

“The Bridge: A-QED”

By Jeff Huggins

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(In this message, I'll talk a bit about the “bridge”. As you'll see, I'm using the abbreviating phrase ‘A-QED’ as a simplifying nomenclature, and an easy device to remember, in order to convey a key aspect of the matter, not in the formal sense of ‘QED’, for present purposes.)

With that said, consider the substance or matter of the “bridge”, the connecting matter, the common foundation, the overlap, or the intersection between the science associated with human morality and the philosophy of human morality, i.e., the moral philosophy of the matter.

One way to put the bridge is this: It has to do with the relationship between “A” and “Q-E-D”, where A, Q, E, and D are as follows:

A — The effective “ultimate” function of Adaptations, in the scientific senses of those words. (And, I use the term ‘effective’ here in its sense of “in effect”, not in the sense of “perfectly accomplished”.)

Q — The “to be, or not to be” Question (or as Camus calls it, the question of suicide) posed with respect to the existence and survival of an interdependent social group, such as a species, by that group. “Q” is a question that we inherit as part of being alive.

E — A comparative Examination of the three possible “macro” responses to “Q”. The three possible responses are: an affirmative (life-affirming) response; a negative (life-negating, and thus self-defeating) response; and an avoidant or ignore-ant response. These three possible responses can be examined and weighed/compared in light of the best combination of empirical evidence and human thinking that we humans can muster.

D — A reasoned Decision, i.e., a choice, from among the three possible responses to “Q” according to the examination, “E”. In other words, we can choose the best-reasoned, most coherent, and most reasonable response from among the three possible responses to “Q”.

In other words, the bridge—or, if you like, the foundation and structure of the bridge—has to do with the vital relationships between these two considerations:

One Consideration: The effective “ultimate” function of adaptations, in the scientific senses of those words.

The Other Consideration: The best, most well-reasoned response to the “to be, or not to be” question, when posed with respect to the existence and survival of an interdependent social group such as the human species, by that group, that we can make based on a carefully considered examination of the three available responses in light of the best combination of empirical evidence and human thinking we humans can muster.

For some purposes (not all), one can think of “A” as representing “the science of the matter” and of “Q-E-D” as representing “the philosophy of the matter”. That said, the point of, and considerations associated with, “Q” and “E” and “D” are also grounded in—and consistent with—a combination of empirical evidence and excellent reasoning based on that evidence. In other words, the “QED” part is also consistent with science. Of course, for the bridge to be a real and robust one, BOTH “A” and “Q-E-D” must be consistent with BOTH science and excellent reasoning, or (in other words) BOTH excellent science and excellent philosophy.

For those interested in considering these matters, it’s helpful to also note the following: First, our human understanding of the universe is probabilistic in nature. There are some great quotes, of course—and two of them are from Aristotle and Cicero—about this point, and of course scientific understanding is thought of in probabilistic terms. And Second, if we keep within the view or assumption that our scientific and philosophical conclusions shouldn’t assume or involve the existence of a supernatural authority, or the assumption that such an authority will give us “the answers” or will justify our human existence to us, for us, then such view or assumption carries a number of implications when it comes to the term ‘justification’, the notion of “proof”, and the nature of probabilistic understanding.

The point and scope of today's message are "introductory", of course, and aren't meant to go into details. Interested readers should (please) refer to other recent messages for more introductory context and a few more details:

My message, "Darwin, Camus, and Hamlet went into a bar, AND . . .", on CHORA (June 13).

My message, ""Robot Revelations": An Opportunity", on PHILOS-L (June 22).

My message, "To Scientifically Informed Philosophers and Philosophically Minded Scientists", on PHILOS-L (June 11).

Also, readers interested in these matters, and in more detail and explanation, should (please) refer to materials on my website, www.ObligationsOfReason.com . I'd suggest the following materials, all included on the "Additional Material From The Author" page of the website:

"On Morality: Key Considerations and a Bridge"

"What good am I?"

"On Morality"

"Regarding 'Directional Dynamics' and 'Normative Facts'"

"The Morality of Sustainability: A DIY Exploration"

"A Framework and Paradigm Of Morality"

Interested parties can reach me via my website or, more directly, via my e-mail address, xxxxxxxxx.

Thanks for your consideration and attention.

Be Well,

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