

In Defense of Natural End Ethics: A Rejoinder to O'Neil and Osterfeld

by Douglas J. Den Uyl

Department of Philosophy, Bellarmine College

and Douglas B. Rasmussen

Department of Philosophy, St. John's University

Patrick M. O'Neil and David Osterfeld have offered some criticisms of our natural end interpretation and defense of Rand's ethics.¹ This essay is a rejoinder to these criticisms. It consists of two parts: (I) a reply to O'Neil and (II) a reply to Osterfeld. In the case of the latter, we will confine ourselves to commenting only on those statements which constitute criticisms of our position. We will not discuss Osterfeld's own views regarding the foundation of ethics.

I

Life and Time Differentiation

We are told by O'Neil that "great problems arise for [our] analysis"² of life as the ultimate value because we ignore the fact that life is "time-differentiated"—that is, that life proceeds through a series of moments from beginning to end. If we make our first conscious volitional choice at time t , we must already be alive at t . We cannot make meaningful choices (valuing) about any point prior to t , because the past is outside our control. Any acts of valuing must therefore be about the future, i.e., $t+1$ or later. Since all choices are about the future, and since death will occur at some future time (say $t+x$), then we must show "why that loss of life at time $t+x$ is to be preferred (automatically) to loss of life at $t+(x-1)$."³ Presumably there is no point between t and $t+x$ which is a necessarily less preferable point for choosing death. Thus life is not *necessarily* the ultimate value for the points between t and $t+x$, since we cannot show why $t+x$ must be preferred to any prior point in time.

It is important to realize that O'Neil phrases his argument as if we had maintained that mere survival or elongation of life were the ultimate value. This misunderstanding is inexcusable, since we have been more than careful in arguing that life as the ultimate value does not mean mere biological survival. Fortunately for us, however, O'Neil's argument fails even without this misunderstanding.

A major portion of O'Neil's argument is based on the fallacious assumption that a choice at t is necessarily about the future. In fact, on the contrary, the correct way to describe any choice we make is that it involves bringing the present into the future. What and where we are at *present* is as important to an accurate description of choice-making as is the future. Thus, it is incorrect to say all choices are about the future. Moreover, since the present is to some extent a function of the past, our past is a necessary component of our choices as well. O'Neil is, of course, correct to note that we cannot choose about our past; but it does not follow from this that all our choices are therefore about the future. David Norton in his *Personal Destinies* more adequately describes valuing and choice-making than does O'Neil.⁴ Rather than viewing life as a linear succession of discrete moments, Norton points out that our present is the repository of our past and future. All three are equally necessary in understanding human choice and valuation. Indeed, it could be said that under Norton's scheme of things the eudaemonic individual lives a time-integrated life, whereas the dysdaemonic individual lives a time-differentiated life as envisioned by O'Neil.

A similar point can be made in the language of economics. Any choice I make now has its associated opportunity costs. These are not costs one is necessarily bearing in the future, but are rather my *present* costs. In fact, there may be more "present" than "future" in my choices, since what I am now doing reflects the present value to me of any future returns. All these points suggest that even the pursuit of suicide involves carrying one's present into the future. If the choice of suicide was just about the future, then we could value suicide without valuing the means to achieve it. In other words, if we could value only the future there would be nothing to link our present to the act of suicide itself. Suicide would then cease to be a value and instead become a wish.

We would furthermore object to the assertion that death can be "achieved."⁵ It is clear what it means to achieve certain positive existential states such as pulling triggers, plunging knives, popping pills, etc. It is not at all clear what it means to "achieve" a negative such as death. To achieve means to achieve something. Since death is not something, it cannot be achieved. Two side comments need to be made here. First, this argument holds even if we posit the possibility of an immortal soul. Believers too use the concept of death as a negative. That is why death is always contrasted to eternal life. Secondly, O'Neil asserts that life cannot be achieved (we just have it). This assertion is one of the more blatant expressions of O'Neil's failure to see that we speak of life as more than mere physical survival. By rejecting O'Neil's interpretation of life as mere physical survival, we see that his claim that life cannot be achieved is thereby rendered false and irrelevant.

