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Programming the landscape – the objectification of space

ABSTRACT:
The following paper will attempt to illuminate and elaborate on a distinct pattern of human behavior, namely the idea that the collective actions of groups (cultures) are directed toward the objectification of their environments. This paper will attempt to prove that this is indeed the case, and further, explain why and how this behavior is undertaken. The more focused implication of this broad assertion is that groups are motivated to program their landscapes in order to position themselves within a more predictable temporal trajectory. It is the assertion herein that the capacity for symbolic thought is the primary vehicle through which this achieved.

Keywords: Objectivity, Theory of Mind, Cognition, Imitation, Entrainment, Anticipation

Introduction

Human energy is coated in a symbolic residue. It is the nature of these symbols that allows populations to program their environments for the maximal level of anticipatory efficiency. The foremost concern of this article is to prove the basic premise that, in general, the behavior of populations and individuals is inclined toward the enhancement of perceived predictability in human landscapes. This behavior is ultimately a product of the unique human capacity for symbolic reasoning. Symbols, either mental or tactile, are shared cultural constructs that demand conventionalization and consolidation of meaning to be most effective. In this sense symbols are programmed with meaning by the populations that employ them. As this paper hopes to illustrate, the conventionalization of semantic reactions engendered by symbol programming detaches the individual from the

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sovereignty of their subjectivity, and leads to the objectification of the human landscape.

This investigation posits a fundamental appreciation for how humans navigate our environments. It is the hypothesis of this paper that humans engage in an objectification of the environments we inhabit, consciously or unconsciously, in order to render the future more predictable. In a more dramatic conception, human landscape usage decisions are driven by a biologically embedded imperative to annihilate the unknown. This imperative may be parsed down to gems of folk wisdom regarding the human abhorrence of vacuums, but more essentially asserts the preeminence of anticipatory prowess in human decision-making.

The survival benefit of accurately anticipating the future properties of one's environment should be evident, but a few of the advantages of high predictability and low uncertainty are listed below:

- It increases the amount and reliability of subsistence that can be extracted from an environment (knowing where a fruit tree will be or when to harvest)
- It decreases the risk of predation or natural catastrophe
- It minimizes the amount of energy-calories necessary for the brain to confront and process novel situations.

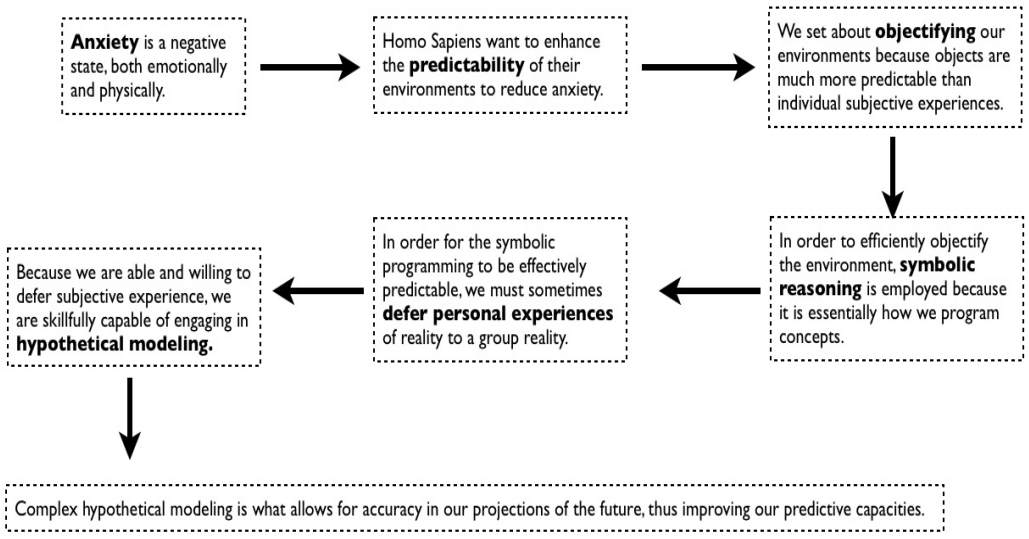
This paper will assume that the benefit of the motivations listed above is inherent. Each is of varying importance, and varying relevance today, but it is clear to see where each motivator could be construed as advantageous, if not essential, to survival. Assuming that these terms are agreeable, the task is now to prove that the attainment of these goals is accomplished through a process of objectification of the human environment.

