

## Toward the Development of a Paradigm of Human Flourishing in a Free Society

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This article supports the ancient Aristotelian idea, based on philosophical realism, that *eudaimonia* (i.e., human flourishing) should be the natural end of individual human actions. Proponents of this idea hold that there is an inexorable connection between human flourishing and human nature. They argue that one's human flourishing can be objectively derived (i.e., human flourishing is both objective and individualized with regard to particular human agents). They explain that, although some propensities are fundamental and universal to human nature, there is also the need to consider what is unique to the individual human person. The natural end is thus an inclusive end. The good is objective, but it is not wholly the same, for all individuals. Rather, it is contextual and relational. It follows that a man requires practical wisdom to choose the proper course of action in a given context—the good is always the good for a particular person. Of course, things or activities can be objectively good for a person even if he does not recognize, respond appropriately to, and/or pursue them—he can be in error with respect to what is of value to him. *Eudaimonia* is not subjectively determined.

An argument is made that self-direction (or autonomy) must apply to everyone equally because of the universal human characteristics of rationality and free will. Self-directedness is based on a proper understanding of human nature that determines the minimum boundaries governing social interactions. The natural right to liberty is thus the principle required for protecting the possibility of self-directedness. In turn, self-directedness is necessary for persons' decisions to

pursue (or not to pursue) their personal flourishing. Self-directedness is open to diverse forms of human flourishing. Because the law is properly concerned only with rules that are universal and necessary, the state should be concerned only with protecting what could be termed self-directedness, political autonomy, or negative liberty. The right to liberty can be viewed as a metanormative principle that sets limits to state power regarding the construction of a political order.

Self-directedness is a precondition for moral activity. Such a political philosophy of metanorms regulates the conditions under which moral actions may (or may not) take place. Rights define the legal framework in which moral actions can occur (or not occur). They also specify individuals' obligations to respect the self-directedness of others. The principle of self-directedness is the principle shared by rights theory and personal normative morality. The principle that specifies one's rights is not aimed directly at specifying one's flourishing. Ethics is practical and concerned with the particular and the contingent.

The article explains the relationship between human flourishing and moral theory, that the personal virtues (as described by Ayn Rand) are traits necessary for human flourishing, that the normative reasons for one's actions should derive from one's personal flourishing, and that the ideas of virtue and self-interest are inextricably related. This paper also discusses how individuals pursue their flourishing within the voluntary institutions of civil society and warns of the problems that result from conflating the state with civil society.

The main aim of this article is to present a schema or diagram that shows the ways in which its various topics link together and why. The article argues for a plan of conceptualization of a number of rather complex topics in relation to each other rather than for the topics themselves. Its emphasis will be on the interconnections between the elements of the flow chart presented in this paper.

This article contends that all of the disciplines of human action are interrelated and can be integrated into a paradigm of individual liberty and human flourishing based on the nature of man and the world. It should not be surprising that discoveries of truth in various disciplines and from different perspectives based on the nature of man and the world are consistent with one another. True knowledge must be a total in which every item of knowledge is interconnected.

All objective knowledge is interrelated in some way thus reflecting the totality that is the universe.

Ultimately, the truth is one. There is an essential interconnection between objective ideas. It follows that more attention should be paid to systems building rather than to extreme specialization within a discipline. Specialization is fine but, in the end, we need to reintegrate by connecting specialized knowledge back into the total knowledge of reality. We need to think systemically, look for the relationships and connections between components of knowledge, and aspire to understand the nature of knowledge and its unity. The concern of the system-builder is with truth as an integrated whole. Such a body of knowledge is circumscribed by the nature of facts in reality, including their relationships and implications. Principles that supply a systematic level of understanding must be based on the facts of reality. In other words, the principles of a true conceptual framework must connect with reality. We need to formulate principles explicitly and relate them logically to other principles explicitly and to the facts of reality. A systematic, logical understanding is required for cognitive certainty and is valuable in communicating ideas, and the reasoning underlying them, clearly and precisely.

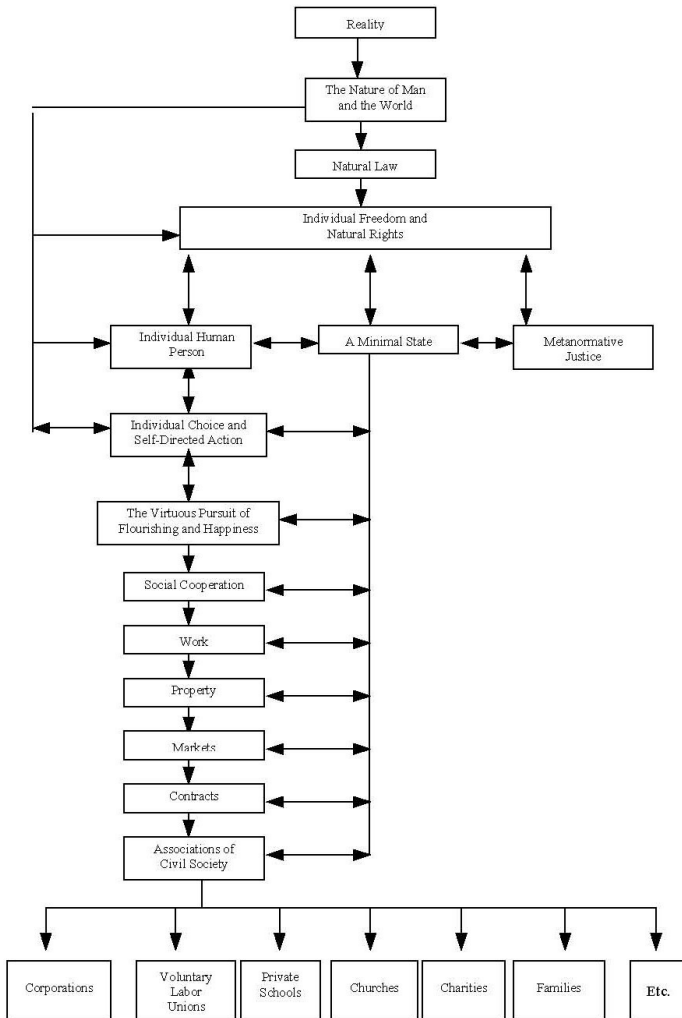
A sound paradigm requires internal consistency among its components. By properly integrating insights into a variety of topics, we may be able to develop a framework for human flourishing in a free society that would elucidate a theory of the best political regime on the basis of proper conceptions of the nature of man, human action, and society. Such a conceptual framework would address a broad range of issues in metaphysics, epistemology, value theory, ethics, and so on, in a systematic fashion.

This article presents a skeleton of a potential conceptual foundation and edifice for human flourishing in a free society. It is an attempt to forge an understanding from various disciplines and to integrate them into a clear, consistent, coherent, and systematic whole. Such a paradigm will help people to understand the world and to survive and flourish in it. Our goal is to have a paradigm in which the views of reality, human nature, knowledge, values, action, and society make up an integrated whole. Of course, the paradigm will grow and evolve as scholars engage, question, critique, interpret, and extend its ideas. This is as it should be because our goal is to have a paradigm

that accords with reality and there is always more to learn about reality.

To aid the reader in seeing the big picture, the following diagram depicts the relationships among the ideas discussed in this article:

**Human Flourishing in a Free Society**



Rather than providing proof or validation of the concepts and principles themselves, the goal of this paper is to provide a schema (illustrated above) that demonstrates the interrelationships among the concepts and principles. I am not going to attempt to “prove” every point that follows in this article.

## **The Nature of Man and the World**

The Aristotelian perspective is that reality is objective. There is a world of objective reality that exists independent of the consciousness of human beings and that has a determinate nature that is knowable (Buchanan 1962; Gilson 1986; Pols 1992; Miller 1995). It follows that natural law is objective because it is inherent in the nature of the entity to which it relates. The content of natural law, which derives from the nature of man and the world, is accessible to human reason. Principles that supply a systematic level of understanding must be based on the facts of reality.

It is necessary to focus our attention on the enduring characteristics of reality. Men live in a universe with a definite nature and exist within nature as part of the natural order. Using their minds, men have the ability to discover the permanent features of the world. A unified theoretical perspective and potent intellectual framework for analyzing the social order must be based on the constraining realities of the human condition—reality is not optional.

We live in a systematic universe with an underlying natural order that makes it so. There are discernible regularities pervading all of existence. There is an underlying order that gives circumscription, predictability, and their character to all things. Through the use of the mind, men can discover the nature of things, the laws that regulate or apply to them, the way they now exist, and the ways they can potentially be. To determine the nature of anything, it is necessary to remove all that is unique and exclusive to a thing and examine it in terms of the common characteristics it shares with all others of its type. This is done in order to study the fundamental nature of existence, of man, and of man’s relationship to existence. Our goal is to discover the natural order as it applies to man and his affairs. There exists a natural law that reigns over the affairs of human conduct. Natural law theory holds that there is a law prior to man, society, and government. It is a law that must be abided by if each of

these is to attain its true character and fulfillment.

To ascertain man's nature, we must, through a process of abstraction, remove all that is accidental to any specific man. What is left must be man's distinctive features and potentialities. It is man's ability to reason that separates him from other vital organisms. Man's rational faculty distinguishes him from all other living species. Conceptualization based on reason is man's unique and only proper way of dealing with the rest of the natural world. It is in man's nature to use his rational powers, to form concepts, to integrate them, to evaluate alternatives, to make choices, and so on. In order to survive and flourish, men must come to terms with the requirements of reality (Rand 1957; 1964, 22–28; Peikoff 1991, 152–86).

The ability to control one's actions (i.e., natural liberty) is an inborn condition of man. In the nature of things, no person can use the mind, senses, or appendages of another. Man is free to use his faculties provided that he does not harm others in his use of them. All thinking and acting is done by individual persons in their own spatiotemporal localities—a society cannot think or act although men can choose to act in a coordinated manner with one another. Men have the ability to cooperate and achieve through voluntary action (Younkins 2002, 11–15).<sup>1</sup> To properly construct a paradigm for flourishing in a free society, it is necessary to go back to absolute fundamentals in human nature. We need to have a precise understanding of the nature of the human person. Human beings are a distinct species in a natural world whose lives are governed by means of each person's free will and individual conceptual consciousness. Unlike other beings, a person's survival and flourishing depends on cognition at a conceptual level. People are all of one species with a definite nature who are uniquely configured because of their individualizing features.

