretmek durumunu göz önünde bulundurursak şunu anlarız: İnsan hayatta kalmak ve yaşamını elde etmek için eylemlerinde bir amaç sahibi olmalıdır. Bu amaç hayatta kalma ve yaşamını sürdürme bağlamında dięer tüm canlılarla da ortak olduęu ilke, yani nefisini korumaktır (self-preservation). Deęerlerini kazanmak ve/ya da korumak için eylemde bulunurken ya da çalışırken, insan bunu kendi çıkarlarının peşinde olarak yapıyor demektir. Dolayısıyla eylemin ve çalışmanın amacı hayatta kalma seçimiyle ele alındığında ancak şu şekilde karşılığını bulabilir: Kendi çıkarının peşinde olmak.

Öyleyse, insan hayatı elde etmek için eylemde bulunmalı ve çalışmalı, bunu da kendi eylemlerinin sonucundan yine öncelikli kendisi fayda sağlayan olarak yapmalıdır. Buna göre, hayatta kalma felsefesi olarak tanımlayabileceğimiz Objektivizm için de diyebiliriz ki hayatla baş etme yolu kendi çıkarlarını korumak ve buna uygun rasyonel amaçlar edinmektir. Rasyonalite bu durumda, yine Objektivizm'e göre, "aklın tek bilgi kaynağı olarak tanınması ve kabul edilmesi" olarak anlaşılır. Daha önce de belirttiğim gibi hayatta kalma amacı doğrultusunda insan aklını kullanmak durumundadır. Akıl deęer yargılarının ve eylemlerinin kaynağıdır. Yalnızca akıl deęerlendirme ve yargıda bulunma özellięiyle insana hayatta kalma ve deęerlerini elde etme olanağını sunabilir. Dolayısıyla tek geçerli çıkar aslında **rasyonel çıkar**dır: İnsanın yaşamını elde etme amacına yönelik kendisine fayda sağlayabileceęi eylemlerinin tek motivasyonu ve nedeni olan rasyonel çıkar.

Görüldüğü gibi Objektivist ahlakın dayandıęı temel prensip insanın eylemlerinde rasyonel çıkarlarını gözetmesidir. Akıl bu anlamda insanın hayatta kalma aracı ve enstrümanı olarak ele alınmalıdır. Tam bu noktada

Kant ahlakıyla bir karşılaştırma yoluyla aklın ve rasyonalitenin bana göre de gerçek rolünü ve kimliğini anlamak mümkün olacaktır. Bu hususta, Objektivist ahlaka dayanarak şu noktalarda Kant ahlakını eleştiriyorum: Ahlaki motivasyon, aklın dışsallaştırılması, soyut ve kolektif ahlak.

İnsan eyleminin temel motivasyonunun bireysel çıkar olduğunu belirttim. Bu anlamda Kant'ın ödev ahlakıyla tezat oluşturduğunu görebiliriz. Aynı Rand Kant ahlakında ödevin “erdemın tek ölçütü” olduğunu ve eylemin ahlaki motivasyonunun da “ödev için ödevde adanmışlık” olduğunu belirtir. Buna katılıyorum, zira ödevin kavramsal olarak ahlakın temel unsurlarından olan seçim ve rasyonel çıkarla çeliştiğini düşünüyorum. Bu anlamda da ahlakiliğin ve dahi ahlaki sorumluluğun asıl özünü vermediğini, aksine bir otoriteye bağımlılık motivasyonu ile tanımlanmasından ötürü bu öze ters düştüğünü düşünüyorum. Bu sert bir yorum gibi algılanabilir ancak şunu düşündüğümüzde hak verilebilir: Ahlaki eylem için temel olan prensip o eylemin amacıyla, yani değerlerin elde edilmesiyle örtüşmelidir –yani rasyonel çıkar. İnsanın sorumluluğu başkalarına karşı değil kendi hayatta kalma amacına ve dolayısıyla seçtiği değerlerine yönelik olabilir –yani bireysel sorumluluk.

