

## THE REALIZATION OF VALUES

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## THE STATUS OF VALUES

In the matter of conduct the status of values is critical in human affairs. To be sure, according to the "Private-world rule", if a person accepts something as a value, regardless of its reality standing, the acceptance of the value determines the consequences. This position lets the sociologist off the hook, on studying behavior. Normative behavior then can be studied while the social scientist escapes the philosophical question. In the case of an individual, even the sociologist, considering his own conduct, however, the problem emerges full bloom.

Most intellectuals embrace something known as "humanistic values". Many find the philosophical posture known as "realism" to be sufficient, if not necessary, to account for the substance of their science and reject suggestions of idealism as mysterious, irrelevant and false. They still espouse humanistic values, either because they like them or because they can explain their having them by appealing to "cultural conditioning" or some other determinist accounting.

This approaches the crux of the problem. To have an intellectually satisfying philosophy on which a deterministic science rests, the question "what is the nature of the stuff behind that which is apparently real?" is followed to its most abstract form. Ultimate reality, the argument goes, is "matter", blind, dead stuff passively obedient to immutable laws.

Some of our ideas are "real" — as distinct from illusion. Their reality, consists of something physical — the electro-chemical firing of nerves in our cranium. These are the result of describable processes, including sense data contacting sense organs, transmitted, in turn, to the brain in a linear sequence. The sequence is real enough. The chemistry equally real, but outside of that there is no "idea". It is in the behavior of the brain, not a property of the world.

If "idea" is epiphenomenal, with no existential reality outside of the neurological structure which creates it, and if "values" are special cases of "idea", they, too, are epiphenomenal. If values have no existential reality, not even

enjoying the status of a scientific law, then all behaviors are equivalent and there is nothing particularly significant about being a human being. The sneeze, or other random act, is equivalent to a vicious murder or a parent sacrificing herself for her child. The child rubbing his sleeve over his nose equals the discovery of penicillin or the composition of a symphony.

The despair of the existentialist, for whom life has no meaning, is the problem of the humanist who embraces philosophical realism. "To be, or not to be, that is the question" — for suicide is equivalent to sacrifice or even doing all those nice, socially liberal things the humanist takes pride in: working for racial or sexual equality, for example. If ultimate reality is simply dead stuff, and ideas have no reality of their own, and all values are equal, then the preferences our humanist intellectuals have no more status than those of the Moral Majority or Ku Klux Klan. They differ only in power and access to the press.

The problem is located in the proposition that one must choose between a philosophy which holds, basically, that matter is real and ideas illusory or, conversely, that idea is real and the changing stuff is their physical embodiment. Let us reject the choice requirement and notice the properties which ultimate reality must have if it is to account for the totality of the universe including the knower as part of humanity.

## A PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION

The demonstrability of materialistic science is given. Ultimate reality must account for that. And change appears to be an integral part of that reality. If there were some common ultimate matter, by itself there is no reason for the incredible changes manifest in our universe, new elements out of the same stuff, new molecules, living matter in all of its complexity, human beings with their incredible competence for feeling and knowing, human organizations capable of the finest acts of charity and the cruelest form of degrading wars. The ultimate stuff by its nature must be active. It must also be knowable.

**IDERGY**

The property of our being able to know anything must be a property of the world, not merely those tiny elements assembled in our brains. As this ultimate stuff combines, it bears with it emergent properties not predictable from prior combinations. As units of this stuff interact with other units, interaction takes place. This active, knowable, force I call "idergy", a combination of "idea" and "energy". It is active, and intrinsically knowable. It is neither "idea" nor "energy". It is "idergy", something which is perceived as "energy" from one perspective and "idea" from another.

When combined units of this interact with something else as when iron and oxygen collide — they bring with them interactive knowledge. They know, how to produce rust. In this production, there is an exchange of idea/energy in the form of rust, which has its own physical structure and its own idea.

