

Some Clarifications about Understanding on Value and Sense of Value

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ABSTRACT. *Value and the sense of value are closely connected and yet differentiated in the connotation and extension. Human being is able to make judgment and evaluation about the relationship between different things and to decide whether they belong to value relationship. Then they can form a self-regard value evaluation and further a sense of value. Value judgment is a factual judgment whose scientificity decide its objectivity. The essence of value is the foundation of the research on sense of value and also the key to understand the sense of value.*

KEYWORDS: *Value, Sense of value; Value judgment; Value evaluation*

1. Introduction

The general explanation about value in a philosophical way needs to find its generality in different disciplines and different scenarios. The general meaning of value, from ancient to modern, mainly focused on “entity theory”, “significance theory”, and “relationship theory”. While the general discussion about concept of value has great significance on understanding it in a scientific way. However, one thing we need to be clear is that the general value interpretation should be comprehensive, abstract and dynamic, any isolated, one-sided, static analysis should be a wrong one. Therefore the generality of the concept of value and the specific problem about value should be connected and yet differentiated, which is conducive to a comprehensive understanding of value.

2. Distinguish Value from the Specific Value

Firstly, value can't be equal with use value.

In daily life, something is determined to be valuable as long as it is useful to people. The essence of it is the use value which describes the significance of attribute of things to people. Things having use value is not necessarily valuable. Because the same thing used by different people can have the different effect. For example a good book has use value, but for an illiterate person the use value can't be converted into value, that is, the text in the book can't bring positive impact on

illiterate people. Nowadays, the academy categorized the use value of the object into the “positive value”, “negative value” and “zero value”. As different as the subject, the effect of the object on the subject is also different.

Secondly, the value is not conform with the entity and property

There are two interpretations about “price” in ancient Chinese books. One is that it is related to things, represented as material, article, money, etc. The other interpretation thinks that “price” are “reputation” and “status”; While “value” means “possession”. Value is equal to equivalent [1] Marx has also examined the value in etymology, “Wert of matter is actually its own Virtus”, [2] Virtus in Latin means strength, merit, and excellent quality. Marx believes that value is related to the attributes of things, but it is not identical to the attributes of entities. “The value of a thing is the virtus that all it has; though its exchange value is completely independent from its materiality.”[3] Materiality includes material entities and material attributes. Marx believes that value comes from a certain attribute of material entities, though they are not identical. Exchange value, in the comparison between things, is considered as a manifestation of value in economics. If, the general, abstracted from the concrete, displayed as the subject-object relationship between people and things that comes from the exchange of things. Secondly it comes with the different effect exerted by the object on the subject after their combination, including positive effect, negative effect, and zero effect which is corresponding to positive value, negative value, and zero value, respectively.

Thirdly, the value can't merely cater to people and their needs

Need and demand are one of the conditions for value to generate. Without the need or demand, it is impossible to generate the subject in the value relationship. The subject of the value relationship is the active party in this relationship. In other words, need and demand are the causes of the subject and also the one of the condition for the value to generate. The second condition is the existence of the object attribute. The certain attribute of object itself generates the use value. When the use value can meet the need or demand, the object in the value relationship is generated, which makes it a passive party in the value relationship. In the value generation, the subject and the object both occur and disappear in connection which comes from the need and demand. The disappearance of specific needs and demands means the disappearance of the connection basis as well as the subject-object relationship. Therefore, the subject-object relationship in value relationship is specific.

According to value relationship, the view that people are the source of value and the world of meaning only belongs to people is incomplete. In the value generation mechanism, the needs is in common to all forms of life. Any production, existence and reproduction of life must have basic ingredient of life. For example, the survival and reproduction of animals need food, and the survival of plants need light and water. All those needs contributes to the formation of active party, namely the subject. The object in this pair of relationship can also become the subject in another pair of relationship. Therefore we can say all creatures in nature are in value relationships that they can take advantages from each other. Some scholars think that

the relationship between creatures is only a reciprocal relationship, not a value relationship. This judgment was made based on the fact that the relationship between creatures has no “meaning” which can only be experienced by human being. The essence of “meaning” is the effect of the object exerting on the subject which can be divided into three categories: positive, negative, and none, corresponding with the value of positive, negative, and zero respectively. “Significance” exists for real, instead of determined by human feelings. If the meaning can only be sensed by human being, it is what we called subjective idealism.