Kant'ta eylemin ahlaki değerini veren ödev için ya da ödev uğruna yapılmasıdır. Bunu da insan iradesini evrensel bir kanunla (Categorical Imperative) bağlayarak yapar. Bunun da temeli akıldır ama bu sözünü ettiğim akıldan farklı olarak aşkınsal ve metafizik bir akıldır –her ne kadar pratik akıl denilse de. Bu anlamda diğer eleştirim Kant'ın akılı yabancılaştırması olacaktır. Bu yabancılaştırmanın iki yönü var: Akılı insanın amaç ve çıkarlarından soyutlanması ve ona hala özgür pratik-akıl gibi davranması ve nesnelliği aslında kolektif olanla tanımlaması. İlk olarak ahlak koşulsuz değil tam da hipotetiktir düşüncesinden ilerliyorum: İnsanın kendi hayatını en yüksek değer olarak koyması ve ahlakın en yüksek amacıyla bunu bağlaması anlamında –insanın ahlakıyla mutluluk elde

etmesidir. Kant'a baktığımızda ahlaki motivasyon aklın otoriter gücüyle tanımlanmış ve buna da özgürlük denmiştir. Oysaki pratik bir özgürlük olmaktan çok uzak soyut ve yaşamsal bağlamından kopmuş bir özgürlük olarak görmek daha doğru olurdu. Bu anlamda da ikinci yönüyle, Kant ahlakını, Rand'ın ifadesiyle “gerçeklik nefreti” üzerine kurgulanmış bir rasyonalizasyon olarak görebiliriz. Kant kolektif olarak yaratılan bir görüngüler dünyası tasavvuruyla Rand'a göre gerçekliği çarpıtmış ve onu insan gerçekliğinden de koparmıştır (akıl kendinde gerçekliği bilemez diyerek). Bana göre ahlak kanunu hakkında çok şey söyleyen Kant ahlaki yaşam hakkında neredeyse hiçbir şey ortaya koymamıştır. Bu anlamda Kant ahlakını pratik ve doğal bir ahlak olarak da görmemiz zordur.

Pratik bir ahlakın prensip ve kavramlarıyla ilgilenen tezimde, aklın da bu bağlamda insanın yaşamını elde etmesin ve kendini sürdürebilmesinde en temel araç olarak anlaşılması gerektiğini bir kez daha vurguluyorum. Aklın kaynağı ve rehberinde bu rasyonel pratiğin gerçekleştirilmesine ‘değerlerin sahiplenilmesi’ ya da ‘değerlerin kendine mal edilmesi’ adını veriyorum. Tezimin Objektivist ahlakta temelini bulan ahlaki perspektifi olan değerlerin sahiplenilmesi ya da değerlerin kendine mal edilmesi, insanın rasyonel çıkarları, amaçları ve eylemlerinin bütünü olan bir pratikte karşılığını buluyor.

Peki değerlerin elde edilmesi ne demek? Aslında en basit haliyle buna “insanın becerilerini kullanması” (the exercise of one's abilities) diyeceğim. Aristoteles'in diliyle söylersek “kişinin potansiyelini gerçekleştirilmesi” de diyebiliriz. Anlaşıyor ki bu bir olasılıkla başlamaktadır. Olasılık kavramı, değerlerin sahiplenilmesi ve insanın kendi yaşamını elde etmesinin bugünü ve geleceğine yönelik imaları bakımından oldukça büyük önem arz ediyor. Yani insan rasyonel olarak seçtiği amaçlarına uygun eylemlerini becerilerini kullanma yoluyla gerçekleştirir. Bu süreç aynı anda hem olası hem de gerçektir: Çünkü biz kendimize mal edene kadar bir eylemin sonucunu

sahiplenmiş olmayız.<sup>283</sup> Eylemlerimizin sonuçları ancak biz sahiplendiğimizde anlamlı olur, çünkü ancak o zaman eylemlerimizden sorumlu olabiliriz. Dolayısıyla eylemlerimizi kendimize mal etmenin doğrudan ahlaki çağrışımı sorumluluktur. Kendine mal etmeyi adil ve hak edilmiş bir yaşamı elde etmek anlamında ilerde yeniden ele alacağım.