The concluding pillar of O'Neil's argument is that Rand's theory cannot explain why dying at $t+x$ (the point of natural or unchosen death) is preferable to dying at $t+(x-1)$ or $t+(x-n)$. The answer to this question is quite simple. Since $t+x$ is not something over which we have control, it cannot be an object of value for the same reasons that O'Neil said t could not be of value (we have no choice about it). With this in mind, O'Neil is partially correct. There is no reason that

$t+x$ can be preferred over $t+(x-n)$, since $t+x$ cannot be preferred at all. Preferences are only possible prior to $t+x$. Thus one must prefer having preferences prior to $t+x$, and it is only life that makes those preferences possible. Even the despondent person contemplating suicide must prefer the fact that he can prefer to die now rather than wait for $t+x$ as, say, an animal must do. Again, $t+x$ is not a positive. Thus those who prefer to elongate their lives are not saying that they prefer death at $t+x$ to that at $t+(x-n)$, but rather that they prefer that alternative which keeps them alive so long as they have an alternative to prefer. This is quite different from saying that one prefers the positive state that occurs at $t+x$ to any prior condition. O'Neil, in short, is a victim of reifying a negative into something positive and then constructing a pseudo-problem from that mistake.

The Is-Ought Problem

If we have not totally misunderstood O'Neil, the central point of his criticism is that we have failed to understand the nature of the is-ought dichotomy. According to O'Neil, the is-ought dichotomy is not a result of there being some unbridgeable gulf between facts and values. (He notes MacIntyre's revisionist claim that even Hume did not seek such a separation.) Rather, the is-ought dichotomy results from a difficulty intrinsic to the discipline of ethics—namely, how one justifies a prescriptive premise. O'Neil states, "one must either assume an infinite regression of prescriptions, or one must assume a most basic prescription (or set of prescriptions)."⁶ If one adopts the first disjunct, then justification of ethical claims is impossible; and if one adopts the second disjunct, then another difficulty arises: "Either this maxim can be disobeyed or it cannot. If it cannot be disobeyed, then the term 'ought' seems inappropriate, for we use that word in connection with free choices only If, on the other hand, there is a choice either to obey or to disobey this most basic moral maxim, then there is a demand automatically set up for either a more basic moral maxim still, or for a reason why one would benefit from obedience to the maxim."⁷ Yet, if there is an appeal to still another maxim, then one is no longer dealing with *the basic* moral maxim, and one once again faces an infinite regress of prescriptions.

Moreover, if the "supplying benefit" alternative is accepted—viz., if the reason why one should live according to the requirements of one's nature is that one will achieve fulfillment and well-being—then this makes the basic moral maxim conditional. One is obliged to follow this basic moral maxim *only if* one wants to be fulfilled; otherwise, there is nothing obligatory about it. Obedience to the basic moral maxim is dependent, in O'Neil's words, upon "the individual, subjective human will."⁸ A person can choose not to act for (desire) fulfillment or well-being; a person can "defy an ultimate value" and is thus in no way bound by it. O'Neil concludes that there is an essential subjectivity to natural end ethics (Randian or otherwise) and no way for this approach to ethics to solve the is-ought difficulty—no way to answer the question: "Why should I?"

The first thing that needs to be said about O'Neil's argument is that it assumes human freedom to be a freedom with respect to what is the natural function or

end of a human being. Yet this is certainly not the case in the ethical tradition in which we operate. In the Aristotelian tradition the ends are given in the sense of being at least potentially present. This is just another way of saying that our human nature has an identity that is not itself open to choice. If we reverse the priority, as O'Neil seems to want, and make freedom primitive and all our ends derivative from that freedom, then our choices would determine our nature. But if our choices could radically determine our nature, then we could choose without first being a chooser, which is absurd.

It is, of course, possible to deny that human nature is teleological in the classical sense in which we take the term "teleological" (i.e., that human beings are constituted by a process of growth toward an end).⁹ But O'Neil does not take on this most important issue. He assumes that the is-ought problem can be discussed in its own right—that is, in abstraction from how best to characterize human nature. Indeed, his discussion of time differentiation seems to presuppose the validity of the Humean paradigm, viz., that human existence is nothing more than a linear succession of discrete moments having no necessary connection to each other. Given that conception of human nature, it is probably true that there is an is-ought problem; but under our conception the problem is less threatening.

In any case, there is an ambiguity in O'Neil's claim that people can act contrary to their natural end. A person can, of course, choose not to act in accord with those principles that tend to promote fulfillment and well-being. But this does not show that one has no natural end. To say that one can ignore or act contrary to an end says nothing about whether that end still remains an end—unless, that is, one is Spinoza, who denies that people act for ends at all. But then Spinoza was consistent enough to deny that people make free choices as well. Thus it is unclear whether O'Neil means to say that we have no ends or whether if we have them it would be possible to choose contrary to them.

