

SELFISHNESS: A BLESSING OR A CURSE?

Just like ants, humans too are collaborative species and strive together for success. But - there are times when our desires, ones that seem feasible to our minds but are disapproved by the 'society', get undermined by the issue of morality. Hence the question, should we sacrifice our desires for others or is it better to fulfill them whatsoever? Ayn Rand (1963), in the "Objectivist Ethics" argues that man must direct all endeavours to fulfill their own rational interests and must never sacrifice for, or expect a sacrifice from others. This way, she believes a harmony between individual interests can be established, which will prove to be the best for humanity. Rand's philosophy is wrong because it is unachievable, weakly supported and instead of doing any good, eliminates the human part from human being.

To begin with, Ayn Rand's utopian philosophy of a conflict-free world with no concept of sacrifice is beyond what we, being humans can achieve. Rand (1963) says that one needs to have a clear perception of reality, remain aloof from emotional whims and must prioritize the ^{rational} process of thought. This philosophy of hers is based solely on the consideration that humans are capable of thinking rationally in every situation, which is false. Although the right, logical part of brain may dominate over the ~~great~~ emotional, left counterpart, it is biologically impossible to eliminate the involvement of emotions in our decisions completely. Therefore, there will always be a time when one's rationality will get undermined by the torrent of emotions and hence, thinking subjectively is an inevitable event in human life. Similarly, there will be times when a rational beings interest will clash with an emotionally-propelled human. All such situations and encounters are loopholes in Rand's philosophy of a harmonious world; the "precise and scrupulous process of thought" that Rand (1963) wants us to have before each decision, no matter how trivial it may be, is one which scholars are awarded nobel awards for and thus, is impossible for an average person to have in every single decision. Moving forth, Rand (1963) requires humans to have "a full mental focus in all choices and a commitment to full perception of reality". She requires humans to think rationally and objectively, the meaning of which differs from person to person.

By this, Rand leaves humans at the disposal of their rationality as the only aid while making decisions. Rand (1963) ~~says~~ asks humans to ~~have~~ "accept reason as one's only source of knowledge". Hence, it is inevitable that evil will flourish and above all, it will be justified by the key-term: rationality. Such happenings of evil are a strong verdict against Rand's conflict-free world and hence, fail to do humans any good. Taking ~~famous~~ examples, Adolf Hitler famously believed the mass-genocide of Jew citizens was rational. Although it was one of the most gruesome acts of terror in human history, looking at it from his perspective, it was for the betterment of the world. Similarly, Kim Jong dictatorship are the perfect definition of Rand's humanity. They never believed in giving and never expected help. They also followed their "own" rationality in every situation without emotional interference, And today, North Korea is the world, that following a philosophy similar to Rand's has created. Therefore, Rand's philosophy is impossible for a human to achieve in its full essence and trying to do so will only result in ~~mass~~ evil flourishing in human minds.

Secondly, Rand's arguments are ill-supported at numerous points and hence, are unconvincing. In the Objectivist ethics, Rand (1963) ~~denies the existence of God by asking~~ asks men to not desire the unearned, avoid any "non-sensory knowledge" and "never act like zombies, without knowing one's motives". Therefore, she denies the existence of a supernatural entity (God) that holds the power of doing things beyond what the mind can perceive. And, Rand (1963) also condemns the acceptance of values or knowledge acquired by religion. All of this, conveys her atheistic ~~point~~ stand-point in the context. However, nowhere in the essay has Rand considered the possibility of the existence of God. Critically analysing her text reveals all her philosophies are based solely on the belief that there is no-one controlling our lives and hence, her works evidently rule out the chances of God being there. But, what if God was real? Then, it would be essential for human survival to follow morals laid down by Him, to pray and ask for His grace ^(requesting) (something that a person has not earned). And, since Rand (1963) asks humans to be entirely rational, it would be a logical choice to worship a God and follow his ethics in case if he existed, so as not to incur his wrath. All this, would be against the morals laid down by Rand but would be a necessity if God was present. So, her objectivist

ethics is useless if God exists. This is a major flaw in her arguments ~~and~~ which renders it weak. Instead of explaining one side of the coin, bias should've been avoided and she should have considered God's existence and explained aspects of her view in both scenarios which would have made her arguments much strong and believable. At another point, Rand (1963) explains that purpose of living is "... which is required for survival of man qua man" but also elaborates that the standard is "living a life proper to a rational being". Although she does try to establish a relation between both, the purpose and the standard of living, both of these statements are vastly unrelated and are rather, the opposites of each other. Ayn's purpose of living promotes the idea of doing anything and everything to survive and ~~hence~~ hence, negates all her sayings by demanding humans to live life like animals do. On the other hand, her standard of living requires humans to be rational and pursue only justified self-interest. Rand (1963) also criticizes hedonists for doing whatever pleases them, but presents the exact same thing as the purpose of living. So, Rand's ideas seem to be ~~conflicting~~ conflicting each other, which makes her argument very weak. This, is either a mere bad choice of words by Rand, or maybe a major loophole in her philosophy but ~~either~~ eitherways, fails to convince one properly. Similarly, Rand's "principle of Trade" is also not carefully thought-out. This principle of trade although feels like the ultimate solution to achieve human good, it neglects some of the most fundamental activities that go on in a person's life. For instance, if all men were to trade things, what would a mother ask from an unborn child before bearing it for a painful period of 9 months, what would parents demand from children in return for cherishing them and fulfilling their needs, what would great humanitarians like Nelson Mandela or Abdul Sattar Edhi ask from the ones in need before helping them; The answer: nothing. Although Rand (1963) proudly asks humans to "deal with one another as traders, giving value for value..." and thinks trade is the best way of having a relationship and requires humans to perform only the deeds that they're ~~getting~~ ^{receiving} something in return for; There are times when nothing can be asked in return but the deed itself is important enough to perform. Hence, ~~like~~ like many of Rand's philosophies in this text, the principle of trade is also unjustified and even if it isn't, at least it is left unanswered by Rand, which makes this argument weak too.

