



The Freedom of Peaceful Action: On the Origin of Individual Rights

Stuart K. Hayashi

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The Freedom of Peaceful Action is the first installment of the trilogy *The Nature of Liberty*, which makes an ethical philosophic case for individual liberty and the free market against calls for greater government regulation and control. The trilogy makes a purely secular and nonreligious ethical case for the individual's rights to life, liberty, private property, and the pursuit of happiness as championed by the U.S. Founding Fathers. Inspired by such philosophic defenders of free enterprise as John Locke, Herbert Spencer, and Ayn Rand, *The Nature of Liberty* shows that such individual rights are not imaginary or simply assertions, but are institutions of great practical value, making prosperity and happiness possible to the degree that society recognizes them. The trilogy demonstrates the beneficence of the individual-rights approach by citing important findings in the emerging science of evolutionary psychology. Although the conclusions of evolutionary psychology have been long considered to be at odds with the philosophies of individual liberty and free markets, *The Nature of Liberty* presents a reconciliation that reveals their ultimate compatibility, as various important findings of evolutionary psychology, being logically applied, confirm much of what philosophic defenders of liberty have been saying for centuries. Moreover, proceeding from the viewpoint of Rand, this work argues that the structure of society most conducive to practical human well-being is commensurately the most moral and humane approach as well.

The trilogy's first installment, *The Freedom of Peaceful Action*, focuses on the secular, philosophic foundation for a society based on individual rights. Starting from a defense of the efficacy of observational reason against criticisms from Immanuel Kant and Karl Popper, it demonstrates how a philosophic position of individual liberty and free markets is the logical result of the consistent application of human reason to observing human nature. This installment demonstrates that any political system that wishes for its citizens to thrive must take human nature into account, and that an accounting of human nature reveals that a system of maximum liberty and property protection is the one most conducive to peace and human well-being.

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