Toward a General Theory of Action

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Values and Value-Orientations in the Theory of Action[1]

An Exploration in Definition and Classification

Human life is — and has to be — a moral life precisely because it is a social life, and in the case of the human species coöperation and other necessities of social life are not taken care of automatically by instincts as with the social insects. In common-sense terms, morals are socially agreed upon values relating to conduct. To this degree morals — and all group values — are the products of social interaction as embodied in culture. From this point of view the examination which follows largely proceeds. On the other hand, there is a sense in which "conscience" may be said to be the last residuum of instinctive behavior in man — other than the relatively few hu-

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man reflexes. At very least "conscience" certainly has a biological basis, though a broad and long-term one. Later in this essay the relations and distinctions between "values" and concepts such as "motivation," "drive," and "need," which have a strong biological reference, will be examined at some length. First we must make a detailed exploration of the concept "value." Since this will be oriented primarily by considerations of social science, it is probably inevitable that aesthetic values are inadequately dealt with. It is felt, as indicated below, that in a very broad and general way the same principles apply to aesthetic and expressive values as to moral and cognitive values. However, a conceptual analysis on the aesthetic side as full as that which follows on the ethical must be a separate task.

Charles Elton, the ecologist, has observed that it is not much use to observe and describe animals until you can name them. Data and reasoning can bring about more confusion than enlightenment unless they are firmly attached to referents which, if not universally accepted, are at least thoroughly understood. Indeed some philosophers today even define science as "the techniques for giving words precise meanings." A concept is a word which has been given a precise meaning. The term *value* urgently requires an attempt at precise definition of the conceptual territory covered and not covered before it can serve effectively as an analytical element in the theory of action. Moreover, as the Cornell value-study group has observed:

> The concept "value" supplies a point of convergence for the various specialized social sciences, and is a key concept for the integration with studies in the humanities. Value is potentially a bridging concept which can link together many diverse specialized studies — from the experimental psychology of perception to the analysis of political ideologies, from budget studies in economics to aesthetic theory and philosophy of language, from literature to race riots . . .
>
> Sophisticated use of value-theory can help to correct the wide-spread static-descriptive bias of the social sciences. (The pervasive emphasis, for example, upon static-equilibrium theories in economics; upon "social structure" in sociology: upon static "need-reduction" theories of personality in psychology.)

In addition to the varied and shifting connotations of *value* in ordinary speech, the word is a technical term in philosophy, economics, the arts, and, increasingly, in sociology, psychology, and anthropology. There can hardly be said to be an established consensus in any one of these fields. L. M. Fraser has shown that in economics there are three main senses, each with subvariants.[2] In philosophy, there are numerous competing definitions.[3] One current of philosophical thought has distinguished the right (ethics) from

[2] *Economic Thought and Language* (London, 1937).

[3] The social scientist will find *Value Theory: A Coöperative Inquiry* (1949), edited by Ray Lepley, perhaps the most useful introduction to the current state of philosophical discussion.

the good (values). Charles Morris has recently defined the study of values as "the science of preferential behavior." Ralph Barton Perry's well-known definition is "any object of any interest." Reading the voluminous, and often vague and diffuse, literature on the subject in the various fields of learning, one finds values considered as attitudes, motivations, objects, measureable quantities, substantive areas of behavior, affect-laden customs or traditions, and relationships such as those between individuals, groups, objects, events. The only general agreement is that values somehow have to do with normative as opposed to existential propositions.

Normative and Existential Propositions

It is often said that all value judgments are selective and discriminative ways of responding. If this is accepted, there is nothing which cannot be — which has not been — "valued" by someone in some situation. The work of Adelbert Ames and Hadley Cantril, among others, has demonstrated the evaluative element in sheer perception. It is easy to magnify out of all proportion the distance from the indicative to the optative and imperative modes. Existential propositions often have nonempirical elements — for example, "There is a God." Charles Morris has shown that factual, wish, and appraisal sentences all have empirical, syntactical, and pragmatic or technic reference, but they differ in the degree to which various elements of reference are present.[4] There is a difference of emphasis, but the difference is seldom of an all-or-none character. A judgment that a person is destructive, greedy, jealous, envious is not too different from a physician's statement about a dysfunction of the heart or lungs. It can be argued that in both cases the underlying assumption is that of a lack of healthy fulfillment of naturally given potentialities.

In reaction against the prevalent intellectual folklore regarding the utter separateness of fact and value, some scholars have tried to merge the two categories. E. L. Thorndike, for example, in his 1935 presidential address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, said:

> Judgments of value are simply one sort of judgments of fact, distinguished from the rest by two characteristics: They concern consequences. These are consequences to the wants of sentient beings. Values, positive and negative, reside in the satisfaction or annoyance felt by animals, persons or deities. If the occurrence of X can have no influence on the satisfaction or discomfort of any one present or future, X has no value, is neither good nor bad, desirable nor undesirable. Values are functions of preferences. Judgments about values — statements that A is good, B is bad, C is right, D is useful — refer ultimately to satisfactions or annoyances in sentient creatures and depend

[4] *Signs, Language and Behavior* (1946). See also Charles L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (1944), esp. chap. iii, which shows "how emotive and descriptive meanings are related, each modifying the other."

upon their preferences. Competent students judge the existence of things by observations of them: they judge the values of things by observations of their consequences.[5]

Reservations that are necessary concerning consequences as an operational test of values (at least as far as the more ultimate values are concerned) will be presented in the last section of this paper. With Thorndike's statement that the linkage between normative and existential propositions rests in the conception of the nature of things in relation to human interests we are in hearty agreement.

