

# **Moral Thinking: An Introduction To Values And Ethics**

**Prof. Vineet Sahu**

**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur**

**Week - 02**

**Lecture -12**

**Ayn Rand's Objectivist Ethics**

In the larger framework of things, of the arguments that she makes, that associating rationality with being human, and therefore with the element of choice, and doing away with that, is contradicting with one's own beings, and doing away with that is, walking on the path of self-destruction. Now, I gathered that, this might seem a little difficult for you to connect, if you have not read the text, or you have not enjoyed the text. What I proposed to do is, after this brief presentation, which is a part of Module 2, I will go through a complete text reading of this particular chapter of her book, where you can see, where we will read the text, side by side, and both have it as a lesson in learning, how to read a text, and to go through the flow of the argument, by the author. So, the next section, where we will read out, or together read the chapter, is an optional section. Those of you, who are not very intrigued by this notion, can omit that. But, those of you, who have been quite interested, or intrigued by the concepts, that have come up in this claim, or are interested in Philosophical argumentation, it would be a good exercise.

So, after I finish this presentation, I shall go ahead, and do a complete textual reading, of this particular text. But, now let me go over, the broad highlights of this text, so that, it can be a precursor, for you to read the text, and make sense of it. And even, after reading the text, you can come back to this presentation, to better comprehend. And of course, the most recommended one would be, to go to the textual reading, that we do together, after this session.

So, because a lot of concepts will make sense, once we go through the flow of the entire argument. So, I am putting out, the central claims of the author, so that, it gives you the big picture, and then you can go back to the text. Remember, I have always advocated reading three times. And, any text has to be read three times. And these three times, are not numerically three times.

But, these are three stages of reading. You may achieve, each stage in two readings,

each stage in one reading, each stage in various readings. What are the three stages of reading. The first time, you have to go through it fast, you have to browse the text, to understand the big picture. And, that is why, this presentation.

The second time, when you read the text, is to understand the details of the argument, that the author is making. And, the third and final stage of reading the text, is when you develop your own reactions to it. So, you are sufficiently familiar with the big picture, in the first reading. In the second reading, you are familiar with the details of the argument. And in the third reading, you can start developing your views, your reactions, your criticisms, to the text.

Right. So, this is very much, again a lawyer preparing for an argument. A lawyer repeatedly reads the draft of the case, to figure out the case, to know it at the back of their mind, and then to develop their own arguments from it. Right. So, you are repeated in that spirit.

And, do not look at repeated reading, as a waste of time. Rather, repeated reading is only where you achieve familiarity, and a grasp on a particular text, that you can completely articulate, that will help you articulate yourself. So, even if you look at traditionally, philosophers are supposed to master, not all texts, but a single text, or maybe in the Indian tradition, the Prasthanatraya. Three central texts, that a philosopher has to master, and comment on that. So, it is one stage of your learning, when you have to move from reading a lot, to reading deep.

So, you would yourself figure out, what stage you are in, and what text you would like to engage, at what level. So, ideally to read deep, you should be reading it repeatedly. It has to stay in your psyche, in the back of your mind. And then, you develop your own views to it. You reach a level of understanding, which seems so different from, what was in the first reading of the text.

I hope this text, the Objectivist Ethics, in the Objectivist Ethics, called the Virtue of Selfishness, the first chapter that we are doing right now, is interesting enough, and also terse enough, for you to attain that level of depth, on a text reading exercise. Okay. So, coming back to the general big picture, that the author is talking about. So, the author is trying to claim that well, self-destruction is as self-contradictory. But, what one's reaction could be, that well, and once you go through the details of the author's argument.

The author holds that, to be focused, to be conscious, to make choices, that support your life, that go through the purpose of life, is the purpose of human being. Human beings have the choice of doing it, or not doing it. But, in case they are not doing it, they are

moving away from the very purpose of life, and they are becoming self-contradictory. So, for the author, self-destruction is self-contradictory. But, I just put it as an aside, that well, contrasting this with the freedom, superseding survival.

Right. Let us take an example of, and this is I am giving you a counterpoint to think, as a reaction to Ayn Rand. We are not reading Ayn Rand, as a follower. And no philosopher will read any text, as a devout follower. Rather, we are reading the text, as an open aware intellectual. So, we are looking at places, where we agree with the author, where the author enriches our understanding, where author gives insights, that are revealing to us.

