

Monday, May 21, 2007

A Succinct Summary of My Worldview

A visitor named Robert [recently stopped by my blog](#) and asked me to provide a "succint statement of what [I] hold to be true and how [I] measure truth." Below I am posting the same response I gave to Robert in my combox.

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I don't think a single statement would ever be sufficient to encapsulate what I hold to be true. But here are some basic pointers in terms of the four basic branches of philosophy:

1) Metaphysics: Objective reality. Three axioms establish this: existence exists, consciousness is consciousness of something, A is A. These are the axioms of existence, consciousness and identity. The initial guiding principle of philosophy is the primacy of existence principle. It is the recognition that reality exists independent of consciousness. Reality is not the product of conscious intentions, nor does it conform to consciousness. Hence I reject the religious view of the world, which essentially holds that a form of consciousness created the universe - i.e., all existence extraneous to itself - and/or directs the events which take place within it. This is a form of metaphysical subjectivism - the view that the subject holds metaphysical primacy over its objects.

2) Epistemology: Reason. Reason is the faculty which identifies and integrates the material provided by his senses. Rationality is the commitment to reason as one's only means of knowledge of reality and his guide to action. The form in which he initially identifies and integrates the objects of his awareness is conceptual in nature, which is a volitional process, and the method by which he integrates what he perceives and identifies into affirmations is logic, which is the art of non-contradictory identification. Reason functions in accordance with the primacy of existence principle, enabling man to distinguish between fact and fiction, the real and the unreal, the actual and the imaginary. Reason is the faculty by which man discovers and validates truths about reality, and is thus the standard of measurement of truth.

3) Morality: Rational self-interest. This is the morality of values, the application of reason to the task of living and man's need to act in order to live. Value is that which one acts to gain and/or keep in the interest of living and enjoying life. The morality of rational self-interest is developed on the recognition that man faces a fundamental alternative - to live or die, and on the basis of a fundamental choice: to live. It requires that one recognize that the needs man has for living are not automatically provided for, that he needs to identify those values which he needs to live and those actions which make acquiring and/or preserving those values possible. "The purpose of morality is to teach you, not to suffer and die, but to enjoy yourself and live." (Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*)

4) Politics/social theory: Individual rights. An objective social theory is one which recognizes that each individual human being has the right to exist for his own sake. "A 'right' is a moral principle defining and sanctioning a man's freedom of action in a social context." (Ayn Rand, "Man's Rights," *The Virtue of Selfishness*) Accordingly, since life is an end in itself, no individual has an obligation to sacrifice his values, his mind or his life to another person, whether real or imagined. As a corollary, a religious believer has the right to worship whichever god he chooses, just as a non-believer has the right not to worship any gods.

I'm hoping these points inspire new questions as much as they are intended to address your initial question. If so, please feel free to probe some more. I always enjoy sharing my views.

by Dawson Bethrick

Labels: [Objectivism](#)

posted by Bahnsen Burner at [5:00 AM](#)

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