As explained by Tibor Machan (1990, 75–97; 1998a, 8–16), there is a biological case for human diversity with the individual as the primary reality. We must respect the condition of human diversity and the fact that people are not interchangeable. Individuality is vital to one's nature. A person is responsible for achieving and sustaining the human life that is his own. Each person has potentialities, is the steward of his own time, talents, and energies, and is responsible for becoming the person he has the potential to become by means of his

own choices and actions.

Human beings possess a stable nature with certain definite, definable, and delimitable characteristics. Consciousness and free will are essential attributes of man's nature. Reason is man's guiding force. Human activities are self-conscious, purposeful, and deliberately chosen. One's actions are caused by one's own volition, which is a human capacity. A human being can initiate and make choices about what he will do. Human action involves purposeful, intentional, and normative behavior. Mental action or thinking is the ultimate free action, is primary, and includes the direct focus and willing of the person. Behavior thus takes place after a judgment or conceptualization has been made. It follows that there is a moral element or feature of action because human beings possess free will, which can cause most (or at least some) of what they do (Rand 1957; 1964, 20–27; Peikoff 1991, 187–205).

The distinguishing features of human nature (i.e., rationality and free will) provide objective standards for a man's choice of both means and ends. Man is a volitional being whose reason should guide his selection of both ends and means to those ends. Volition is a type of causation—it is not an exception to the law of causality. Men can think, choose, act, and cause. Human beings act, choose means to achieve ends, and choose both means and ends. In human action, a person's free will choice is the cause and this cause generates certain effects. Such causality is a prerequisite of action and is primarily concerned with a person's manipulation of objects external to himself (Rand 1957; 1964, 21–25; Peikoff 1991, 64–69).

Free will is not the negation of causality, but rather is a type of causality that relates to man. Causality is an association between an entity and its mode of action. It is not the relationship between actions and earlier actions. For a human being, a cause can be the change in his assessment of the relative importance of his values. A person uses his knowledge to correlate his values with his various plans. The concept of purpose underlies the idea of causality as motivated action. Action in behavior is directed at attaining a purpose. Human action has a teleological character because it is rational conduct aimed at a goal. A person can consciously act to initiate a sequence of causation by changing or moving an attribute of his body. This act implies that he has a contemplated objective that

he wants to attain. This initial change in a person's body is intended to cause other events to take place and to eventually lead to the accomplishment of the desired goal. The success or failure of a person in attaining his objective depends on his ability to isolate correctly the relevant causal features of a situation and to predict the future accurately both in the presence and in the absence of one's own contemplated actions (Branden 2001, 57–62; Mises [1949] 1963; Machan 1998a, 31–50; O'Connor 2002; Pols 1982; 2002).

The idea of human action depends upon the introspectively valid fact that there is a type of conduct that is peculiarly human. This kind of conduct coincides with the consciousness of volition. Actions are free only if they are controlled by a faculty that functions volitionally. A person knows via introspection that he experiences physical variables and properties, creates concepts, chooses values, and changes physical variables and properties because he constantly does those activities. Introspection supplies the knowledge that we can make metaphysically free decisions to attempt to attain our values (Branden 1974; Machan 1998a, 17–30; 2000).

What is known (i.e., the object) is distinct from, and independent of, the knower (i.e., the subject). Men are born with no innate conceptual knowledge. Such knowledge is gained via various processes of integration and differentiation from perceptual data. For example, a person apprehends that he has a conscious mind by distinguishing between external objects and events and the workings of his mind. Self-awareness is thus attained when a person reflects upon what he has observed (Rand 1957; [1966–67] 1990).

Reality is what there is to be perceived. Reality exists independently of a man's consciousness. It exists apart from the knower. It follows that empirical knowledge is acquired through observational experience of external reality. People can observe goal-directed actions from the outside. An individual attains an understanding of causality and other categories of action by observing the actions of others to reach goals. He also learns about causality by means of his own acting and his observation of the outcomes. Action is thus a man's conscious adjustment to the state of the world.

It is necessary to provide a realistic foundation for a true paradigm for a free society. Therefore, a comprehensive moral defense of individualism and its political implications is founded



appropriately on a naturalistic philosophy. An Aristotelian metaphysics such as that supplied by Rand (1957; 1964; 1967; [1966–67] 1990) would be an excellent starting point for a political and economic framework based on the requirements of reality and of man's nature. Logic is pivotal to correct human thought because reality corresponds to the principles of logic. Men are capable of comprehending the workings of the world through the application of logic. Logic is the method by which a volitional consciousness conforms to reality. It is reason's method. The method of logic reflects the nature and needs of man's consciousness and the facts of external reality (Joseph 1916; Veatch 1952; Rasmussen 2007).

Principles such as the laws of identity and noncontradiction underpin the observable fact that there are innumerable distinct types of being in reality. Human beings are a unique class, characterized by the real attributes of reason and free will, that introduces a dimension of value into nature. Human existence represents a distinct ontological realm different from all others. A human being can choose and is thus a moral agent. This moral nature is grounded in the facts of nature. What a thing must be or do depends on the kind of object or entity that it is. The values (and virtues) of life are discovered by means of an understanding of human nature and the nature of the world (Machan 1990, 78-85).

## **Natural Law**

The idea of natural law has played an important role in political and economic philosophy and in ethics for more than 2,500 years. Elements of natural law can be found in the writings of many ancient and medieval thinkers including Lao Tzu, Aristotle, the Stoics, Cicero and the Romans, Epicurus, and Thomas Aquinas. The development of natural law thought was continued by Spinoza, Hugo Grotius, John Locke, A. R. J. Turgot, Adam Smith, J. B. Say, Herbert Spencer, and Carl Menger as well as by others. Contemporary natural law thinkers include Ayn Rand, Murray Rothbard, and Michael Novak, among many others. Throughout history, both the secular natural law tradition and the Christian natural law tradition have stressed individual personal responsibility and have advanced the defense of a free society and classical liberal thought (d'Entreves 1951; Wild 1953; Gierke 1957; Finnis 1980; Gilson 1956).

There are ontological necessities, constraints, possibilities, and impossibilities regarding the way the world works that exist regardless of what we believe of the world or how we represent it—the world works through a variety of laws, causal processes, and interactions. There is one universe in which everything is interconnected through the inescapable laws of cause and effect. There is a natural order with various types of beings whose fulfillment comes from developing and perfecting their potentialities. Differences abound in nature and reality is nuanced in its varieties. There is a stable human nature that establishes limits regarding how human beings should act. To survive and flourish a man must recognize that nature has its own imperatives. There is a natural law that derives from the nature of man and the world and that is discernible through the use of reason. It is necessary for men to discover the natural order and to adhere to it. It follows that one needs to examine human nature—one requires a sound, feasible, and viable conception of human nature.

Human nature is what it is. It follows that the law of human nature is the only law that man, possessing free will, is free to try to disobey. Of course, a man must be prepared to experience the consequences of his “disobedience.” If a person desires to prosper, he should not ignore natural law. We could say that the efficacy of human nature is, in a sense, dependent upon human volition. The law of nature is revealed by reason and man can choose to attempt to violate it. Moral concerns are matters of fact and standards of morality are grounded in the facts of nature. It is only if moral standards can be freely adhered to or avoided that a framework for moral standards can arise. In order to have such freedom, each person must be protected from intrusion by others. What is required is a social structure that accords each person a moral space over which he has freedom to act—natural rights define this moral space.

Natural laws exist and we can discern what they are. Natural law is universal and unchanging and is discovered rather than made. The principles produced through natural law analysis are important and nonarbitrary human constructs or concepts and are firmly rooted in the real world. To derive objective concepts from reality requires a rational epistemology involving both induction and deduction. Natural law reveals an objective moral order knowable through reason and favorable to the survival and flourishing of human beings in the

world. Natural law's moral order provides individuals with motivations to fulfill their potential as human beings. Of course, putting natural law principles into practice requires judgment and practical reason. Aristotle taught the benefits of a virtuous life in accordance with the law of human nature. He explained that man's particular nature, different from all other entities and objects, gives him the ability to make moral judgments.

Natural law provides the groundwork for the Aristotelian idea of human flourishing and links moral commitments to facts about the natural world. Because human nature is what it is, ethical naturalism is rooted in a biological understanding of human nature. Natural law addresses the problem of how individual human persons should live their lives. Human beings are not fungible—each individual is responsible for his conduct in the context of his personal attributes and circumstances. Of course, the laws of nature do not guarantee that every person will flourish—they only offer the opportunity to flourish. Human beings can flourish and attain happiness by living their lives according to laws inscribed in their beings. Natural law doctrines have generally been said to include, but are not limited to, the state of nature, natural rights, the social contract, and the rule of law. Because natural law can be inferred from what is innate in the nature of man and the world, it would be compelling even if God does not exist. Natural law can be deduced with or without a religious framework. Natural law doctrines are discovered through the use of reason.

The state of nature includes the suppositional circumstances that are assumed to have existed before the institution of a civil government. Because all persons are free and equal in the state of nature, it follows that no one person has the natural right to reign over any of the others (Harrison 2002).

Society is natural to man as an associative being. It is within society that man can make voluntary exchanges that please and fulfill him. Furthermore, government (or a system of private competing legal and protection agencies) is essential to enable each man to keep what is his and to live peacefully while having mutually beneficial voluntary relations with others. The state is not society. It is simply the organization charged with the function of protecting society that overflows the boundaries of the state. If a society was synonymous

with the state, it would not be free because all human activity would be prescribed and governed by law (Gierke 1957; Brown 2007).

According to thinkers such as Turgot, Spencer, and, arguably, Hayek, the ideas of social cooperation, spontaneous order, and progressive evolution of the social order are included within natural law. That which is appropriate for society is appropriate for human nature, and thus, according to natural law. If the law emerges and evolves spontaneously, then it has its roots in human nature and human intelligence (Bury 2004; Angner 2007).

The natural law insists that everything stands under the test of reason grounded in reality. The particular nature of entities requires particular actions if the desired ends are to be attained. Natural laws of human action, discoverable through the use of reason, necessitate specific means and arrangements to affect the desired ends. The laws of nature determine the consequences. The free society works because it is in accord with nature. Natural law provides for reasoning and verification about what is good and what is not good.