And, as an equal to the author, we the reader, also critique the author. Also, look at where, there are limitations of the text. So, by criticising the common sensical, or the colloquial meaning of the word criticism, is often being critical of it, or being always sceptical or negative about it. But, in Philosophy, when I say, being critical or critique, means to set the limit of. So, whenever I say, critique an essay, you are going to set the limit of that particular argument, claim or essay.

So, critique is not an unthought through criticism, which is generally colloquially understood. But, criticism is to set the limit of the essay. Here, is an attempt that, when we look at a Freedom Fighter. Freedom Fighter, who is fighting for freedom, and is becoming a martyr. Well, that Freedom Fighter is also laying down one's life.

And therefore, will it be self-contradictory, in Ayn Rand scheme of things. I leave you to think about it, as an opening to argue for. I am sure, if you are arguing for Rand, or if how would Rand answer this question, would say that well, perhaps the Freedom Fighter is actually looking at the survival of the species, and the flourishing of the species, as the primary goal, and thereby does not contradict her claim. So, when you are thorough with a text, you are thorough with a philosophy, you can then answer questions, that are not raised, from the point of the view of the essay, or the philosophy. So, let us call it, the Objectivist Ethics.

Now, as an Objectivist Ethicist, you will be able to answer questions, which are beyond, what is raised in the text. So, these are many things, that when you truly understand a text, you can answer, you can extend, you can retort, as the author would do, or as the philosophy, as the text would do. So, that is the level of proficiency, that one should target for. So, as an Objectivist Ethicist, how would you answer a real-day question, that comes in, say genetic modification, say genetic enhancement, say on suicide. How will all these questions, perhaps which have not been raised in the text, also will be something, that you can answer.

Because, you have understood the core philosophy of the Objectivist Ethics. So, now coming to, well, for the, for Ayn Rand, or for the author. And, these are synonymous, when I say, for the author, for Ayn Rand, or for the Objectivist Ethicist, I mean the same thing. And, I will generally refer as author, because that is the easiest, simply because it is the easiest name to take. It is phonetically easier for me to say, refer to the author, than the Objectivist Ethicist, which is a kind of tongue twister, and I might end up mispronouncing it, or Ayn Rand itself, who is again.

So, the author is going to be the term, to be synonymously understood with, each of these three. So, the author is now saying that, life as the standard of value. Value cannot be spoken, independent of life, or ultimate values stand on their own, and no relation between ultimate values, ends and facts of reality. Now, examine. When I say examine, now I have put it this, as a fourth of a question.

I assume, and this question will make sense, if you have read the text earlier. So, for the author, life is the standard of value. And, we cannot talk of value, independent of life. Remember, the indestructible robot example, that we talked about, or the indestructible human example, that we talked about. If we are indestructible, can we have this notion of value, for the author.

No, we cannot have it. But, what about the contrary view. And, when I put here as an or, I look at another view, that disagrees with the Objectivist Ethics, is that, ultimate values stand on their own. No relation between, ultimate values and facts of reality. There is a competing ethical standpoint, or moral standpoint, that talks about, moral values as standing independent of human life and existence. That, these are ideals, that we need to realise.

And, these ideals exist independent of our reality, of our lived reality. So, that is a contrasting view to, Ayn Rand's view. So, these are the debates, that you have to unearth, from Ayn Rand's position, so that, you can critique, understand the limits of, and you can grow beyond the text. So, that the text is a stepping stone, for you to sharpen and polish your understanding. Now, today's Moralists agree, that Ethics is a subjective issue.

And, that the three things barred from its field, are Reason, Mind, and Reality. So, what the author is doing, it is challenging this promise of Modern Ethics. So, the author is alleging, that today as in her times, and which is more or less even popular understanding today, that today's Moralists, and the author alleges, that the today's Moralists argue, that Ethics is a subjective issue. And, that three things are barred from its field, Reason, Mind, Reality. So, it is this premise of Modern Ethics, that the author

seeks to challenge, right.