Ray Lepley, in a paper entitled "The Identity of Fact and Value," has argued that the separation of the two categories results solely from our conventional habits of thought:

> The belief that valuative statements as expressive of means-end relations are inherently different from scientific propositions as denoting cause-effect relations has apparently risen, as has the view that valuative sentences are less verifiable than factual statements, from failure to see that the whole gamut of events and relations can be referred to by both forms of statement, and this failure has perhaps in turn risen from failure to escape wholly from what Dewey has deplored as the subjectivistic psychology. The habit of looking at personal and social events and relations from the inner, subjective viewpoint and referring to them in more valuative terms and of surveying non-human organic and especially inorganic events and relations and the outer, objective viewpoint and denoting them in more factual terms has given rise to the notions that means-end and cause-effect relations are inherently different, and that therefore factual and valuative propositions are inherently different because they respectively denote these two supposedly distinct kinds of relations.[6]

This much is certainly true: "The whole gamut of events and relations can be referred to by both forms of statement." Here is the source of much of our confusion. One can and does think both about values and about existence. And the two modes are often linked in the same proposition. "This is a value for me" is an existential proposition about me. When the scientist says, "This is valid," he is making an evaluation in terms of an existential standard, but he is not affectively neutral toward his utterance, for it is made partly in terms of his highest values: truth, validity, correctness.

There can be no doubt that an individual's or a group's conceptions of what is and of what ought to be are intimately connected. As McKeon says:

> In the context of cultural expressions, ideas and ideals are not opposed to facts or derived from interests but are themselves facts. In that factual context the preferable and the possible are determined by what men want or think they want and by the social order which they plan or dream as means to attain it, not by what can be shown to be better for them on some grounds of practical or scientific argument and on some analysis of fact and prac-

[5] *Science*, January 3, 1936.
[6] *Philosophy of Science*, X (1943), 124–131.

ticability, or by what they can secure or think they can secure by negotiation with those possessed of related and opposed interests.[7]

Northrop is probably right in maintaining that primitive [8] concepts of nature and primitive postulates about nature underlie any value system. Values go back to a conception of nature, "verified" by facts which are in some sense independent of culture. However, the primitive concepts and primitive postulates are not independent of culture. We live in a world where the same sets of phenomena are being accounted for by different postulates and concepts. Different cultures are tied to different conceptualizations.

It can, however, be said that in all cultures "normal" individuals recognize some natural limitations upon what can be. To take an almost absurd but clear example: In their conceptions of a desirable state of affairs people do not postulate conditions under which the law of gravity ceases to operate, the threats and irritations of climatic variations disappear completely, or food and drink appear spontaneously ready for consumption.

Values are constrained within the framework of what is taken as given by nature. If the nature of human nature is conceived as intrinsically evil, men are not enjoined to behave like gods; though if human nature is believed to be perfectible, they may be. In other words, existential propositions also supply the clues for major values. The Navaho think of the natural order as potentially harmonious. It is therefore a prime value of Navaho ceremonialism to maintain, promote, or restore this potential harmony.[9]

George Lundberg has done a service in calling attention to the interdependence between normative and existential propositions, but he has strained unduly to dissolve the distinction completely. He writes:

> The first step toward the recognition of the essential basic similarity of scientific and ethical statements will have been taken when we recognize that all "should" or "ought" statements, as well as scientific statements, represent *an expectation* which is, in effect, a prediction. This is true of such varied forms as "if the gasoline line and the ignition are both in order (etc.), then the engine ought to start"; or "he [under stated or implied circumstances] ought to be ashamed," (i.e., "if he were a 'decent,' 'civilized,' socially sensitive person, then he ought to be ashamed"). Sometimes the actual expectation may be very low and, in fact, may represent merely the individual's wishful thinking, that is, expectation according to the standards of an ideal or dream world; e.g., "People should not (ought not) gossip"; "We should love our enemies." (Incidentally, the latter statement involves a semantic confusion of its own in that, by definition, an enemy is someone not loved, i.e., if we loved our enemies we would no longer regard them as enemies.) *Expected behavior* of some kind (under whatever circumstances are assumed),

[7] Conflicts of Values in a Community of Cultures", *Journal of Philosophy*, XLVII (1950), 202.

[8] In, of course, the meaning of modern logic.

[9] See Clyde Kluckhohn, "The Philosophy of the Navaho Indians," in *Ideological Differences and World Order*, edited by F. S. C. Northrop (1949).

is implicit in all "ought" statements. Mankind often disappoints us; our predictions in this area are not, as yet, as accurate as those of the meteorologist. But this is merely saying that (a) the probability of the sequence "if . . . then" varies; that (b) the stipulated conditions or desiderata vary; and that (c) both may be misgauged in physical as well as in social affairs. Thus, all "ought" statements are essentially of the "if . . . then" type characteristic also of all scientific statements.