Natural law underpins the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Negative liberty, the absence of constraints and restraints coercively imposed upon a person by other persons, can be arrived at by studying the distinctive faculties and abilities of human beings and abstracting away the particular levels or amounts that specific individuals possess with respect to their faculties and abilities. What remains is the ability of each man to think his own thoughts and control his own energies in his attempts to act according to those thoughts. Negative freedom is thus a natural requirement of human existence.

Freedom from coercive man-made constraints and obstacles is a necessary condition to fulfill the potentialities of one's nature. This does not mean freedom from obstacles in general. Not having the abilities or resources is not coercion and therefore does not constitute a lack of freedom.

According to the precepts of natural law, a person should not be forced into acting or using his resources in a way in which he has not given his voluntary consent. It follows that man has certain natural rights to life, to the use of one's faculties as one wills for one's own ends, and to the fruits of one's labor. These rights inhere in man's nature and predate government, constitutions, and courts. Natural

rights are derived from the facts of human nature and are respected because they protect individual self-directedness (Younkins 2002; 11–15).<sup>2</sup>

The social contract is the tacit agreement of all which is essential, in the nature of things, to the existence of society. It is the implicit and concurrent covenant not to initiate violence, to fulfill agreements, not to trespass, not to deny others the use of their property, etc. The social contract is the understood, timeless, and universal contract that necessarily must exist if people are to live peacefully within society (Paul 1983; Rasmussen and Den Uyl 1991, 191–206; Morris 1999).

Social interactions and associations offer great benefits to individuals, including friendships, more information, specialization and the division of labor, greater productivity, a larger variety of goods and services, etc. Throughout history, economic activities have been the main type of social interaction and cooperation among people (Rasmussen and Den Uyl 1991, 173–91).

Government (or a natural order of competing security and conflict resolution agencies) is needed in order to enable people to live well in society. It is needed to prohibit and punish the private violation of the natural rights of those who peacefully use their energies and resources, to punish fraud and deception, and to settle disputes that may arise (Younkins 2002, 37–42).

Of course, the existence of a natural order prior to government means that government's role should be limited and restrained. Natural law theory limits government to its proper sphere, sets bounds to its actions, and subjects the government itself to the law. It follows that to circumscribe government to its proper role, power must be separated into its different functions and power must be counterbalanced to keep those who govern from exceeding their legitimate bounds. This is important because when those who govern act outside the law, they do so with the full coercive power of the government (147–49).

Under the rule of law, everyone, including the government, is bound by rules. The idea that the government is under the law is a condition of the liberty of the people. The rule of law requires law to be general and abstract, known and certain, and equally applicable to all persons in any unknown number of future instances (145–47; Tamanaha 2004).

A constitution is a law for governments. Constitutional governments are characterized by specific restraints and enumerations of their powers.<sup>3</sup> The force behind constitutional governments is the idea of a higher natural law restricting the operations of the government (Hayek 1960). What is required is a constitutional structure based on natural rights.

The notion of metanormative justice, an idea in harmony with natural law, is concerned only with the peaceful and orderly coordination of activities of any possible human being with any other in a social setting. This type of justice refers to equal treatment under social and legal conditions that include a collection of known rules regarding allowable and nonallowable actions that will lead to unequal positions with no one knowing in advance the particular result this arrangement will have for any specific person (Den Uyl and Rasmussen 1995, 68–70; Younkins 2002, 136–38).

Similarly, the state can properly be said to be ensuring the common good when it protects man's natural right to seek his own happiness. Only protected liberty (or self-directedness) can be said to be good for, and able to be possessed by, all persons simultaneously. No other definition of the common good can be in harmony with an ordered universe and the natural law. The common good properly understood is protected freedom that permits persons to pursue happiness or the good that each defines for himself. The government achieves the common good when its functions are limited to protecting the natural right to liberty and preserving peace and order (Rasmussen and Den Uyl 1991, 131–71; Younkins 2002, 31–35).<sup>4</sup>

There is a critical distinction between the legitimacy of a right and the morality of exercising that right. The government should only be concerned with questions such as the domain of rights, the proper role of violence, and the definitions of aggression and criminality. The government should not be concerned with all personal moral principles. There is a huge difference between establishing the permissibility of an action and the goodness or morality of it. The state should be concerned with the rights of men and not with the oughts of men.

It follows that because religion is a private matter, the government has no right to enter the field of religious beliefs on the side of theism or on the side of atheism. People are free to hold any religious

or nonreligious view they choose. Religion is a matter of personal conviction.

A healthy, differentiated social order relies on a separation of political, economic, and moral-cultural-religious systems (Novak 1982). The power of the state should not be enhanced by the identification with religion. Churches need to be free from state power and vice versa. The Constitution and Bill of Rights correctly state that neither a state nor a federal government can set up a religion nor can they pass laws that aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can they force nor influence a person to go to or remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. The state is properly required to be neutral in its relations with groups of religious believers and nonbelievers.

## **Human Flourishing**

An Aristotelian self-perfectionist approach to ethics can be shown to complement the natural right to liberty that itself provides a solid foundation for a minimal state. This approach gives liberty moral significance by illustrating how the natural right to liberty is a social and political condition necessary for the possibility of human flourishing—the ultimate moral standard in Aristotelian ethics interpreted as a natural-end ethics. A foundation is thus provided for a classical liberal political theory within the Aristotelian tradition. Modern proponents of this approach include Rand (1957; 1964; 1967; [1966–67] 1990), Rasmussen and Den Uyl (1991; 1997; 2005); Machan (1975; 1989; 1990; 1998a), and others.<sup>5</sup>

According to Rasmussen and Den Uyl (2005 127–52), human flourishing is objective, inclusive, individualized, agent-relative, self-directed, and social. One's flourishing is desired because it is desirable and choiceworthy. Human flourishing is understood in a biocentric context and is ontological (i.e., a state of being)—it is not simply a feeling or experience of subjective (i.e., personally estimated) well-being. It is a self-directed activity, an actuality, and an end accomplished through choice—it is not a passive or a static state. Human flourishing is an inclusive end, is complex, individualized, unique, and diverse, and involves moral pluralism. There can be no human flourishing separate from the lives of individual human persons.

However, a person's maturation or flourishing requires a life with others—friendship is a constituent of human flourishing. In addition, human sociality is open-ended with respect to relationships with any other human being.

Rasmussen and Den Uyl explain that there are both generic and individuating potentialities. As an inclusive end, human flourishing comprises basic or generic goods (e.g., knowledge, health, wealth, friendship, creative achievement, beauty, and pleasure) and virtues. These determine what contributes toward flourishing because of man's universal human nature, but the appropriate proportions, amounts, or applications of the goods and virtues depend upon the particular and contingent circumstances of various individuals. What is good for the flourishing of an individual is agent-relative and is objective because of the actual potentialities, needs, and circumstances that delineate both what and who a person is. The goods and virtues must be attained according to the circumstances, endowments, talents, contexts, beliefs, past choices, and history that differentiates an individual from others. It takes practical wisdom, at the time of action, for an individual to discern and choose what is morally required in particular and contingent circumstances. It follows that ethics is open-ended, practical, and concerned with the particular and contingent facts and circumstances in the lives of different individuals. The moral life requires that individuals be partial with respect to their valuations of generic goods. Each person must use his practical wisdom to discover how to integrate and particularize the generic goods in their lives. Law, on the other hand, must be concerned with rules or social conditions that are universal, necessary, and applicable to everyone equally. Law must protect each person's self-directedness (i.e., autonomy) with respect to the exercise of his rational agency. Self-direction is the central necessary ingredient or constituent of human flourishing.

Human flourishing (also known as personal flourishing) involves the rational use of one's individual human potentialities, including talents, abilities, and virtues in the pursuit of his freely and rationally chosen values, goals, and personal projects. Human flourishing depends on the sustainable pursuit of, and vital engagement in, a person's core projects (Little et al. 2007).<sup>6</sup> An action is considered to be proper if it leads to the flourishing of the person performing the



action. Human flourishing is, at the same time, a moral accomplishment and a fulfillment of human capacities, and it is one through being the other. Self-actualization is moral growth and vice-versa. Not an abstraction, human flourishing is real and highly personal (i.e., agent relative) by nature, consists in the fulfillment of both a man's human nature and his unique potentialities, and is concerned with choices and actions that necessarily deal with the particular and the contingent. One man's self-realization is not the same as another's. What is called for in terms of concrete actions such as choice of career, education, friends, home, and others, varies from person to person. Human flourishing becomes an actuality when one uses one's practical reason to consider one's unique needs, circumstances, capacities, and so on, to determine which concrete instantiations of human values, goods, and virtues will comprise one's well-being. The idea of human flourishing is inclusive and can encompass a wide variety of constitutive ends such as self-improvement, knowledge, the development of character traits, productive work, religious pursuits, athletic pursuits, physical fitness, community building, love, charitable activities, allegiance to persons and causes, self-efficacy, material well-being, pleasurable sensations, etc.

To flourish, a man must pursue goals and personal projects that are rational for him both individually and also as a human being. Whereas the former will vary depending upon one's particular circumstances, the latter are common to man's distinctive nature—man has the unique capacity to live rationally. The use of reason is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for human flourishing. Living rationally (i.e., consciously) means dealing with the world conceptually. Living consciously implies respect for the facts of reality. The principle of living consciously is not affected by the degree of one's intelligence or the extent of one's knowledge; rather, it is the acceptance and use of one's reason in the recognition and perception of reality and in his choice of values and actions to the best of his ability, whatever that ability may be. To pursue rational goals and personal projects through rational means is the only way to cope successfully with reality and achieve one's self-endorsed and self-concordant goals. Although rationality is not always rewarded, the fact remains that it is through the use of one's mind that a man not only discovers the values required for personal flourishing, but also

attains them. Values can be achieved in reality if a man recognizes and adheres to the reality of his unique personal endowments and contingent circumstances. Human flourishing is positively related to a rational man's attempts to externalize his values and actualize his internal views of how things ought to be in the outside world. Practical reason can be used to choose, create, and integrate all the values, goods, and virtues that comprise personal flourishing. Virtues and goods are the means to values and the virtues, goods, and values together enable us to achieve human flourishing and happiness.

The constituent virtues (identified by Rand 1964, 25–27), such as rationality, independence, integrity, justice, honesty, productiveness, and pride (moral ambitiousness), must be applied, although differentially, by each person in the task of self-actualization. Not only do particular virtues play larger roles in the lives of some men than others, but there is also diversity in the concrete with respect to the objects and purposes of their application, the way in which they are applied, and the manner in which they are integrated with other virtues, goods, and values. Choosing and making the proper response for the unique situation is the concern of moral living—one needs to use his practical reason at the time of action to consider concrete contingent circumstances to determine the correct application and balance of virtues and values for himself. Although virtues, goods, and values are not automatically rewarded, this does not alter the fact that they are rewarded. Human flourishing is the reward of virtues, goods, and values, and happiness is the goal and reward of human flourishing.