Still, the basic matter of contention here is whether in valuing any Y one must also value the ultimate value of man's life. This issue again has to do with human nature and the is-ought problem. O'Neil finds an ineluctable natural end to be morally valueless, for it is pointless to say one should live in accordance with one's nature if it is impossible to do otherwise. Yet, this objection fails to distinguish between what is potential and what is actual. The natural end for man is ineluctable in the sense that there is an inherent potentiality for a certain end, and nothing else. Although human nature cannot be something other than what it is, it does not follow from this that our potentialities will necessarily be actualized. The actualization of this potential is a highly contingent matter, subject to circumstances and human choice. However, the contingency of actualizing our potential does not compromise the necessary applicability of our natural end as a standard for evaluating our choices. Of course, "necessity" here is used differently from the way O'Neil must conceive of it. For O'Neil "necessity" means something like "cannot fail to be." Since there is no teleology in O'Neil's conception of man, any event which does not conform to what is said to be "necessary" automatically destroys the necessity of a standard, rule, or normative law. In our conception,

on the other hand, "necessity" means something like "always applicable" or "ever present." Since we are teleological creatures, the mode by which an end is achieved is distinct from the end itself, so that misdirection in the former does not invalidate the latter as either a standard or as a value. It is characteristic of thinkers like Hume, Spinoza, *et al.*, of the modern era to deny latent potentialities or developmental potentialities of classical teleology. O'Neil has not shown this modern prejudice to be correct and the classical conception mistaken; he has merely *presupposed* the validity of the modern view and constructed his criticisms accordingly.

The second thing that needs to be said about O'Neil's argument is that he is much too casual about the fact-value issue. He regards the is-ought problem as primarily ethical in character and not at all metaphysical. This is, however, a mistake as we have already indicated above. When it comes to justifying a basic moral maxim, the very thing that allows a natural end ethicist to avoid the dilemma O'Neil presents is the contention that certain facts of nature are inherently value laden. Thus, what justifies one's following an ultimate prescriptive premise is that, as a result of one's nature, one is concerned with the benefits that living in accord with it tends to bring—namely, fulfillment and well-being. This is not something dependent on the "individual subjective will." For example, people who choose (value) being a "metaphysical misfit" are able to value such a state *only* because that state (qua value and qua object of choice) is made possible by their natural end (e.g., that fulfillment requires chosen courses of action). One's humanity is what makes one's choice to be a "misfit" possible. In effect, the "misfit" is saying, "I'm glad I'm the kind of being who can choose to be a misfit and not the kind of being to whom choices are not available." Our human life *is* a phenomenon that makes possible and inherently requires the pursuit of values. In general, then, the metaphysical claim that there can be value laden facts is given insufficient attention by O'Neil, and this lack of attention affects his interpretation of both Rand's and our arguments. Again, O'Neil presupposes the validity of a paradigm we are calling into question.

Necessity, Possibility, and Contradiction

Although O'Neil pays insufficient attention to Rand's claim that life makes value possible and is the sort of phenomenon that is inherently value laden, he does make some metaphysical judgments on this issue. For example, O'Neil claims that the view that life must be maintained directly contradicts the claim that life can cease to exist. Yet, this "must" refers to the fact that living things, by their very nature, have to act to sustain and maintain their lives. Such an assertion does not imply that these acts necessarily succeed; so there is no conflict.

O'Neil asks us to imagine an immortal man experiencing all sorts of pleasures and pains, and he claims that this picture provides a counter-example¹⁰ to the claim that values exist only because living things do. However, our ability to visualize a state of affairs is not an argument for its possibility.¹¹ Can O'Neil provide a coherent conception of this putative state of affairs? What function do pleasure and pain serve for this immortal man? Just why would he differentiate between

pleasure and pain? What would be the point of this creature seeking pleasure and avoiding pain? O'Neil, perhaps, would insist that the difference between pleasure and pain is a given, but what are we to make of an alleged pleasure-pain mechanism that is unrelated to the maintenance of life? Everything we know about pleasure and pain indicates that they exist for the maintenance of life. Beyond O'Neil's powers of imagination, what evidence does he have that suggests that it might be otherwise? We should note in this connection that the procedure of *inspectio mentis* is not an appropriate way to determine what is or is not possible for some feature of nature. Furthermore, the notion of natural necessity is not captured by the view that one "unpacks" a definition.¹² O'Neil's argument seems to betray an acceptance of a "Humean" or "logical empiricist" view of concepts and necessity. Needless to say, this is neither a view that a natural end ethicist must accept nor one that represents the predominant position regarding such matters.¹³