As an opening caveat, it is crucial to assert that the behaviors to be addressed within are designed to enhance the perceived predictability of the environment. There are indisputably numerous, countless failures in this effort, but what is important is that the behaving agent feels as though they can accurately anticipate

future scenarios. It is this confidence that allows the agent to conserve energy on the anxiety of the unknown -- even if they are dead wrong.

It is the supposition of this paper that human populations have been capable of thriving in environments ill-suited to our original physical adaptations -- the African savannah -- precisely because we have programmed the environments we inhabit to conform to cultural algorithms, which may be relatively accurately forecasted and projected into the future, thus deriving the above list of beneficial effects.

If we allow that the primary goal of social behavior is to render our environments more conducive to predictability, which I hope to prove in the following sections, we can trace this imperative to the pursuit of environmental objectification, which in turn, leads to the introduction of symbolic thought, and eventually to the deferment of subjective experience, which is ultimately what makes us exceptionally gifted hypothetical modelers, which includes projections the future. More cogently, this sequence may be visualized with the help of the following diagram (fig. 1):



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Objectivity, Objectification & Objects

The words objectivity, objectification and object overflow with meaning for many English-speakers. There are several competing definitions and concepts for each. In the parlance of this paper, it is hoped that these numerous connotations can be bridged and inclusive of all. The primary understanding of objectivity is often as an opposition to subjectivity. Whereas subjectiveness is the first-hand experience of an individual, objectiveness is an alleged unbiased interpretation of the environment that is detached from personal experience, and based solely upon exteriorly verifiable data. Subjectiveness is a personal impression based on information accrued through the five individual senses, objectiveness is supported by information from trusted sources, e.g., the theoretical objectivity of the newspaper. There has been much debate on whether total objectivity can ever be attained (Halbwachs 1925). It does appear that human agents, with our contingent life histories, are incapable of complete objectivity, however, the ideal of perfect objectivity is a standard against which newspapers, jurors, judges and politicians are often held. This debate is largely inconsequential to the present paper.

The term objectification has come to represent the dehumanization of people, places or things, often towards ill-intentioned ends. When we speak of objectifying women, we are stripping them of their individuality, their personality, and basically disconnecting them from their subjective experiences of life -- transforming them into predictable and programmable objects. It is the contention of this paper that this process is fundamentally undertaken in order to reduce the anxieties of the unknown, and imbue the objectifier with the (false) confidence inherent in control. This process can be applied to individuals, groups and even environments. While it may seem quizzical to speak of dehumanizing something that is not human (i.e. can we really dehumanize a landscape?), what is truly meant by this, is to desubjectify, that is, to attribute desired programmable properties. And it is certainly possible to

attribute desired properties to a landscape, or in other words to objectify the landscape.

The term object(s), on its own, is also considered in a very precise sense herein. Of primary concern is that objects exhibit properties which may be mapped, described, projected and fully understood. The woman as an object has properties which can be controlled and projected, whereas the woman (or any gender) as an individual is unpredictable, thus a source of anxiety -- negatively taxing on our energy allocation. Another operative distinction for the term object is that, while objects may not intrinsically be man-made, “objectified things” are intrinsically products of human endeavor. For example a tree -- not a man-made creation -- may still be considered an object. In classifying a tree as an object we, again, are ascribing properties and behaviors to the tree which may be predicted and projected. Whether or not our predictions and projections are accurate is ultimately rather irrelevant. What is significant is that we have confidence in our predictions and projections, and may thus limit our anxieties. In short, what defines an object for purposes of this paper is something that can be programmed to behave according to human laws and conceptions of the future.

In this case, “objective” is not meant to convey any claims to absoluteness or correctness, only the common reality that a majority of a population indulges. For example, we willingly defer our own subjective experiences of the flatness of the Earth to peers who have cultivated much more in-depth knowledge of this subject, such as Pythagorus, Eratosthenes, or Magellan -- we can objectively say that the Earth is spherical. Similarly millions of Germans deferred their subjective experiences of reality to the objective reality of Hitler during World War II. Just because reality has been consolidated does not mean it is any more or less accurate.