Happiness can be defined as the positive conscious and emotional experience that accompanies or stems from achieving one's goals and values and exercising one's individual human potentialities, including talents, abilities, and virtues.<sup>7</sup> In other words, happiness results from personal flourishing. One's experience of happiness tends to correlate with a properly led life. A person's experience of happiness or unhappiness is an indicator or internal monitor of the objective status of one's pursuit of one's life and its values. The belief that one is flourishing is usually a product of a person taking rational and proper actions in his life. Of course, he may be mistaken and/or irrational and his activities may not be truly advancing his existence. When people are properly happy, they are motivated to further act in a life-

fulfilling manner. The joy found in one's flourishing helps to maintain and further a person's motivation to continue to engage in life-enhancing activities. There is a dynamic reinforcing interaction between the condition of factual flourishing and one's experience of flourishing (i.e., happiness). The better a man is at living, the more likely he will experience happiness, love his life, and be inspired to live well. Happiness can be consistent with crisis, pain, grief, and struggle and is generally not possible without them. Happy people tend to be those who respond positively to adversities and setbacks.

Rasmussen and Den Uyl (2005, 76–96) explain the need for a different type (or level of) ethical norm when social life is viewed as dealing with relationships between any possible human beings, and when the individualized makeup of human flourishing is understood. Such a norm would not be concerned with promoting personal conduct in moral activity, but instead with the regulation of conduct so that conditions could be achieved that would permit morally important actions to occur.

Self-directedness is required by this metanormative principle. It follows that an ethics of human flourishing does not require a perfectionist politics and that there is a perfectionist basis for a non-perfectionist politics. It is the notion of self-directedness that supplies the principle for linking the political and legal order and the personal moral order. Self-directedness is necessary for human flourishing. People have a shared need to act in a peaceful and orderly social and political context. It follows that the legitimate aim of politics is peace and order. Although the individual right to liberty is not a primary ethical principle, it is politically primary because it protects the possibility of self-directedness in a social context. Rasmussen and Den Uyl's position (with which I agree) thus differs from that of Rand who holds that the prohibition on initiating force is a moral principle; she contends that rights are a moral concept rather than a metanormative one. Although self-perfection has moral primacy, individual rights must be viewed as having political priority. Self-direction (i.e., autonomy) involves the use of one's reason and is central and necessary for the possibility of attaining human flourishing, self-esteem, and happiness. It is the only characteristic of flourishing that is both common to all acts of self-actualization and particular to each. Freedom in decision-making and behavior is a necessary operating

condition for the pursuit and achievement of human flourishing. Respect for individual autonomy is essential to human flourishing (Miller 2002).<sup>8</sup> This logically leads to the endorsement of the right of personal direction of one's life, including the use of his endowments, capacities, and energies. These natural (i.e., negative) rights are metanormative principles concerned with protecting the self-directedness of individuals thus ensuring the freedom through which individuals can pursue their flourishing.

The goal of the right to liberty is to secure individuals' self-directedness, which, in turn, allows for the possibility of human flourishing. This is done by preventing encroachments upon the conditions under which human flourishing can occur. Natural rights impose a negative obligation—the obligation not to interfere with one's liberty. Natural rights, therefore, require a legal system that provides the necessary conditions for the possibility that individuals might self-actualize. It follows that the proper role of the government is to protect man's natural rights through the use of force, but only in response, and only against those who initiate its use. In order to provide the maximum self-determination for each person, the state should be limited to maintaining justice, police, and defense, and to protecting life, liberty, and property.

The negative right to liberty, as a basic metanormative principle, provides a context in which all the diverse forms of personal flourishing may coexist in an ethically compossible manner. This right can be accorded to every person with no one's authority over himself requiring that any other person experience a loss of authority over himself. Such a metanormative standard for social conduct favors no particular form of human flourishing while concurrently providing a context within which diverse forms of human flourishing can be pursued. The necessity of self-direction for human flourishing provides a rationale for a political and legal order that will not require that the flourishing of any individual be sacrificed for that of any other nor use people for purposes for which they have not consented.

A libertarian institutional framework guarantees man only the freedom to seek his moral well-being and happiness as long as he does not trample the equivalent rights of others. Such a system is not concerned with whether people achieve the good or conduct themselves virtuously. The minimal state is concerned only with a

person's outward conduct rather than with the virtuousness of his inner state of being. Rights are necessary principles for the construction of political policies at the constitutional level. Because rights are metanormative principles, rather than normative ones, they cannot replace the role of the constituent virtues. A political and legal order based on the metanormative principle of the right to liberty allows people to act in ways that are not self-perfecting. Its purpose is not to direct the positive promotion of human flourishing; it is simply to allow persons to pursue their moral well-being on their own. The good of the individual person is thus inextricably related to the common good of the political community that involves the protection of each man's natural right to liberty through which he can self-actualize and freely pursue further actions. Therefore, the legitimate purpose of the state, the protection of man's natural right to liberty, is procedural in nature and is the same as the promotion of the common good of the political community. In other words, the common good of the political community involves a set of social and legal conditions based on a man's natural rights (Younkins 2002, 40).

It follows that the minimal state is concerned only with justice in a metanormative sense—not as a personal virtue. Whereas justice as a constituent virtue of one's personal flourishing involves an individual's specific contextual recognition and evaluation of people based on objective criteria, justice in a metanormative sense is concerned only with the peaceful and orderly coordination of activities of any possible person with any other. Justice as a normative principle is concerned with exclusive (i.e., selective) relationships and requires practical reason and discernment of differences of both circumstances and persons. On the other hand, justice as a metanormative principle is concerned with nonexclusive (i.e., open-ended and universal) relationships that do not assume a shared set of commitments or values. Although both types of justice are concerned with social or interpersonal relationships, justice as a constituent virtue deals with others in much more specific and personal ways than when justice is considered as the foundation of a political order that is concerned with any person's relationship with any other human being. Therefore, metanormative justice (i.e., the basic right to liberty) provides the context for exclusive relationships to develop and for the possibility of human flourishing and happiness (Den Uyl and Rasmussen 1995,

68–70; Younkins 2002, 136–38).

## **Human Flourishing and Natural Rights**

Natural law is thought by many scholars to be an older concept than the idea of natural rights. John Locke and his predecessor, Hugo Grotius, are frequently credited with ushering in the modern concept of natural rights. Historically, the doctrine of natural rights appears to have developed either within, or at least consonant with, the framework of the natural law tradition. There is some debate among philosophers as to whether the idea of natural rights is based on the idea of natural law, whether the concept of natural law is derived from the concept of natural rights, or whether they are separately developed, but related, concepts. Either way, natural law and natural rights are compatible ideas each of which is rooted in human nature itself—both require an ontological foundation. Both natural law and natural rights are based on epistemological realism.

People are all of one species with a definite nature who are also each uniquely configured because of their individuating attributes—individuality is essential to one's nature. Having reason and free will, each person has the capacity and responsibility to choose to attempt to actualize his potential for being a flourishing individual human being—it is a person's moral responsibility to be as good as possible at living his own life. Morality is the good of man in his individual instantiation—it does not aim at the common good. There is only flourishing of individual human beings. The human *telos* is the standard for morality and the individual human person is the center of the moral world. This classical teleological *eudaimonistic* approach to ethics states that the proper moral task of each person is to seek his personal flourishing and happiness in his life—one's needs and purposes in life are determined by his humanity and individuality. It follows that the morally good is subject to the determination by each individual person who is responsible for his own life—the human moral good is connected with individual initiative. There is a connection between respecting each person's right to liberty and one's attempt to flourish by answering questions of morality and by acting accordingly.

Each unique individual human person is morally autonomous and should be held responsible for his actions. It is essential to respect

human autonomy and uniqueness so that individuals can attain self-actualization. There is an inviolable moral space around each person that protects him from intrusion by others. Rights involve a delineation of jurisdiction within which an individual may decide what to do. A person's own discerned potentialities tell him what to do and the standard of flourishing provides a criterion for one's wants and desires. Each person is responsible for living the type of life that realizes his distinctiveness. The notion of responsibility is a key concept for understanding rights, morality, and human flourishing. Agential direction involves autonomous acting on decisions made via a process of examination, reflection, deliberation, and choice.

Individual uniqueness is the source from which value pluralism flows—from value differences emanate the need to engage in peaceful exchanges and for voluntary associations. Individuality entails varieties of value and diversity with respect to human flourishing; in a society of varied individuals the outcomes of human flourishing will reflect that variety. It follows that what is required is freedom of action to allow for a plurality of ends and for a diversity of approaches to the attainment of human flourishing. Responsible agents require a moral space for living their lives in accordance with their nature as individual human persons. A protected moral space is needed for the possibility of self-direction. The doctrine of natural rights attributes to human beings moral rights that others are obligated to respect. Natural rights justify the context in which human actions take place and determine the moral principles that establish what is permissible within that context. Mutual noninterference provides the context and proper setting for social interactions.

Natural rights are derived by reason from human nature and supply a comprehensive principle that applies universally to all persons and to all acts. Natural rights are based on the common aspects of human beings whereas each life to be lived is the life of some individual person—the human *telos* is individualized and agent relative. The cognition of the universal idea of natural rights involves abstraction without precision and is based on the consideration of human nature. Natural rights provide a context of self-directedness that is common to every act of human flourishing. Common features give rise to universal standards; some principles are irrefutable and indispensable. Natural rights provide a sphere of rightful defensible

authority for individuals to live their own lives according to their nature as individual human beings. The designation “natural” refers to the justification of these rights.

The ultimate justification of an ethic of human flourishing is consequentialist and agent-based, endorsing each person’s pursuit of his individual well-being. On the other hand, the doctrine of natural rights can be viewed as having a deontic dimension, informing people what restrictions they must accept. There is a distinction between ethical principles that are teleological and those that are deontic. According to teleological principles, the moral value of an action depends upon the consequences of the action—human flourishing is a consequence-based theory of right action. According to deontic principles, the propriety of an action stems from something other than the consequences. Deontic restrictions are moral prohibitions against imposing specific forms of treatment upon other people. There are deontic restrictions that are correlative to the rights of others as well as correlative to each person’s right to his own life. We could say that rights and responsibilities are relational in the nature of human persons. It would be inconsistent or contradictory to maintain the right to direct one’s own life and not to advocate others’ rights to direct their own lives. It follows that an individual is not limited personally regarding his own pursuits but he is limited interpersonally with respect to others’ actions.