Let us understand that the ultimate bit of physical reality is not the atom of Neils Bohr. His atom was misnamed from the Greek Word designed to designate the ultimate bit of stuff; the atom of Greek Philosophy has not been found, let alone split. We can ignore, then, the nuclear physics of modern philosophy. But some important principles of ultimate matter can be recast to fit the concept of idergy.

1. Idergy can neither be created nor destroyed, but its form can be changed. An inspiration can lead to a new marketable product, a piece of art or a new building. Some ground may produce vegetables which, consumed as good, become part of the living tissue of the creative genius.

2. In the working out of action, some idergy is consumed. As active matter, this energy aspect is perceived as motion; as idea, it is perceived as logic. It takes some idergy for the completion of either: entropy is characteristic of reality. The combinations of idergy may be a galaxy; an automobile; a politician running for office; two people in love; a country at war; or a simple plant growing in the desert. Unless the system has a continuous supplying of idergy, it unwinds. Movement comes to a halt; bearings wear out; the gas-tank goes dry; and man gets hungry. Some organizations run out of enthusiasm or supporting ideas.

3. Once an action is under way, once a logic is begun towards its conclusion, the process

will continue unless prevented by entropy or by an outside force. This is as true of an individual caught in a web of circumstance moving inexorably to his doom as it is of a particle set in motion.

Whether one's metaphysics assumes idergy, dead matter, or idea as the ultimate reality, notice that time is not defined in terms of it. If, as I propose, idergy is intrinsically active as idea seeking its logical conclusion or as matter in some sense of motion, time is that which is required for the completion of its logic or its motion. Time is not made up of matter; and if the ultimate reality were not active, time would be meaningless.

Distance is simply an aspect of idergy in relation, and has no subjectively real properties. There are no 'distances' in an externally real sense. In physics, certain aspects of time and distance are packed into elementary ideas, as in 'speed of light'. Small wonder that mankind adjusts notions of physical time to notions of distance and the converse.

Notice, too, how with 'idergy', there can be "time within time". There may be cosmological time, which we use as a sort of standard. But each logic has its own time and, collectively, need not be correlated with astronomic time. There is the time, for example, which makes up human history; and within discernible historic periods, social process as 'becoming educated', 'adjusted in marriage' take differing bits of time according to the moment in history.

Physical distance is not the only legitimate kind of distance. Social distance, as in social status, or life-style preferences, is as real—however difficult to measure. But like physical distance, social distance is a function of relations, hence objectively real. There are no bits of social distance waiting to come between people.

Finally, we note that, as in other mental processes, the human may generalize and make abstract his experience of time and distance. He is capable of holding immediate bits of experience against a sense of whole and pattern. He may act concretely in the moment, but juxtapose that act against eternity. It is in the nature of reality that he can; it is in his nature that he does.

There is, then, an at-one-ment of the universe. If ultimate reality is at all like "idergy", perceivable as energy from some perspectives

and as idea from others, man and the stars are governed by the same rules and forces. Not only is change a required aspect of an active system, but its knowability is a constituent part. Our statements about it may be false. The world, and all of its units, simply exist. We must not equate "words" with "ideas"; words are merely the instrument by which we seek to exchange our understanding of the ideas manifest in a physically real and observable world.

Every discernable sub-part of that external reality is an information/energy exchange unit. It has its own logical integrity; as energy, it is in motion or motor activity and as idea it is working to its logical conclusion, which may be death. It exists as subject, and its subjective truth may never be known; its subjective truth is independent of statements made of it. Its objective status results from a relationship it has with some other information/exchange unit. The "unit" may be what we call "grass". It has a subjective truth; as object, it may be shelter to a lizard, food to a goat, or data to a scientist.

Objective truth depends upon statements made. Statements may or may not capture the subjective reality of the unit. Statements are intrinsically distortions, for the unit exists *now* in a logically complete and wholistic sense, but sentences are mere words connected in a linear sequence.

