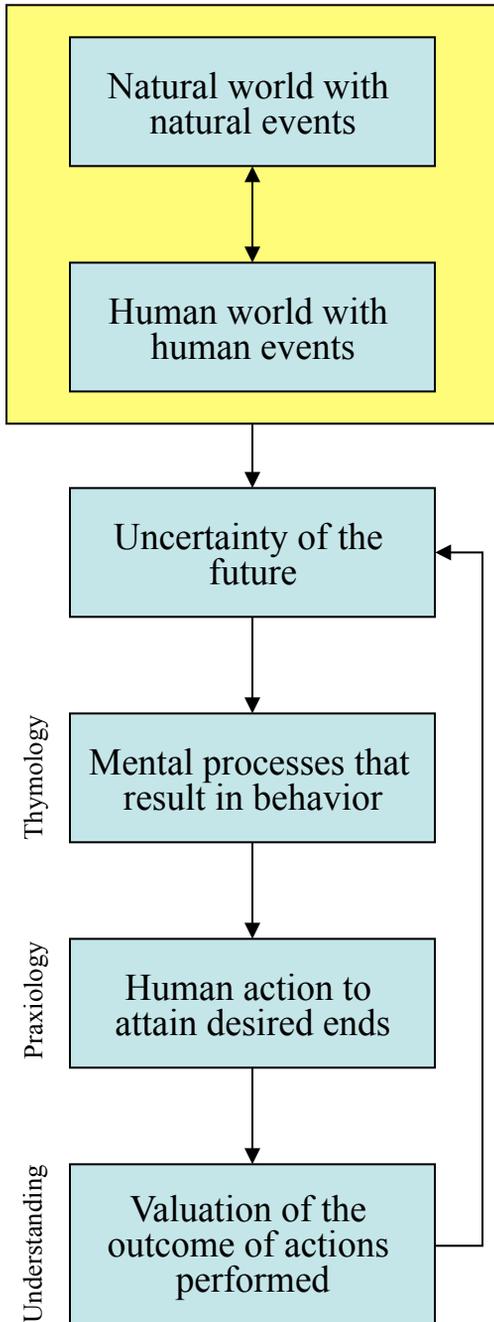


HUMAN ACTION & THE HUMAN MIND

The A-Priori Nature of Human Understanding

Ludwig Von Mises, *The Ultimate Foundation of Economic Science* (2nd Edition), Sheed Andrews & McMeel Inc., Kansas City, 1978.

“[M]an acts. To act means: to strive after ends, that is, to choose a goal and to resort to means in order to attain the goal thought.”



“The environment in which man acts is shaped by natural events on the one hand and by human action on the other.” (p. 46)

“Man acts because he is dissatisfied with the state of affairs as it prevails in the absence of his intervention. Man acts because he lacks the power to render conditions fully satisfactory and must resort to appropriate means in order to render them less satisfactory.” (P.p. 2-3)

“The future for which he plans will be codetermined by the actions of people who are planning and acting like himself. If he wants to succeed, he must anticipate their conduct.” (P. 46)

“The uncertainty of the future is caused not only by uncertainty concerning the future actions of other people, but also by insufficient knowledge concerning many natural events that are important for action.” (P. 46)

“Thymology [the branch of psychology that deals with human action]...deals with the mental activities of men that determine their actions. It deals with the mental processes that result in a definite kind of behavior, with the reactions of the mind to the conditions of an individual’s environment. It deals with something invisible and intangible that cannot be perceived by the methods of the natural sciences.” (P.p. 47-48)

“This specific understanding of the sciences of human action [Verstehen - Category of Understanding] aims at establishing the facts that men attach a definite meaning to the state of their environment, that they value this state, and, motivated by these judgments of value, resort to definite means in order to preserve or to attain a definite state of affairs different from that which would prevail if they abstained from any purposeful reaction. Understanding deals with judgments of value, with the choice of ends and of the means resorted to for the attainment of these ends, and with the valuation of the outcome of actions performed.” (P.48)

“Understanding is not a method of procedure peculiar only to historians. It is practiced by infants as soon as they outgrow the merely vegetative stage of their first days and weeks. There is no conscious response of man to any stimuli that is not directed by understanding.” (P. 48)