Eğer insan kendi yaşamını en üst değer olarak elde etmeyi amaçlıyorsa eylemlerinin sonuçlarını da sahiplenmelidir. Bu da becerilerini kullanması yoluyla mümkündür diyorum. İnsanın becerilerini kullanması, sonuçlarını sahiplenmesi anlamına gelecektir –başka türlü düşünülemezdi. Dolayısıyla insanın becerilerini kullanması mülkiyet edinme hakkıyla doğrudan ilişkilidir denilebilir.

Mülkiyet edinme hakkı, Locke'da mülkiyet edinme sürecindeki sınırlamalarla, yani bir takım kural ve normlarla belirlenmiştir.<sup>284</sup> Aslında bu sınırlamalar mülkiyet edinmenin bireysel sorumluluğu bağlamında görülmesi gerekir, yani özü ahlakidir. Ancak bu noktada benim fikrim mülkiyet edinmedeki bireysel sorumluluğun asıl anlamının, değerlerin kendine mal edilmesi pratiğinde bulunduğudır. Bu pratik 3. Bölümde yer alan hak argümanımda karşılığını buluyor.

Hak kavramının mülkiyetle bağlantısını iki boyutta ele alıyorum: Birincisi hak iddia edilen şeylerin öncelikle becerileri gerektirmesi (gerekli koşul), diğeri de yalnızca sahiplendiğimiz şeyler için sorumlu olabileceğimiz (yeterli koşul). İlki becerilerimizin eylemlerimizin de belirleyici niteliği olduğunu söylemek anlamına gelir. Dolayısıyla biz, yaşamımızı elde etmek için becerilerimizi kullanırken aslında nelere dair hak iddia edebileceğimizi de anlamaya/kavramaya başlarız. Ancak bu hak iddia etmek için yeterli

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<sup>283</sup> Sahiplenmek yalnızca eylemin sonuçlarından fayda sağlamak değildir; hak edilmiş olanı sahiplenmek demektir. Bireysel ahlaki sorumlulukta karşılığını bulan bu durum sahiplenmenin tam olarak ahlaki özüdür.

<sup>284</sup> 2. Bölümde bu sınırlamaların ne olduğundan detaylıca açıklayarak bahsettim.

değildir, çünkü ahlaki bir kıstas gerekir. Bu kıstas ikinci boyutta ortaya çıkar: Yani sonuçlarını sahiplendiğimiz becerilerimizden sorumlu olmamızda. Bu argümanı tezimde detaylı bir şekilde açıkladım. Kısaca ifade etmem gerekirse:

Yaşamı seçerken aslında becerilerimi kullanmayı seçiyorum. Yaşamı seçmenin becerilerin kullanımını seçmek demek olduğunu yaşamın seçilmesiyle beraber değerlerin seçilmesi ve değerleri kazanmak ve/ya da elde etmek için eylemde bulunma bağlantısında anlıyorum.<sup>285</sup> Dolayısıyla sorumluluk aslında seçimimin sorumluluğudur –ki bu da ahlakın bana göre tam karşılığıdır. Bu elbette bireysel bir ahlaka bizi götürür ve dolayısıyla sorumluluk da bireysel bir sorumluluktur. Bu bağlamda Hak kavramını sonuçları sahiplenilen ‘becerilerin ahlaki kullanımı’ olarak tanımlıyorum. Eylemlerimin sonuçlarını kendime mal ederek sorumluluğunu aldığımında ahlaki eyleme dönüşürler, ancak o zaman becerilerimi ahlaki olarak kullanmış olurum ve hak iddia edebilirim.

Hak iddia etmenin doğrudan ahlaki sorumlulukla bağından, sahiplendiğim şeyleri sorumlu bir şekilde sahiplenmenin bilgisini elde ediyorum: Kendime mal ettiğim eylemlerimin sonuçlarında yalnızca hak ettiğimi sahiplenmem ve neyi hak edip etmediğimi anlamam. İşte bu epistemolojik bir ahlaktır: Sahiplenmenin pratik bilgisidir ve bu tezime göre Hak kavramında karşılığını tam olarak buluyor.