Why, then, do we have the deep-seated feeling regarding the difference between scientific and ethical statements? One, and perhaps the principal, reason is that certain implicit unspoken premises in ethical statements are usually overlooked, whereas in scientific statements these premises are always recognized. This fact, in turn, is related to a subtle and unrecognized assumption that, while scientific statements describe events of nature, ethical statements describe only personalistic judgments, wishes, or whims, whether of men or of gods. These latter are assumed not to be amenable to the methods found effective in predicting "natural" phenomena. Actually, as I have pointed out elsewhere, (*Can Science Save Us?* pp. 26–33, 97–103), the word "Values" refers to *valuating behavior* of some sort and as such can be studied scientifically like any other behavior. Most of our statistics on prices, salaries, occupations, migrations, consumption and, for that matter, all so-called "voluntary" or "choice" behavior whatsoever are studies of human "Values."

Consider, from this point of view, the following illustrations: (1) "If [specifying all the necessary and sufficient conditions], then we shall (with stated degree of probability) avoid another war." How does it differ from this statement: (2) "We ought to avoid another war"? Implicit in the "ought" form of this statement is the unspoken premise "*if we want to avoid all the undesirable consequences entailed in another war*, then we should (ought to) prevent another war." This proposition depends for its validity on (a) the accuracy of the estimated probability that another war would, in fact, entail the expected undesirable consequences, and (b) the reliability of the prediction that certain conditions prevent or produce war (the "if" clause of statement I) — both of them questions that can be approached by the same scientific methods as the first proposition. The reader is invited — and challenged — to produce a single "ought" statement which cannot be more fully expressed in the "if . . . then" form. At least one premise usually will be found unspoken, implicit, and taken for granted. That premise *implies a desideratum* which, it is assumed by the speaker of an "ought" statement, is a necessary and sufficient condition for the occurrence (or non-occurrence) of what it is asserted "ought" to happen.[10]

What Lundberg apparently fails to see is the somewhat arbitrary process of selection involved in his "unspoken" premises relating to the desirable. Values, as has been pointed out, are limited by nature and depart in some sense from nature, but are only to a limited extent given by nature. Existential propositions purport to describe nature and the necessary interconnections of natural prenomena. Values say, in effect: "This appears to be naturally possible. It does not exist or does not fully exist, but we want to move toward

[10] "Semantics and the Value Problem," *Social Forces*, XXVII (1948), 114–116. Cf. Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, edited by Shils and Finch (1949), esp. pp. 50–55.

it, or, it already exists but we want to preserve and maintain it. Moreover, we aver that this is a proper or appropriate or justified want." Lundberg also equivocates in his use of "expected" between what is anticipated as a result of the operation of natural processes and what is demanded or hoped for in terms of humanly created standards. Finally, it should be noted that existential statements often reflect prior value judgments. In scientific discourse, at least, our propositions relate to matters we consider important.

"Nature" is one frame of reference; "action" is another frame of reference. In the former, one need only ask, "Is this the case (fact)?" In the latter, one must ask both this question and, "Ought this to be the case (value) in the conceptions of the subject(s) of the enquiry?" The two frames of reference, as has been shown, are intimately related. Perhaps one further statement is in order:

> Because man inevitably builds up for himself an assumptive world in carrying out his purposive activities, the world he is related to, the world he sees, the world he is operating on, and the world that is operating on him is the result of a transactional process in which man himself plays an active role. Man carries out his activities in the midst of concrete events which themselves delimit the significances he must deal with.[11]

Existence and value are intimately related, interdependent, and yet — at least at the analytical level — conceptually distinct. It is a fact both of introspection and of observation that there are three fundamental types of experiencing: what is or is believed to be (existential); what I and/or others want (desire); what I and/or others ought to want (the desirable). Values are manifested in ideas, expressional symbols, and in the moral and aesthetic norms evident in behavioral regularities. Whether the cognitive or the cathectic factors have primacy in the manifestation of a value at a particular time, both are always present. Values synthesize cognitive and cathectic elements in orientations to an object world, most specifically a social object world — that it, a social relationship system. Values define the limits of permissible cost of an expressional gratification or an instrumental achievement by invoking the consequences of such action for other parts of the system and for the system as a whole.

Definition of Value for the Theory of Action

No definition can hope to incorporate or synthesize all aspects of each conception established in the various fields of learning and yet remain serviceable. Selection or construction of a definition for our purposes must depend upon convenience (considering, of course, the problems at hand) and

[11] H. Cantril, A. Ames, Jr., A. H. Hastorf, and W. H. Ittelson, "Psychology and Scientific Research: III. The Transactional View in Psychological Research," *Science*, November 18, 1949.

upon meeting the special requirements of basic social science. Convenience demands doing as little violence as possible to whatever established core of meaning may exist in familiar usages in ordinary language and scholarly terminology. It also requires simplicity so far as this is consistent with precision.

