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Status Maxims

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Status Maxims

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The presentation of the concepts of Person and Behavior has been accomplished by means of various related conceptual-notational devices. Among these are the following.

1. The parametric analysis of behavior, and the general formula for behavior.
2. The calculational system for generating forms of behavior description.
3. The Judgment Diagram for reconstructing, analyzing, and criticizing Deliberate Actions.
4. The Emotion Formulas for reconstructing, analyzing, and criticizing emotional behaviors.
5. The definition of Person.
6. The parametric analysis of persons.
7. The Developmental Schema for historical explanation of personal change.
8. The Relationship Formula and Relationship Change formulas for explaining behavior.
In addition, familiarity with the calculational system, parametric analyses, and descriptive formats dealing with reality concepts in "What Actually Happens" was largely presupposed.

The present section provides a different sort of access to the Person Concept, with emphasis on the concepts of Person and Behavior, particularly in relation to the reality concepts and specifically excluding reference to verbal behavior. This access is given by a set of related mottoes, or maxims. These maxims are, effectively, a set of rules or principles for distinguishing formally and methodologically adequate formulations of actual (historical) persons and their behavior. Thus, they reflect a shift from the more expository presentation of a set of distinctions and conceptual structures to a more tutorial instruction in how to use them appropriately.

As in the case of the rules of a game, these rules all apply simultaneously. At first blush, it may seem impractical to apply approximately one hundred rules simultaneously. In fact, however, once a general sort of mastery has been attained, the issues, perplexities, and uncertainties which arise are likely to involve relatively specific points, and it is therefore helpful to be able to refer to relatively specific and discrete rules. Unlike the case with the rules of a game, there is no way
of generating a set of rules here which is either finite and exhaustive or uniquely definitive. This is because each 'rule' is simply another 'view' of the same conceptual structure, the Person Concept, and there is no end to such views and also no privileged set.

Historically, the practice of constructing formulations which are in accordance with the maxims and using them in accordance with the maxims has been called "Status Dynamics." The maxims are, accordingly, designated as Status-Dynamic maxims.

Heuristically, the maxims have been organized below into nine groups. These groups are designated as follows.

A. Person and World
B. Behavioral Choice
C. Value and Behavioral Choice
D. Stability and Change
E. Person and Community
F. Persons and Other Persons
G. Person and Self
H. Limits, Constraints, and Limitations
I. Norms, Baselines, and Burdens of Proof

The various maxims under these headings are presented directly below without elaboration in order to facilitate summary reference. Following that, they are
presented again, this time with sufficient explication and elaboration to provide some practical guidelines for use. Rules, of course, have to be interpreted and applied, hence the maxims should not be taken to have the same kind and degree of inflexibility as mere truths.

The distinction between maxims and truths in this respect is important on two counts. The first is that rules or maxims are primarily something to act on, in contrast to truths, which are primarily something to be judged and learned, and therefore the use of maxims is a reminder that the Person Concept formulation, no less than the Person Concept, is primarily something to be acted on rather than something to be learned or believed. The second is that most of the maxims could be taken straightforwardly as tautologies or sentential formulas in a theory of behavior, and therefore the temptation to deal with them in terms of a truth evaluation is, for many, an overwhelming temptation.
D. Stability and Change

D1. A historical individual acquires a given individual characteristic by virtue of having the prior capacity and the relevant intervening history.

D1a. A person acquires a given person characteristic by virtue of having the prior capacity and the relevant intervening history.

D2. A historical individual having a finite history has some non-acquired characteristics during some part of that history.

D3. If a person acquires a given person characteristic he acquires it in one of the ways in which it can be acquired.

D3a. If a person acquires a given relationship to something he acquires it in one of the ways in which it can be acquired.

D4. A person acquires concepts and skills (know how), archetypally, by practice and experience in one or more of the social practices which call for the use of (and offer opportunities for the use of) that concept or skill.

D5. What a person takes to be the case about the world is the outcome of his observation, thought, and action.
D6. If a person has a given person characteristic he continues to have it until it changes.

D7. If a person has a given relationship to something he continues to have it until it changes.

D8. If a person, C, has a relationship, R, to Z, and if C's behavior with respect to Z is such that it violates R and expresses RR, then R will change in the direction of RR.

D9. If a person knows something he continues to know it until he forgets it or changes his mind.

D10. (A9) A person takes the world to be as he has found it to be.

D11. The world is subject to reformulation by persons.

E. Person and Community

E1. A person requires a community in order for it to be possible for him to engage in human behavior at all.

E2. A person requires that the community be one way rather than another in order for him to behave in one way rather than another.

E3. A community is characterized by a common world, a language, a structure of social practices, ways of living, and individual members.

E4. A person's place in the community provides reasons and opportunities to engage in one behavior rather than another.
E5. To engage in a deliberate action is to participate in a social practice of the community.

E6. If a person participates in a social practice he must do it in one of the ways it can be done.

E7. When a person is in a pathological state there is a significant restriction in his ability to participate in the social practices of the community.

E8. If a person makes non-normative changes in his participation in the social practices of the community, that calls for an explanation.