İnsanın becerilerini kullanması aslında özgürlüğünü gerçekleştirme demektir: Çünkü bu bireysel hayatını elde edişinde eylem değer ve amaçlarını seçmesi demek olacaktır. Bu seçim özgürlüktür ve yaşam da

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<sup>285</sup> Eylem seçim ve beceri gerektiren bir ontolojik kavrayışta ele alınıyor. Bu ontolojik kavrayış olasılık kavramında ve onun gerçeklikle bağlantısında karşılığını buluyor. Eylemin amaçsal ve rasyonel olması bu iki unsuru (seçim ve beceri) içermesi anlamına gelmesinden öte, olasılığın gerçekliğin metafizik önkoşulu olma ve gerçekliğin de olasılık üzerinden kavranıp ele alındığını görebilirsiniz. 3. Bölümde buna bir ayrı bir bölüm ayırarak açıkladım.

özgürlüğün gerçekleştirilmesi anlamına gelecektir. Peki, bu özgürlüğün gerçekleştirilmesi neye bağlıdır? Kısaca özgürlüğümü sahiplenmeme bağlıdır diyebilirim: Yani seçtiğim eylemlerimin sonuçlarını özgürce kendime mal etmem ve bu yolla değerlerimi elde etmeme bağlıdır. Pratik ve ahlaki bir özgürlük ancak becerilerin kullanımıyla elde edilenin hak edilmesi demek olacaktır. Özgürlüğün mülkiyet edinmeyle bağlantısı düşünüldüğünde, özgürlük ürettiği sonuçla koşullanmış demek olacaktır – pratik özgürlüğün tam karşılığı bu denebilir. Bunu açıklamak için özgürlüğün kamusal alanda gerçekleştirilmesi meselesini incelememiz gerekiyor.<sup>286</sup>

Özgürlüğün kamusal ya da sosyal alanda gerçekleştirilmesi tezimin en temel meselelerinden biri olarak görülebilir. Bunu derinlemesine ele aldığım 4. Bölüm “Mahremiyet” de şöyle bir temel argümanı öne sürüyorum: Özel mülkiyet pratik özgürlüğün kamusal alanda gerçekleştirilebilmesinin, daha doğrusu kamusal alanda kişinin eylemde bulunabilmesinin nesnel koşuludur. Bu şu demek oluyor: Kişi kamusal alandaki bireysel varlığını ancak diğerlerine karşı koruyabildiği ve ayarlayabildiği mesafelerde sürdürebilir. Bu mesafeleri sağlayan ve garanti eden şey de özel mülkiyetin ta kendisidir. Mesafeler kamusal alanda yaşamımızı sürdürmenin, becerilerimizi kullanabilmenin ve değerlerimizi elde etmenin zorunlu bir prensibidir. Pratik ahlakın gerçekleşebilmesi bu mesafelere, dolayısıyla mesafeleri yaratan özel mülkiyete bağlıdır. Bunu en iyi şu soruyu düşünerek anlayabiliriz: Mahremiyetini “terk ederek” özgürlüğünü gerçekleştirmek için kamusal alana çıkan kişinin bireyselliğini bu alanda koruyabilmesi nasıl mümkün olacaktır?

Mahremiyet burada iki şekilde anlaşılmalıdır: Kişinin kendi kapalılığı olan özel benliği ve ilişkisel olan kamusal benliği. Eylem ve pratik özgürlük

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<sup>286</sup> Kamusal alanla kastım sosyal alandır; insanların bir arada iletişim ve ilişkilene olanaklarına açık oldukları dünyadır.

mahremiyetin bu ikinci anlamıyla mümkündür. Dolayısıyla mahremiyeti özel mülkiyetle düşünmezsek, kişinin kamusal alana çıkarken terk ettiği mahremiyeti, yani bireysel varlığı ve özgürlüğü, kaybolup yok olma ve toplumda çözünme tehlikesiyle yüz yüze kalacaktır. Aynı zamanda eylemde ve iletişimde bulunma olanakları da (mesafe) mümkün olmayacaktır – argümanıma göre. Ahlaki eylemin ve dolayısıyla herhangi bire özgürlüğüm gerçekleştirilmesi de söz konusu olamayacaktır.