### A GENERAL METAPHOR

The properties of idergy are totally abstract and, by explaining everything, have limited utility in explaining any particular thing. Thus, simple motile life forms are prototypes of human problems and we can see the structure of the problem of values in the behavior of any instances of life. Mobile life is an easier model to follow, and so we will adopt it.

Any mobile living organism has a logic which, at the moment, is working to its completion. Thus the amoeba, in its marine ambience, participates in a local part of a larger world; of its locality, it distinguishes between parts and the whole. The animal undergoes three processes simultaneously: there is a substantive conclusion; it makes a judgment of it; and programs a response. Every encounter has bits of each of the three — a substantive aspect, an affective aspect, and a sociative relational aspect. The lion distinguishes between the zebra from its environment; judges it to be edible and

catchable; and proceeds to attack. The scientist distinguishes between the dish and the data, judges some data relevant, and records the information. It is in the nature of the world that it can be known, judged, and responded to by living forms.

### THE BICAMERAL BRAIN OF MAN

The classic view of the social sciences holds that man is a passive bundle of capabilities. Stimulated, the organism will respond. If the response leads to a reward, it is more likely to recur in the event of subsequent stimulation. At some point, learning takes place and the stimulus tends almost always to evoke the response. This is sometimes called the "reduction of error" theory of learning. It has been subject to an enormous amount of verification; and, we can regard it as being demonstrable.

This is the basic model the humanists alluded to earlier appeal to explain their own normative preferences. It is the model on which educational strategies are most frequently based: teaching methods are simply elaborate stimuli and the search is to get the right method to teach anything to anybody. Failures of the method are labelled either "over achievers" or "under achievers" placing the blame on the individual rather than on the system.

The model is insufficient. It assumes that whatever can be learned can be taught. Probably not true: people are forever learning lessons no one tries to teach. The inmate in a penitentiary may be taught how to make license-plates; but learns that the work ethic is a bummer. Learning is a far wider concept than being taught; for creative behavior and self-discovery can lead to learning for which one had no teacher.

The model also presumed a passive human being. But the brain is totally active until the moment of death. Indeed, most scientist today would rather define death in terms of the brain activity rather than the pumping action of the heart. The child reaches out; the astronomer deliberately looks through the telescope. At each moment of life, the human being has integrity and shares a restless activity with the same stuff that results in an evolving sequence of change.

The model is less than half-right. Part of the brain does function in a linear-sequencing stimulus-and-then-response manner: motor

skills and the whole host of behaviors we are trained to do. These predispositions to act, called attitudes, may well be stored in the dominant left hemisphere of the brain. But the other part of the brain has capability of a holistic response, of patterns, principles, and not mere sequenced words.

If a linear sequence is broken, the brain can routinely fill in the missing parts and our cognitive process may not notice the break. Thus we can converse in a noisy subway, cocktail party, or at work in a factory. If the pattern is broken, however, it can be replaced by a new pattern, by a creative leap. After the leap has been manifest, the linear sequencing may demonstrate how closure can be obtained. But the brain has both capabilities and our educational experience only lately is trying to embrace them both.

Neither the disciplined response to a pattern nor the general metaphor described earlier can be understood if the brain were not in continuous communication within itself. The two hemispheres are in constant contact; judgments are always made to determine whether a substantive, affective, or relational fit occurs.

Moreover, the holistic pattern capability permits the brain to act in truly marvelous way, not imagineable from a mere sequencing of linear bits. It is the property of abstraction. The active aspect of the pattern-holding hemisphere appears to drive man to make and store increasing abstract formulations of each of his three innate processes. In the natural capacity one abstracts substantive reality to arrive at concepts of the real, whether it be "idergy", or a more traditional matter or idea as reality. Similarly, in regard to affective judgment, the mind not only has the capability of abstracting normative judgments, it is driven to do so in the same way one yearns for scientific understanding.

And as it is in the nature of the world that it be known, it is in the nature of the world that judgments fit and relate themselves to one's courses of action. One has the capability of responding to that world; and is capable of making statements about his experience. Some of these statements make assertions as to what the world is in fact like. And some of them assert what the world ought to be like. To former are empirical statements; the latter are normative. It is not so much that they are themselves

value-judgments as it is that they are premised on values.