Value implies a code or a standard which has some persistence through time, or, more broadly put, which organizes a system of action. Value, conveniently and in accordance with received usage, places things, acts, ways of behaving, goals of action on the approval-disapproval continuum. Furthermore, following Dewey, "the desirable" is to be contrasted with "the desired." Cathexis and valuation, though concretely interdependent in some respects, are distinguished in the world of experience and must therefore be distinguished conceptually. In all cultures people have wants for themselves and for a group which they blame themselves for wanting — or which at very least they do not feel or consider to be justifiable. Such cases represent negative valuation, to be sure, but the point here is the nonidentity of the desired and the desirable. The existence of the value element transforms the desired into the not-desired or into the ambivalently desired.[12]

A value is a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action. A commentary on each term in this definition will be set forth below. It should be emphasized here, however, that affective ("desirable"), cognitive ("conception"), and conative ("selection") elements are all essential to this notion of *value*. This definition takes culture, group, and the individual's relation to culture and place in his group [13] as primary points of departure. Later a definition within the psychological frame of reference will be presented.

A *conception* identifies value as a logical construct comparable to culture or social structure.[14] That is, values are not directly observable any more

[12] Pragmatically speaking, values are also more or less stable ways of resolving ambivalence. That is, actors perhaps most often think about and refer to values when they are in doubt about alternative courses of conduct: when the long-run results of the possible selections of paths of behavior are not immediately obvious or scientifically demonstrable or when the pressures of personal motivation are strong on one side and social sanctions or practical expediency of some other kind strong on the other side.

[13] For example, a value is classified in a following section as "idiosyncratic" or "personal" only because the group is taken as the standard of reference and because values are taken as communicated and transmitted by symbolic means.

[14] In spite of the fact that *conception* is a noun this definition is thoroughly congruent with Lepley's "adjectival" position on *value*: "The underlying issue . . . is whether 'value' is a noun standing for something that is an entity in its own right or whether the word is adjectival, standing for a property or quality that belongs, under specifiable conditions, to a thing or person having existence independently of being valued. If the first view is adopted, then to say that a diamond, or a beloved person, or holding an official position, has or is a value, is to affirm that a connection somehow has been set up between two separate and unlike entities. If the second view is held, then it is held that a thing, in virtue of identifiable and describable events, has acquired a quality or property not

than culture is. Both values and culture are based upon what is said and done by individuals but represent inferences and abstractions from the immediate sense data. The statement, "people ought to help each other," is not a value in strict usage but rather one manifestation of a value. In its analytic meaning, the locus of value is neither in the organism nor in the immediately observable world; its locus is rather that of all scientific abstractions. Concretely, of course, any given value is in some sense "built into" the apperceptive mass or neural nets of the persons who hold that value — in the same way that a culture is "built into" its carriers. However, the social science abstraction "value" is not abstracted from neurological properties but from verbal and nonverbal behavioral events. These internalized symbolic systems do have a special status as regards methodology, requiring in part, at least at present, a *verstehen* rather than an *erklären* type of interpretation.

A value is not just a preference but is a preference which is felt and/or considered to be justified — "morally" or by reasoning or by aesthetic judgments, usually by two or all three of these. Even if a value remains implicit, behavior with reference to this *conception* indicates an undertone of the desirable — not just the desired. The desirable is what it is felt or thought proper to want. It is what an actor or group of actors desire — and *believe* they "ought" or "should" desire — for the individual or a plurality of individuals. This means that an element, though never an exclusive element, of the cognitive is always involved; and hence the word *conception* was deliberately included in the definition. The observer imputes to actor or actors ideas held in an implicit sense. Values are ideas formulating action commitments. These ideas are instigators of behavior "within" the individual but are not to be conceived as internal social "forces" in the classical sense of the word "force." Operationally, the observer notes certain kinds of patterned behavior. He cannot "explain" these regularities unless he subsumes certain aspects of the processes that determine concrete acts under the rubric "value."

The history of thought has always more or less clearly distinguished values from sentiments,[15] emotions, drives, and needs. To the extent that man is a species characterized by a propensity for rationalizing his acts verbally,

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previously belonging to it. As a thing previously hard becomes soft when affected by heat, so, on this view, something previously indifferent takes on the quality of value when it is actively cared for in a way that protects or contributes to its continued existence. Upon this view, a value-quality loses the quasi-mystical character often ascribed to it, and is capable of identification and description in terms of conditions of origin and consequence, as are other natural events" (*Value*, p. 8).