Mülkiyet, özgürlüğümüzü kamusal alanda gerçekleştirmek ve aynı zamanda mahremiyetimizi korumak için nesnel ve mekânsal olanak sağlar.<sup>287</sup> Bu anlamda mahremiyetin garantörü mülkiyettir demek son derece yerinde bir ifade olacaktır. Bireysel varlığın ve ahlakın kamusal alana taşınması mahremiyetin kamusal alana geçirilebilmesiyle mümkündür, bu da kamusal benlikle yani iletişime giren bireyin eylemleriyle sağlanabilir. Dolayısıyla mülkiyet kamusal alanda belirlediğim özgürlük alanım anlamına geliyor – başka tür bir pratik özgürlük tahayyül edemiyorum: Kamusal alana geçen mahremiyetin özgürlüğü ancak mülkiyetle gerçekleşir.

Bu noktada kişilerin birbirleriyle iletişiminde bireysel ahlaki sorumluluklarının nasıl bir rol oynadığı akla gelen soru olacaktır. Sorumluluk yalnızca kendine mal edilen değerler ve eylemler için söz konusudur dedik. Öyleyse bu sorumluluğun başkalarına olan yaklaşımda ahlaki bir eyleme yön vermesi nasıl mümkün olacak? Daha açık bir ifadeyle, bu tarzda bireysel sorumluluğun ve sahiplenmenin başkalarıyla ilişkide kurduğu ahlaki prensip nedir? Bu prensip “talep edilene karşılık verme” prensibidir, elbette değerlerin kendine mal edilmesi bağlamında. Mahremiyet üzerinden bu kolayca anlaşılabilir: Kendin mahremiyeti bir değer olarak sahiplendiğim ölçüde karşımdakinin ya da diğerinin mahremiyet talebine cevap veririm –çünkü sadece sahiplendiğim değer

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<sup>287</sup> Arendt sosyal dünyanın yükselişiyle mahremiyetin ortadan kalktığını söylüyor. Ancak benim tezime göre onu mesafeler yoluyla özel mülkiyet koruyor.

talep edilebilirliğini yani diğerlerine “hak gördüğümü” kavrayabilirim (demandability).<sup>288</sup> İletişim varlığını bu alışveriş üzerinden sürdürür. Bunu insan ve doğa arasındaki ilişki için de düşünmemiz olasıdır: Doğaya karşı yükümlülük duymak yerine onun taleplerine karşılık veren bir üretim ilişkisi içinde olmak gibi. Tezimin ileri sürdüğü ahlak anlayışında herhangi bir ödev ya da yaptırım ya da zorunlu eylem söz konusu değildir. Bunların hepsi yine tezimin ele aldığı yönüyle kişinin özgürlüğünü gerçekleştirmesine aykırı düşecektir. Ahlaki eylemi belirleyen unsur talep-karşılık iletişiminde ifade edilmektedir. İnsanlar arasında kurulabilecek bir pratik ahlak alanı görev ya da yükümlülük değil, talep ve karşılıkları esas alır diyebilirim.

Karşılıklı bir ilişkide değerlerin ve ilkelerin aktarılması yoluyla ve bunların sürekli alışverişi prensibiyle iletişim sağlanır. Bu değer ve ilkelerin taşıyıcısı da sorumluluktur. Sorumluluğun ahlaki bir ilişkideki fonksiyonu aslında sahiplendikleri değerleri birbiriyle alışveriş eden bireyler arasında güven kurmasıdır. İletişime karakterini veren değer alışverişidir. Buna Ayn Rand “tüccar prensibi”(trader’s principle) demektedir. Tezimin 5. Bölümü’nde konu ettiğim profesyonelliğin dayandığı iki temel prensipten ilki. Diğeri de “saldırmazlık”(non-aggression) prensibi. Değer alışverişinin esas olduğu bir iletişimde bu iki prensip pratik olarak hayata geçmekte ve aslında barışçıl bir ilişkinin kurulmasını sağlamaktadır: Bireyler sahiplendikleri değerlerini iradi ve özgür eylemleriyle değiş tokuş ederek uzlaşmaya varırlar. Bu aynı zamanda bireylerin aralarında gerçekliği kurmaları demektir.<sup>289</sup>

Değer alışverişi kişilerin sahiplendikleri benliklerini iletişim yoluyla gerçekleştirmesi anlamına gelecektir. Öyleyse güven kişilerin öncelikle sahiplendikleri değerler yoluyla nasıl bir ahlaki kimlik sahiplendikleri ve sonra bununla edindikleri güvenilirlikleriyle doğrudan alakalıdır.