### KINDS OF OUGHT-TO STATEMENTS MEMORY-BASED

Man can learn. He has a memory of the past, and can seek the fulfillment of the memory in some part of the future. He may have grown up in a small town and remembers a store at a particular street corner. When he returns, he can imagine seeing the store he remembers. If it is not there, he feels "there *ought to be* a store there". Note the functioning of the scanning operator and the simultaneous recollection and projection from past to future.

### THEORY-BASED

Man can learn. He develops substantive theories to account for observations. This is basic to testing all hypotheses, if the theory is true then he *ought* observe some specific thing. The chi-square test normally run in elementary statistics courses compares a theoretically derived "ought to frequency" with an empirically based set.

### INTENTION-BASED

Man not only encounters and judges the world, he programs courses of action. This relates to his ability to imagine the future, of course; but in respect to action, he can note: "if I am going to test these hypotheses, I will need support money; and for that I *ought to get* a grant": To obtain a goal, intermediary steps must be taken; instruments must be secured if ends are to be achieved. The intention is given; the means are the problem.

### TRANSCENDENT CONSIDERATIONS

Man not only encounters and judges the world, he encounters and judges himself. At some point he notes, "if I am to be that kind of human being, then I *ought to . . .*" Guilt tells us that these determinations are sometimes after the fact; one did the wrong thing and the pangs of guilt teach us the oughts we had not articulated.

### AN IDEA ABOUT VALUES

Man is an active creature, capable of learning, judging and developing abstraction of both. In his programs for action, he develops attitudes, pre-dispositions to act. These may

be learned as skills. They may be the various roles we play. They may be such basic behaviors as the ability to cry, to laugh, to think, to write. They may be programs as in a "flight or fight" response. They may be habits, traditions, customs or other routines of behavior. Most of what we do are simply the completion of attitudes, triggered in culturally defined situations.

In our language system, we basically identify nouns as names of things and verbs, the things that the things do. In my lexicon, however, names appear as attitudes. We name things as a consequence of our relation to them; we give them objective status and name and describe them as they relate to us — not as things in themselves with subjective status. Thus "chair" is an indication of "sitting" and "police" suggests a way of behaving depending on who you think you are.

Sometimes, we have a vague feeling of judgment which we cannot properly articulate. Note this property of the bi-cameral brain: the left hemisphere may not be able to perform neatly with the understandings of the other. We may have an experience without words properly to express it. We may, similarly, have a judgment we cannot assert: and have a sentiment about something, affective in character, but not precisely stated.

Sometimes, the affective aspect hangs on our behavior, and sets a style — a mood, persisting into situations where others find it ill-fitting and strange. Again, we may be unable to articulate the feeling or account for it — another instance of a pervasive pattern instead of a unit more subject to linear and disciplined control. Sentiments relate to attitudes as they tend to suggest an affective direction in behavior; moods relate as they suggest pervasive styles of response, styles that encompass a variety of situations experienced in direct sequence.

The actor sometimes considers more than one course of action. He has two or more somewhat aroused attitudes, two or more things that he can do and is considering. He must choose some program for action; he cannot do both. His "determined past" has brought him to face alternatives. A value is the premise which enables a choice to be made; to some extent it is the price he would rather pay to one thing than the other. In some circumstances

the options may be among "least harm" rather than "greatest gain".

In our glance at differing kinds of "ought to" statements, we noted an instrumental "ought to": to achieve some stated goal. If there are alternative means to a *given* end, the choice rests on *instrumental values*. If differing goals are considered, that choice rests on *transcendental values*, as the choice transcends the instrumental one. Options valued in their own right rest on intrinsic values.

Behavioral situations "bleed into one another". The goal of one situation is a means in a more broadly defined one. Getting a grant is the means to get funds needed for research. The research activity is a means to secure scholarly publication. The scholarly publication is a means to make a claim on tenure or public recognition. In this concatenation of means-ends none of which may involve value choice but be merely the fulfillment of attitudes, the possibility exists for a more and more abstract transcendental value which, gives meaning and direction to life.