Getting rid of all kinds of partial understanding and the idea that thinks value only caters to people, we should find the generality of value generation, that is, the commonality of the value world and the law of the material world. The understanding about the essence of value is not only about what the material world is, but also a question of what the material world should be. If we understand the material world in a wrong way, then the “should” based on “what” can’t be reasonable. This is just like in modern times we placed the value world behind people, and everything other than human being should serve people. Human becomes the master of the material world, and everything other than human is regarded as a tool, which directly leads to the breaking between human and nature. Human being, of course, also paid a heavy price because of this biased self-cognition.

3. The Value Judgment is Not Value Evaluation

Among so many forms of relationships between things, value relationship is one of them which describes the relationship between the needs of the subject and the attributes of the object. Some attributes of the object meet the needs of the subject that brings some certain reaction from the subject and thus exert certain influence on it in this way. Value relationship occurs in the material world where there are value relations between many species, not for human only. Human beings can make value judgments and evaluations on the relationship between things, determine whether it is a value relationship, and form a value evaluation in self-regard way.

Firstly, value judgment is factual judgment

First of all, since the value relationship is a factual relationship, it is wrong to separate the value relationship from the factual relationship. Because a value relationship is an objective state that does not exist according to human consciousness. Human understanding about the value relationship can only be deepened, but can’t be changed arbitrarily according to subjective attitude, for the value relationship reflecting whether the object satisfies the subject's needs, the degree of its satisfaction, and the effect of satisfaction. Whether it is satisfied is the standard for judging whether there is a value relationship, the degree of satisfaction is the standard for judging the amount of the value, and the satisfaction effect for judging the nature of the value. The subject and object in the value relationship are delimited by the fact that who takes an active position. The need is the basis of the subject, while the relationship between things attribute and the subject's needs are

the basis of the object. And the combination of the two is the basis of forming the value relationship. The value relationship reflects the dynamic relationship between the biological and non-biological elements of the material world, and is a general definition of the factual relationship.

Secondly, the essence of value relationship judgment is whether the subjective and objective are consistent or close. From the perspective of ontology, matter determines consciousness, and consciousness reflects matter. Consistency or closeness between the two is truth which means the correct reflection of consciousness on the material world. Value relationship is a kind of factual relationship. It is a judgment on objective factual relationship, deciding the type and nature of the relationship, determining whether it is a special value subject-object relationship, and whether a value relationship has occurred. Therefore the value judgment is actually the value discrimination and the perception of subject on object, which can be divided into two types: right and wrong. The right one is the truth and the wrong one is fallacy. In a word, value judgment is a factual judgment and a general perception of the world.

Secondly, the value judgment standard is not the value evaluation standard

There are two parts of human understandings about value relationship, that is, value judgment and value evaluation. Although the academy doesn't distinguish the two, instead including them in the overall determination of value standards, which leads to an unclear relationship and confusion between value and the sense of value. That's why there is a wrong idea that thinks both value and sense of value are depending on people.

Value, describing objective facts, is a part of the objective material world, and is the effect of the object on the subject. The magnitude of the value is determined by the degree of subject's need and satisfaction. Since the value relationship exists both in human world and non-human world, the value relationship is essentially a matter of energy conversion and flow, it is not exclusive to the human world. It is the understanding about the value relationship in material world that is exclusive to human being. Understanding is divided into judgment and evaluation, judgment is about right and wrong, while evaluation is about good or bad. This is the difference between the two. The standard of value judgment is about whether the subjectivity is consistent with the objectivity, any consistency or closeness were considered as truth, otherwise it is a fallacy. The standard of value evaluation is about whether it is favorable or not. "Evaluation will only occur where there is a problem, where there are some troubles need to be solved, where the embarrassment, scarcity, and deprivation need to be changed, or where the existing conditions need to be changed to resolve all the conflicts. [4] This means the value evaluation has obvious subjective characteristics and is closely related to the needs of the subject. It is not completely based on objective facts. Russell once pointed out: "When we assert something or someone is valuable, we are expressing our own emotions, rather than expressing the fact that it is reasonable to have different personal feelings" [5] This is also a verification of "self-regard" in value evaluation. Therefore we can say the values of the human world featured with purpose of favoring human survival and

development. The specific value evaluation cannot be made without the correct value judgment. After all, “value evaluation is still the unification of prospective judgment and retrospective judgment, which means before the practice of establishing a value relationship, the subject can make a predictable judgment on the object about the degree of the subject need, or the subject can make a summarized value evaluation based on the comparison between achievements and expectations after the practice “[6] Value evaluation, based on the objective value relationship recognition, is supposed to form a reasonable judgment about the past, the present, and the future with the principle of self-regard.