[15] It is true that William McDougall defined "sentiment" as a combination of an affective disposition with a cognitive disposition, the centering of a system of emotions about the idea of some object. His "sentiments" run the gamut of specificity all the way from the "concrete particular" (e.g., love for a certain painting) through the "concrete general" (e.g., love for paintings) to the "abstract" (e.g., love for beauty). His notion of the "sentiment" is similar at many points to ours of a "personal value" (see "Organization of the Affective Life," *Acta Psychologica*, XI [1937], 233–346).

the consistent connection between values and notions of approval and disapproval implies the potentiality for rational justification.[16] Values are eminently discussable, even though in the case of implicit values the discussion does not mention what the observer would call the value but rather centers on approval or disapproval of concrete acts, with the value left as the tacit premise that is the least common denominator of the reaction to these acts. Finally, something which is "desirable" (not something merely "desired") means an emancipation from immediate physiological stresses and from the press of a specific, ephemeral situation. Such generalization and abstraction is referable only to the realm of concepts. While there are, of course, more general and more specific values, *conception* also implies reference to a class of events which may encompass a variety of content and differ considerably in detail.[17]

The phrase *explicit or implicit* is necessary to our definition since it is an induction from experience that some of the deepest and most pervasive of personal and cultural values are only partially or occasionally verbalized and in some instances must be inferential constructs on the part of the observer to explain consistencies in behavior. An implicit value is, however, almost always potentially expressible in rational language by actor as well as by observer. On the other hand, the fact that everybody cannot readily verbalize such conceptions does not remove them from the realm of value. It may legitimately be asked, "Can a *conception* be *implicit?*" The answer is that "verbalizable" is not to be equated with "clearly and habitually verbalized." The actor's values are often inchoate, incompletely or inadequately verbalized by him. But implicit values remain "conceptions" in the sense that they are abstract and generalized notions which can be put into words by the observer and then agreed to or dissented to by the actor. Verbalizability is a necessary test of value.

This is perhaps a way of saying that such matters as instinctual behavior and needs are below the level of abstraction and hence not part — directly — of the realm of value. Values must be susceptible of abstraction by the observer and formulable by the observer in such terms that the subject can under-

[16] To say, following certain contemporary usage, "Eating spinach is a value for Smith," because Smith likes spinach or prefers spinach to broccoli is to confuse the desired with the desirable. This practice both negates one of the few constant differentia of value (that of approval-disapproval) and makes the category value so broad as to be useless. It is much more convenient to separate "value" and "preference," restricting "preference" to those selections which are neutral (i.e., do not require justification or reference to sanctions) from the point of view of the individual and/or the culture. Of course, if Smith justified his preference for spinach in rational or pseudo-rational terms of vitamins, mineral content, and the like, it then becomes by definition one of his values. If, however, he simply says "I just like spinach better than broccoli," it remains a mere preference.

[17] Cf. Perry's relational definition of values: "Value arises whenever interest is taken in something and does not inhere in an object as isolated entity."

stand and agree or disagree. The subjects on ordinary verbalization with respect to values will often be oblique or indirect, and implicit values will be manifested only in behavior and through verbalizations that do not directly state the pertinent values.

Values are clearly, for the most part, cultural products. Nevertheless, each group value is inevitably given a private interpretation and meaning by each individual, sometimes to the extent that the value becomes personally distinctive. Furthermore, the facts that values change and that new values are invented could not be accounted for, did we not posit idiosyncratic as well as group values. Moreover, as the Cornell value-study group has noted:

> *Some* values are directly involved in the individual's existence as a "self." Values which manifest this quality appear to be especially important in many ways; they are powerful in the world. These values are registered or apprehended as part of the "self," as a psychological entity or system, no matter how diverse the structure or content of specific systems may be. (The quality in question is further suggested by alternative phrasings; such values act as components of super-ego or ego-ideal; they are constitutive of the person's sense of identity; if violated, there is guilt, shame, ego-deflation, intropunitive reaction.)

The word *desirable* is crucial and requires careful clarification. It places the category in accord with the core of the traditional meaning of value in all fields, with the partial exception of the economic. Value statements are, by our tradition, normative statements as contrasted with the existential propositions to which they are closely related. In the ethical sphere the *desirable* includes both the *ius* (strictly legal or cultic prescriptions) and the *fas* (general moral commandments) of the Roman jurists. The desirable, however, is not restricted to what is commonly designated as the "moral." It includes the aesthetic and those elements of the cognitive which reflect appraisal. The cue words are "right" or "wrong," "better" or "worse." It can be argued that these words are crude scalar dimensions just as Lundberg suggests that *ought* can be considered an implicit conditionality. Nevertheless it remains a fact that in all languages such words have strongly affective and conative tinges. Even the arts not only record values but are always in some sense implicit criticisms of society. The cue words are certainly used whenever it is felt that there is an incomplete matching between an existent state of affairs and what is possible in nature. "Things would be a lot simpler if people acted the way they 'ought' to." Perhaps there is an underlying assumption of least effort as the goal and hence desirable. At any rate there can be no question at all that when one talks of values one gets somehow into the realm of cathection.

The individual, as Henry A. Murray says, can cathect anything from an object to a philosophical idea. Since value always involves affect, cathexis and value are inevitably somehow interrelated. Sometimes the relationship is

that the value is little more than a rationalization for a cathexis.[18] A probable example is the widespread conception among the working class that regular sexual intercourse is necessary for health — at least the health of the male. In other cases, cathexis in the strict sense and value in the strict sense pull against each other. Disvalued activities are cathected. People are strongly attracted to adulterous relationships. Conversely, a man goes to church on Sunday when (apart from the value element) he would strongly prefer to start his golf game early.