There remains only one other matter pertaining to necessity, possibility, and contradiction to be considered. Regarding the claim that it makes no sense to value Y without valuing that which makes the valuing of Y possible, O'Neil asks why the word "illogical" instead of the words "makes no sense" was not used. He speculates that this choice of words indicates a reluctance to call such an activity contradictory and claims to know the reason for the alleged reluctance—namely, if an activity were truly illogical, that is, something which involved a contradiction, then such a course of action would not be followed, and there would be no reason to discuss an activity that could not exist. O'Neil asks: "If such valuation were truly illogical, how indeed could it be made?"¹⁴ This is, however, not a perplexing question. People can and do follow courses of action that involve contradictions, "make no sense." The crucial point, of course, is that they do not realize it. O'Neil forgets that contradictions are impossible if and only if two conditions are met—namely, sameness of time and respect. A person can at one time explicitly hold a particular belief, and then later, having never revoked that belief but now not consciously considering it, explicitly hold its contradictory. Alternatively, a person can at a given time have two beliefs which, although not explicitly contradictory, have contradictory implications which the person has not yet recognized or discovered. In these ways a person may be said to hold contradictory beliefs and could act in accordance with them. Thus, it is simply false to suppose that people cannot and do not act according to contradictory beliefs and plans. They will, of course, ultimately not succeed, and this is indeed why there is a point to showing people why their course of action involves a contradiction. There is, then, no reluctance on our part to say that there is something illogical or contradictory about valuing Y without also valuing that which makes the valuing of Y possible, and O'Neil has failed to show that there is any difficulty in saying this either.

Rationality and Choice

O'Neil claims that "an immense problem for the Randian philosophy"¹⁵ arises from Rand's claim that rationality is a matter of choice. O'Neil argues that either the choice to be rational is itself rational or it is not. If the choice is nonrational

then that choice is "unfree." It is not at all clear why O'Neil concludes that a nonrational (or pre-rational) choice to maintain or abandon rationality must be considered an "unfree choice." Perhaps he believes that Rand holds that only things which qualify as free choices are rational choices. It is hard for us to believe that O'Neil would attribute such a thesis to Rand, especially in light of the fact that he talks of Rand's acceptance of the idea of freely chosen evil shortly after he makes the foregoing assertion. Perhaps O'Neil believes that, since the choice is not a conscious one, it must be unfree—that it must be unfree because the will to be either rational or irrational would stem from some hidden urge within us. But it would seem that just the opposite could equally make sense here. Since O'Neil is willing to call the primary choice of being rational or not a "choice," that choice would not be unfree but rather radically free in a sense similar to Descartes' claim that freedom of the will is more fundamental than reason or doubt. It is not likely that Rand would hold this latter, alternative position either; but it does not matter. All that is necessary to refute O'Neil is to show that what is "prior" to the choice to be rational need not be "unfree" as he claims.

In any case, O'Neil is not particularly concerned with the freedom or lack thereof in the primal choice. Instead he immediately mentions a possible Randian reply and responds to it. Rand's response, O'Neil supposes, could be that the choice of rationality is what constitutes a rational choice and the choice of irrationality is what constitutes an irrational choice. This solution is said to pose a "double difficulty." In the first place, "it is unclear how the selection of one of two alternatives can possibly alter the nature of the prior choice that produced the selection."¹⁶ We must confess that we find this statement of the problem opaque. It seemed to us that the choice of rationality constituted a rational choice. Thus the choice of one alternative over another would not "alter" the "prior choice" but rather give that choice significance (with respect to some standard). Perhaps we have misunderstood the criticism, but even if we have, O'Neil does not seem particularly anxious to press the point.

It is the second part of the "double difficulty" that appears to interest O'Neil. Here we are told that "the elimination of the possibility of a rationally chosen commitment to irrationality means that there can be no such thing as freely chosen evil."¹⁷ Now much of this criticism leads into O'Neil's major point that Randian ethics can have no theory of moral obligation. Since we have treated this point elsewhere, we shall not repeat ourselves here. Another direction in which this criticism moves is the claim that Rand is like Kant in conceiving of all immoral acts as self-contradictory. We have also already said something about O'Neil's conception of logic and metaphysics in the preceding sections of this essay. Here it is enough to note that when Rand uses "contradiction" in an ethical context she means something like "is in opposition to those principles expressing the demands of our nature." She does not mean that the predicate term contradicts what is necessarily implied by the subject term in the analytic way that Kant uses "contradiction."

