

A Groundwork for Rights: Man's Natural End*

by Douglas B. Rasmussen

*Philosophy Department
Our Lady of the Lake University
San Antonio, Texas*

Murray Rothbard, in a paper entitled "The Ethics of Liberty,"¹ argued that the standard for moral goodness is set by man's nature. Whatever fulfills the nature of a living thing is good, and whatever diminishes the nature of a living thing is bad. When the living thing in question is a human being and when we are speaking of chosen ends, then we are speaking of moral "goods" and "bads." Rothbard, in almost all respects, endorsed a natural-law doctrine as the groundwork for rights. He approvingly quoted Henry Veatch who said:

A thing's nature may be thought of as being not merely that in virtue of which the thing acts or behaves in the way it does, but also as a sort of standard in terms of which we judge whether the thing's actions or behavior is all that it might have been or could have been.²

Clearly, for Rothbard the foundation for all rights claims, including the right of liberty, was in the good being something natural and knowable.³

David Osterfeld, in response to Rothbard, claimed that Rothbard had failed to show why the actions of a human being should be in accord with his nature.⁴ The axiological rule that human behavior should conform to the requirements and needs of human life did not have "scientific status." The argument was schematized by Osterfeld in the following way:

1. The behavior or movement of any [living] entity having a nature ought to be in accord with its nature.
2. Man has a nature.
3. Hence, man ought to act in accordance with it.⁵

Though a formally valid argument, the first premise, according to Osterfeld, could not be shown to be true, and thus Rothbard's foundation for rights failed. The reason why the first premise could not be substantiated was

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because it claimed to be an ultimate value, a *summum bonum*, and while such an ultimate value could not be disproven, neither could it be proven. Accordingly:

One may therefore feel that anyone who could reject the conclusion that one "ought to act in accordance with his nature" is "a bit weird," but the fact remains the moral norm can be binding only on those who accept the higher axiological rule, *but it is quite without moral significance for anyone who doesn't.*⁶ (emphasis mine)

One could not prove the obligatory nature of an ultimate value, for that would require that the value be substantiated by reference to some other value, and hence what was claimed to be an ultimate value would not be so, and if such a justificatory process were followed, why should one accept the value used to provide the final justification? Wherever the justification process ends, what does one say to the person who does not choose to accept the ultimate value? According to Osterfeld nothing can ultimately be said, and only an appeal to a common agreement of values (which interestingly enough he claimed *must* be universal)⁷ was possible.

In this paper we shall take up the argument for natural-law ethics at this critical juncture. We shall ignore Osterfeld's interesting attempt to slip natural law in the back door by a different name⁸ and proceed to what we find most interesting—namely, the claim that ultimate values, by their very nature, cannot be justified. This will take us into a consideration of just what kind of defense, if any, can be given such values. It will also give us a chance to offer what we believe is an effective argument for why one should act in accordance with his nature. We will not get into the sticky process of arguing for a certain conception of natural rights from this position, for we have already indicated what we believe this to look like elsewhere;⁹ and since we are here interested in the *groundwork* for rights, we believe we should concentrate our efforts at this level.

I

It seems only fair to note that when defending a position which claims that there is something ultimate or basic about itself there are special justificatory procedures required, for by the very nature of what is claimed the justification cannot be in terms of anything else. If this were not done, then one's position would not be ultimate or basic. But contrary to what Osterfeld and others have said regarding such positions, it does not follow that such positions must be accepted without argument or defense. In fact, it is only a dogma that first principles qua first principles cannot be defended. Why should one accept a priori this methodological principle? Would not the more empirical procedure be to consider those candidates for first principle status?

Yet, how would this be done? If one knows the criteria to be used in judging whether something is a first principle, then are we not justifying such a principle in terms of something else? And if we do not have such criteria, how do we distinguish real first principles from apparent ones? This dilemma, however, is not real, for the criterion used in judging whether, let us say, X is a first principle is not some additional principle that the proponent of X introduces. Rather, the criterion used in judging whether X is a first principle is a result of the very language the opponent of X uses—namely, is X necessary for the very possibility of the subject matter under question, let us say Y, or not? In other words, the criterion for judging whether X is or is not a first principle is a result of the statements the opponent of X makes, not some premise from which the proponent of X deductively reasons. Is X necessary for the possibility of Y or not? This is the criterion used.