The reason that cathexis and value seldom coincide completely is that a cathexis is ordinarily a short-term and narrow response, whereas value implies a broader and long-term view. A cathexis is an impulse; a value or values restrain or canalize impulses in terms of wider and more perduring goals. A football player wants desperately to get drunk after his first big game, but this impulse conflicts with his values of personal achievement and loyalty to his teammates, coach, and university. In a society where livelihood depends upon the coöperation of members of the extended family, the group must attach strong sanctions to values which minimize friction among the relatives who live and work together.

More abstractly, we may say that the desired which is disvalued (i.e., cathected but not desirable) is that which is incompatible with the personality as a system or with the society or culture as systems. Values define the limits of permissible cost of impulse satisfaction in accord with the whole array of hierarchical enduring goals of the personality, the requirements of both personality and sociocultural system for order, the need for respecting the interests of others and of the group as a whole in social living. The focus of codes or standards is on the integration of a total action system, whether personal or sociocultural.

The influence of value upon selective behavior is, then, always related to the incompatibilities [19] and consequences, among which are those which follow upon rejection of other possible behaviors. In cultural systems the systemic element is coherence: the components of a cultural system must, up to a point, be either logically consistent or meaningfully congruous. Otherwise the culture carriers feel uncomfortably adrift in a capricious, chaotic world. In a personality system, behavior must be reasonably regular or predictable, or the individual will not get expectable and needed responses from

[18] For further consideration of cathexis, motivation, sentiment, and value see the last section below under "Psychology."

[19] It is perfectly true that both personalities and cultures can continue to function in the face of many internal incompatibilities. Integration is tendency rather than literal fact. We all live with more incompatibilities than our personality models would suggest were possible. Too many, however, are a threat to the preservation of the system as a system. Moreover, what appear superficially as incompatibilities are seen on closer examination to be functions of varying frames of reference. Compare the aged philosophical chestnut, "One can't step into the same river twice."

others because they will feel that they cannot "depend" on him. In other words, a social life and living in a social world both require standards "within" the individual and standards roughly agreed upon by individuals who live and work together. There can be no personal security and no stability of social organization unless random carelessness, irresponsibility, and purely impulsive behavior are restrained in terms of private and group codes. Inadequate behavior is selfish from the viewpoint of society and autistic from the viewpoint of personality. If one asks the question, "Why are there values?" the reply must be: "Because social life would be impossible without them; the functioning of the social system could not continue to achieve group goals; individuals could not get what they want and need from other individuals in personal and emotional terms, nor could they feel within themselves a requisite measure of order and unified purpose." Above all, values add an element of predictability to social life.

With many older people, as has often been remarked, the sharp contrast between wish and duty tends to become obliterated. Only in the exceptional personality, however, is the Confucian state reached in which "you want to do what you have to do and have to do what you want to do." Values and motivation are linked, but only rarely do they coincide completely. Values are only an element in motivation and in determining action; they invariably have implications for motivation because a standard is not a value unless internalized. Often, however, these implications are in the nature of interference with motivation conceived in immediate and purely personal terms. When there is commitment to a value — and there is no value without some commitment [20] — its actualization is in some sense and to some degree "wanted"; but it is wanted only to the extent that it is approved. Desirability and desiredness are both involved in the internal integration of the motivational system. But values canalize motivation. This is what has happened in the case of old people whose personalities are both well adjusted and internally harmonious.

The word *desirable,* then, brings out the fact that values, whether individual or cultural (and the line between these is elusive), always have an affective as well as a cognitive dimension. Values are never immediately altered by a mere logical demonstration of their invalidity. The combination of *conception* with *desirable* establishes the union of reason and feeling inherent in the word *value.* Both components must be included in any definition. If the rational element is omitted, we are left with something not very different from "attitude" or "sentiment." When the affective aspect is omitted, we have something resembling "ethics plus aesthetic and other taste canons." The elements of "wish" and "appraisal" are inextricably united in "value."

The word *influences* would have been rejected out of hand by most sectors

[20] Including, of course, repudiation in the case of negative values.

of the scientific world until quite recently. It was fashionable to regard ideas of any sort as mere epiphenomena, verbal rationalizations after the fact. Mechanists, behaviorists, and positivists [21] maintained, and natural science knowledge justified them in maintaining, that human beings responded only to particulars — not to universals such as ideas. This group agreed, though for different reasons, with the idealists and dualists that "scientifically verifiable knowledge of biological and other natural systems provides no meaning for purposes, for universals, or for human behavior which is a response to and specified as to its form by a temporally persistent normative social theory." [22]

However, the work during the past twenty years of Arturo Rosenblueth, Lorente de No, Norbert Wiener, Warren McCulloch, and other neurologists, physiologists, and mathematicians has demonstrated that not only can human beings reason deductively, but that, given the structural and physiological properties of their nervous systems, they must reason deductively, responding to general ideas as well as to particulate stimuli. The anthropologist Leslie White has been proven right in saying that symbolism is "that modification of the human organism which allows it to transform physiological drive into cultural values." In addition to the newly discovered neurological basis of the determinative force of ideas in human behavior, one might also on a cruder empirical level say simply, "Consider the history of Russia since the November Revolution." [23]

Selection is used in the definition as a more neutral word than *choice*.[24] There is no intention — or any necessity — to beg any metaphysical questions regarding "free will" or "determinism." However, it is proper to point out that for certain purposes the statements, "the actor can choose" and "the actor behaves in some respects as if he had the possibility of choice," are equivalent. From the viewpoint of the social scientist the propositions, "choice is real" and "choice is psychologically real," lead inevitably to about the same operations. In any case, the matter at issue here is clear-cut: as the observer sees behavior, the actor or actors have open in the observable world more

[21] A leading logical positivist, while denying the "objectivity" of value judgments has recently conceded their influence upon action (A. J. Ayer, "On the Analysis of Moral Judgments," *Horizon* [London], XX [1949], no. 117; see esp. pp. 175–176).