That Ethics is subjective, it does not have anything to do with Reason, or Mind, or Reality. And, we just have to accept it as a subjective luxury, as amusement, as whims, as fancies, as something which does not affect the world out there. This is the thesis of Modern Ethics of her times, that the author challenges. Her claim is that, human, she constantly refers to as man, and it is to be understood as human, as during those era, man was, and still continues to be, but we are more politically correct. Now, when we use the term man, we mean human beings.

So, I shall put in HU in brackets, to emphasise the contemporary usage, over the archaic usage, that is present in that particular text. Human consciousness as volitional, perception, reason, concept formation, thinking. So, that means, human consciousness, or her claim is, and once we go through the detailed textual reading, we will see, how she moves, step by step. Now, these claims may appear to be discrete. And, they appear discrete only because, we are trying to get the big picture, what the author is talking about.

Once we go through the detailed textual reading together, we will know the flow of the argument, that how she comes around this. So, her claim is that, human consciousness is volitional, perception, reason, concept formation, thinking. All of these are chosen. These are choices, that we make. And, for her, a crucial claim that she makes, is that, an unfocused mind is not conscious.

That, when we are unfocused, we are not conscious. And, we all have the ability of focusing. But, whether we deploy it or not, will determine, whether we are being true to our purpose, or not. Now, for human beings, the basic means of survival is reason. Wherever, I put things within the quote, it means, it is a direct extract from this text.

Right. So, for man, the basic means of survival is reason. So, she gives an example, that well, plants have their way of survival. They absorb nutrients, from their environment. Animals have certain, more complicated ways of their survival. They have life cycles, they remember, and they act upon the environment, to create their conditions suitable for their own welfare, for their own survival.

But, for human beings, the instrument that they have is reason. Because, from reason is what, how we have built the world around us. We will understand it, in greater detail, when we go through the flow of the argument. Responsibility. On responsibility, she says that, nature gives him, meaning human beings, no automatic guarantee of the efficacy of his mental effort.

And, here again, the question that I add here is, subsidy or assistance, belittle, human freedom, or responsibility. So, what the author is saying that well, nature gives us the choice, or we have the choice, to employ our focus, or not employ our focus, to determine the values that we follow. There is no guarantee of the efficacy of our mental effort. That means, just because of the fact that, we have put in mental effort, we will get our results.

That is something, not guaranteed by nature. So typically, that is an example, I think, I will talk about in the text also, when we do the textual reading. say anybody, when you raise children, when parents raise children, children sometimes make incorrect choices, or choices that are detrimental to them. Say well, somebody, say if you are an adventurous guardian or a parent, sees the child curious, maybe a child curious about, say something hot, and or say a small charge of DC electricity, if that is an adventurous parent. They would allow the child to expose the child to that particular stimuli, maybe a little hot vessel, or in little bit of an electricity leakage, maybe DC that is a small battery that can allow the child to know, what is it to be the feeling of sensation of heat, or excessive heat, a little bit of electric shock, for their child to understand, what it is. So, now a parent or a guardian, very often allows the child to take these decisions, and suffer the consequences of those decisions, especially if the consequences are not fatal, or not lethal.

They are unpleasant, but they are manageable. The reason for doing this is, so that the child learns from the consequences, and will not repeat it the next time. Whereas, the notion of, when we talk about subsidy and assistance, and this as analogically from paternal governments, is when we give assist, or when we buffer, or when we protect the child from the consequence of his or her acts, which are unwise, then we are not allowing the child to learn from the consequences of their acts. So here, for the author, responsibility is supreme. Human beings have the choice, and nature gives them the choice, but nature does not guarantee the efficacy of their mental effort. So, if they have made a wrong choice, they will suffer the consequences of it.

And, comparing this with, the notion of subsidy and assistance. And, this can also be generalised at a very governmental scale, that the way governments are paternalistic about citizens. And, they give subsidy or assistance, or make rules to, does that belittle human freedom, or responsibility. What would Ayn Rand's position be. If you have understood, the Objectivist Ethics, you would clearly understand that, the author would argue for, as little subsidy and assistance as possible.

Because, subsidy and assistance buffer the consequences of incorrect decisions. And

therefore, break the feedback loop, where one would have learnt from an incorrect decision made. So, exercising freedom, and taking responsibility for choices. This is the human predicament.

