

Applied Epistemology – CharCon, 26 May 2018 – Class Handout

Mixed Epistemologies

From a myriad of sources – parents, teachers, people around us

Result – five irrational epistemologies

not just mixed premises – **mixed-up, unstructured mental framework**

more basic than premises – taken as the norm

no pathway to applying epistemology – nonsensical, meaningless exercise

How We Think, and How We Do

Percepts, Concepts, and Abstract Concepts – Abstract concepts are the components that enables us to reason.

Concepts defined by a word, described by a definition. The word and definition replace the real thing and its pattern of **first-level concepts** in our minds, to make abstract concepts possible.

Causality is the component of reality that makes it possible for us to comprehend reality in all its complexity.

Causal Analysis is how we connect our mind to reality.

Concepts make “the universe knowable by bringing it within the range of man’s consciousness.” – Ayn Rand

In other words, within his mental capabilities to understand. The process used is analysis.

Two Connections from Theory to Practice

Analysis is the detailed steps we use to rationally resolve complex, interrelated issues.

Methods are the detailed processes we use to take complex, coordinated series of actions.

Study those techniques and look for ways to improve them, recursively applying them to themselves, to improve our capabilities

Complex means that which is beyond the immediately, intuitively, obviously, or implicitly graspable and knowable.

Methods of Analysis

Breaking down a problem into its component pieces

Analysis breaks down that implicit “black box” into explicit components that can be individually considered, analyzed, and improved. In turn, the same is true for each component.

Iterative analysis – do the part you understand; repeat.

Measurement

Scheduling, breaking a task into shorter pieces to measure rate of progress

Time - Breaking down a prolonged action into near-term intervals

Problem-solving

Open-ended vs. closed problems

Baby steps

Personal “downshifting”

The Evolutionary Development of Abstract Conceptualization

Nature / Evolution does nothing extra; only what is necessary to survive

Treating first-level concepts as percepts – leads to concepts about concepts

Connecting concepts – positive feedback loop

Discipline and Value Judgements – the first step to “ought” and ethics

The Functional Parts of Our Minds

autonomous

subconscious / memory / instinctual

conscious mind – the only part capable of abstract conceptualization

The Arts

The mind’s requirement to tie its concepts to experience

To the mind – especially the subconscious mind, abstract concepts are real

What seems important – “selective re-creation”

Lead to fictional images, stories, sounds – music

We call it “Art” but it is an unequivocal mental requirement

Time – “before” and “after” require abstract conceptualization

Animals recognize patterns, but not time

Methods of Relationships and Politics

Politics is issues of ethics applied to interpersonal relationships (Ayn Rand)

Politics is relationships – courtesy, manners, customs, traditions, laws

Politics – Methods of Governance

Two types of governance – imposed or authorized

Revolutionary vs. Evolutionary Cultural Development

Impact of Cultural Mindsets on the Thinking Process

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14 DEC 2015

UNIQUELY RELATED

THE U.S. IS UNIQUE IN HAVING A GOVT AUTHORIZED BY A CONSTITUTION ESTABLISHED BY THE PEOPLE, SUBSERVIENT TO THAT CONSTITUTION AND UNABLE TO CHANGE IT.

NECESSARILY, A PEOPLE WHO HAVE THAT STANDING MUST HOLD ULTIMATE POWER - THE CONTROL OF FORCE - MUST BE ABLE AND WILLING TO USE IT; HENCE, THE STATEMENT OF THE SECOND AMENDMENT, NOTING THAT RIGHT AND SO LIMITING ANY RELATED ACTIONS OF THE GOVT IN THAT REALM.

THIS REQUIREMENT NEVER BECOMES OUTDATED, FOR THE NATURE OF PEOPLES' NATURAL ACTIVITIES, AND THE NATURE OF IMPLEMENTING THOSE ACTIVITIES IN GOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS NEVER CHANGES.

IN CONTRAST, ANY OTHER FORM OF GOVT MUST FEAR AN ARMED CITIZENRY, AND THUS MUST BAN AND HEAVILY REGULATE THE PERSONAL OWNERSHIP OF ARMS.

GOVT DOES NOT SPRING UP IN ISOLATION. GOVT DOES NOT SET IN ISOLATION. RATHER, AS THE COMPLEXITY OF RELATIONSHIPS GROW (DUE TO THE INCREASES IN POPULATION), THE COMPLEXITIES OF GOVERNANCE - MEDIATION - INCREASE. GOVT MUST BE VIEWED IN THAT PERSPECTIVE TO BE BEST UNDERSTOOD.

(THE RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT)

GOVT IS THE AGENCY SET UP FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION.

11-SEPT-2017

IE, "WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF POLITICS?"

POLITICS IS THE GOVERNANCE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION, WITH THE PURPOSE OF PROTECTING THE LIFE, LIBERTY, AND PROPERTY ("PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS") OF THE CITIZENS/RESIDENTS.