[22] F. S. C. Northrop, "Ideological Man in His Relation to Scientifically Known Natural Man," in *Ideological Differences and World Order* (Yale University Press, 1949), p. 413. This article also gives bibliographical references to the works of the writers referred to in the next paragraph.

[23] Of course, the fundamental question is that of frame of reference, not of ontology. More than one frame of reference is legitimately operative in the scientific world. In the social sciences selection ("choice") and evaluation are inherent in the frame of reference. The biological sciences are probably a meeting ground between the physical and social sciences in this respect.

[24] The union of "desirable" and "selection" in the definition signifies that *both* affective and conative elements are essential — neither has universal primacy.

than one mode, or means, or direction of action, each of which is "objectively" open.

The reality of "choice" in human action presents one major opportunity for the study of values. Values are operative when an individual selects one line of thought or action rather than another, insofar as this selection is influenced by generalized codes rather than determined simply by impulse or by a purely rational calculus of temporary expediency. Of course, in the long run, the person who disregards values is not behaving expediently, for he will be punished by others. Most selective behavior therefore involves either the values of the actor or those of others or both.

The social scientist must be concerned with the differing conceptions of "choice" from the viewpoints of the individual actor, a group of actors, and of the observer. Most situations can be met in a variety of ways. From the actor's point of view, his degree of awareness of these various possibilities will vary in different situations: in some cases he will make a conscious choice between alternatives for action; in others, an action will appear inevitable and the actor will not be aware that any selection is being made. From the viewpoint of the observer as scientist, "choice" becomes a process of selection from a range of possibilities, many (or even all) of which may not be obvious from a cultural point of view or from the viewpoint of any given individual. These three angles of vision may overlap or diverge in differing degrees.

Available, in our definition, is another way of saying that genuine selection is involved. It does not imply that the same amount of "effort" or "striving" is necessarily involved in one mode, means, or end as opposed to another. It implies merely that various alternatives are open in the external world seen by the observer. Nor is the question of "functional effectiveness" prejudged. So far as the satisfaction of the actor's need-dispositions are concerned, this cannot always be estimated in terms of the consequences of a "choice" as seen from the standpoint of an observer. It is clear that there is always an "economy of values," for no actor has the resources or time to make all possible "choices." But the effectiveness of a selection must be interpreted, in part, in accord with the intensity with which the actor feels the value — regardles of how little sense the "choice" makes according to an observer's rational calculus.

In any case, selection of modes, ends, and means of action is assumed to involve orientation to values. The relation between such selections and the objective limitations upon them (imposed by the biological nature of man, the particular environment, and the general properties of social and cultural systems within which men inevitably live) become problems for value research. For example, in the case of the comparative study of five cultures in the Ramah area, one could examine the alternatives that are open to all five societies in particular situations and the varying "choices" which have been

made. There is a range of possibilities for dealing with drought (and other common environmental pressures), and each group has "selected" varying emphases in coping with this common problem — a selection which is determined in part by its particular value system as well as by such situational factors as technological equipment and capital.

Conceptions of the desirable are not limited to proximate or ultimate goals. Ways of acting are also valued; there is discrimination in approval-disapproval terms of the manner of carrying out an action, whether the act itself be conceived as a means or as an end. It is equally a fact of ordinary experience that, even when an objective is agreed upon, there is often violent disagreement about the "rightness" or "appropriateness" of the means to be selected. Of course, the distinction between *ends* and *means* is somewhat transitory, depending upon time perspective. What at one point in the history of the individual or the group appears as an end is later seen as a means to a more distant goal. Similarly, the discrimination between *modes* and *means* is sometimes blurred (empirically, not analytically). *Mode* refers to the style in which an instrument is used. For example, the English language is learned by some foreigners as a means of obtaining positions with our establishments abroad. But the language is spoken by some softly, by others loudly, by others with exaggerated precision of enunciation. These variations in the utilization of the instrument are attributable, in part, to the cultural or personal values of the learners.

In summary, then, any given act is seen as a compromise between motivation, situational conditions, available means, and the means and goals as interpreted in value terms. Motivation arises in part from biological and situational factors. Motivation and value are both influenced by the unique life history of the individual and by culture.