This way of arguing has been called “transcendental” because of Kant’s arguments about “what is necessary for the possibility of experience,” but there is even a more venerable source for this way of arguing—Aristotle’s defense of the Principle of Non-Contradiction (PNC) as a first principle of being qua being. The PNC is defended by showing it to be necessary not only for the very possibility of its being denied, but even for the denier’s thought, speech and action. Admittedly, the strength of such a way of arguing depends on (1) the ability of dialectical arguments to reach truth and not merely defeat an opponent, (2) the firmness of the initial condition whose very possibility is claimed to require the truth of X, and (3) the plausibility of the distinction between circularity and vicious circularity in the defense of first principles. Yet, these assumptions can be defended:

(1) Aristotle in his defense of the PNC does not propose to demonstrate such a first principle, because then it would not be first, or such demonstration would be guilty of begging the question. Rather, Aristotle seeks to demonstrate the PNC negatively. Aristotle distinguishes negative demonstration from demonstration proper in that the starting point for the former is what the opponent of the PNC says. It is from this starting point that the PNC is shown to be true. If the denial or the doubt regarding the PNC is to exist, if any significant speech or thought is to occur at all (Y), then the PNC (X) must be true. Something cannot be meaningfully said if it is also what it is not and therefore also everything else.¹⁰ Thus, the very existence of significant speech requires the truth of the PNC. The PNC is “shown to be true” because it follows necessarily from true premises. The premise of the negative demonstration—someone significantly speaking—cannot be rejected without self-refutation or self-defeating silence. Thus, the defense of the PNC is not *merely* dialectical, an argument from the common *beliefs* of some interlocutor, but rather an argument from what T. H. Irwin calls “the right kind of premise,”¹¹ a premise no one can rationally reject. This premise is not intrinsically necessary, that is, “prior and better known by nature,” but

it is unavoidable in the sense that its denial would be an instance of what the denial would purport to deny. The denial or the expression of doubt regarding significant speech is itself significant speech. This kind of argument, at least in this instance, would seem then to be productive of truth and not just the mere defeat of an opponent.

(2) The initial condition of this way of arguing must be firm. If it is not clear that Y exists, then the argument for the truth of X will be weak, because Y's existence is the argument's premise. Aristotle's defense of the PNC is strong because the initial condition Y, significant thought and speech, is unavoidable. It will be interesting to see if this kind of argument can be applied to other areas. Do specific branches of philosophy have such firm initial conditions? Does ethics?

(3) In claiming that the rejection of the starting point (the initial condition) of the negative demonstration of the PNC is unavoidable one could be accused of circular reasoning, for to point out that the denial of significant speech is itself significant speech is only to show that the opponent is both saying there is and there is not significant speech, but what is wrong with that? Surely, the opponent of the PNC cannot be judged by the principle he denies. Yet, this misconstrues the difficulty the would-be denier of the existence of significant speech faces. It is not self-contradiction that defeats him; rather, it is that the denial of significant speech must be significant if it is to be a denial, and if it is not, then it is not a denial. But if the denial is real, then significant speech exists. If the denial is not real, then the starting point of the PNC's negative demonstration is not challenged, and given the existence of the starting point (significant speech), the PNC must be true. All of this, of course, is to reason *in accordance* with the PNC, but this must be so if the PNC is a first principle. Yet, this does not make negative demonstration *viciously* circular, for the argument does not reason *from* the PNC. It only starts from what the opponent of the PNC says or thinks, nothing else. It is the distinction between reasoning *in accordance* with the PNC and reasoning *from* the PNC that provides the basis for the further distinction between circularity and vicious circularity. The former is not begging the question; the latter is. As Marie C. Swabey has noted:

Rational procedure, it would seem, is *not* necessarily circular in a vicious sense, when dealing with its own canons. There is a vast difference between employing a law of logic as a principle of proof for itself and using it as part of the content of demonstration.¹²

The distinction, then, between what is viciously circular (reasoning from some principle in order to demonstrate that very principle) and just circular (reasoning in accordance with some principle in order to show how the opponent of the principle must accept that very principle) does seem plausible.