12 12-JULY-2016
POLITICS - THE FOURTH BRANCH "THE ANSWERS GIVEN BY ETHICS DETERMINE HOW MAN SHOULD TREAT OTHER MEN, AND THIS DETERMINES THE FOURTH BRANCH OF PHILOSOPHY = POLITICS, WHICH DEFINES THE PRINCIPLES OF A PROPER SOCIAL SYSTEM." - "PHILOSOPHY = WHO NEEDS IT", P.4, BY AYN RAND

BUT WHY DOES POLITICS DESERVE TO BE CALLED A BRANCH OF PHILOSOPHY? BECAUSE RELATIONSHIPS ("HOW MAN SHOULD TREAT OTHER MEN") IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF LIFE.

AS "A PROPER SOCIAL SYSTEM", POLITICS NOT ONLY DEALS WITH ECONOMICS - CAPITALISM VS. SOCIALISM, TYRANNY, ETC., BUT ALL ~~ASPECT~~ KINDS OF RELATIONSHIPS, OF WHICH GOVT IS ONLY THE FINAL CULMINATION.

CONCRETIZING THEM - CON-STRUCTING A "REALITY" IN WHICH ITS (ABSTRACT) CONCEPTS EXIST, WHERE THEY CAN BE EXPLORED AND EXPERIENCED, AND WHERE THEIR VALUE AND IMPACT CAN BE EVALUATED.

13 12-JULY-2016
ESTHETICS - THE FIFTH BRANCH "ART IS A SELECTIVE RE-CREATION OF REALITY [...] MAN'S PROFOUND NEED OF ART LIES IN THE FACT THAT HIS COGNITIVE FACILITY IS CONCEPTUAL..." "ART AND COGNITION", "THE ROMANTIC MANIFESTO", P.45, AYN RAND

BUT WHY ^{DOES} ESTHETICS DESERVE TO BE CALLED A BRANCH OF PHILOSOPHY? BECAUSE ART - ESTHETICS - AND THE WHOLE PROCESS OF "SELECTIVE RE-CREATION" IS A NECESSARY PART OF THE FUNCTIONING OF A CONCEPTUAL CAPABILITY. IT IS AN PART OF THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING / PROCESS. IN

INEXTRICABLE EVOLUTIONARY TERMS, THE NEED TO SELECTIVELY RE-CREATE PRECEDED ESTHETICS AND ART. THE MIND EXPLORES ITS ~~CONCEPTS~~ ^{CONCEPTS BY} < ABSTRACT

ARISTOTLE'S OTHER WORKS WERE BROUGHT FROM SEVILLE, BAGHDAD, AND CONSTANTINOPLE IN THE 1100S AND 1200S, MARKING THE BEGINNINGS OF THE RENAISSANCE.

ARCHIMEDES WAS ON THE EDGE OF INVENTING CALCULUS;

HYPATIA WAS ON THE EDGE OF PROVING THE EARTH REVOLVES AROUND THE SUN;

BOETHIUS, IF HE HAD FINISHED HIS TRANSLATIONS, MIGHT HAVE SHORTENED 700 YEARS OF DARK AGES TO 300.

THREE MARTYRS WHO MIGHT HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD, FAR BEYOND WHAT THEY DID ACTUALLY DO.

18 21 OCTOBER 2016

INTELLECTUAL MARTYRS

THREE GREATS OF THE CLASSICAL ERA WERE KILLED BY ILLITERATES, WITH PROFOUND CONSEQUENCES.

ARCHIMEDES - KILLED IN 212 BC BY A ROMAN SOLDIER, WHILE AT WORK ON A MATHEMATICAL PROBLEM, IN SICILY.

HYPATIA - THE LAST TRUE SCIENTIST OF THE CLASSICAL ERA, IN 405 AD, IN ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT, BY A CHRISTIAN MOB, IN THE LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA.

BOETHIUS - WHO WORKED TO TRANSLATE THE WRITINGS OF ARISTOTLE, KILLED BY OSTROGOTH KING THEODORIC IN 524. HIS TRANSLATION WOULD BE THE ONLY KNOWN WORKS OF ARISTOTLE IN EUROPE FOR 700 YEARS OF THE DARK AGES, UNTIL COPIES OF

A GENETIC CHANGE IS NATURE'S CLOSEST ATTEMPT AT REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE; A RADICAL ONE-OFF ACCIDENT THAT IS USUALLY FATAL OR AT BEST BENIGN. BUT IN RARE CASES IT IS A LEAP - IF IT BREEDS TRUE.

AND IT EXPLAINS WHY OTHER ANIMALS CANNOT THINK; IE, THEIR BRAINS LACK THE ANTECEDENTS TO IT.

- THE CLOSEST TO A "REVOLUTIONARY" CHANGE -

19 MARCH 2017

NATURE DOES NOT INNOVATE

NATURE DOES NOT INNOVATE; IT FOLLOWS, BUT IT DOES NOT INNOVATE. EVERY CHANGE IS AN ADAPTATION OF AN EXISTING FEATURE TO A CHANGE IN ENVIRONMENT. THIS IS TRUE FROM THE SIMPLEST CREATURE, TO THE THINKING PROCESS IN MAN. IT SUGGESTS WHERE HIS ABILITY TO ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALIZATION CAME FROM; IT DID NOT POP INTO EXISTENCE MAGICALLY. EVEN MUTATIONS - A GENETIC CHANGE - SIMPLY CAUSES A VARIATION IN WHAT IS, AND SOMETIMES (RARELY) IT IS A CHANGE THAT ALLOWS A BETTER ADAPTEDNESS TO SURVIVAL. EVERY FEATURE OF EVERY ORGANISM TELLS A STORY OF ITS ANCESTORS.