No instinct or template for decision making. This is what, frequently philosophers have called the, burden of freedom. So, what the author talks about is that, plants and animals have a default mechanism set in them. And, they need to follow that, for their own survival.

They can sniff out their food. They can identify food. They have certain behaviour in affluent food surplus times. They have certain behaviour in food deficit times. But, human beings do not have this template. And, this template is both gives them freedom.

But, it also is a burden. Because, this freedom can be abused. This freedom can land us in trouble. Because, there is no fixed template about, how do we go about things. And, Sartre and existential philosophers have often talked of it, as the burden of freedom. Freedom to be conscious or unconscious.

That is the freedom, that we have according to the author. So, to be conscious or unconscious, the penalty of being unconscious, of unthinkingly following the default mode, is destruction. So, the choice that we have is to, between being conscious and being unconscious. Unconscious does not mean, being fainted. But, unconscious means, that not being focused, not being aware of the task at hand, of looking at templates, paradigms. And, remember the critique of social morality, that she talks about, is that, we see that, okay, thou shall not lie.

And, I shall not lie, because my parents have told me so. My parents did not lie. My religion tells me so.

The whole world tells me so. I do it. But, I do not have a reason. I am not making this as a conscious choice. The only conscious choice, I am making, is to follow the default, that has come to me. What the author is talking about is that, the penalty of such unconsciousness is destruction. That means, each decision, each value, that we follow, needs to be thought through.

And, this is where, the science of Ethics. And, notice the word, she uses, science of Ethics. As systematic study, not art, not intuition. The science of Ethics is required, to arrive at the values, that survival requires. Ethics is not for the after world, but this is for the living. So, this is a very clear claim, that the author is making, that it is a science, Ethics is a science.

And, we need to arrive the set of values, that requires our survival. But, this is not the same as, Survival Ethics. Because, what we are aware of survival. This is not Survival Ethics. Rather, I would say, you can better understand it as, Human Flourishing.

This is what, you should understand. This is what, you should understand Ethics, according to the Objectivist Ethics, is that, it promulgates Human Flourishing. Ethics is very much a code, for this world. It is not for the after world. So, she is not looking at, metaphysical backstories, that are beyond this world. That well, one and typically, she is hitting religion, that we are supposed to be Altruist and Charitable.

That we reach in heaven, we are posted to heaven, rather than hell. So, these are the notions, that she is attacking. So, when you are a thoughtful leader, or when you have reached your third stage of reading, you will also be able to reason and find out, why is the author mentioning this. A good awareness of history, for any exercise is important, if you are doing financial analysis, or you are doing philosophical analysis, or textual analysis. Because, the breadth of your knowledge, will give you tools, to connect, why is the author going from step A to step B.

And therefore, you can make sense of it, much better. So, she talks about the, Science of Ethics. For her, Ethics is in, the page numbers mentioned here, are page numbers, which are directly from the text. Ethics is an objective metaphysical necessity, or man's survival, not by the grace of supernatural. So, that means, when she is denying, not by supernatural, means, it is not by the grace of God, that you are surviving, nor of your neighbours. That means, not of society, by neighbour, she is of course, hinting at society, that it is not society, which is giving us an ethical code for survival, nor of your whims.

So, not your emotional, what we earlier talked about, Emotivism. Not your emotions, through which you have a code of conduct, but by the grace of reality, and the nature of life. So, there is nothing subjective, or iffy about ethical code of conduct. It is not being given by the supernatural, or your neighbour society, or your own whims. Rather, it is a feature of the lived reality, that we have.

And, that is why, if we are perceptive to it, we can lead a purposeful life. So, the reason perhaps, let me try to think of an example, why you would, or an analogy, that would make sense, in this regard. If one is, say okay, the prevalence of junk food today. Now, all of us know, that junk food is harmful to our health.

Right. But, junk food is also tasty. And, we are aware, that junk food causes many diseases. So, being aware of this, and enhancing one's consumption of junk food, would



it not be suicidal. So, when the author is talking about, the virtue of selfishness, is that, when you are rationally selfish, when you are productive, you will always look at, the long-term goal. Right. And, even short-term goals, that are not immediately detrimental, but detrimental in the long-term, will be regarded as, incorrect or wrong decisions.

