

Eidos, the Eidetic and the Reification of Value.

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I believe it necessary to attempt to describe the actual process of reification - the construction of value as it is perceived and given meaning within our minds eye. Specifically the process by which a quantity of value is perceived as itself – so that it exists in a relation of commensurability to the holders of value - in its form of equivalence in the form and its measure as money (price) in exchange.

Value within capitalism is necessarily a quantitative relation of equivalence. The notion of equivalence is necessarily a quantitative relation because the possibility of a same/same relation is required. Without the possibility of the formation of equivalence, the purpose of the assessment (measurement) of value in exchange would not exist. The perception of a same/same (value/price) relation is required by any consensual act of mutual exchange.

The underlying concern for a morality to the market and the requirement that exchange is an act of volition warrants that there be a same/same relation to commodity exchange. The Smithsonian notion of equilibrium and Pareto optimality is implicitly a theorisation of that fact that is underpinned by a concern for justice embedded in the market. Slavery = theft, Feudalism = unequal exchange, Capitalism = equality? Next stage = generosity? Generosity as an organising principle involving collective giving without the expectation of debt (equivalence in return for the IOU) as a voluntary system of spontaneous order in giving.

In order to describe the actual process of reification of value - these axes upon which value is constructed, translated and indeed represented must be detailed. For each of these requires its own cognitive relation to interpretation and meaning - the holy trinity and the transubstantiation of the necessary movements between, all the while the requirement for a singularity within.

Value of the commodity finds its formation in the abstract socially necessary labour time plus the transfer of the value of constant capital required under normal (socially necessary) conditions of production. This is comprehended in its state as the organic composition of human labour to technology (constant capital) and is such constitutive of the exchange value of a thing that is of use and is thus in demand. There are three dimensions to the consideration of value formation from valorisation to realisation and they consist of:

- Value of labour power (its use creates a value greater than itself - it is the material relation of a social ontology)

- Value of money -its use-value is its exchange-value. Money has no intrinsic value but its capacity to command value in the commodity form.

- Value of value - where the validation of equivalence in the moments of exchange is the reckoning of value. The question is what are we essentially measuring value against (time/ gold/ opportunity cost etc). In some sense this is a historical positioning and juggling exercise. Perhaps exchange rates can be placed into this category. Although in themselves they do not hold the essence of value they are adjusted via market trading that does react to the desire for determining the value of value. The point to be made though is that in a crisis there is a run / scramble for the value of value. This essentially involves the conceptual to gravitate toward the material (crises of transubstantiation).

Currency is too immaterial to be the definition of value at such a point of crises – because in a floating market there is an unbounded regression. It does however suffice in a day to day account of a statement of rates in the evening news – necessary for trade and an assessment of the health of macro-economic stability. And thereby the value of value is conceptually sustained.

Any description of reification is necessarily a description of the subjective process of objectification - how is commensurability and equivalence established in both conceptual understanding and in the civil accord of the market.

It is instructive to look at points of conflict where reference is made from many analogous historical resolutions of same/same disputes. Role of law is to determine the actuality of the same/same relation (same/same or not). That is to establish a binary relation to include or exclude history and its origins / or occurrences from consideration. In this way it establishes integrity to change - ostensibly - but more often than not now an attempt at extrication from the rules (deregulatory evangelism).

The analogue and the digital logic - the concrete and the abstract – the eidos and the binary negation - the switching from one to the next (interplay between) is the dialectic. The long term tendency is towards singularity - absolute truths. The absolute being the unequivocal nature of interpretation.

Words are in a sense the digitalisation of the analogue. In their form they are constructed by pro-forma rules of interpretation, however, what the sound/script indicates is a meaning - an insight borne of some image or genealogical understanding. Thus at the core is the analogical relation of word to some abstracted truth or interpreted meaning.

Eidetics is a theory of perceptual cognition / memory and retrieval that links understanding and thought to the capacity for photographic glance / recognition. Translated it is something akin the image as idea. Perhaps the most useful metaphor is that of the mind's eye. But the relation is that popularised by semiotics of the sign and its signifier. It is significant for a positioning of a theory of the image and its meaning – perceptual images – and the actual processes of subjective projection, reflection and recall.

There are many different areas in which eidetics as a theory of perception/memory/cognition is used

- from pedagogical methods for early childhood teaching (because children are believed to have a greater eidetic capacity than adults who are more linguistically orientated in thought and cognitive process) and:
- Also interestingly enough in the field of artificial intelligence. Computer systems of memory compression, bootstrapping and flash retrieval.
- The other area is that of memory expansion techniques – programs for speed reading based on what is often referred to as developing a photographic memory etc.

"Optical perception (or eidetic) images are phenomena that take up an intermediate position between sensations and images." (Jaensch 1970: 1)

When there is little influence of the imagination these images are just slightly intensified after images. When the influence of the imagination is at its maximum they are ideas that, like after-images, are projected outward and literally seen. (Jaensch: 2) The significance is that the phenomenon of eidetic

images manifests itself between after images and memory image. Consider in this context holographic consciousness.