Thirdly, the moral code, that Rand wishes the entire humanity should follow, instead of making the world a better place for humans, denies the existence of humane qualities in mankind. Hence, rather than contributing to human good, following this code strictly will leave a human more of an emotion-less, hard-wired robot. To begin with, Rand (1963) forbids humans to pursue things -that they're unsure about by saying:

"If a man desires and pursues contradictions -
he disintegrates his consciousness" Rand (1963)

But, she fails to realize that this is what a basic aspect of human intelligence is. Statistically speaking, humans almost never acknowledge the perks of something until they've experienced it. The philosophy of Rand would rule out the possibilities of unsure arranged marriages, will prevent us from taking new steps in life such as shifting to a new job that might not strike as ~~extra~~ attractive at the moment; but above all, this philosophy would human from believing in a factor called "fate". Rand (1963) says "one must take no decision apart from the integrated sum of ones own knowledge", but fails to realize that doing so would stop humans from believing and taking a step forward, an act that most humans perform before almost every major decision of life. Therefore, following Rand's thoughts will make one afraid of taking risks (something that is normally an intermediary step for success) and will remove a very-important aspect of blind-belief from human nature. In the objectivist ethics, Rand (1963) asks humans to value their life and go to all limits to ensure its continuity by saying, "accepting man's life as primary and pursuing the rational value it provides". She asks humans to hold their life above anything and everything but is completely oblivious of the fact that, like every other thing, life has an end too. So, why does Rand emphasize upon protecting something that is already bound to end, whereas, this life, can be used for a greater cause; a cause for something beyond what the current time manifests. Many examples such as Marie Curie, Abraham Lincoln, or Gandhi strived ~~to~~ selflessly to achieve a happier future of humanity and succeeded. All this proves that it is the attitude of selflessness ~~that~~ in harsh times is what the world need, not Ayn Rand's biased philosophy. Her philosophies eliminate the self less factor from a human, -the same factor that propels one

to spend their life for a greater cause. Hence, her philosophies, apart from doing other harms mentioned earlier, also make humans inhumane.

Finally, Rand's statements bound humans to live with what they're born with and eliminate the concept of 'thinking outside the box', both of which have pivotal roles in the advancement of humanity. Without it, humanity would suffer drastically,

"man must never seek or grant the unearned or undeserved" Rand (1963)

But, she fails to realize that a man only strives for something, if he aims for it sincerely. In her philosophies, Rand asks humans to stay happy for what they already have; in other words, she denies humans the liberty to dream and strive honestly to fulfill their desires. Following this philosophy of hers, without the liberty to dream boundlessly, humanity would stop progressing and hence would prove fatal for a successful survival of human race. Similarly, if people tried being as rational as Rand wants them to be, this mindset would prove highly disadvantageous for the future of humanity as it would hinder the creativity of humans.

Creativity essentially is 'thinking outside the box'... every major invention or work-of-art has been a product of anything but sheer rationality. There's a factor of emotions, belief and rebellion that led to the advancements that humanity has achieved today. In a world where rationality is the only way of deciding, it would be impossible for humans to explore, invent and experiment; in such a world, there would be no Picasso who coloured the world with their creativity and emotions, no Mark Zuckerberg who dropped-out of college to develop a venture they were passionate, yet unsure about. All of this loss of an essential element of human thinking (creativity) would prove to be fatal in the cycle of human advancement and hence, such scenarios are a strong verdict against Ayn Rand's philosophy of ~~the~~ objectivist ethics.

Conclusively, Rand's philosophy ~~is~~ in the objectivist ethics fails to achieve its true purpose of doing human good because of the above mentioned reasons; which include her ideas being impossible to achieve, her arguments not being well-supported and having loopholes, her philosophies eliminating essential qualities from humans and also hindering the revolutionary process of thought that has always contributed towards a better future. Hence, Rand's idea of a selfishness-promoting "Clever" world fails to prove beneficial.

for humanity and therefore, is wrong. Instead, it is necessary that an element of sacrifice, emotion and selflessness be present in each human being for humanity to progress at a positive pace.