Right. This is where, it is being corrected by the nature of life, what grace of reality, and nature of life, that they talk about. These are two things, that very often do not affect in the moment. Sometimes, they do. But, very often, they do not affect in the moment, and they affect in the long-term. So, the Objectivist Ethics holds, man's life as the standard of value, and his own life as the ethical purpose of every individual man.

Right. Here, makes a difference between, standard and purpose. If you have gone through it, you will be aware. But, we will go through it, when we go through the text. Value is something, and this is the nomenclature. So, to build an argument, one has to build the nomenclature, or the conceptual structure, to make the claim. And, these are things, that one would come across, when one looks at the argument in detail.

Value is that, which one acts to gain, and or keep. Virtue is that, by which one gains or keeps it. So, here is making the difference between, value and virtue. Value is something, which one wants to gain, which one acts to gain. And, virtue is the act, by which one gains or keeps it. So, the three values that she has talked about, of the Objectivist Ethics, are reason, purpose, and self-esteem.

And, how does one attain that. Reason by rationality, purpose by productiveness, and self-esteem by pride. Now, we will go through the detail, when we talk about in the text. But, I want you to connect it, in the big picture.

So, look at productivity. Productivity is something, that is appreciated. Productivity is something, that is greatly valued. Productivity is what gives you purpose. Now, no matter what profession, or what area you are in, probably you have expectations of productivity. You yourself want to be productive. Look at how, Ayn Rand has put out, this worded out, this philosophy of capitalism, philosophy of the Objectivist Ethics.

And, it is not just a monetary system, that they are talking about. The monetary system of capitalism, is an expression, in the financial domain, or the economic domain, of the broader philosophy of the Objectivist Ethics, where productivity is to be celebrated. So, to be productive, is to have a purpose. So, to have pride, in achieving a self-esteem. Now, if you look at the modern day, successful capitalist character, they would look at productivity, as something, which gives them purpose.

Their sense of pride and self-esteem, coming from the productivity, that they engage in. Right. And, this is fleshed out reality. If you look at a person, say a typical capitalist person, would not be very happy, or should not be very happy, to take subsidy or assistance. Because, there is a certain amount of pride, in one's own doing, pride in one's own creativity, and not taking subsidy or assistance.

Right. And, this is where, reason or rationality becomes the champion, for this free individual. In fact, it may not be as accurate to call this, the ideal capitalist person. But, in the Objectivist Ethics, the rational person, or the free person. So, productivity becomes a very crucial part. Success sustains life, sets man free of the necessity, to adjust to the background or environment.

Freedom from suffering, freedom to create solutions. So, productivity is a very crucial character, that if one is producing something, producing a solution from others. Now, is it just a coincidence, that all the inventions that have taken, or most of the inventions that have taken place in the world, have come from capitalist societies. Science has developed there. So, in a simplistic fashion, Ayn Rand has anticipated this change, that where productivity is celebrated, where rationality innovation is celebrated, is the ideal world order.

Right. Productivity sets man free from the necessity, to adjust to the background, or to the environment. Freedom from suffering, freedom to create solutions. This is, you can also think of it as, taking a jibe at a religious claim, that all that we suffer, are because of our own bad karma, may be in a previous life.

So, that rationalises. Right. There are two ways of leading life, or looking at the world. In case of a change, if the environment changes, one is to adapt yourself, to tolerate it. The other is to change your immediate environment. Let us say a typical example. If the globe is warming up, or you are in a hot climate, you can either slow down your heartbeat, may be the yogic way, to feel less hot. Alternatively, you can invent the electricity, air conditioner, fans, to buffer out the heat and humidity of the region.

You can accept disease as natural, or you can find out ways of treatment, and vaccinations, and prevention, for taking care of disease. Productiveness. Productive work is the central purpose of a rational man's life.

The central value, that integrates and determines the hierarchy of all his other values. Reason is the source. The precondition of his productive work, pride is the result. So, Productive work is the central purpose of rational man's life. So, what it does, it integrates and determines the hierarchy of all his other values. Reason is the source.

