

is made, however, it may operate to obscure the actual and potential relations of valuative judgments to factual judgments.

A second point to be noted is that, as Carnap himself says, a value statement “may have effects upon the actions of men, and these effects may be either in accordance with our wishes or not.” Indeed, a or the distinctive function of valuation is to determine what is really wanted, to foresee which candidate desire we most wish to unleash into action—all things considered. Doubtless in this process many of the judgments are predominantly descriptive, but they assist in forming, informing, and reforming wishes. It certainly cannot correctly be said that a statement that actual or probable effects are or are not in accord with desires—our own or those of others—does not assert anything and cannot be proved or disproved. And if it be insisted that by definition this is a factual or descriptive, not a valuative or normative, judgment, it must nonetheless be acknowledged that such judgment assists in performing a function essential to all intelligent adjustment—the function which we have called “normative.” From the viewpoint under consideration, logical analysis of single propositions may have operated to conceal this function—a function which can be performed only with the coöperation of a number of processes and acts, some or all of which may or may not be stated.

It may be noted in the third place that although Carnap recognizes the possibility and importance of inquiry regarding value statements and acts of valuation, he seems not to recognize it as the vital function of informing action. Nor does he apparently see the full significance of action and interaction for the formation and correction of judgments. He does recognize, at least for morals, a part of what we have called the normative function, though he prefers to call it empirical or scientific ethics.

The word “Ethics” is used in two different senses. Sometimes a certain empirical investigation is called “Ethics,” *viz.* psychological and sociological investigations about the actions of human beings, especially regarding the origin of these actions from feelings and volitions and their effects upon other people. Ethics in this sense is an empirical scientific investigation; it belongs to empirical science rather than to philosophy.

Fundamentally different from this is ethics in the second sense, as the philosophy of moral values or moral norms, which one can designate normative ethics. This is not an investigation of facts, but a pretended investigation of what is good and what is evil, what is right to do and what is wrong to do.<sup>12</sup>

But that empirical ethics is restricted to a study of what has already occurred seems obvious from the following:

To avoid misunderstanding it must be said that we do not at all deny the possibility and importance of a scientific investigation of value statements as well as of acts of valuation. Both of these are acts of individuals and are, like all other kinds of acts, possible objects of empirical investigation. Historians, psychologists, and sociologists may give analyses and causal explanations of them, and such historical and psychological propositions about acts of valuation and about value statements are indeed meaningful scientific propositions which belong to ethics in the first sense of this word. But the value statements themselves are here only objects of investigation; they are not propositions in these theories, and have here as elsewhere, no theoretical sense. Therefore we assign them to the realm of metaphysics.<sup>13</sup>

According to this view, science is apparently a study of what has already occurred. Philosophy, or inclusive and critical inquiry and reflection, gives us no assistance in criticising assumptions or in envisaging wider horizons. Neither thinking nor overt action is given a constructive or reconstructive role in the formation of facts and values.

The logical empiricists might conceivably admit all three points just stressed: that value statements are not merely expressions of wish, that desires are appraised and reformed by consideration of the conditions and effects of action, and that thought and action may assist each other in such consideration.<sup>14</sup> But they or others may still insist that in the case of factual verification there is

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26. See also footnote 14 below.

<sup>14</sup> These points appear to be largely granted by Carnap in the following note, dated May 9, 1943, which is gladly reproduced at his request:

“I should like to add a few remarks to my earlier formulations on ethics in *Philosophy and Logical Syntax* (1935), in order to clarify my position.

“Moral value statements are meant by some philosophers as statements concerning the probable consequences of the acts in question. To call a kind of behavior good or bad is meant here as saying that it is a suitable or unsuitable way to a certain aim.

reference to something substantial, something which is as it is regardless of the wishes or other reactions of the knower, whereas valuative “verification” always rests finally upon wishes, no matter how well informed these may be. So, as Charner M. Perry has put it, norms or the normative ride but loosely upon existence. The implication in both cases is that factual formulations do or can correspond more closely and exactly to existence.

There is, of course, a sense in which it is true that normative propositions and formulations of “ought” do not and cannot “correspond” so closely to “more proper forms of existence,” such as the actual physical, social, or physiological state of affairs. For it is the very nature and function of wish to go beyond or to set itself over against previous, present, or probable non-wish existentials—even to go beyond previous wishes themselves. Such reaction is what wishing is. If an existing state of affairs were wholly satisfactory or secure, there would probably be no rise of desire and no expression of preference among desires. The function of a normative formulation is not merely to express what already exists independent of the desiring subject’s desires, but to express and to appraise desires themselves. Such formulations are, then, to be regarded as verified in, the degree that they direct further action

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For instance, “killing is evil” may be meant as saying: ‘killing is not a suitable way to further a harmonious community life.’ On the basis of any interpretation of this kind, e.g. in terms of instrumental function or of human interests or the like, a value statement has obviously factual, cognitive content.

“On the other hand, suppose a philosopher refuses to give to his value statements any interpretation which makes them either analytic or subject to test by empirical evidence; perhaps he says explicitly that a certain act is good not because of any consequences it may have but merely by its intrinsic nature. Value statements of this kind may be called absolute, in contrast to those mentioned before which are relative to certain aims. The critical judgment of logical empiricism is directed only against absolute value judgments, such as occur frequently in works of European philosophers, not against the relative ones, which prevail in philosophical discussions in this country.

“Since the word ‘meaning’ is often used in a wider sense, I wish to emphasize that the kind of meaning which we deny for absolute value statements is only cognitive (theoretical, assertive) meaning. These statements certainly have expressive, especially emotive and motivative, meaning; this fact is of great importance for their social effectiveness.”

See also Feigl, “Logical Empiricism,” in *Twentieth Century Philosophy*.

prosperously or satisfactorily, not merely in terms of their exact correspondence with nondesire events.

But desires are not disembodied entities or acts. They are at least complex interplays of complex personal or internal energies maintaining themselves by interaction with complex environmental or external forces. These energies and forces, these interplays and interactions, are what they are or are becoming. They set limits to the feasibility of the desires which they are or occasion. They are the physical, social, and personal conditions which must be met and adjusted. Formulations of desires and oughts are therefore subject to some measure of testing with respect to their correspondence both with particular desires and with many desires operating complexly together, both with short or narrow visioned desires and with long and wide visioned desires.

This may also be granted, but it may be objected that such testing is not really verification, that the degree of normative testing is slight as compared with descriptive verification, and that it ends in setting up desires against each other, desires which are ultimately arbitrary and cannot in any proper sense be validated. Three points are to be noted, however.

The first is that both descriptive and normative formulations are formulations. Each is the product of complex mediation. Errors and illusions occur in even the simplest sensory perception. The classic example concerning the certainty of seeing aright the "bent" stick protruding from the water is but a striking instance of the falsification which in the nature of the case doubtless occurs in some respects and to some degree in all perception. And if it be that the whole of existence is composed of myriads of events and relations and that all of them are in process of change and interaction and no two exactly alike, how much more subject to probability must be all generic propositions, even those denoting perceptions of meanings and relations of symbols. These considerations do not disparage description and descriptive verification, but they do emphasize both the need for and the relative character of experimental verification in the case of all descriptive as well as all normative formulations.