The science of value depends on the science value evaluation from three aspects. First, the rationality of the human needs which was decided by the scale human. “Man is the scale of everything, including things that exist, and the things that do not exist.”[7] Therefore, considering that human needs are actually a problem about subject existence. It seems any need has a reasonable value trend. Though needs can be true or false. The false one is not suitable. The necessity of judgment about human needs should take the current social situation into account, making a reasonable judgment about the reality of the development level of social productivity and production relations with the standards with the basis of human survival and the goal of development. Secondly, the question of cognition about objective things, whether they have grasped the attributes, functions, the internal relationship between the objects and the subject “I”. Third, the scientific value evaluation is the harmony of truth, kindness, and beauty. Truth is the objective perception about the real world; Kindness is about being both altruistic and self-regard at the same time; Beauty is the emotional enjoyment of the subject with the harmony of the subject-object relationship. “The masses, as the founder of human history and the subject of social history, their needs for the continuation and progress of human society reflects the requirements of human society development. The needs of individual subject and group subject are only reasonable when they are consistent with the needs of the masses. Only a value evaluation based on this can be called a scientific value evaluation. “[8]

Thirdly, the stable result of value evaluation is the sense of value

Value is a macro word that contains a huge amount of information. Therefore, the necessity of carrying out a micro analysis on the connotation is helpful to distinguish the theoretical value from the specific value in life so that we can understand the true meaning of value and clarify the value misconception. From the perspective of epistemology, the value, divided into value judgment and value evaluation, are both produced from the cognition. They are the human brain functions that need to go through the procedures of organizing, and processing. So they are all the products of consciousness. However, there are substantial differences between the value judgment and value evaluation. Value judgment, based on value facts, reflects the objective facts with the criterion of whether it is true. While value evaluation, considering as a presupposition and practice based on value judgments, is a self-regard choice with the criterion of whether it is reasonable. Value evaluation has obvious characteristic of subjective, the subject needs, interests, desires, and pursuits all determine the direction of value evaluation. “The needs of the subject to

some extent are object. It is limited by human physiological conditions and historical conditions. Any needs beyond the human physiological social historical conditions are meaningless and impossible to achieve. Even all the internal and external conditions can be satisfied, human needs are still varied in natural needs, social needs, individual needs, group needs, emotional needs, and material needs. The different classes, strata, social status, education background all contributes to the need variation"[9] this change demonstrated the features of humanity and self-regard. In addition, value evaluation is not a random fantasy by the subject, but a reasonable value evaluation that based on objective facts so it can form a true value judgment. Wrong value judgments is impossible to result in a reasonable value evaluation. Therefore, value judgment is the basis of value evaluation.

Here is the question. What is value evaluation exactly? Value evaluation is the subject's judgment, analysis and presupposition on value facts to form a self-regard viewpoints and opinions and its stable result is called the sense of value. Practice is the parent of value. "As a human specific way of being, practice is a two-way movement between subject and object. While value represents a direction and a meaning in the two-way movement which means the quality and effect of the relationship based on human subjectivity." [10] Value evaluation can be divided into instantaneous evaluation and stable evaluation. The former one is an idea about value and the latter one is regarded as a sense of value. Stable evaluation is the verification and summary of instantaneous evaluation. Once formed, it is difficult to change, and it will be expressed by the language and behavior of the evaluation subject.

The sense of value is human's subjective reflection and evaluation on relationship between objective values and value. The science of the value firstly depends on whether it objectively reflects the value and value relationship, including the subject value, the object value, and the interaction between the subject and the object. So we can say that values demand for a comprehensive reflection on value issues. Any party lacking in a value relationship or the failure of forming a correct understanding about any party directly affects the science of the sense of value. In addition, the second part of formation of sense of values is the reasonable evaluation on the value relationship. Although the evaluation is subjective, the subjective evaluation, based on objective values, reflects the consciousness of the subject and the "self-regard" characteristic "Where there is a relationship, the relationship exist because of me." [11] Therefore, the sense of value places human in a dynamic world where it requires human beings to flexibly and objectively understand and deal with various value relationships based on objective facts. The demand of both reflecting the subjective factors and following the objective value relationship requires a comprehensive understanding of the human subject and object dynamics to obtain a reasonable evaluation.

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