The precondition of his productive work, pride is the productive work, and pride is the result. So, productivity being seen as the highest virtue, and it is powered by reason, and the accomplishment created, gives a sense of pride. So, when relate this to the world experience, live today. Say, entrepreneurs, startups, innovators, that are solving a problem of the world. Look at, say, Ola cabs. Now, Ola cabs, with some simplification, or some generalisation, did something innovative, or all these call taxis.

What is the innovative thing, that they did. There was demand, and there were supply. Just built a good system, to connect both of them. And with that, they became a unicorn, or a billion dollar enterprise. So, the money that they have earned, is something that, is a celebration for them, and has been rightfully, from this perspective, from the objectivist ethics perspective, is rightfully theirs, and needs to be celebrated. Whereas, there can be other viewpoints, which say that well, capitalists are cornering away, enough of the wealth, or too much of the wealth of the world.

One percent of the country owns, eighty percent of the country's assets. So, these are contrary views. Now, she is a hardcore champion of Capitalism, saying that, well, those who have been powered by reason, who have been productive, they say, the Ola chaps, had the vision, had the courage to implement it, take a chance. And then, they succeeded. And, the result of their success, the pride of building a successful company, and the wealth they generated, both for themselves, and their shareholders. So, this is the principle of the modern day world also, which Ayn Rand anticipated, almost 6 to 7 decades back, almost a century back, if you say, if he was born, in the 1920s, I think.

So, since man has no automatic knowledge, he can have no automatic values. And, since he has no innate ideas, he can have no innate value judgements. So, yes, to the subjectivists, who say that well, there is nothing innate, that Ethics is nothing ingrained. That is where, the author would agree with the subjectivists. But, where she would disagree, is by saying that, yes, we do not have any automatic knowledge.

Yes, we do not have any innate knowledge. But, we can think through our values. And, that values is very concrete, and real out there. They are not whims, fancies, or traditions, that we come across. So, now this further goes with her, to reconceptualise, what is Happiness. Happiness is that, state of consciousness, which proceeds from the achievement of one's values.

So, Happiness is not a hormonal stage. Happiness is not something, feel good factor. Happiness is that state of consciousness, you might understand it as, fulfilment, which proceeds from the achievement of one's values. So, when you have a philosophical

worldview, you almost redefine crucial concepts, that we hold. So, for her, happiness is not physical experience. Happiness is the state of consciousness, which proceeds from the achievement of one's values. To hold one's life as one's ultimate value, and one's own happiness as one's highest purpose, are two aspects of the same achievement.

Existentially, the activity of pursuing rational goals, is the activity of maintaining one's life. Psychologically, its result, reward and concomitant, is an emotional state of happiness. So, this is a direct quote from, what she talks about. To hold one's life as one's ultimate value, and one's own happiness as one's highest purpose, are two aspects of the same achievement.

Where is it, critiquing the altruist. Because, altruist would call this town, right selfish. How can you hold your own happiness, as one's highest purpose. But here, she disagrees, and spins out her philosophy, saying that well, one's own happiness is one's own highest purpose. But this happiness is not by snatching, or at the cost of the other. But it is by producing something, which has been latent, which has been generated.

And so, the sense of achievement, that flows from it, is what is happiness. So, scientifically, the activity of pursuing rational goals, is the activity of maintaining one's life. So, the moment we are pursuing rational goals, right. So, the rational goals of maintaining our health, that is maintaining one's life.

What are irrational goals, is not taking care of one's health. Isn't it then suicidal, in that case. Only, it does not happen at an instant. But it happens, over a period of time. At three different levels, she explains this. So, one is the level of psychology, one is existentially. And, to hold one's life, as one's ultimate value, and one's own happiness, as one's highest purpose, are two aspects of the same achievement.

This is explained existentially, and psychologically. Existentially, it is the activity of pursuing rational goals, is the activity of maintaining one's life. So, to pursue rational goals, is to maintain one's life. Existentially, that is understood. Psychologically, its result, reward and concomitant, is an emotional state of happiness.

So, psychologically, the joy of creating something, and being proud of it, one should not be ashamed of it. Again, look at the critique to the altruist. Well, one who exhibits a sense of pride. If for the, for the Ayn Rand, the Ola founder being proud about his achievement, is something deserved. Not something brash, arrogant, or to be ashamed of, but something that, that person rightfully deserves.