In his various writings, Eric Mack (1989; 1993; 1995; 1998a; 1998b) has explained that there is a distinctive correspondence or correlation between the doctrines of human flourishing and natural rights. Endorsing human flourishing makes it rationally necessary to also endorse natural rights. Although human flourishing is not the mainspring or source of rights, the two doctrines are complementary systematizing principles within an ethical framework that is rational because it contains both of these coordinating and integrating components. The rationality of advocating the doctrine of human flourishing depends upon the support of the doctrine of natural rights.

The doctrine of natural rights provides a conception of freedom that establishes the context for other senses of freedom. Natural rights portray the appropriate setting for social interactions and specify the conditions for meaningful senses of moral virtue and



human flourishing. Natural rights delineate conceptually the moral space within which individuals need to be free (and self-directed) to make their own choices regarding their possible pursuit of their self-actualization without interfering with the like pursuit of others with whom they interact socially.

Natural rights do not enforce themselves. Securing natural rights should be the primary and central concern of the political and legal order. The notion of natural rights should inform the formation of law and government. Political liberty should involve a state of organized social life in which persons are not deprived of their sovereignty. Human flourishing can best occur when there exists a minimal state that takes no actions except to uphold the negative natural rights of all of its citizens. Politics and law should not have a direct role in how people ought to live their lives. Politics should be concerned only with the limited ends of peace and security—politics and law should be separated from personal morality.

The 2005 book, *Norms of Liberty*, embodies the most complete expression of, and best statement to date of, Rasmussen and Den Uyl's thesis that liberalism is a political philosophy of metanorms that does not guide individual conduct in moral activity. Arguing that politics is not suited to make men moral, they proclaim the need to divest substantive morality from politics. The purpose of liberalism, as a political doctrine, is to secure a peaceful and orderly society. Political philosophy should only be concerned with providing a framework within which people can make moral choices for themselves. This framework creates a moral space for value-laden activity. Politics should be concerned solely with securing and maintaining the conditions for the possibility of human flourishing that is real, individualized, agent-relative, inclusive, self-directed, and social. Liberalism requires conduct so that conditions may be obtained where moral actions can take place; liberalism is not an equinormative system. Metanormative and normative levels of ethical principles are split because of their different relationships to self-perfection. Rights are metanormative principles; they are ethical principles, but they are not normative principles.

What is required is the existence of an ethical principle that aspires not to guide human conduct in moral activity, but instead to regulate conduct so that conditions can be achieved where moral

actions can occur. Rasmussen and Den Uyl explain that rights are an ethical concept that is not directly concerned with human flourishing, but rather is concerned with context-setting—establishing a political/legal order that will not require one form of human flourishing to be preferred over any other form. A two-level ethical structure consists of metanorms (also referred to as political norms) and personal ethical norms. Rights, as a metanormative principle, supply guidance in the formulation of a constitution whereby the legal system establishes the political and social conditions required for persons to select and implement the principles of normative morality in their individual lives.

Ethics are not all of one category. Whereas some regulate the conditions under which moral conduct may exist, others are more directly prescriptive of moral conduct. Of course, the conditions for making any type of human flourishing possible are less potent than conditions that serve to advance forms of human flourishing directly. Natural rights do not aim at directly promoting human flourishing; the context of natural rights is as universal as possible. Self-direction is the common crucial element in all concrete distinct forms of human flourishing and the negative natural right to freedom is a metanormative principle because it protects the possibility of self-direction in a social context. According to Rasmussen and Den Uyl, the purpose of rights is to protect the possibility of self-directedness. Although they acknowledge that human flourishing is man's *telos*, their argument for rights does not justify rights for their being conducive to achieving human flourishing. The natural right to liberty permits each individual a sphere of freedom in which self-directed activities can be undertaken without the interference of other people.

A neo-Aristotelian ethical perfectionism is consistent with, and supportive of, a non-perfectionist view of politics. A person's human nature calls for his personal flourishing, which, in turn, requires practical wisdom and self-directedness. The purpose of rights is to protect self-directedness. It follows that self-directedness can be viewed as an intermediate factor between metanormative natural rights and normative human flourishing. Self-perfection requires self-direction and pluralism; diverse forms of flourishing are ethically compossible under the rubric of universal metanorms.

Rasmussen and Den Uyl have extended and refined ideas from

political philosophy that began in ancient times. These are the ideas that the state should not use or permit coercion against peaceful people and that the state should have nothing to do with fostering individual personal morality and virtue—people participate in political life so that they are not harmed rather than to be made to flourish. Elements of these notions can be found in the writings of a number of philosophers such as Lao Tzu, Epicurus, and especially of Spinoza, who strongly warned people about the dangers of the moralization of politics.<sup>9</sup>

Rasmussen and Den Uyl state that, based on the nature of man and the world, certain natural rights can be identified and an appropriate political order can be instituted. Rasmussen and Den Uyl base their view of natural rights as metanormative principles on the universal characteristics of human nature that call for the protection and preservation of the possibility of self-directedness in society regardless of the situation. Because they do not base natural rights on human flourishing, they believe they have formulated a strong argument for a non-perfectionist and non-moralistic minimal-state politics. Rasmussen and Den Uyl see a problem in putting what many consider to be a moral principle (i.e., natural rights) as the subject of political action or control. Their goal is to abandon legal moralism—the idea that politics is institutionalized ethics. They say that statecraft is not soulcraft and that politics is not appropriate to make men moral.

A number of thinkers over the years have also commented on the different senses in which a system can be said to be moral and in which an individual human being can be said to be moral. For example, in his book *The Morality of Law* (1964), legal philosopher Lon L. Fuller distinguishes between what he calls the “morality of duty” and the “morality of aspiration.” Fuller explains that the morality of duty begins at the bottom of human achievement and establishes the fundamental rules that are necessary to have an ordered society. He says that the basic rules impose duties regarding what is necessary in order to have social life. According to Fuller, natural rights create a universal enforceable duty with regard to just conduct but not with respect to good conduct. In the morality of duty, penalties take priority over rewards and objective standards can be applied to deviations from adequate performance. It is not the function of the

morality of duty to compel a man through the law to live the good and virtuous life of reason. The law, through the enforcement of natural rights, can only create the prerequisite conditions necessary, but not sufficient, for the attainment of one's personal flourishing in society. Securing the social order through protected natural rights places restrictions on the means a person can use to pursue his happiness. Fuller points out that the type of justification that characterizes judgments of duty does not apply with respect to the morality of aspiration. He says that the morality of aspiration is reflected in the Greek philosophy of excellence, challenging ideals, and the Good Life. It follows that the morality of aspiration exists at the highest rank of human achievement. Fuller notes that the ancients properly saw that the word "virtue" belongs in the vocabulary of the morality of aspiration and not in the vocabulary of the morality of duty. In the sphere of the morality of aspiration, a person makes value judgments, and praise and reward take precedence over disapproval and punishment. It is clear that virtuous conduct far surpasses the realm of natural rights, which are neutral regarding the variety of ways in which a person could choose to pursue his happiness. In his work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Adam Smith's idea of justice approximates Fuller's idea of the morality of duty. Smith thus sets justice apart from all of the other virtues. In addition, both Herbert Spencer's (1851) "law of equal freedom" and Robert Nozick's (1974) "framework for utopias" emphasize the importance of negative freedom so that each person can pursue his happiness as he sees it best for him to do so. Also, although Rand (1964) promulgated what Fuller would call a morality of aspiration, derived natural rights and all of Objectivism's other moral principles by way of ethical egoism, and did not use the word "duty," she still spoke of natural rights that must be respected by every human being. Unlike Rand, who derived her political ethics from a code of personal morality, Rothbard ([1982] 1998) deduced his "social ethic of liberty" from the self-ownership axiom and the nonaggression principle. Rothbard developed a radical dissociation between political ethics and personal morality, thus differentiating between what Rasmussen and Den Uyl term the metanormative realm of politics and law and the normative sphere of moral principles. Rothbard began and ended his ethics at the metanormative level. Of course, instead of a minimal

state, he advocated a pure anarchocapitalist society to provide defense, security, and arbitration services.

## **Morality and Human Flourishing**

Moral values enter the world with human life. There is a close connection between an objective normative structure for understanding human life and economics. Human flourishing or happiness is the standard underpinning the assessment that a goal is rational and should be pursued. This common human benchmark implies a framework for evaluating a person's decisions and actions. It follows that the fundamental ethical task for each man is the fullest development of himself as a human being and as the individual that he is. Human life thus provides the foundation and context of the realm of ethics. The idea of value is at the root of ethics. A man's immediate needs for survival are economic and are values for his life. Economic production is necessary to satisfy these needs or material values. A productive man is a rational, self-interested, and virtuous man. He is doing what he ought to do to sustain his life (Machan 1989, 37–50).

To survive and flourish a man must grasp reality. To do this requires a rational epistemology and a theory of objective concepts. These have been supplied by Rand ([1966–67] 1990). A person needs to observe reality, abstract essentials, and form objective concepts and laws. The objective nature of the world circumscribes the operations that must be accomplished if goals and values are to be attained. Reality is what is there to be perceived and studied. Everyone is constrained by what is metaphysically real. Fortunately, people have the capacity to objectively apprehend reality. A man's mind can identify, but cannot create, reality. Knowability of the world is a natural condition common both to the external world and the human mind.

Rand's conception of universals (or essences) as epistemological (she really means contextual and relational) is arguably superior to the traditional interpretation given to Aristotle's ideas or universals as being metaphysical. Rand explains that knowledge is acquired by an active, conscious agent through the processes of induction and deduction. In order to deduce from axioms and general statements, we must first have inductive inferences. We can know via the senses, inferences from data supplied by the senses, and introspective

understanding.