Can this way of arguing be applied to ethics? T. H. Irwin has made the following suggestions regarding the applicability of this way of arguing to Aristotle's ethics:

In the *Analytics* Aristotle insists that scientific knowledge requires demonstration from first principles grasped by intuitive intellect, with no further scientific defence of the first principles. In *Metaphysics IV* he recognizes a science of being which is non-demonstrative, and can defend its own first principles scientifically. [This is the negative demonstration mentioned above.] In the ethical works, Aristotle comes to see that not all ethical reasoning must rely on an end accepted without reasoning, since there can be deliberation about ends as well as from ends. He realizes in *Metaphysics IV* that not all argument which yields knowledge must conform to the demonstrative model; and the ethical works show that not all rational deliberation must conform to the analogy with the demonstrative model.¹³

We shall leave it to those more learned to assess exactly just what forms of deliberation about ultimate ends one does find in Aristotle's ethics. Yet, what we do find absolutely fascinating about Irwin's comments is that there might be a way of arguing for ultimate ends that could be modeled after Aristotle's negative demonstration of the PNC. Of course,

the premises of the *Ethics* are not indispensable in just the same way [as the premise used in the negative demonstration of the PNC—namely, the opponent of the PNC speaking significantly], but Aristotle might reasonably claim that they are indispensable for a rational agent, the sort of person who is the proper concern of ethics. Careful choice of premises shows how dialectic can justify first principles, not merely make them more plausible from ordinary beliefs.¹⁴

So, are there some careful choices to be made? Is there some initial condition, some premise or starting point that everyone concerned with ethics must accept, that requires the truth of some ultimate value, let us say X? In particular is there some initial condition that someone like Osterfeld accepts that requires that he also accept the ultimate value of a living thing acting in accord with its nature; and, even more importantly, would this initial condition require the acceptance of a human being acting and living in accord with his nature as the ultimate moral value? Sketching an answer to these questions will be the specific task of the remainder of this paper.

II

There certainly does seem to be an initial condition that Osterfeld and indeed all concerned with ethics would seem to accept—the existence of end-oriented behavior, that is, action done for the sake of something. Regardless of what the "something" may be, whether it be the result brought about by the action or the conformity of the action with some deontological principle,

the matter of concern is the same: some agent acting for some end.¹⁵ If there were no end-oriented behavior, if there were no such things as “means” and “ends,” there would be no ethical enterprise. To be concerned with what justifies some action is just to be concerned with that for the sake of which the action was done, and to say that some action requires no further justification is just to say that it is the type of action or activity that is an end in itself. In this sense of the term, the “end” always justifies the “means,” and it is the search for what such an end would be that constitutes the ethical enterprise.¹⁶

Given that end-oriented behavior is the concern of ethics and thus the concern of anyone who wishes to dispute that ultimate values can be rationally defended, what does the very possibility of the discussion of ends (values) and whether they can be justified require? What does the very possibility of the denial of ultimate ends demand? It should be clear from what we have said so far that we are not going to claim that because someone uses the term “ultimate value” that therefore there must be an ultimate value. This would no more follow than would the existence of unicorns from a discussion of their properties. Rather, we are going to claim that the very existence of ends—that for the sake of which an action is done—does require the existence of something whose very being not only makes the existence of ends possible but indeed necessitates the existence of ends. Thus, when someone in an ethical discussion displays a concern for the ends pursued or what justifies them, or when someone in a meta-ethical discussion denies that ends can ever be ultimately justified, we wish to claim that a conceptual dependency exists here, and one commits a category mistake if one speaks of ends and at the same time denies the possibility of an ultimate end—an end which requires no justification beyond itself. We wish to claim that in order for this kind of talk to be meaningful, to make sense, there must be an ultimate end. Yet, when we do so, we want to make it clear that we are not concerned with just how words are used or even with how the human mind happens to think, but rather with what the *reality* of end-oriented behavior requires.

