METAMODE INSTITUTE ON PUBLIC POLICY

Profile

June 24, 2013

Mission Statement

The mission of the Metamode Institute is twofold: first, the development and promotion of a forward thinking approach to the public policy process in addressing the critical problems and issues facing Canada and the world in the 21st century; second, the generation and dissemination of forward thinking, public-policy solutions with a view to enhancing the workings of our free market economies, the nurturing of socio-cultural and political conditions where individual rights and freedoms are valued and safeguarded; and advancing the cause of good and effective governance and peace.

The Institute has been in operation as a discussion group since 1997. It was incorporated as a non-profit corporation without share capital in 2001. The notion of *metamode* refers to the capacity of rationality to break free of its own constructs, contrivances, and designs--intellectual, cultural or otherwise. It can also be defined as "the ability of human intelligence to extricate itself from the contexts it creates". In the process, rationality is able to switch into a forward thinking mode in order to seek out, assess, and construct new means-ends relationships. Thus, the purpose of the Institute, as articulated in the mission statement above, is to examine public policy questions and issues from this perspective and to generate breakthrough solutions that effectively address some of the critical problems of our times.

Please note that in the next several months the Institute will be undergoing a review of its goals and its present organizational parameters. As a first step, a decision has been taken to phase out the Advisory Council and to replace it down the road with a governing group reflecting a new long-term plan for the further development of the Institute and its new organizational parameters. The names of the individuals who have honoured the Institute by serving on the Council from 1997 to 2008 found listed in the next section.

LEGACY ADVISORY COUNCIL (1997-2008)

We would like to thank all of the individuals listed below for their support and advice on the promotion and development of the Institute from its founding in 1997 to the Advisory Council's retirement in 2008. For the record, it should be noted that Institute releases during this period did not reflect the views of any particular member of the Council, but expressed only the views and ideas of their authors or the public policy positions of the Institute itself.

It has been a long journey driven by a staunch belief in the vision and mission of the Institute as a means of promoting a forward thinking approach to public policy, as well as a way of examining those fundamental perennial questions with which men and women have struggled spiritually and intellectually in their daily lives over the millennia. Inspired by the following words of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the work of the Institute and its development will continue for the public good.

"Let truth appear but once to a single soul, and nothing can ever stop it from invading everything and setting everything ablaze."

Rose Andrachuk, Barrister and Solicitor, Politician, Former Chair of the Toronto Catholic District School Board

Naim Attallah, Former Director of Astrey of Bond Street, Publisher and Author, London, England

Nicholas Belak, MBA, Retired Public Servant and Investment Analyst and Founding Member of the Metamode Institute

Charles W. Conn, Businessman, Author, and Politician

Dr. Albert Francis Fiorino, Canadian Educator, Author, and Founder of the Metamode Institute

Eleanor S. Vojtech Fiorino, Nursing Educator and Case Manager with the Central West CCAC and Founding Member of the Metamode Institute

Dr. Samuel Gregg, DPhil (Oxon.), Director of Research, Center for Academic Research, Acton Institute, USA

Dr. Joseph Gulsoy, Professor Emeritus at the University of Toronto, Internationally Renowned Scholar in Medieval Studies

Dr. Giuseppe Gori, Leader of the Family Coalition Party of Ontario

Elias Helewa, Retired Businessman, Author, and Founding Member of the Metamode Institute

Rima Hindo, CA, MBA, Accountant, Former Internal Auditor with the Royal Bank of Canada, Consultant

Cahalane (Carla) Jennings, Educator, Author and Poet, Victoria, Australia

The Hon. John C. Major , QC, LLD, Retired Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and currently Counsel with Bennett Jones LLP

Peter Edward O'Rourke , Barrister, Judge, Politician, USA

Imam Abdul Hai Patel, Chaplin at the University of Toronto, Co-ordinator of the Canadian Council of Imams, Former Member of the Ontario Human Rights Commission

Joe Peschisolido, Peschisolido Company--Barristers and Solicitors, Vancouver, BC, Former MP and Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Hon. Stephane Dion, PC, MP and Founding Member of the Metamode Institute

+Isabel Showler
Society of Friends

Dr. Michael A. Stephen
Watson Wyatt Canada, Former President of Aetna Insurance Company of Canada , and Past Chair of Aetna International

John Vojtech Stephens, **LLB**, **QC**, Retired Barrister in Corporate Law, McMillan Binch LLP and Stephens French McEwan LLP, Past Honourary Consul of the Slovak Republic, and Founding Member of the Metamode Institute

The Hon. Peter Van Loan, **PC**, **MP**, York-Simcoe, Minister of Public Safety, and Past Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform

Introduction to *Metamode*
Albert Fiorino, PhD

The Metamode Institute on Public Policy was founded in 1997 on the firm belief that there exists an inherent capacity in human rationality to go beyond itself. Support for this belief can be found in several philosophical traditions (e.g., moderate realism and phenomenological existentialism). This view also finds support in the writings of Karl Mannheim and Herbert Simon in their treatment of rationality, and lies implicit in the social action theory of Chris Argyris. Rationality's ability to distance itself from its own constructs is also presupposed in contemporary meta-contingency theories and is demanded for any clear resolution of critical questions dealing with matters relating to social responsibility and public policy.