Eidetic phenomena is a peculiar, distinct class of psychic phenomena not simply because what we are dealing with are not simply visual memory images or after images from normal everyday being-in-the-world and perception. But because decades of TV news media and images from the myriad of forms of cultural representation have infused our understanding as well as the pace of our cognition around increasingly didactic lives. As a consequence, narratives and concepts are processed in more perceptive (subliminal) minds and thus, our processes of perception and capacity for it have become more acute and sophisticated. How has this affected value, the real and the nature of change? Simply it can be appreciated that it has contributed to exponentially increasingly the possibility for understanding of the real in its multiplicity of positional realities in the tele-media temporarily alert societies.

"There is an intimate connection between the structure of perceptions and that of eidetic images, so that both classes of phenomena obey similar laws, which in the limiting cases are identical" (Janensch 19)

Eidetics shows that there are residues of images and experiences that are capable of being parts of the structure of perceptions, because they are concrete and not, like many contents of knowledge, purely abstract. Our 'mirror world' (opt cit 24) the part of the environment that is mirrored in consciousness constitutes our perceptual world in which semantic perception and the congruence of what is real is formed.

The hermeneutic circle is continental philosophy's theoretically expounded equivalent of a theory of eideticism. Herein the foundations of discourse and

inter-subjective understanding and phenomenological approaches to meaning and understanding map the cognitive process of the eidos. Indeed the hermeneutic circle is a useful analogy for the process of understanding and the theory of eidetics. Inasmuch as the notion that understanding or a definition of something employs attributes which already presuppose an understanding or definition of that thing (the a priori as the point of cognitive return of recognition and validation).

The essence of a hypothesis of eidetics within the realm of economic theory can be located within an understanding of the necessary and hence the recognition of value and the real in the instantaneous processes of perception of a thing – as it is – in both use and exchange value in the simple act of a glance as flash recognition. This is the processes and moment of reification. Why are eidetics important in an analysis of reification? Because price has a history of understanding - a history in the market for each commodity. A history which is successively encoded into our memory/consciousness via:

- Experience of exchange in purchase / transaction. This is perhaps the most conscious and strongest after image of a commodities price because in the act of the decision to purchase in exchange we make the conscious evaluation of commensurability of our labour-time (wages) and that of another's (commodity price).
- Indirectly through advertising / particularly TV as well as brochures (glossy ones) and window shopping. TV game shows like the New Price Is Right are in a sense the revelling of a consciousness of price as entertainment based simply on the capacity for recall and relativism.

It is worth noting that women almost sociologically know the prices of food/clothing and white goods, whereas kids recognise fair price of games and computers and men (even to political extremes) obsess over the right

price for beer and petrol. This is an observation applicable along the lines of Heidegger and the notion of situated understanding.

There is an obvious sense in which it can be stated as a matter of fact that price is determined via a process of the consideration of labour equivalence - particularly for the majority who work to live (ie, where earning is not a inconsequential adjunct to spending capacity). When stopping for a lunch break - to spend in one hour more than one makes in one hour simply for sustenance is irrational unless like in the case of a consumer durable its benefit can be enjoyed over a commensurable or greater period of time.

If the eidetic is about the semantic perception of value and the real then it involves a mapping of the syntactic and semantic processes of representation within the culture of capitalism. Semantic universals as well as conceptual dependencies and meaning equivalences have saliency within positional histories of the known and the necessary.

Syntax is a system of meaning that has significance for the lexical process of conveying truth. The perception of the image however obeys the rules of poetics – juxtaposition / allusion / synonym /analogy / metaphor /suggestion / reversal / optical sequencing – to construct semantic perception.

Price is always accompanied by a context of explanation (marketing) – contents contains, features include, warranty lasts for etc etc - if it is higher in market price than its class of substitutable goods it competes with it is not selected for purchase – unless it posses other attractive qualities (colour, texture etc). The use of environmentally friendly marketing (unbleached toilet paper or dolphin friendly tuna) is a case in point.

But the fact remains that a price a consumer is willing to pay is dependant on a historical understanding of the socially necessary labour time necessary for the production of this or that. Why else would we expect cheaper products from China or be willing to pay a high price for technologically sophisticated products from Japan. Why would consumers be willing to pay a higher price for goods made in Australia but to protect local wage rates? In the absence of other price competitive and quality concerns the decision to purchase - the recognition of the price as right - will depend on whether the specific price is seen as not out of sync with the normal – the known – the necessary.

And this is an act of recognition that replicates the act of an eidetic conscious process that surmises a coherence of value and the real. Essentially this is a process of mapping from sense-data to semantic representation. Thereby it is possible to locate the reifications of value in the form of recognition of the real in price in the realm of perceptual cognition and memory and that links understanding / thought to the capacity for photographic glance. Perhaps the most useful metaphor is the recognition of the minds eye.