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Back Track

It is my belief that the process of objectification outlined within has been undertaken in some extent for at least some 2.6 million years, back to the appearance of the first stone tools in Africa, presumably belonging to our Australopithecine relatives (McHenry and Coffing 2000). And, to be clear this is a behavior that falls upon a spectrum, it is not a condition which one either has or has not. Chimpanzees are capable of the same behaviors, but the quantity and quality of their objectification process appears diminished in comparison to our own.

The objectification of the landscape is also a process that predates the material manipulation of stones or timber. As Bradley notes (1993), long before the megaliths of Northwestern Europe "artificially" transformed cultural spaces, "natural" landmarks were employed for similar purposes. A noteworthy tree, or natural rock formation of some distinction are equally capable of serving the cultural, symbolic role played by monuments and other man-made landscape alterations. Symbolic objectification did not begin with symbolic objects. It began through interaction -- the need to defer to an objective reality to enhance cooperative impact, to be discussed in-depth below.

The introduction of material objects into the human toolkit, such as hand axes, or the timber-derived implements that must have surely preceded them, but failed to survive into the archaeological record, signal a change from passive receiver of environmental symbols to active manipulator and transformer of the environment. This transformation and its philosophical implications has been discussed at length (Wynn & Coolidge 2004; McHenry and Coffing 2000). To varying degrees human populations expanding from Africa through the Middle East and Asia, and eventually to Western Europe utilized an increasingly complex toolkit from the environmental resources they encountered.

The significant leap forward in the material record that allows a more qualitative glimpse into the mind of our prehistoric predecessors is the appearance

of cave art and other aesthetic depictions, roughly around 35,000 years ago. This is an extremely significant turning point, and almost certainly denotes that the populations engaging in this activity possessed a robust language.

The enhanced durability of thought provided by cave art must have been an instrumental step in the ability to program human environments. However, while these early symbolic advances were extremely critical, we can infer that they were more or less not public symbols. While we cannot positively assert that they were an exclusive symbolic code (Bradley 1993), the very fact of their location in out-of-the-way caves and crevices, limits the amount of widespread exposure and effect they were capable of having on expanding populations. Moreover, evidence seems to indicate that many of the locations of the oldest cave art went completely unoccupied and undiscovered until modern excavation work (ibid), further limiting the impact they may have had in spurring the explosion of landscape objectification with which this study is concerned.

A critical element of the thesis of this paper is that the sort of landscape programming that was engaged in during the Neolithic was both extremely public and extremely durable. It is these factors which distinguish the landscape alterations undertaken by Neolithic populations from those of previous populations. The substantiative fact is that the totality of the paleolithic industry, no matter how complex, does not survive today. This in itself is at least slightly telling. Without a material objectification or material symbolic system that can endure across generations, the conceptual vitality of a population is significantly diminished.

It is when we reach the Neolithic with its associated landscape alterations, both monumental and subsistence-based (agriculture/domestication), that the sort of long-term, wide spread programming of spaces, with which this paper is concerned comes into play.

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Reality Curation

It is the goal of the following sections to erase any doubt that human populations do indeed engage in the manner of environmental objectification that is the premise of this article. In accomplishing this goal, I will provide evidence for the uniqueness of human hypothetical and predictive skill, as well as suggest the various motivations for why objectification has proven an asset in human social and biological evolution.

Human populations tend to objectify their environments in order to reduce uncertainty and enhance predictive capacity, along with the other motivators listed in the introduction. In fleshing out the position of this paper -- that humans objectify the environments they inhabit -- evidence will be presented that human symbolic communication processes, be they language, art or ritual, are the primary tools with which this objectification is executed. One property of symbolic interaction, among others, is that it serves to consolidate the accepted reality of a population through the conventionalization of semantic reactions (Korzybski 1933). There is, of course, never perfect consolidation, as the myriad political disagreements of today attests, but the behavior of symbols trends toward an ultimate objectivity, just as does the newspaper reporter.

Below are three lines of evidence to support the assertion that symbolic reasoning allows and inspires the objectification of human space, namely: 1) the uniqueness of human test subjects to appreciate that others possess false beliefs will demonstrate a distinct skill in human predictive capacity; 2) A predisposition to imitative behavior has been selected for in human evolution, and serves to reinforce the tendency toward consolidation of competing subjective reactions to the environment; and 3) human cognition is a socially distributed process, reliant upon relationships and representations, illustrating the symbolic nature of the human landscape.