The chief defect in O'Neil's second criticism, however, is that it is either inco-

herent or a non sequitur. O'Neil is saying either that one can rationally commit oneself to irrationality (which is incoherent) or that a commitment to irrationality necessarily implies the absence of freely chosen evil (which is a non sequitur). It thus seems to us that the "immense problem" fades away upon analysis. This is not to say that there are no problems in accurately and unambiguously positing a thesis of "free will" and rationality. But whatever the problems may be with such a position, they are certainly not peculiar to Rand, nor are they any more troublesome here than with various philosophic alternatives.

II

The central criticism that Osterfeld advances regarding natural end ethics is simply that the natural end of man has not been shown to be something that ought to be pursued. Whether commenting on Aristotle and Aquinas or our own interpretation of Rand's ethics, Osterfeld believes there is an "inability to demonstrate the validity of . . . the value they hold as ultimate or the norm they hold most basic."¹⁸ Though there is much that could be said regarding Osterfeld's characterization of Aristotle's as well as Aquinas' ethics,¹⁹ we shall confine our comments to Osterfeld's criticism of the claim that the morally obligatory character of a normative first principle can be defended.

The major thing to be noted regarding Osterfeld's criticism of the position taken in "A Groundwork for Rights: Man's Natural End" is that he misinterprets the nature of the argument that is presented. He states that the argument attempts to show that "from a *strictly logical point of view*, first principles *can* be demonstrated."²⁰ This is false. In no sense was it claimed that the morally obligatory character of the statement that "one should act in accord with one's nature" was a conclusion from some other normative principle or set of principles. Moreover, it was the central point of that essay to show that there was an instructive parallel between Aristotle's argument that the denier of the Principle of Non-Contradiction must accept this principle in order to deny it and Rand's argument that the person who asks why he should live in accord with the requirements of his nature must value such a way of life in order to value (*viz.*, desire, want) an answer to his question. A normative first principle, like a logical and metaphysical one, cannot be demonstrated, but it can be defended. The defense or argument on its behalf was called a "negative demonstration," and the essay went to great pains to explain the difference between such a way of arguing and a demonstration. A "negative demonstration" uses the statements and actions of the person who claims to deny or doubt a first principle. A "negative demonstration" attempts not to prove or demonstrate the truth of a first principle but rather to show how such a principle is already accepted by the person who claims to deny or doubt it. Osterfeld apparently did not grasp the difference between a defense and a demonstration. Nor does it seem that this difference was not made clear, for as Professor Fred Miller has noted regarding this very argument:

There is a close, instructive parallel between the Aristotelian and Randian arguments. Aristotle's argument proceeds "You cannot think or speak unless

the law of noncontradiction is true." . . . The argument for life as an ultimate value has a similar structure: "You cannot value unless it is true that one ought to promote life." Again, one cannot prove the principle *in vacuo* or persuade a vegetable or entity devoid of values of the principle. But the argument can be directed to an interlocutor who holds any value (in Rand's sense of value: that which one acts to gain or keep).²¹

Possibly Osterfeld interprets the argument presented in "A Groundwork for Rights" as an attempt to demonstrate or deduce the truth of a normative first principle because he holds that anything less than this amounts to showing that there is only a "factual" connection between the is and ought and not a "logical" one. In other words, if one appeals to the facts regarding human nature, there is no basis for saying that living in accordance with one's nature is *valuable* or *desirable*—that is, one can show what men do but not what they ought to do. But, why must one accept this Humean view of facts? A case for viewing human nature in a teleological fashion was clearly presented. We hasten to note that the argument used did not involve the crude non sequitur that living in accord with one's nature is the ultimate value because values can be attained only if one is alive to attain them. Rather, it was argued that the very nature and character of life was such that what it constituted was a value. That is to say, part of the world's furniture included things that were inherently value laden.

Osterfeld claims that no evidence was presented "to demonstrate that life is valuable." Though no deductive argument was presented, it was claimed 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."²² In Aristotelian terms this meant that the actualization of a living entity's nature was the good or that-for-the-sake-of-which something was done.²³ The basis for this biocentric theory of value was the irreducibility of the laws of biology to those of physics and chemistry. To the extent the laws in terms of which organic phenomena are explained *cannot* be reduced to laws which make no mention of the end or goal of the living process but only how the material constituents interact, then there is a case to made for teleology—that is, facts that inherently involve values. Though this view of teleology's foundation is by no means beyond dispute, Osterfeld in his essay never addresses this issue. Yet, the claim that values exist only because living things do is the crucial meta-ethical insight of Rand's ethics, and the very thing we have used in developing the notion of natural ends or functions. In this regard, Osterfeld is like O'Neil in that he fails to consider the metaphysical dimension of the is-ought controversy.