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 CORE COLONIES, MEANT TO BE SELF-SUSTAINING IN THEIR OWN RIGHT, BY PEOPLE WHO DELIBERATELY LEFT THE OLD WORLD'S WAYS BEHIND. INDIVIDUAL EFFORT WAS CONSUMABLE, THE ULTIMATE REQUIREMENT FOR SUCCESS. AND IN THAT INTENTION WAS INTRODUCED THE EXPLICIT VIRTUE OF PRODUCTIVITY - IN TOTAL CONTRAST TO THE SPOILS OF CONQUEST AND NOBLES LIVING OFF THE WORK OF SERFS. DRUDGE - THE IMPACT WENT MUCH FURTHER; THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM WAS FIRST STATED IN 600 BC, BY SOLON, BUT WITH THE EXPLICIT REALIZATION OF PRODUCTIVITY PER SE, NECESSARILY THAT IMPLIED THE INDIVIDUAL AND HIS RIGHT TO HIS EXISTENCE - HIS "LIFE, LIBERTY, AND PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS".
 - AND SIMULTANEOUSLY, INDEPENDENCE AND NECESSARILY

88 23 FEBRUARY 2018
 THE RISE OF PRODUCTIVITY AS A VIRTUE THE STANDARD OF BEING PRODUCTIVE REALLY ~~WAS~~ ONLY CAME TO THE FORE WITH THE SETTLEMENTS OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES - JAMESTOWN, PLYMOUTH, AND ELSEWHERE. EUROPE'S HISTORY, SPANISH AMERICA WERE REplete WITH CONQUEST AND ITS SPOILS = SEIZURE OF EXISTING WEALTH, WHICH HAD SIMILARLY BEEN ACQUIRED IN THE SAME WAY. ASIA, AFRICA, AND THE REST OF THE WORLD WERE NO DIFFERENT. ~~THE~~ EVEN NEARBY CANADA WAS SETTLED AS TRADING POSTS WITH THE INDIANS AND FOR THE TRAPPING OF FURS. NEW AMSTERDAM (ULTIMATELY, NEW YORK CITY) WAS A MIXTURE OF TRADE CENTER, WITH SOME COLONISATION. JAMESTOWN AND PLYMOUTH, ALTHOUGH THEY TRADED WITH THE INDIANS, WERE AT THEIR

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 CRESCENDO, UPSURGE, APEX, CREST, PINNACLE, ZENITH, CLIMAX, SWELL, SUMMIT, APOGEE, PEAK, CAP, CULMINATION, PAYOFF, VERTEX, CROWNING TOUCH
 OFFSHOOT, VARIANT, BRANCH, DERIVATIVE
 IMPACT, RAMIFICATION, REPURCUSSION, RESULT, CONSEQUENCE, FALLOUT, EFFECT, CHAIN REACTION, OUTCOME, OFFSHOOT
 "IF ALL ELSE FAILS, STOP. YOU'RE DOING IT WRONG."
 PREVARICATE, DODGE, EQUIVOCATE, EVADE, HEDGE, QUIBBLE, DOUBLE-TALK, HEM AND HAW, CONTRIVE, BALK, DUCK, GIVE THE RUNAROUND
 & C. P. 73
 EFFRONTERY, AUDACITY, BRASHNESS, GALL, IMPERTINENCE, INCIVILITY, INSOLENCE, TEMERITY
 DEMAGOGUE, ZEALOT, PROVOCATEUR, FIREBRAND, MALCONTENT, INSTIGATOR, AGITATOR, PROTESTER, INCENDIARY

91 20 MARCH 2018
 SAYINGS, SLOGANS, COORDS
 DOWNTRODDEN, OPPRESSED, ABJECT, AT-ONE'S-MERCH, HELPLESS, SUBJUGATED, IN-ONE'S-CLUTCHES, TYRANNIZED, COERCED, ENSLAVED, RULED, VANQUISHED, SUBJECTS, SUBSERVIENT
 ARCAIC, ESOTERIC, HIDDEN, UNKNOWNABLE, CRYPTIC, UNFATHOMABLE, COMPLICATED, OBSCURE, MYSTIFYING, ENIGMATIC, ABSTRAUSE, UNINTELLIGIBLE, CIRCUITOUS
 INCULCATE, INSTILL, IMPLANT, TRAIN, INDOCTRINATE, DRILL, CONDITION
 SHALLOW, SUPERFICIAL, LACKS DEPTH, TRIVIAL, HOLLOW, INANE, TORRID, SPURIOUS
 REBEL, ROGUE, RENEGADE
 DISABUSE, DISILLUSION, BURST THE BUBBLE
 "ACCOMPLISHMENT STARTS WITH OPTIMISM"