The movement on the part of rationality from one means-end connection to another presupposes either a programmed response moving the individual to consider the next means-end relationship or an intentional act on the part of rationality in deciphering a new end and the various means by which to attain it. It is this ability to abstract meaning (intelligibility) from reality that, in 1946, Karl Mannheim in his work, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, calls s*ubstantial rationality*, "the capacity of thought which reveals intelligent insight into the interrelations of events in a given situation" (53) and "the capacity for rational judgment" (58).[*]

It is this meaning-generating capacity of human intelligence that is the basis for the creation of contexts, be they social, cultural, personal, or intellectual. Moreover, it is by way of this same capacity, coupled with rationality's ability to extricate itself from the contexts it creates, that human intelligence is able to seek out, assess, and construct new means-ends relationships. I refer to this new mode of acting on the part of human intelligence as *metarationality*, and to the mode itself as *metamode*. It is through this mode of acting that human intelligence is able to come up with breakthrough ideas, engage in effective conflict resolution, and thus strive to restore order and integration in contexts where disorder and apparent chaos previously prevailed.

Human intelligence is somewhat of an elusive variable and for that reason is either presumed or discounted altogether in scientific theory development. It is always ahead of itself and yet ever present in all of the contexts it creates. Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, the basis of contemporary quantum theory, underlines this paradox. As part of the context, human

intelligence cannot help but disturb the spatio-temporal dynamics in the subatomic field it is investigating. However, it compensates for this disturbance by factoring itself in its fixes on this reality.

In the case of the principle of uncertainty, this compensation assumes form in the development of the theory of quantum mechanics elaborated in the 1920's by Heisenberg, Paul Dirac, and Erwin Schrodinger. In the theory, its proponents elaborate statistical models for predicting the seemingly random behaviour of subatomic particles/waves. For Herbert Simon, this compensatory phenomenon would simply be an example of the workings of *procedural rationality*, which he describes as bounded rationality (limited/subjective) "in search of good solutions"(137). It is rationality, aware of its own limitations, in search of contrivances (material and/or intellectual), which will enable it to obtain greater objectivity. That is the best that rationality can ever hope to achieve in a cosmic context in which objects (from the subatomic to the supra-atomic) and their almost infinite configurations (quantum states) are in constant motion and change.

What is most amazing, nevertheless, and that is the point that is being argued here, rationality is forever moving beyond itself, always posing new questions along the way, never at a loss for fresh insights, and continually seeking innovative means by which to overcome its own limitations. As a creature of space-time, it cannot help but proceed in such an algorithmic way. It is not perturbed, however, that it cannot attain a perfectly objective grasp of reality because it intuitively knows that that mode of knowing can only be the prerogative of an absolutely transcendent Being. It is satisfied with its imperfect understanding of reality realizing that what it knows imperfectly, it knows it with a fair degree of precision; otherwise, it would never have been able to accomplish such feats as space travel or create such procedural contrivances as the computer (somewhat of an extension of itself). In the process, it, at times, even glows in glimpses of its own transcendent origins and kinship, and therein lie its driving force and prime motivation.

From a purely secular perspective, therein lies also the hope for any resolution of the many predicaments humanity faces as it approaches the new millennium. It lies in the resilience of human intelligence and its capacity to go beyond itself--its ability to switch into *metamode*. The shift into this *metagear* cannot be delayed much longer. As Alvin and Heidi Toffler point out in their book *Creating a New Civilization*, the process of social reconstruction (on a global scale) must begin now before further disintegration in the socio-cultural systems takes place (108).

This short discussion of rationality is certainly not free of epistemological and theoretical controversy. The main purpose in this inaugural essay has been simply to introduce the notion of *metamode.* The existence of controversy merely serves to affirm the conception of rationality under discussion.

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*See Albert Fiorino, "Toward a Holistic Approach to the Study of Organizational Rationality", metamode *release*, No. 1 (Fall, 1983), 16p, for an examination of the different "faces of rationality". In the same paper, Dr. Fiorino advances the view that all human behaviour is purposive, including its irrational outcroppings. A version of this paper was also submitted to the *Macdonald/ Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada* in1983. Dr. Fiorino presented an informal version of the same ideas on rationality at the Fifth General Assembly of the World Future Society held in Washington, D.C. in June, 1984. Lastly, he went on to elaborate his views further in another paper entitled, "A Meta-Contingency Model of Rational Choice for a Rapidly Changing World," delivered at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations, Learned Societies Conference '87, held at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, on May 28th, 1987. It was also in this presentation that he first coined the term *metamode*, a shifting of gears on the part of rationality enabling it to go beyond itself in search of new means-ends relationships.

Sources and Other Readings

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Founder's *Vision*

The Metamode Institute is an interactive circle of individuals in search of innovative solutions to the critical problems facing humanity in the 21st century. It represents one person's quest:

to improve the human condition

to provide an answer to the social question

to resolve the ego-centric predicament

to find truths that encompass

to find personal meaning that endures

to discover the links that unite us

The notion of *metamode* implies that individuals do have the capacity to transcend any kind of contextual constraint or restraint in an effort to bring about positive change in the human condition. Thus, the Institute is an affirmation of human intelligence's capacity:

to go beyond its own constructs

to engage in critical thinking

for self-evaluation

to explore the different layers of visible and invisible reality

to achieve objectivity

to grasp the right motive and to act upon it