Osterfeld is also like O'Neil in that many of his objections to our position assume that mere survival or elongation of life was claimed as the ultimate end or value. This is not true. "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 thing is . . . [L]ife as the sort of thing a human being is—man's life qua man—becomes the ultimate moral value."²⁴ Furthermore, Osterfeld is like O'Neil

in that he assumes that if the obligatory character of a normative maxim is conditional on something, e.g., one's being a valuer, then it somehow loses its moral force. Yet bewitchment by the Kantian demand for categorical imperatives can be avoided, and this does not mean that morality need only be viewed as hypothetical. A human being is a valuer—even if one decides to forego valuing anything else, one must at least act for, value, the state of no longer valuing. To make morality dependent on what a human being *is* is not to make it any less obligatory, and, most importantly, it allows for an explanation for why morality is obligatory for man—namely, because man is by nature a being who is concerned with that which morality tends to promote, viz., self-actualization.

There is, of course, much more to be said in defense of natural end ethics. Nevertheless, the comments made here should suffice by way of meeting the objections advanced by both O'Neil and Osterfeld.

NOTES

1. Douglas J. Den Uyl and Douglas B. Rasmussen, "Nozick on the Randian Argument," *The Personalist* 59 (April 1978): 184–205; and Douglas B. Rasmussen, "A Groundwork for Rights: Man's Natural End," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 4 (Winter 1980): 65–76.
2. Patrick M. O'Neil, "Ayn Rand and the Is-Ought Problem," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 7 (Spring 1983): 91.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
4. David Norton, *Personal Destinies* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976).
5. O'Neil, "Ayn Rand and the Is-Ought Problem," p. 92.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
9. See Douglas B. Rasmussen, "Essentialism, Values, and Rights: The Objectivist Case for the Free Society," in Tibor R. Machan, ed., *The Libertarian Reader* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1982), pp. 37–52.
10. O'Neil claims that a counterfactual example was introduced by Rand herself, and so one should not be disturbed by his appeal to imaginary beings. Yet, it should be noted that Rand does not use the term "imagine" to mean merely the ability to picture, as O'Neil does, but rather as equivalent with "coherently conceive." In this regard, it is instructive to note that Rand does not claim to imagine an immortal, indestructible being which has values, but instead asks the reader to "try to imagine" (Ayn Rand, "Objectivist Ethics," *The Virtue of Selfishness* [New York: Signet Books, 1964], p. 16, emphasis added).
11. See Douglas B. Rasmussen, "The Open-Question Argument and the Issue of Conceivability," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 56 (1982): 162–72.
12. See Douglas B. Rasmussen, "Logical Possibility: An Aristotelian Essentialist Critique," *The Thomist* (October 1983), pp. 513–40.
13. See Panayot Butchvarov, *The Concept of Knowledge* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970), chap. 2, for a devastating critique of the claim that necessary truth can be accounted for by linguistic or purely formal considerations. For a defense of the claim that necessary truth can have ontological or factual import, see notes 11 and 12 *supra*, as well as Douglas B. Rasmussen, "Quine and Aristotelian Essentialism," *The New Scholasticism* (Summer 1984), pp. 316–35.
14. O'Neil, "Ayn Rand and the Is-Ought Problem," p. 96.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 88–89.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
18. David Osterfeld, "The Natural Rights Debate: A Comment on a Reply," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 7 (Spring 1983): 104.

19. See Douglas J. Den Uyl and Tibor R. Machan, "Recent Work on the Concept of Happiness," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 20 (April 1983): 115-33, for a discussion of the complexities and richness found in Aristotle's view of happiness. See John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Right* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), for a discussion of all that is involved in the moral injunction that one should do good and avoid evil.
20. Osterfeld, "The Natural Rights Debate," p. 110.
21. Fred Miller, "The Natural Right to Private Property," in Machan, *The Libertarian Reader*. Miller is specifically referring to the parallel that is presented in Rasmussen, "A Groundwork for Rights."
22. Rasmussen, "A Groundwork for Rights," p. 72.
23. See Henry B. Veatch, *For an Ontology of Morals* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971), chap. 6, for a discussion of how goodness, when understood as the actual as compared with the potential, constitutes what is desirable as well as what is desired.
24. Rasmussen, "A Groundwork for Rights," p. 73.