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Ethics and Morality as Axiological and Praxeological Semiospheres of Culture: First Steps to a Conceptual Framework

Abstract: Against the background of logical-philosophical conceptions of sign and meaning coming from general semiotics, which operatively function as superordinating classifiers in the domain of human-centered semiotics, this article aims at construing a unified model of ethicality and morality of humans as two complementary axiological and praxeological semiospheres of culture. In this model, the significant goods of culture, manifesting either in values or virtues, are labelled as axiosignificates, whereas the significant tools, manifesting either in functions or interests, are esteemed as praxeosignificates. Accordingly, the distinctions between two orders of culture, as “value-and-purpose” vs. “function-and-need”, are counterposed to the opposition between “virtue-and-duty” vs. utility-and-interest”. Appropriately, axiosignificates of an ethical individual are rendered in terms of competence, in other words, knowledge of the public self, and the praxeosignificates of a moral individual respectively as performance of a private self. While confronting the virtue- or utility-oriented semiospheres, the article refers *ethics* to the responsibility-awareness of a public self as a participant of group decision-making, and *morality* to the interactive conduct of a private self as an agent of individual decision-making. Finally, it ascertains that the duty-related choice of virtues belongs to the axiosemiotics of culture, and the utility-related acts constitute its praxeosemiotic sphere.

Keywords: culture and civilization, ethics and morality, meaning and significance, axiology and praxeology