You can, it occurred, Ola occurred to me. But, you can as well as use, any other

innovative game changing companies, that have come into being, or policies also. Happiness is not primary or irreducible. So, that means, because a common tenet has been, that happiness is something, which is primary and irreducible.

Here, she disagrees with it. Human life is the primary standard. And happiness is consequence of it. Emotions are not tools of cognition. Here is a, again a retort to the Emotivist, who would say that, just because something feels good, does not make it right. So, when we use emotions as tools of cognition, we are making an error. Emotions are not tools of cognition. Because, if they were tools of cognitions, then we would keep on going on, to what we have a pleasant feedback, and to what we have an, avoid what we have an unpleasant feedback.

The fallacy of Hedonism, frequently talked about is, happiness can be the purpose, but not the standard of Ethics. Desire is not an Ethical primary. So, this will make sense, when you read it in the text. But, the claims here is, looking at desire as not something, the Ethical primary.

Desire can be created. Because, certain philosophies, or certain ways of thinking, will always hold that desire as something primary. How best can we achieve it, or how can we control it, or how can we modify it, or how can we let it, exert it. So, that looking at desire as the primary. But here is where, she says that, desire is not an Ethical primary. When she talks about, Moral Cannibalism.

Moral cannibalism of all Hedonist and Altruist doctrines, lie in the premise that, the happiness of one man necessitates the injury of another. So, for the Moral Cannibalist, and she uses the term, Moral Cannibalism, as a hard term, or a hard critic, that Hedonist and Altruist are Moral Cannibalists. Why are they Cannibalists. Because, the premise of these Hedonist and Altruist are, that the happiness of one man necessitates the injury of another.

How is it for the Hedonist. The Hedonist is looking well, pleasure. Now, that pleasure gives somebody else suffering. It does not matter, because I am looking at my pressure. For Altruist, the suffering is one's own suffering. So, to sacrifice one's own well-being, for the good of another. So, in that sense, she puts the Hedonist and the Altruist, in the same bracket.

That both of them, have the premise that, the happiness of one man necessitates the injury of another. Here, the happiness of the agent, for the Hedonist, the happiness of the Hedonist necessitates the injury to another person. And, for the happiness of the Altruist, it necessitates the injury to the Altruist himself or herself. Objectivist Ethics,

negates this Moral Cannibalism, and advocates for Rational Selfishness. Now, here is where, she brings out the term, Rational Selfishness.

So clearly, Objectivist Ethics, negates this Moral Cannibalism, and rather advocates for Rational Selfishness. Because, Selfishness is often misunderstood, she qualifies it as, Rational Selfishness. What is Rational Selfishness? She puts it out. And, I quote, rational interests of men do not clash. That there is no conflict of interest among men, who do not desire the unearned, who do not make sacrifices, nor accept them, who deal with one another, as traders giving value for value.

This is quite a crux claim, that the author makes, that well, the rational interests of men do not clash. So, Rational Selfishness means, not battling with each other's interests. There is no conflict of interest possible. Because, they do not desire, what they have not earned.

They do not make sacrifices for others, nor do they expect others to make sacrifices for them. What they believe in, is trade. They believe in dealing value for value. Neither sacrifice, nor expect anybody to sacrifice. So, what becomes the cherished value here, is trade value for value. An example, that I always give in my class, about this example is, let us say, some of you have, or when you have joined a new institution, a college or a school.

You are alone, you are the only person, you are new to the class. And, the class is new to you. People are all new to each other. We are original. So, classically, people are nice to each other. They want to make friends. And, within a few weeks, you have your own friend circle set.

The notion of friendship, cannot be, and should not be grounded on sacrifice. Suppose, somebody is a bore, but they like your company. You cannot stick along for long with them, or you cannot be their friend, because they are boring.

Right. They keep on repeating. Suppose, they keep on talking about themselves. So, friendship is a trade of value. Because, there is a trade, you add value to their lives, they add value to your lives. If it is a single sided value addition, then it is parasitic. So, that is why, you can be sympathetic to somebody, in a bad time, and listen to them.