Capitalism is the consequence of the natural order of liberty, which is based on the ethic of individual happiness. Freedom is connected with morality, ethics, and individual flourishing. Men are moral agents whose task it is to excel at being the human being that one is. In order to be moral agents, people need to be free and self-directed. It follows that capitalism is the political expression of the human condition. As a political order relegated to a distinct sphere of human life, it conforms with human nature by permitting each person to pursue happiness, excellence, and the perfection of his own human life through the realization of his rational and other capacities. A free society, one that respects an individual's natural rights, acknowledges that it is an individual's moral responsibility to be as good as possible at living his own life. Of course, such a society cannot guarantee moral and rational behavior on the part of its members. It can only make such conduct possible (Machan 1989, 153–64; 1990, 128–44; Younkins 2001; 2002, 1–6).

Free will is critical to human existence and human flourishing. A person has the ability to choose to actualize his potential for being a fully-developed individual human being. A man depends on his rationality for his survival and flourishing. He must choose to initiate the mental processes of thinking and focusing on becoming the best person he can be in the context of his own existence. He is responsible for applying reason, wisdom, and experience to his own specifically situated circumstances. Rationality is the virtue through which a man exercises reason (Boyle et al. 1976; Machan 1998a, 17–30). Rand explains (1964, 1–25) that men know they have volition through the act of introspection. The fact that people are regularly deciding to think or not to think is directly accessible to each person. Each person can introspectively observe that he can choose to focus his consciousness or not. A person can pay attention or not. The implication of free will is that men can be held morally responsible for their actions.

The idea of free will does not imply that a person has unlimited power with respect to the operation of his own mind. Man's consciousness has a particular nature, structure, set of powers, and characteristics. Action can be said to be influenced by physiological, psychological, sociological, and other factors, but there is at least

some residual amount of free will behind the action that operates independently of the influencing factors. An action is not totally determined by a man's inheritance.

Although a man's choices are ultimately free, there is, in all probability, some connection to a person's physical endowments, facticity, urges, past choices, articulated preferences for the future, scarcity of a good, acquisition of new knowledge, and so on. Certainly each person is subject to his unconscious mind, biological constraints, psychological impediments, genetic inheritances, feelings, urges, social environment, social influences, etc. However, none of these denies the existence of free will, but only shows that it may be challenging for a person to use his free will to triumph over them.

Each person shares some attributes with other human beings, such as free will and the capacity to reason. It follows that at a basic or metanormative level what is objectively moral or ethical is universally the same. In addition, a person's moral decisions depend, to a certain degree, on his particular circumstances, talents, and characteristics. The particular evaluations a person should make are made through a process of rational cognition. A rational ethical action is what a person believes he should do based on the most fitting and highest quality information acquired about human nature and the individual person that one is. When people approach life rationally, they are more likely to conclude that virtues and ethical principles are necessary for human flourishing. They discover that human beings have a profound need for morality.

Human purposefulness makes the world understandable in terms of human action. Human action is governed by choice and choice is free. Choice is a product of free will. A voluntaristic theory of action recognizes the active role of reason in decisions caused by a human person who wills and acts. Choosing both ends and means is a matter of reason. Because human action is free, it is potentially moral. It therefore follows that human actions necessarily include moral or ethical considerations. Values cannot be avoided. Free will means being a moral agent.

## **Human Flourishing and the Personal Virtues**

During the last forty years or so, there has been a revival of scholarly interest in the virtues in general and in virtue ethics in

particular. Many thinkers have turned their attention to a neo-Aristotelian version of virtue ethics, but none has made a better or more consistent case for a virtuous life than has Rand (1957; 1964; 1967; [1966–67] 1990).<sup>10</sup> She explains that attaining moral perfection means achieving the highest level of human flourishing of which one is capable of reaching. Rand details how and why the consistent practice of seven virtues is essential for a person to attain his objective well-being (i.e., his flourishing).

For Rand, morality is a type of enlightened and rational self-interest—each individual's moral obligation is to attain his own moral well-being. She defines value as “that which one acts to gain and/or keep” (1964, 27). The purpose in pursuing values is the flourishing of one's own life. Values are thus at the root of morality. Proper moral norms are determined by human nature. Rand's ethical egoism sees naturalism as leading to facts that become the basis for objective judgments of value. An objective value is a feature of reality that is positively related to the flourishing of an individual human being. An objective value is relational and exists in a life-affirming relationship to a particular person.

Rand defends the principled pursuit of one's own flourishing. She explains that promoting one's own interest requires a person to consistently follow principles. A human being needs to understand, in the framework of principles, the cause and effect relationships between his actions and the achievement of his values. Moral principles are formulated through observation and induction regarding the effects of various forms of action on one's well-being. A man must identify and follow rational principles if he is to flourish.

Moral principles, as guides to life-promoting actions, are defined in relationship to the facts that makes them essential. For man to survive, he must discern the principles of action necessary to direct him in his relationships with other men and with nature. Man's need for these principles is his need for a code of morality. To flourish, a person must select proper principles and act in accordance with them. Human flourishing requires the identification and practice of a particular systematic code of morality. The traditional major virtues, as recast by Rand, provide the rational principles for this code of morality—virtues are manifestations of the rational long-range standards or principles that life as a human being requires.



Rand explains that a virtue is the act by which one gains and/or keeps an objective value. From another perspective, character traits that objectively and rationally benefit their possessor are deemed to be virtues. The virtues are egoistic or partial to oneself, but not in any objectionable sense. A virtuous character is the result of appropriate actions and is contributive to further appropriate actions.

Rand explains throughout her writings that the rational pursuit of one's self-interest requires the consistent practice of seven principal virtues: rationality, honesty, independence, justice, integrity, productiveness, and pride. Unfortunately, she did not produce a comprehensive, systematic, and detailed work with respect to the virtues. On the positive side, Tara Smith (2006) has endeavored to provide a detailed explanation of the virtues in the context of Rand's rational egoism.

Rationality, the primary virtue, involves full focus, commitment to reality, and the constant expansion of one's knowledge. Rationality is one's recognition and acknowledgment of reason as one's only source of knowledge, judge of values, and guide to action. Reason is the faculty that identifies and integrates the material provided by man's senses; it is man's fundamental means of survival and a practical instrument for gaining the values that further one's life. Rationality is concerned with the method by which an individual reaches his conclusions rather than being concerned with the particular conclusions that he comes to. Rationality is essential to the kind of practical actions required to attain human flourishing. It involves acceptance of the conditions necessary for man's flourishing. The virtue of rationality requires an individual to act on his rational conclusions.

Rationality requires the exercise of six additional derivative virtues that can be viewed as expressions of rationality (48–74). Honesty is the refusal to fake reality—it is the rejection of unreality and the recognition that the unreal can have no value. Misrepresenting reality does not change reality. Facts are independent of a person's beliefs. For honesty, a person must renounce misrepresentation, artifice, and evasion. He must also develop an active mind and act on his knowledge—an honest person seeks knowledge because he needs it to act properly. Honesty is practical. An individual must be truthful with himself, and not pretend that reality is something other than what it is. Self-deception is counter-productive. Dishonesty diverts

an individual from identifying and seeking rational plans for gaining objective values. Dishonesty diminishes one's self-esteem and pride. It also changes facts and his own rationality into his enemies. Whereas an honest person depends on others' virtues, a dishonest person relies upon their vices.

Through dishonesty, a man makes himself dependent on others' standards, expectations, judgments, and ignorance. A liar depends upon others' naivete and he must strive to keep them unaware. In reality, an individual is apt to profit the most from others' rationality, knowledge, and virtues. Honesty, like all the virtues, is contextual and does not require one to tell the truth in all cases. It is permissible (and moral) to lie in order to protect a value that is being threatened. The use of force or fraud by an aggressor changes the conditions and the relationship between honesty and life. Lying is wrong when done in an attempt to gain a value (75–105).

An independent person establishes his primary orientation to reality rather than to other people. Accepting the primacy of existence, the independent person goes by his own judgment of reality. Independence requires a person's acceptance of the responsibility for making his own judgments, gaining knowledge through the use of his own mind, and surviving and flourishing by the efforts of his own mind. Thought is performed individually. Because reason is a characteristic of the individual human person, knowledge must be attained by the individual. Because thinking is a self-directed activity, the requirement of independence is implied in the requirement of rationality. Independence can be viewed as the method through which an individual comprehends ideas. It is essential to follow through by acting on his independent judgment.

It is permissible to learn from others provided that one thinks through and grasps the ideas for himself. A man can be independent while not being the creator or discoverer of new ideas. What is important is a person's own judgment. In our division of labor society, it is rational to make use of the knowledge of experts and people who are more experienced. However, it is essential not to accept unconditionally whatever the other person says merely because it is the judgment of another person. It is necessary not to substitute the judgments of others for one's own judgment. It is important to assess, to the best of one's ability, the ideas presented and the

legitimacy of the expert's qualifications, education, and experience (106–34).

Because other people are potential values or disvalues to an individual, it is essential to judge other individuals' character and conduct objectively and to act accordingly. The personal virtue of justice involves the application of rationality to the evaluation and treatment of other persons. These moral assessments and judgments require fidelity to reality and the use of one's reason rather than yielding to one's emotions.

It is essential to give each person that which he deserves. This idea reflects respect for causality—certain causes justify certain effects. This value-oriented perspective on justice recognizes that virtuous actions bring values into existence and that unprincipled or irrational actions damage or destroy values. It is rational to reward virtues with positive values and vices with punishments or negative values.

Smith explains that a man should judge others objectively and treat them as they deserve because that is the best way to achieve his own personal flourishing. In fact, everyone is in a position to profit from actions that produce value and to be diminished by actions that harm or extirpate values. Injustice destroys the natural causal chain by rewarding corrupt conduct and punishing virtuous conduct. The Randian view is that both those who receive just treatment and the individual bestowing that treatment profit from that practice. It follows that one should support and endorse qualities in other people that benefit himself and dissuade those attributes that are damaging to oneself. It is necessary to judge, evaluate, and act properly toward other people in order to attain one's values and flourishing (135–75).

Integrity is loyalty in action to rational principles and to one's convictions and values. There should be no breach or dichotomy between one's thought and moral principles and his actions. Integrity is fundamental to attaining one's values and flourishing. Integrity requires a policy and the conscientious consistent practice of life-promoting principles. Smith explains that Rand condemns some, but not all, forms of compromise. There is a difference between a compromise of moral principle and a compromise of the details of a situation falling under a moral principle. It follows that when a person voluntarily negotiates toward a final agreed-upon price, he is

not compromising the principle of free trade (176–97).