1.) False Belief & Hypothetical Modeling

The False Belief Test is a commonly deployed experiment in psychology and linguistics, aimed at understanding when children begin to acquire Theory of Mind -- the appreciation that others possess thoughts, beliefs and motivations that are dissimilar from their own. The design is meant to test if the subject understands that another's mental representation of a situation is different from their own. A typical test of this nature involves a child being shown that a hypothetical character who has been deceived about the whereabouts of a token, i.e., the character's token is hidden when the character leaves the room. When asked where the character will look for its token upon returning, if the child answers that the character will look for the token where it actually is, then the child has failed the test. The correct answer, in terms of passing the False Belief test is to answer that the character will look where the token was when the character last knew its whereabouts (Baron-Cohen 1985).

While this test is most often used in developmental psychology, and toward understanding the acquisition of language in children, it more vividly illuminates whether a child is capable of hypothetically projecting. I would suggest that a test of this nature more accurately measures, not whether a child perceives the mental states of others, but rather their ability to retain hypothetical models in their mind. As children under the age of four consistently "fail" this test (Baron-Cohen 1985), it may indicate that rather than being unable to appreciate that others possess false beliefs, children at this age are limited to more literal or subjective thought processes -- that is, they are unable or unwilling to defer their personal experiences of reality to a more conceptual interpretation. In short, the child is given a hypothetical situation and asked to predict the most likely outcome. After five years of age children consistently "pass" the False Belief test (ibid). The psychological research would seem to indicate that we do not possess this ability until four years of age, but that once we do come to harness this skill, through the accrual of

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additional real world experience, we become very accurate predictors and modelers of hypothetical scenarios.

Comparatively, to draw on experiments conducted by biological anthropologists on the faculties of our primate relatives, it has been shown that chimpanzees, of all ages, have consistently failed False Belief tests (Call & Tomasello 2008). This failure comes in spite of the fact that, as the authors write, "chimpanzees understand both the goals and intentions of others as well as the perception and knowledge of others (ibid)." That is, they appreciate all aspects of Theory of Mind, with the exception of projecting hypothetical models. What this ultimately demonstrates is that chimpanzees lack the capacity or willingness to subvert their subjective experiences into predictable objects, the very nature of a hypothetical model.

This evidence simply indicates that among our primate relatives, we are skilled hypothetical modelers, an indispensable attribute for predictive acuity. I have suggested that this skill is derived from a willingness to defer our subjective experiences. Further, I have suggested that this willingness is a byproduct of symbolic thought processes, and this is subsequently the result of our tendency toward objectification. Accordingly, the next line of evidence to be presented will illustrate how and why we engage in the deferment of subjective knowledge when engaging in public and social behaviors.

2.) Imitation is the Sincerest Form of Survival

From the above we have seen that humans have a unique knack for the hypothetical modeling of the future, that is, predicting. Reflecting the model offered in the introduction, we will continue to trace back this skill at prediction to the willingness and ability to defer subjective knowledge in public and social environments.

The famous Asch-Line test, in which the power of groupthink is vividly demonstrated, shows that social considerations, such as "being liked" and "fitting-

in" motivate much of a population to behave as one. In this experiment originally conducted by Solomon Asch (1955), one test subject is placed in a room with a handful of confederates and the group is asked to select, from a series of lines, two lines that match in length. The mathematically correct answer is rather apparent, but the confederates consistently agree on an incorrect answer. After a single trial, the test subject is shown to agree with the confederates and answer "incorrectly" due to the social pressure to imitate.

The conclusions of this test, as well as research conducted by others, suggest that the consolidation of diverse subjective experience is motivated by mechanisms that favor imitation over distinctiveness in social groups. There can be no better definition of subjective deferment than the act of imitating, so by exploring the properties and benefits of imitation, the hope is to prove that socially adaptive behaviors encourage the deferment of subjective points of view. The following paragraphs will discuss the proposed evolutionary benefits of imitative behavior in order to demonstrate that the consolidating of subjective viewpoints is highly adaptive.