Seldom does one face a simple choice of Alternative A is "good" and Alternative B is "bad": but that is hardly a difficult choice unless the "bad" option has some attractiveness. Typical choice is in facing situations in which each of the alternatives is to some degree good or to some degree bad; or each option has some good elements and some bad elements. In either case, the problem is facing the construction of a hierarchy of values. Unless 'values' have some possibility of being 'real', it is a fool's game.

## THE REALIZATION OF VALUES

Man is a creature with an integrity of being, regardless of how he is altered by learning experiences. As a complicated instance of information/energy exchange systems, there is a logic of his integrity, a logic seeking fulfillment. Subject to entropy, in both the physical and ideational senses, this logic works inexorably toward fruition, unless upset by external forces.

The logical fulfillment of one's integrity cannot be assured unless certain conditions are met. Specifically, one must avoid those which deny one's fulfillment or alters destructively that basic integrity. Injured integrity may be re-deemed, but only if appropriate choices are

made. In any case, the potential for making normative decisions subjectively exists. Faced with alternatives, some of which are destructive, realizable values exist which can provide the premises for appropriate choice.

Behavior takes time. The time requisite for the completion of one's implied goals takes place in the context of historic time. External conditions are subject to change. One can not rely simply on the fulfillment of attitudes. One must encounter, judge, and relate to the world in a meaningful way, with goals which transcend the immediate moment of action.

As one can generalize existential reality to an ultimate idergy, and time to eternity, one can generalize self to be subsumed under 'humanity'. One can generalize principles of transcendent choice to ultimate purposes which become intrinsically valued precisely because they give ultimate meaning to experience. The quest for consummation of the restless feeling of self-dom, the denial of which is despair and alienation, is the task of everyone. Ultimate values must have the property of being realized, or it is an empty game.

Man experiences a reality which has a subjective truth totally independent of the statements that are made. Man may 'know' that reality without being able to express it. Similarly, man may well hold values and act in terms of them without being able to articulate them. Unless ultimate values become mixed only with sentiments, which have the property of unarticulated affective judgments, the human being must accept the task of expressing in words and through deeds those values which give meaning and direction. The proof of the two are vastly different. Statements of fact sometimes lend themselves to the discipline of linear and sequenced experience, as in an experiment. Man, in his own subjective experience is the sole judge to ultimate meaning. Pangs of guilt may be the price of error in this regard, but it is the individual's integrity which is at stake.

The pursuit of values requires moments of self-awareness in the face of alternative courses of action. It is not a mere intellectual exercise, worried through in a social or behavioral vacuum. Rather, it is in the facing of an active life where options carry enormous consequences that the quest for values is tested. What is the price one is willing to pay for

some ultimate good? One's fortune? One's honor? One's life?

Life. Not merely in the sense of dramatic martyrdom, though that is not excluded, but in the totality of all the time one has left on earth. In committing one's life, one's fortunes and honor are inextricably woven, one may realize ultimate values. The converse in certainly true. Playing only for the moment with small stakes where one neither risks nor finds ultimate values leads one to recognize a life spent in vain. I may be wrong. Idergy may be my idle dream. But I would rather be wrong and cling to the view I have of humanity than be right with the dismal truth that all is for nothing.

PERLSTADT

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families or party factions. The fear that these would lead to a coup d' etat is mitigated by the continuity of leadership and the adherence to Constitutional procedures and mandates. Nevertheless, the political nightmare is uncomfortably close to reality.

Viewers of *I Claudius* were both fascinated and horrified as the television drama performed an almost ritualistic function of explaining the present through exploring an allegory based on the past. Those historical events could not be changed by the writers or producers any more than the audience could change its most recent political and social experiences. But knowing what could have been and realizing that a different path was taken by the more recent past makes it relevant for the contemporary audience.

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