Productiveness, the process of creating material values, is necessary for human survival. Such values should be created rather than being confiscated. Productive work is the process through which man's mind maintains his life. It is through productive work that man's consciousness controls his existence; it involves the adjustment of nature to man's requirements and the translation of ideas into physical form. All productive work requires a combination of mental and physical exertion in varying proportions depending upon the particular kind of work. Values in reality are made possible by the existence of knowledge. Although the mental aspect is primary, this does not imply that there is some type of separation from the physical realm. The product of one's work must acquire physical existence outside of one's consciousness. Existential values are made possible through the application of a person's knowledge.

Productive work is necessary for a man both materially and spiritually; according to Rand, it is the central purpose of a person's life. Productivity depends upon one's rationality and sustains a man's self-esteem and sense of identity. Productive work can act as the integrating central element of a person's life. As such, it can be viewed as both an end and as a means (198–220).

Pride (i.e., moral ambitiousness) is the commitment to attain one's own moral perfection. Pride demonstrates the exercise of the other six Randian virtues and involves one's dedication to achieving the highest or best character state of which he is capable of attaining. Like Aristotle, Rand views pride as the "crown of the virtues." Smith explains that pride involves one's commitment to rationality in thought and action, the systematic pursuit of achievement, life-advancing actions, and the continual strengthening of one's character. Pride leads a person to the self-esteem that is necessary for human life. Moral perfection is essential for one's personal flourishing (221–46).

## **The Pursuit of Flourishing and Happiness**

Personal flourishing requires the rational use of one's talents, abilities, and virtues in the pursuit of one's freely chosen goals. Happiness is the positive experience that accompanies or flows from the use of one's individual human potentialities in the pursuit of one's

values and goals. In other words, personal flourishing leads to happiness.

Virtues and goods are the means to values and the virtues, goods, and values together enable individuals to attain human flourishing and happiness. Living by, and acting on, rational moral principles cultivate corresponding virtues, which, in turn, lead to value attainment, flourishing, and happiness. An appropriate set of general evaluative principles provides basic guidelines in living well (Younkins 2002, 43–51).

The right of private property is a precondition for making the pursuit of one's flourishing and happiness possible. No more fundamental human right exists than the right to use and control one's things, thoughts, and actions so as to manage one's life as one sees fit. If one has the right to sustain his life, then he has the right to whatever he is able to produce with his own time and means. Each person has the right to do whatever he wants with his justly held property as long as in so doing he does not violate the rights of another. Without private ownership, voluntary free trade and competition would be impossible (55–62).

As men found specialization desirable, an exchange mechanism evolved through which one person, who could produce an item more efficiently than others, could exchange it for an article that he could not make as efficiently as another person could make it. As trade and commerce developed, this giving-and-getting arrangement became more and more protected by formal contract. The idea of sanctity of contract is essential to a market economy and one of the most important elements that hold a civilized society together (63–68).

A market economy is a voluntary association of property owners for the purpose of trading to their mutual advantage. The market accommodates people who seek to improve their circumstances by trading goods and services in a non-coercive setting. Markets are efficient and effective mechanisms for ensuring that society is arranged to maximize individuals' ability to act on their best vision of their well-being. The market process reflects both social cooperation and voluntarism in human affairs. A market economy is a necessary condition for a free society.

Private markets encourage people to interact, cooperate, learn, and prosper from their diversity. The market economy inspires

people to seek out others who are different from them, treat their differences as opportunities, and garner mutual gains through their cooperative interaction. When two people make a deal, each one expects to gain from it. Each person has a different scale of values and a different frame of reference. The market mechanism permits people to maximize their results while economizing their efforts.<sup>11</sup>

The price of any good or service is whatever others willingly give in voluntary exchange in particular circumstances. The judgments of all parties are continually and everlastingly changing. There is no one optimal product or service specification. Not only do consumer tastes vary among prospective purchasers at any one point in time, they also change over time and situationally, so that experimentation and research in product and service specifications is a continuous process.

The market is an effective communicator of data. With its continuing flow of positive and negative feedback, the market allows decision makers to review a constantly changing mix of options and resulting trade-offs and to respond with precision by continually making incremental adjustments. The role of prices as transmitters of knowledge economizes the amount of information required to produce a given economic result. No one person need have complete information in order for the economy to convey relevant information through prices and achieve the same adjustments that would obtain if everyone had that knowledge. Prices are a mechanism for carrying out the rationing function and are a fast, efficient conveyor of information through a society in which fragmented knowledge must be coordinated. Accurate prices, resulting from voluntary exchanges, allow the economy to achieve optimal performance in terms of satisfying each person as much as possible by his own standards without sacrificing others' rights to act according to their own standards.<sup>12</sup>

Many economists make a value-free case for liberty and hold that values are subjective. Although these economists maintain that values are subjective and Objectivists argue that values are objective, these claims are not incompatible because they are not really about the same things; they exist at different levels or spheres of analysis. The value-subjectivity of economists (especially of Austrian praxeological economists) complements the Randian sense of objectivity. In reality, there is no dichotomy between these two notions of value. The

distinction arises because of the different conceptual contexts (i.e., the levels of abstraction and isolation) of praxeological economists and proponents of Objectivism's ethical egoism. The realm of objective values dealing with personal flourishing transcends the level of subjective value preferences. Value-free economics is not sufficient to establish a total case for freedom. A systematic, reality-based ethical system must be discovered to firmly ground the argument for individual liberty (High 1985, 3–16; Machan 1998b, 43–46; and Younkins 2005a; 2005b, 361–64).

Production is the means to the fulfillment of men's material needs. The production of goods, services, and wealth metaphysically precedes their distribution and exchange. When a man acts rationally and in his own self-interest, he makes wealth creation, economic activity, and the scientific study of economics possible. To survive and flourish, men have to produce what is necessary for their existence. The requirements of life must be objectively identified and produced. The facts regarding what enhances or restrains life are objective, established by the facts of reality, and based on proper cognition. There are requirements and rules built into the nature of things that must be met if we are to survive and prosper.

Both Austrian economists and Objectivists agree with the French classical economist, Jean-Baptiste Say, that production is the source of demand. Products are ultimately paid for with other products. Consumption follows from the production of wealth. Supply metaphysically comes before consumption. The primacy of production means that we must produce before we can consume. Demand does not create supply, and consumption does not create production.

Productiveness is a virtue. People tend to be productive and successful when they are rational and self-interested. Production requires people who practice the virtues of rationality and self-interest. Rationality, a common standard in human nature, is a discerning approach to the selection of both ends and means. Self-interest is also a virtue because living, for human beings, is ultimately an individual task. Because the maintenance of each person's life is conditional, it is necessary for each individual to choose to think, plan, and produce if he wants to survive and flourish.

Work is built into the human condition. Men have to work in order to sustain themselves. The things by which people live do not

exist until someone creates them. Man survives by using his reason and other faculties to adjust his environment to himself. Productive work is also a means through which people attain purpose in their lives. Work is at the heart of a meaningful life and is essential for personal survival and flourishing. Work is necessary not only to obtain wealth but also to one's purpose and self-esteem. There are integrated links between reality, reason, self-interest, productive work, goal attainment, personal flourishing, and happiness.

There is an inextricable association between purposeful work and individual freedom. Both employees and employers are parties to a voluntary agreement, the terms of which both parties are legally and morally obliged to honor. Both seek to gain from the arrangement. As independent moral agents, the employee and employer agree to terms in a matter that affects their lives, their values, and their futures. A freely chosen job can be a source of one's happiness and self-respect (Younkins 2002, 69–76). Because a large portion of an individual's potentialities can only be realized through association with other human beings, personal flourishing requires a life with others—family, friends, acquaintances, business associates, etc. These associations are instrumentally valuable in the satisfaction of nonsocial wants and desirable for a person's moral maturation, including the sense of meaning and value obtained from the realization of the consanguinity of living beings that accompanies such affiliations. Men are necessarily related to others and they can determine to a great extent the persons they will be associated with and the ways in which they will be associated. Each person is responsible for choosing, creating, and entering relationships with persons that he values that enable him to flourish. Voluntary, mutually beneficial relations among autonomous individuals using their practical reason is necessary for attaining authentic human communities. Human sociality is also open to relationships with strangers, foreigners, and others with whom no common bonds are shared—except for the common bond of humanity (17–21).

Unlike the state, which is based on coercion, civil society is based on voluntary participation. Civil society consists of natural and voluntary associations such as families, private businesses, unions, churches, clubs, charities, etc. Civil society, a spontaneous order, consists of a network of associations built on the freedom of the



individual to associate or not to associate. The voluntary communities and associations of civil society are valuable because human beings need to associate with others in order to flourish and achieve happiness. For example, freely given charity may be considered as an embodiment of one's struggle for self-perfection. In this context, charitable activities may be viewed as fulfillment of one's potential for cooperation and as a specific demonstration of that capacity—not as an obligation owed to others (23–29).

A person's moral maturation requires a life with others. Charitable conduct can therefore be viewed as an expression of one's self-perfection. From this viewpoint, the obligation for charity is that the benefactor owes it to himself, not to the recipients. If a benefit is owed to another, rendering it is not a charitable act; charity must be freely given and directed toward those to whom we have no obligation. Charitable actions may be viewed as perfective of a person's capacity for cooperation and as a particular manifestation (i.e., giving to those in need) of that capacity. Kindness and benevolence, as a basic way of functioning is not an impulse or an obligation to others but a rational goal. Compassion is not charity and sentiment is not virtue. This nonaltruistic, noncommunitarian view of charity (and the other virtues) is grounded in a self-perfective framework under which persons can vary the type, amount, and object of their charity based on their values and their contingent circumstances. Other contemporary concepts of charity rely on adherence to duty expressed as deontic rules or as the maximization of social welfare (Den Uyl 1993, 192–224).<sup>13</sup>

Business is the way a free society arranges its economic activities. Business deals with the natural phenomena of scarcity, insatiability, and cost in a valuable and efficient manner. The business system creates equality of opportunity and rewards businessmen who take advantage of opportunities by anticipating consumer preferences and efficiently using resources to satisfy those preferences. Through his thought and action, the businessman enables other people to obtain what they want (Younkins 2002, 97–107).

Progress is difference and change. If individuals were not free to try new things, then we would never have any improvements. In order to have progress, there must be freedom to attempt new advances. Progress is impossible unless people are free to be

different. Regulation and controls stifle innovation and experimentation. Bureaucracy gets in the way of change. Capitalism has made advances possible, not solely in providing life's necessities, but in science, technology, and knowledge of all types upon which human society depends. Freedom attracts innovators and explorers and gives life to their ideas. Freedom for people to act in their own self-interest is the mainspring for a diversity of ideas, innovations, and experiments that lead to the discovery of new products, services, and other means of production.