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<sup>288</sup> ‘Demandability’ kavramım için “hak görme” karşılığını öneren danışmanım Doç Dr. Barış Parkan’a teşekkür ederim.

<sup>289</sup> “Gerçekliğin” doğası ancak Pratik bir ahlakın kurulması demek olabilir; bu savımı tezimde Hegel ve Kant la tartışarak açıkladım.

Güvenilirlik güveni kuran şeydir ve dolayısıyla güven ancak değerlerin alışverişi üzerinden kurulan bir iletişim yoluyla anlaşılabilir.

Adalet de hak edilmiş bir yaşamın sahiplenilmesi yoluyla kurulabilir. Yani bunu açarsak, becerilerin ahlaki kullanımı ve sonuçlarının hak edilmişinde hem kendi hem de başkalarınca rasyonel objektif değerlendirme ve bu yaşamın haklı karakterinin ortaya çıkmasına karşılık gelmektedir diyebiliriz. Adalet benliklerini ve değerlerini sahiplenen insanlar arasında bir objektif ahlaki alan kurulması demektir. Bunu da ancak rasyonel çıkarları doğrultusunda aralarında uzlaşma sağlayan ve kendi iyiliklerini bu ilişkiler yoluyla karşılıklı artıran insanlar sağlayabilir. Tezimde bunu egoizmin ilişkiselliği bağlamında ifade ediyorum: Dünyayla<sup>290</sup> ve diğerleriyle girilen iletişimde hak edilen bir yaşam ve hak edilen bir mutluluğun rasyonel ve nesnel karşılıklarını bulmak anlamında bir ilişki egoizm.<sup>291</sup> Yani kendim için başardığım ve kendime mal ettiğim her neyse o şeyin dünyanın ona verdiği karşılıkta hak edilmişliğini bir anlamda onaylıyorum –aslında bunu sahiplenme pratiğimde biliyordum, çünkü neyi hak edebileceğimi “öngörmüştüm”.

Yaşamı başarmak olası bir hikâyedir ve bu demektir ki her zaman her şey daha iyi olabilir. Bu aslında ahlaken ilerleme ve gelişmenin de ölçüsüdür. Bu ölçü değerlerin sahiplenilmesi ve kişinin kendine mal etme pratiğinin sürekliliğinde yatar. Bu süreklilik eylemlerimi rasyonel değerlendirmemle ve öngörmemle mümkündür. Değerlerin sahiplenilmesi aslında bir rasyonel öngörü ahlakıdır: Seçimiyle başlattığı yaşamını ve eylemleriyle ürettiği geleceğini sahiplenerek kendine hak görebilen insanın rasyonel öngörüsü.

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<sup>290</sup> Dünya derken insanların düşünme ve üretme becerileriyle yarattıkları ahlaki mülkiyetler alanını anlıyorum.

<sup>291</sup> İlişkiselliğin diğer boyutları da mesafeler alanı ve değerlerin alışverişi gibi iletişim formlarında açılıyor.

## APPENDIX B: TEZ İZİN FORMU/THESIS PERMISSION FORM

### ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

- Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences
- Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Social Sciences
- Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics
- Enformatik Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Informatics
- Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Marine Sciences

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**Bölümü** / Department : Felsefe

**TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS** (İngilizce / English) : Moral  
Justification of Private Property

**TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE:** Yüksek Lisans / Master  Doktora / PhD

- 1. Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır.** / Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide.
- 2. Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of **two** year. \*
- 3. Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır.** / Secure the entire work for period of **six months**.

**Yazarın imzası** / Signature

**Tarih** / Date