
What's in a (natural) valuation?

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Abstract

Mark Bedau's value-centered theory of teleology becomes the theoretical ground of his incursion into the objectification of values, which he explores observing the way traits react to selection pressures, that is, its "evolutionary activity". Intrinsic to this view is the construal of selection as a valuation device. However, Bedau's views of teleology and value have certain inconsistencies, which center around, precisely, of what a valuation consist of. While Bedau's statement that there can be no real teleology without values seems to be correct, its identification of certain recurrent etiologies as *telic mechanisms* takes valuation in the wrong direction. Etiological views of teleology tend to conflate origin and value of functional traits. In contrast, my proposal offers a view of valuation which centers around the independence between the origin and the value of a trait, and explores the consequences of this view for the issue of biological functions in the context of Artificial Life (ALife). A result of this perspective on valuation and functions is a singular view of novelty and creativity in evolution.

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