An end is that for the sake of which something is done or in Randian terms “that which one acts to gain and/or keep.”¹⁷ Behavior is said to be end-oriented or goal-directed when it is understood or explained by reference to something it seeks to achieve. Given that there is such behavior, what is necessary for the possibility of ends (values)? (1) End-oriented behavior by its very nature implies that there is an alternative present. If there were no question of achieving an end then there would be no reason to act to gain it. (2) End-oriented behavior requires by its very nature the existence of an entity faced with an alternative, i.e., an entity whose actions could achieve or fail to achieve a goal. If success or failure with respect to some goal were not

conditional on the entity itself, then there would be no reason or basis for that entity to act to achieve the goal—it could have no ends or goals. (3) *End-oriented behavior requires* by its very nature that the alternative faced by an entity be *capable* of making a difference to the entity, that is, having an effect or consequence upon it. If the consequence of succeeding at achieving some end were no different to the entity than the consequence of failing to achieve some end, then there would be nothing to differentiate achieving some end from not achieving some end. Hence no alternative would be faced by the entity. An alternative must be capable of making a difference to the entity which faces it, or there can be no end-oriented behavior. All three of these conditions are present and only present in a single class of entities—living things. As Rand has argued:

There is only one fundamental alternative in the universe: existence or non-existence—and it pertains to a single class of entities: to living organisms. The existence of inanimate matter is unconditional, the existence of life is not: it depends on a specific course of action. Matter is indestructible, it changes its forms, but it cannot cease to exist. It is only a living organism that faces a constant alternative: the issue of life or death. Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action. If an organism fails in that action, it dies; its chemical elements remain, but its life goes out of existence.¹⁸ [emphasis mine]

Living beings necessitate and make possible the existence of end-oriented behavior, and they are the only type of beings which do so. Living beings may face many alternatives and may have many goals, and they may achieve a goal or fail to, but they have no basis or reason for acting to achieve a goal if ultimately there is no difference between achieving and failing to achieve a goal. We can see this if we will but consider the following question: what determines whether the goal has been achieved or not? The only possible answer is the difference, the effect, it can make for the entity who acted to achieve the goal. There is a result that comes from achieving a goal and a result that comes from failing to achieve a goal (even if it is just the lack of a positive result). The difference in the result to the being who acted to achieve the goal determines whether the goal has been achieved. What differentiates the results of goal-directed behavior? The most fundamental difference possible is the difference between existence and non-existence. If such a difference did not exist, if some *being* were not conditional, if an action could not result in the existence or non-existence of the entity that acted to achieve a goal, then there would be no difference in the results of achieving or failing to achieve a goal. If there were no difference in result with respect to an entity existing or not existing, then what other differences could there be? What could make results differ if there were not this basic difference? None. Thus, it is the difference between a living being existing and not

existing that creates all the other alternatives a living being faces, and it is because life is something that must be maintained that there are goals in the first place.

This very point Allan Gotthelf has argued in "Aristotle's Conception of Final Causality." He states that the primary use of "for the sake of" concerns the development of a living organism and that all other uses of "for the sake of" are understood by Aristotle to be definable in terms of this primary use.¹⁹ In other words, final causation in Aristotle should not be interpreted in terms of some "immaterial agency" present in all of nature nor in an "as if," mechanical fashion, but as an irreducible potential for form that characterizes organic development. Gotthelf states that

the notion of an irreducible potential for form supplies the proper content to the awareness that for Aristotle organic development is actually *directive*, without implying (as the "immaterial agency" interpretation does) that it is *directed*; and it identifies the ontological basis of the awareness that the existence of stages of a development can be understood only in terms of its end—by establishing that the *identity* of the development is its being *irreducibly* a development to that end, irreducibly the actualization of a potential for form.²⁰

The obvious implication here is that teleology is found in the universe because the very nature of living things involves the development toward the form of the mature organism, and this means that living *being* is the ontological basis for end-oriented behavior. Non-living being faces no alternative of existence or non-existence. A non-living thing, e.g. a sofa or boulder, may be open to the possibility of non-existence. The sofa could be reconstructed into something else—say a bed; a boulder could be smashed into a million pieces so that it became gravel or sand. But neither of these is an alternative that the sofa or boulder faces. They may be respective possibilities open to the sofa or boulder, but they are not alternatives faced by them. The sofa or boulder does not achieve or fail to achieve its existence as a result of its actions. Its *existence is not an object, a result or an end of its actions*. The basic "stuff" of the world may change or evolve toward increasing complexity or simplicity, but it cannot cease to be—its existence is conditional on nothing. Thus, non-living being faces no alternative and hence cannot perform end-oriented actions. Only living beings can do so.²¹