Progress requires the use of information that exists only as widely dispersed knowledge that each person has with respect to his own circumstances, conditions, and preferences. Such tacit, locationally specific knowledge is only useful if people are free to act upon it. A free market permits prices to emerge from the use of people's localized knowledge. These prices contain more and better information and result in better decisions than what can be achieved under a regime of central planners. Limited government and decentralized markets permit more freedom and foster more prosperity than do state-dominated and centralized bureaucracies.<sup>14</sup>

Flourishing as a human being requires adequate information. It follows that human beings are, to a certain extent, information processing entities who reason theoretically and practically and can act autonomously. Bynum (2006) explains that philosopher-scientist Norbert Weiner ([1950/1954] 2006) understood well the important relationship between the information-processing nature of human beings and the purpose of a human life (i.e., to flourish as a human person). To flourish as a human person requires one to participate in a wide range of diverse information processing activities. Weiner emphasizes the importance of individual autonomy with respect to making life choices and carrying them out in the pursuit of one's goals. He explains that the creative and flexible information processing potential of human beings allows each person to strive to reach his full potential as the individual that he is. When presented with adequate information, autonomous human beings have the potential to live flourishing human lives in a diversity of ways. Weiner teaches that a society should be built upon principles that would maximize each person's ability to flourish through variety and adaptability of human action. His *Principle of Freedom* aims toward the maximiza-

tion of the opportunities for all people to use their autonomy as they attempt to attain their chosen goals and individual human potential. This necessitates a social context that provides security for protection of individuals' lives and property.

Wealth, in the form of goods and services, is created when individuals recombine and rearrange the resources that comprise the world. Wealth increases when someone conceives and produces a more valuable configuration of the earth's substances than the combination that existed previously. It is the existence of unremitting change that summons entrepreneurs in their search for profits. The entrepreneur predicts, responds to, and creates change regarding the discovery of new resource sources, new consumers' desires, and new technological opportunities. He seeks profit by creating new products and services, new businesses, new production methods, and so on. An entrepreneur attains wealth and his other objectives by providing people with goods and services that further flourishing on earth. Entrepreneurs are specialists in prudence—the virtue of applying one's talents to the goal of living well (Younkins 2002, 111–16).

Technology is an attempt to develop means for the ever more effective realization of individuals' ideas and values. The purpose of technological advancement is to make life easier through the creation of new products, services, and production methods. These advances improve people's standard of living, increase their leisure time, help to eliminate poverty, and lead to a great variety of products and services. New technologies enhance people's lives both as producers and consumers. By making life easier, safer, and more prosperous, technological progress permits a person more time to spend on higher-level concerns such as personal project pursuit, religion, character development, love, and the perfection of one's soul (117–24).

The corporation occupies an important position within civil society. The corporation is a social invention with the purpose of providing goods and services in order to make profits for its owners, with fiduciary care for shareholders' invested capital. Corporate managers thus have the duty to use the stockholders' money for expressly authorized purposes that can run from the pursuit of profit to the use of resources for social purposes. Managers have a contractual and moral responsibility to fulfill the wishes of the

shareholders and, therefore, do not have the right to spend the owners' money in ways that have not been approved by the stockholders, no matter what social benefits may accrue by doing so (87–96).

Unionism currently consists of both voluntary and coercive elements. Voluntary unions restrict themselves to activities such as mass walkouts and boycotts. They do nothing to violate the rights of others by using violence against them. Coercive unions use physical force (e.g., picketing when its purpose is to coerce and physically prevent others from crossing the picket line and from dealing with the struck employer) aimed at nonaggressing individuals. Mass picketing that obstructs entrance or exit is invasive of the employer's property rights as are sit-down strikes and sit-ins that coercively occupy the property of the employer. People who are willing to work for a struck employer have a legitimate right (but currently not a legal right in many states) to do so. In addition, the struck employer has a legitimate right to engage in voluntary exchanges with customers, suppliers, and other workers.

Coercive unions achieve their goals through the coercive power of the state. Most states' legislation excludes nonunion workers when a majority of the workers choose a particular union to be their exclusive bargaining agent. The state should not be concerned with a private citizen's agreement to work with a particular firm. In a free society, one based on natural law principles, each person would be free to take the best offer that he gets. In a free society, unions could merely be voluntary groups trying to advance their members' interests without the benefit of special privileges. In such a society, some workers would join one union, some would join other unions, and some would choose to deal with the employer directly and individually (77–85).

## **Toward the Future**

There are a great many coercive challenges, encroachments, and constraints that have inhibited the establishment of a society based on the natural liberty of the individual and the realities of the human condition. By nature, these barriers tend to be philosophical, economic, and political. Some of the strongest attacks on, and impediments to, a free society include: collectivist philosophies,

cultural relativism, communitarianism, environmentalism, public education, taxation, protectionism, antitrust laws, government regulation, and monetary inflation. These bureaucratic and socialistic ideologies and schemes tend to stem from various sources such as true human compassion, envy, the insecurity of people who want protection from life's uncertainties, categorical "solutions" proposed to solve problems, idealism, and the tendency to think only of intended, primary, and immediate results while ignoring unintended, ancillary, and long-term ones (161–288).

We must work to create a culture of liberty that would serve as the foundation for a free society in which individuals can flourish. Attitudinal and behavioral changes are a function of culture. Because the required cultural changes cannot be legislated, we need to study the cultural and nonrational factors that affect people's attitudes toward political, economic, and moral-cultural freedom. It is essential for us to be culturally aware, acknowledge the importance of culture, and appreciate insights from a diversity of disciplines.

In *Total Freedom* (2000), Chris Matthew Sciabarra cautions us not to reduce the study and defense of freedom to economics or politics with an inadequate understanding of the interconnections between the philosophical, the historical, the personal, and so forth. Sciabarra's message is that libertarians need an effective strategy that recognizes the dynamic relationships between the personal, political, historical, psychological, ethical, cultural, economic, and so on, if they are to be successful in their quest for a free society. He explains that attempts to define and defend a nonaggression principle in the absence of a broader philosophical and cultural context are doomed to fail. Typical libertarian opposition to state intervention is not enough. Libertarians must pay greater attention to the broader context within which their goals and values can be realized. The battle against statism is simultaneously structural (political and economic), cultural (with implications for education, race, sex, language, and art) and personal (with connections to individuals' tacit moral beliefs, and to their psychoepistemological processes). The crusade for freedom is multidimensional and takes place on a variety of levels with each level influencing and having reciprocal effects on the other levels.

It is possible to analyze society from different vantage points and on different levels of generality in order to develop an enriched

picture of the many relationships between the various areas involved. Change must occur on many different levels and in many different areas. It cannot just be dictated from the political realm, but must filter through all of the various levels and areas. Any attempt to understand or change society must entail an analysis of its interrelations from the perspective of any single aspect.

People need to understand both the necessity for objective conceptual foundations and the need for cultural prerequisites in the fight for the free society because some cultures promote, and others undermine, freedom. Freedom cannot be defended successfully when severed from its broader requisite conditions. We must attempt to grasp and address all of freedom's prerequisites and implications.

The gradual breakdown and crises of the reigning welfare-state paradigm enhance our future prospects for a free society. Only a free society is compatible with the true nature of man and the world. Capitalism works because it is in accordance with reality. Capitalism is the only moral social system because it protects a man's mind, his primary means of survival and flourishing. Truth and morality are on our side. Our battle is intellectual, moral, and cultural. Our message should appeal to all individuals and groups across the public spectrum. Let us hasten the demise of statism and the establishment of a free society by working individually and in concert with others to educate, persuade, and convert people to a just and proper political and economic order that is a true reflection of the nature of man and the world properly understood.

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## **Notes**

1. Regarding the importance of the idea of individualism see Lukes 1973; Machan 1989; 1990; and Marine 1984.

2. For a variety of perspectives on natural rights, see Finnis 1980; Lomasky 1987; Machan 1975; 1989; Nozick 1974; Rasmussen and Den Uyl 1991; 2005; Shue

1980; Smith 1995; Strauss 1953; Sumner 1987; Tuck 1979; and Veatch 1985.

3. For relevant and useful discussions of constitutionalism, see Berman 1983; Buchanan 1975; Buchanan and Tullock 1962; Corwin 1928; Kurland and Lerner 1987; Lutz 1988; McIlwain 1940; Pangle 1988; Pound 1957; Spiro 1959; and Sutherland 1965.

4. Readers interested in further elucidation of the notion of the common good should consult Aquinas 1963; Maritain 1947; Novak 1989; and Udoidem 1988.

5. For a range of additional accounts of the idea of human flourishing, see Annas 1993; Hunt 1999; Hurka 1993; Norton 1976; Nussbaum and Sen 1993; Paul et al. 1999; Sen 1993; Skoble 2008; Smith 2000; Sumner 1996; and Veatch 1971.

6. Lomasky (1984 and 1987) has drawn on a conception of personal projects in constructing a theory of individual rights.

7. The nature of happiness has never been defined in a uniform way. One can find a multiplicity of meanings especially in the fields of economics and psychology in which researchers routinely attempt to measure happiness. For literature on this, see Annas 1993; Diener et al. 1999; Diener et al. 2003; Kahneman et al. 1999; and McGill 1967.

8. For more on autonomy, see Christman and Anderson 2005; Mele 2001; Paul et al. 2003; Spector 1992; and Taylor 2005.

9. More detailed discussion of these three philosophers are found in chapters 1, 4, and 6 of Younkins (2008).

10. For rival explanations of virtue ethics, see Annas 1998; Crisp and Slote 1997; Darwall 2002; Foot 1978; 2001; Gaut 1997; Hunt 1997; Hursthouse 1999; Korsgaard 1996; MacIntyre 1997; McDowell 1978; Slote 1992; 1995; Swanton 1995; Wallace 1978; and Zagzebski 1996.

11. For excellent discussions of the market process see Boettke 1994; Harper 1996; and Kirzner 1992.

12. For more detailed explanations, see Hayek 1937; 1945; Kirzner 1984; and Sowell 1980.

13. For somewhat different perspectives, see Kelley 1996; and Machan 1998b.

14. For more on this, see Hayek 1945; Kirzner 1984; Lavoie 1986; and Sowell 1980.

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