E9. A person may act as a representative of the community or as merely a member.

E10. A person takes it that a member of the community has the personal characteristics required for normal participation in the social practices of the community unless he has reason enough to think otherwise.

E11. Reasons for behavior (deliberate action) are states of affairs which are Contingencies (as defined the Basic Process Unit) within the structure of the social practice of which the behavior is an optional component.

F. Interactions of Persons

F1. The behavior of one person with respect to another is a participation in [at least] one of the social practices of his community.
F2. (B9) If A has the relation R to C the behaviors of A with respect to C will be an expression of R, unless:

(a) A is acting on a different relationship which takes precedence
(b) A doesn't recognize the relationship for what it is
(c) A is unable to do so
(d) A mistakenly believes that A is doing so, or
(e) A miscalculates or A's behavior miscarries.

F3. If C and Z participate in a social practice, the fact that Z participates in one way rather than another (or chooses that social practice rather than another) gives C a reason to participate correspondingly in one way rather than another.

F3a. C's behavior with respect to Z may be a case of participating in two or more social practices simultaneously.

F3b. If C and Z participate in a social practice C may anticipate to some extent Z's choices among behavioral options on the basis of Z's personal characteristics, and relationships to C and others.

F3c. Z may participate in one way rather than another (choose certain options rather than others) as a way of letting C know what kind of person Z is.
F4. If C has a given relationship to Z, C's behavior potential is different from what it otherwise would have been.

F4a. If Z has a greater behavior potential than P, it is likely that C would gain more behavior potential from a positive relationship with Z than with P.

F5. If C makes the first move in a social practice, that invites Z to continue the enactment of the practice by making the second move. (Move 1 invites Move 2.)

F6. If C makes the second move in a social practice, that makes it difficult for Z not to have already made the first move. (Move 2 preempts Move 1.)

F7. Z's positive or negative evaluation of C's behavior provides reasons for C to continue, discontinue, modify, or elaborate (etc.) such behavior.

F7a. If C chooses his behavior under the description "Bl" and Z redescribes it as "B2" and C accepts the redescription and C appraises B2 differently from Bl, then C will have an additional reason to engage in Bl or not to engage in Bl, depending on the nature of the appraisal.

G. Person and Self

G1. A person is an individual whose history is, paradigmatically, a history of deliberate action.

G2. A person has a status in the real world.
G3. A person has a status in the world as an Actor, as an Observer/Describer, and as an Appraiser, or Critic.

G4. A person has a status in the world as a possible-Actor, as a possible-Observer/Describer, and as a possible-Appraiser/Critic.

G5. A person's statuses as Actor, Observer, and Appraiser each correspond to distinctive sorts of relationship to the world and/or parts of the world either simply or in their aspects.

G5a. A person acts as himself.

G5b. A person knows about himself.

G5c. A person knows about his relation to the world and his place in it.

G5d. A person evaluates his worth.

H. Limits, Constraints, and Limitations

H1. A person's personal characteristics correspond to reality constraints on the behaviors he can engage in.

H1a. (B7) If the situation calls for a person to do something he can't do, he will do something he can do, if he does anything at all.
H1b. If the situation calls for a person to enact a behavior for which he lacks the requisite knowledge, he will enact some other behavior for which he has the requisite knowledge, if he does anything at all.

H1c. If the situation calls for a person to enact a behavior for which he lacks the requisite motivational priorities, he will enact some other behavior for which he has the requisite motivational priorities if he does anything at all.

H2. A person's personal characteristics correspond to reality constraints on the ways in which he can acquire personal characteristics and relationships.

H2a. A person's personal characteristics correspond to reality constraints on which personal characteristics and relationships he can acquire.

H3. A person's world is made up of possibilities and non-possibilities for behaving.

H4. A person's self concept is a summary, and primarily intuitive (unreflective) formulation of his behavior potential.

H5. All the world's a stage.

H5a. Status takes precedence over fact.

H5b. Reality takes precedence over truth.

H6. (C2) A person will not choose to actualize less behavior potential rather than more.
H7. Behavior goes right, if it doesn't go wrong in one of the ways it can go wrong.

H8. A person always acts under conditions of uncertainty.

H9. A person always has enough information to act on.

I. Norms, Baselines, and Burdens of Proof

I1. A person takes it that things are as they seem, unless he has reason enough to think otherwise.

I2. (A9, D10) A person takes the world to be as he has found it to be.

I3. If a person has a given person characteristic and his behavior is an expression of it, that calls for no explanation, whereas if his behavior violates that person characteristic, that does call for an explanation.

I4. If a person has a given relationship and his behavior is an expression of it, that calls for no explanation, whereas if his behavior violates that relationship that does call for an explanation.

I5. If a person's relationships or personal characteristics change, that calls for an explanation.

I6. A person's behavior goes right, if it doesn't go wrong in one of the ways in which it can go wrong.
I7. A person takes it that a person who is a member of a group, class, or set of persons is a typical member until and unless he discovers differences.

I8. (E8) If a person makes non-normative choices, that calls for an explanation.

I9. If a person engages in an intrinsic social practice, that calls for no further explanation.