

Value and the Quest for the Good

US275 Scientific Ethics
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What do humans value?

- What is valuable?
 - money
 - joy
 - “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”



Nicholas Rescher's 8 categories of basic values

1. Material and Physical Value

- health, comfort, physical safety

2. Economic Value

- economic security, productiveness

3. Moral Value

- honesty, fairness, kindness

4. Social Value

- generosity, politeness, graciousness

Nicholas Rescher's 8 categories of basic values (cont).

5. **Political Value**

- freedom, justice

6. **Aesthetic Value**

- beauty, symmetry, grace

7. **Religious Value**

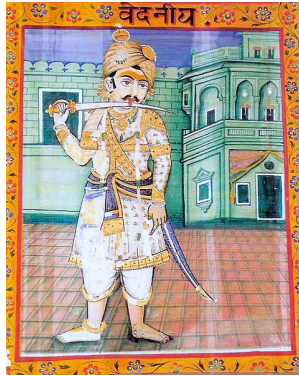
- piety, obedience, faith

8. **Intellectual Value**

- intelligence, clarity, knowledge

Intrinsic goods

- desired because of their nature
- not derived from other goods
- joy, pleasure



Mural Painting from Jain Digambara Temple for Jaipur depicting Vedaniya Karma (Pleasure and Pain inducing karmas.) This picture shows a person licking honey from sword. This induces both pain and pleasure, 19th century art.
Wikimedia Commons

Instrumental goods

- desired because they are effective means of attaining intrinsic goods
- examples:
money, medicine



Man offering a Woman Money
Judith Leyster, 1631
Wikimedia Commons

2 broad groups

- **Hedonists**

- hedon (greek): pleasure
- all pleasure is good
- pleasure is the only good

- **nonhedonists**

- pleasure is not the ultimate desire



Socrates Tears Alcibiades from the Embrace of Sensual Pleasure
Jean-Baptiste Regnault. Oil on canvas, 1791.
Wikimedia Commons

Hedonist: Sensualism

- equates all pleasure with sensual enjoyment
 - do what feels good
 - avoid doing what causes pain or discomfort



Lakapurusha Cosmic Man.
The torso and head contain heavenly domains where the inhabitants experience lives of pleasure. 16th Century
Wikimedia Commons

Hedonists: Satisfactionism

- equates all pleasure with satisfaction or enjoyment
 - not necessarily with sensuality
 - do what makes you feel happy



Desire and Satisfaction
Jan Toorop, 1893
Wikimedia Commons

Pleasure

- sensualism
sensual enjoyment physical pain
- satisfactionism
satisfaction displeasure/dissatisfaction

Nonhedonists: Monists

- mono = one
- believe in a single intrinsic value
 - but it is not pleasure



The Monolith,
Gustav Vigeland, 1944

Nonhedonists: Pluralists

- plural = many
- view pleasure/enjoyment as an intrinsic good
- but also add other intrinsic goods
 - ex. knowledge, life, love



The Choice of Hercules between Virtue and Pleasure
Benjamin West, 1764
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Objective values

- absolute “Good”
 - impartial:
independent of individual perceptions
 - desire good because it is good



Subjective Values

- Value of “Good” because it is desired
 - the stronger the desire,
 - the greater the value



Portrait of Louis XVIII in coronation robes
(but this king was never crowned...)
Robert Lefevre, 1822
Wikimedia Commons

Relationship of value to morality

- the pursuit of what is valued
 - guides principles
 - leads to decisions and actions



Assignment

The activity for this topic will be assigned after the Social Contract mini-lecture.



Readings

Chapter 4: Value and the Quest for the Good

Pojman & Fieser,
Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong



Queen Osburga reads for her son Alfred, who would become Alfred the Great
J.W. Kennedy, 1911

Any Questions?

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<http://www.vipitbullkennels.com/images/animated-question-mark.gif>