Operational Indices

Surely one of the broadest generalizations to be made by a natural historian observing the human species is that man is an evaluating animal. Always and everywhere men are saying, "This is good"; "that is bad"; "this is better than that"; "these are higher and those lower aspirations." Nor is this type of behavior limited by any means to the verbal. Indeed it might be said that the realm of value is that of "conduct," [25] not that of "behavior" at all. Approval is shown by many kinds of expressive behavior, by deeds of support and assistance. Acts regarded as "deviant," "abnormal," and "psychotic" provide clues to conduct valued by a group. Disapproval of the acts of others or of the particular actor is manifested on a vast continuum

[25] "Conduct" here means regularities of action-motivation which are explicitly related to or which imply *conceptions* of desirable and undesirable behavior.

from overt aggression, through persistent avoidance, to the subtle nuances of culturally standardized facial expressions.[26] Self-disapproval is indicated by defensive verbalizations, by motor reactions which in that culture express guilt or shame, by acts of atonement. No adults, except possibly some psychotics, behave with complete indifference toward standards which transcend the exigencies of the immediate situation or the biological and psychological needs of the actor at the moment. Even criminals, though they may repudiate many or most of the codes of their society, orient their behavior toward the codes of their own deviant groups and indeed (negatively) to the cultural standards. There is almost no escaping orientation to values.

The first area of action, then, which is relevant to the study of values is that where approval or disapproval is made explicit by word or deed. "Ought" or "should" statements and all statements of preference (where the preference is directly or indirectly shown to be regarded as justifiable in moral and/or rational, including aesthetic, terms) are constantly made in daily behavior. They are also embodied in the formal oral or written literature of the group, including laws, mythology, and standardized religious dogmas. Neither in the case of the individual nor in that of the groups are such "ought" or "should" statements random or varying erratically from event to event or from situation to situation. There is always some degree of patterned recurrence.

The observer should watch not only for approval and disapproval but for all acts which elicit strong emotional responses. What, in a given society, is considered worth-while to *die* for? What frightens people — particularly in contexts where the act is apparently interpreted as a threat to the security or stability of the system? What are considered proper subjects for bitter ridicule? What types of events seem to weld a plurality of individuals suddenly into a solidary group? Tacit approval-disapproval is constantly manifested in the form of gossip. Where gossip is most current is where that culture is most heavily laden with values. The discussability of values is one of their most essential properties, though the discussion may be oblique or disguised — not labeled as a consideration of values.

The second area relevant to the study of values is that of the differential effort exhibited toward the attainment of an end, access to a means, or acquisition of a mode of behavior. Brown will work hardest to get a scholarship in a college of engineering, Smith to get a chance to act in a summer theater.[27] Americans in general will strive hardest and undergo more deprivations for "success" in the occupational system, whereas members of other cultures will characteristically give their fullest energies only to preserving a received

[26] It is, of course, required by the definition that regularities of action or of motivation be referable to an expressed or underlying conception.

[27] These examples may imply only motivation but in such cases motivation is partly determined by value elements.

tradition or to types of self-fulfillment that do not make them a cynosure of the public eye.

The third area, that of "choice" situations, blends into the second. When two or more pathways are equally open, and an individual or a group shows a consistent directionality in its selections, we are surely in the realm of values, provided that this directionality can be shown to be involved in the approval-disapproval continuum. An example of an individual "choice" situation is the following: Three college graduates, from the same economic group, of equal I.Q., and all destined eventually for business, are offered by their fathers the choice of a new automobile, a year of travel, or a year of graduate study. Such "choice" points come up frequently in life histories. An example of a "choice" situation at the group level is: Five groups, each with a distinct culture, who carry on subsistence agriculture in the same ecological area in the Southwest, are faced with severe drought. Two groups react primarily with increased rational and technological activity, two with increased ceremonial activity, and one with passive acceptance. It should be profitable to observe members of two or more groups confronted with *any* objective crisis situation (war, epidemic, and the like). Under such circumstances the durability of values may come to light and hence the manner in which various challenges make or do not make for the suspension of values. Both individual and group crises (birth, death, illness, fire, theft) and conflict situations (marital, political, economic) throw values into relief.

Statements about the desirable or selections between possible paths of action on the basis of implicit conceptions of the desirable are crucial in the study of values. Neither of these, however, "are" values. They are rather manifestations of the value element in action. One measures heat by a thermometer, for example, but, if one is speaking precisely, one cannot say that a temperature of ninety degrees "is" heat. The concept of "force" in physical science is comparable. No one ever sees "a force"; only the manifestations of a force are observed directly.

Operations for the Study of Values [28]

It is interesting that it is precisely in the fields rejected by the behaviorists, positivists, and reductionists that perhaps the best social science techniques have been developed: the procedures of public-opinion polling and various

[28] Other remarks on operational methods will be found throughout this paper. It is impossible here to refer to all the literature on methodology for the study of values. Mention should be made, however, of George D. Birkhoff's *Aesthetic Measure* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), an attempt to arrive at objective determination of universal aesthetic values, and of Ralph White's attempts at rigorous establishment of values by content analysis. See his "Value Analysis: A Quantitative Method for Describing Qualitative Data," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XIX (1944), 351–358. Rashevsky's mathematical approach to this problem is also noteworthy. See also S. C. Dodd, "How to Measure Values," *Research Studies of the State College of Washington*, XVIII (1950), 163–168.