But, that does not make you their friend. Because, you are tolerating them, and they are ranting about their misfortune. But, if they do not do the other way, or your meeting is not mutually enriching for each other, that cannot be friendship. So, here is what she gives. So, when we look at traders, traders typically bizarre, or market is something,

which has a negative connotation in many societies, that everything is tradable.

That is not a healthy attitude, as per the Objectivist Ethics. Because, trading is the basis of human survival. Trading is not just monetary. Trading is also, you trade with each other's company. Why do you meet your friends? How do you choose a life partner? Because, you trade, you add value to each other, you enjoy each other's company. You are neither sacrificing yourself to the other person, nor do you expect the other person to sacrifice yourself.

So, if you have a friend, who constantly agrees with you, it is so boring. You would probably not be friends. You would, that may be a follower, that may be a fan, but that is definitely not a friend. So, trading is important. And, trade is not just trade in things, or trades about money, but trade about exchange of values.

We add value to each other. And, that is the way, we can understand friendship, from the Objectivist Ethics perspective. The principle of trade, is the only rational ethical principle for all human relationships. It is the principle of justice. That means, putting trade as the principle of justice. That is such a crucial and phenomenal claim to make, an extreme claim to make, that looking at trade as justice.

Because, one way of looking at trade will be, to well, look at what each other exchange of needs. But, looking at it, or terming it as the principle of justice, is an achievement.

Alright. Now, coming to the final slide. When we talk about, what is the gains from social existence. It is knowledge and trade. So, social existence is to be celebrated. Nowhere, is the author arguing that, we are isolated individuals.

But, we need to protect ourselves, and grow in our paths. And, social existence gives us both, knowledge and trade. We learn from each other. Physical force, only in retaliation, and only against those, who initiate its use. The holdup man example. No man may obtain any values from others, by physical force.

So, what is the role of the government. And, if you can typically see, connect now, the bigger picture that the author is talking about. The role of the modern state, the state in a capitalist nation, is that of a Night Watchman. Is just to maintain that, there is no unlawful usage of force. So, for those of you who may not be aware of, when the state in a capitalist society is called the Night Watchman.

Means that, what is the role of the Night Watchman. The Night Watchman is well, when all of you are asleep, may be somebody is patrolling the streets. The Night

Watchman only has to see that, no burglary takes place, nobody harms each other. The policeman will just make sure that, nobody harms each other. So, if the role of the government has to be, in the capitalist framework, to be limited to the Night Watchman.

That is an extreme view. But, that is a standard example taken, from capitalist nations. So, government protects human beings rights, as the Night Watchman, without property. Now again, property becomes a crucial notion. So, there is Prowd Horn, I think at one end, who says, all property is theft.

But here, property becomes expression. Property without property rights, no other rights are possible. That is a very important question opened up. As we often see that, a mango tree in a public space, rarely has the chance for its mangoes to ripen. One of the other, will end up plucking it. Right. Now, that is perhaps, examples that, many of us who have had some rural exposure, or semi-rural exposure, can relate to.

So, but a mango orchard, that is private, will have its mangoes, will allow place for it to flourish. So, the property rights become essential. And this is where, she lays out the foundations of capitalism, as the world order. And in crux, it is not a monetary system, or a financial system only.

It is a way of celebrating life. Unashamed of life, and celebrating life, for life, not fear, is the source of all morality. Very crucial claim, that we end with. That for the Objectivist Ethicist, life is not something to be ashamed of. That, we are not in a fallen state. It is not that, we should be ashamed of it, and we should be continuously giving away ourselves, like the altruists would say. Rather, we should be unashamed of life, and celebrate life, not at the cost of others, but by generating, by producing. And, the source of our morality is life, not fear of social reprimand, not fear of not being able to live up to expectations of parents, societies, or civilisation, not the fear of being posted to hell.

But, because life itself becomes the cornerstone, as the source of all morality. So, with this, we come to the end of Module 2. We will have one session of textual reading, of this entire paper. If you would like to, that is not essentially required. But, if you want a deeper understanding, you are welcome to go through the video, on the textual reading. But, for the purpose of the second module, this comes out to be the end of the second module. Thank you. .