Now if an ultimate value or end is "that final goal or end to which all lesser goals are the means—and it sets the standard by which all lesser goals are evaluated,"²² is there anything that constitutes a final goal or end? From all that has been said, we see that life is the ultimate or final goal of all goal-directed behavior. Otherwise, there would not *be* such behavior, and this is Rand's very point when she states:

Without an ultimate goal or end, there can be no lesser goals or means: a series of means going off into an infinite progression toward a non-

existent end is a metaphysical and epistemological impossibility. It is only an ultimate goal, an end in itself, that makes the existence of values possible. Metaphysically, life is the only phenomenon that is an end in itself: a value gained and kept by a constant process of action. Epistemologically, the concept of "value" is genetically dependent upon and derived from the antecedent concept of "life."²³

"Metaphysically, life is . . . an end in itself: a value gained and kept by a constant process of action." These words are absolutely crucial, for they show that living being is inherently value-laden. Yet, this does not make life an intrinsic value—a value that is not an object of some entity's action. On the contrary, the relational nature of value—the idea that something becomes valuable not only because of its characteristics but also because it is an object of an entity's actions—is preserved in saying life is a value in itself, for living being is the entire complex of the relation that makes something a value. Living being acts to live. It is, itself, both the terms of the relation as well as the relation itself. This is what it means to be an end in itself. This type of being does not require anything else to justify its status as a value, for its being a value is what it is.

If life is the ultimate value or end, what determines when it is achieved? The only possible answer is the form of living being which the particular living thing is, and it is the actuation of this form that constitutes a living thing's acting to live. To be a living thing and not be a particular sort of living thing is impossible, and thus, we cannot speak of life as an ultimate end or value without also understanding that it is always life as the sort of living thing the particular living entity is. In other words, it is the nature of the living entity, the kind of thing it is, that determines whether the life of the entity is achieved. Acting in accord with one's nature is acting to live.

When the actions taken are the result of choices, when the types of ends being pursued are purposes, the action being considered is human action because only human beings are capable of choice. In this context, the ultimate end or value becomes the standard for moral evaluation. Thus, life as the sort of thing a human being is—man's life qua man—becomes the ultimate moral value, the *summum bonum*. This is what traditionally has been called man's natural end. A human can, of course, act in a manner inconsistent with the standards set by his nature and not be literally dead, but such "non-death" cannot be considered life or, at least, successful human life. To ignore the principles that human nature requires and to attempt to live without regard to them in any manner one might choose is to opt for an existence as a metaphysical misfit, living by sheer luck and/or the moral behavior of someone else. The principles that human life requires—rationality, productivity, pride and benevolence—are guides to human life. Every mistake or evasion will not result in immediate and literal obliteration, but these principles are no less obligatory on that account. It is wrong

to believe that a moral principle is obligatory only if immediate and devastating consequences rain down upon you when you violate them. The consequences of immoral action are seldom as immediate or ostensible as moralists often would like, but this is no reason to say that such principles are any less necessary for a good human life. Yet, we still have the initial question of Osterfeld's to handle: why should I live in accordance with my nature? Why is it obligatory for me to do so? Here is the question that we have been seeking to address, and it is here that the type of argument used in the defense of the PNC seems capable of employment. Let us consider the following argument:

1. Y is an object of choice.
2. X is necessary for the existence of Y as a value.²⁴ X makes Y's existence as a value possible.
3. If P chooses (values) Y, P must choose (value) what is necessary for P's valuation of Y.
4. P chooses (values) Y.
5. Thus, P chooses (values) X.
6. X is man's life qua man, man's natural end.
7. Thus, P chooses (values) man's life qua man in choosing (valuing) Y.

Insofar as one chooses, regardless of the choice (even if it is the choice not to choose), one must choose (value) man's life qua man. It makes no sense to value some Y without also valuing that which makes the valuing of Y possible. Thus, it is a category mistake—a type of contradiction—to hold something as a value, i.e., to make some choice, and at the same time ask why one should live in accord with his nature. "Man's life qua man" is the end at which all human action implicitly aims; and insofar as one chooses, one values this ultimate end. The very asking of the question "Why should I live in accord with my nature?" is a choice, a valuation, that demands that one already accept this ultimate value. Thus, Osterfeld would be obliged to act in accord with his nature by virtue of his own act of choice, his valuing Y, which in his case was the wanting of an answer to his question. Thus, not only does the mere acceptance of end-oriented behavior require the acceptance of an ultimate end; the mere acting for some end requires the acceptance of an ultimate end, which in the case of chosen ends is man's life qua man—man's natural end.

This argument would seem to have a firm initial condition, indeed almost as firm as the initial condition used by Aristotle in the defense of the PNC, for it is hard to imagine how someone could get outside the responsibility of making choices, of valuing ends. For, as already said, even the decision not to make choices is itself a choice. The conclusion that man's life qua man must be accepted—must be valued—by anyone who makes choices follows necessarily from true premises, so the defense of man's life qua man as the ultimate value is not just a dialectical victory. Finally, the obligatory nature

of the statement "one should live in accord with his nature" does receive its moral force from the ultimate moral value of man's life qua man, but this is not viciously circular, for the initial choice, the initial valuing, which required the acceptance of this ultimate moral end, was done by the opponent or skeptic of this ultimate value, not the proponent. So, we believe we have answered Osterfeld's question and defended Rothbard's approach to the justification of the right of liberty.

NOTES

1. Part of an unpublished manuscript discussed at the Fifth Annual Libertarian Scholars Conference, October 21-23, 1977, Woodrow Wilson School of International Studies, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.
2. Henry Veatch, *For an Ontology of Morals: A Critique of Contemporary Ethical Theory* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971), pp. 7-8.
3. Though an "Austrian" economist, Rothbard does not accept the subjectivist view of values proposed by that school of economic thought.
4. David Osterfeld, "Reflections on the Substantive and Epistemological Aspects of the Rothbardian Natural Rights Ethic," presented at the Fifth Annual Libertarian Scholars Conference.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
7. "Everyone in the world empirically demonstrates by the simple fact of his continued existence that he values life more highly than death." *Ibid.*, p. 18.
8. By accepting the "doctrine of demonstrated preference," Osterfeld claims that everyone alive values life more than death, and from this point seeks to construct a natural-rights ethics by employing the notion of self-ownership. We cannot help but feel that his argument fails because of difficulties much akin to those that beset the "psychological egoist."
9. Douglas Den Uyl and Douglas Rasmussen, "Nozick on the Randian Argument," *The Personalist* (April 1978): 198-99. The central argument for man's life qua man as the ultimate moral value used in this paper is taken, with certain modification, from "Nozick on the Randian Argument."
10. Cf., Douglas B. Rasmussen, "Aristotle and the Defense of the Law of Contradiction," *The Personalist* (Spring 1973): 154.
11. T. H. Irwin, "Aristotle's Discovery of Metaphysics," *The Review of Metaphysics* (December, 1977): 229.
12. Marie C. Swabey, *Logic and Nature* (New York: New York University Press, 1955), p. 12.
13. T. H. Irwin, "First Principles In Aristotle's Ethics," in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, (Morris, Minnesota: The University of Minnesota, 1978), 3:265.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
15. Even the Kantian injunction that an action be done from duty can be considered as the "end" or "goal" of the action.
16. Even the non-cognitivism of the positivists and emotivists does not conflict with this fundamental concern of ethics, because moral predicates and expressions of value have "linguistic force" (even though not descriptive) for them and as such still can be action-guiding.
17. Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness* (New York: New American Library, Signet Edition, 1964), p. 15.
18. *Ibid.*

19. Allan Gotthelf, "Aristotle's Conception of Final Causality," *The Review of Metaphysics* (December 1976): 237, fn. 19.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
21. We cannot understand what living things are and how they function except insofar as we understand such functioning as ordered by the maintenance of the entity's life, which for any particular living thing is understood as the living entity's development to maturation, or even in more explicit Aristotelian terms, the actuation of the particular living thing's form. *And* we do not need to view the actions of non-living things in terms of an end in order to understand their behavior. Cf. David Hull, *Philosophy of Biological Science* (Engelwood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), chaps. 4 and 5.
22. Rand, *Virtue of Selfishness*, p. 17.
23. *Ibid.*
24. For a more complete discussion of the notion of "value," and how it functions in this argument to meet certain difficulties Nozick raises for Rand's thesis that life is the ultimate value, see "Nozick on the Randian Argument," particularly notes 14 and 16.