Entrainment, as studied by Kinsbourne (2005), is the process of social mimicry which may serve to underwrite the adaptive benefits of our highly refined imitative skill, and the properties of our unique interactive behavior. "Entrainment is adopting shared rhythms of behavior (Kinsbourne 2005)." A baby's gaze that follows its mother's, a gang of friends who share inflections and slangs, and a sleazy salesman trying to gain your confidence are all practicing entrainment.

It is proposed that imitating the behaviors of another produces social affability and encourages congenial relations (ibid). Kinsbourne writes, "imitation is more about affiliation or attachment than about learning." In describing the learning process that is a byproduct of imitating, Kinsbourne continues, "what the baby cares about is not the name [of an object], but the joint regard itself, the fact that the adult is doing what the baby is doing." Kinsbourne has suggested many explanations

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for this phenomenon. Among these are the postulate that Homo Sapiens are a comparatively weak mammal physically, so sustaining strong peer bonds was an indispensable survival trait in competing with other mammals. There is also the belief that we are attracted to those that mirror our own behaviors because it saves cognitive calories in attempting to forecast the future behavior of an interactant (Meltzoff 2005). Entraining with others decreases anxiety. As Halbwachs (1925) demonstrated, being able to accurately gauge the near-future decreases anxieties derived from the "unknown," and when an interlocutor exhibits behavior substantially different from our own, it is harder to gauge their ensuing actions.

Simply, we find comfort in having our expectations met, and it makes carrying out coordinated activities with others more feasible.

Tomasello offers another suggestion for why humans exhibit imitative tendencies. In his article (2006) on why other primates do not point, he describes an evolutionarily adaptive motivation for sharing psychological states that is present in human populations. An element of the shared psychological states that Tomasello describes includes common reactions to environmental stimuli -- sharing the feeling of disgust at the sight of excrement. Sharing goals and experiences serves to embed mutual benefit to interlocutors (if not mutual benefit, at least a mutual fate, as is the case in warfare and violence).

From Tomasello's theory we can see that imitation also works on much more macro scales than the personalized entrainment mentioned above. Gergely and Csibra (2006) suggest that human imitative aptitude is an adaptive trait which allows for greater degrees of cultural fidelity across generations. While it may be questioned whether long term cultural rigidity is truly beneficial -- failure to adapt to changing environments because of strict adherence to cultural practices and traditions that have worked in the past has led to the demise of numerous populations throughout history (Greenland 1400, Easter Island 1750, Southern Arizona 1300 (Diamond 2005)) -- there is little question that the ability to pass on

the knowledge a culture has attained through traditions, rituals, and direct language can be a very beneficial short-term behavior. Again, the ability to predict the human landscape is paramount.

Cultural fidelity is a crucial element of maintaining a predictable environment (or at least the illusion of predictability). Briefly, practices that were useful at the time they were established (such as the Jewish aversions to hoofed animals or shellfish in the pre-Christian Levant), do tend to endure. This sort of perpetuation of cultural tradition may be perceived as a system of temporal or generational imitation. Imitation and replication of behaviors and traits is the path of least resistance. From a basal energy sense, it takes much more energy to deviate than to perpetuate.

Once again reflecting on the thesis of this paper, it should now be evident that deferment of subjective experience does occur in human social interaction, and has enough adaptive benefit to force a test subject to disregard the reality in front of them to conform with the popular reality, i.e., the Asch-Line test. How does this property of our behavior relate to predictive capacity? This article suggests that it is the deferment of the reality in front of our faces that allows us to engage in complex hypothetical modeling -- hypothetical modeling being critical for predictive prowess. We can temporarily disengage from the reality before our eyes in order to chart numerous possible realities.

To be clear, accurate hypothetical models can and do rely on individual experience, however, what affords the distinctness of human predictive skill is our ability to depersonalize the future. For instance, it is often the case that if one's hypothetical model of the future is too shaded by personal bias, the effectiveness of prediction is diminished. As an example, if every time that we go to a meeting everyone is 15 minutes late, we may begin to adjust our own arrival time back 15 minutes in anticipation of this. Subsequently when we are invited to a more formal meeting where punctuality is expected, in order to arrive on time, we will have to

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defer our first-hand knowledge of meetings starting 15 minutes late, and submit to the punctual reality of the more formal meeting.

3.) The Map is not the Territory

Above, we asked and attempted to answer the question of how subjective deference relates to predictive capacity. Herein, we will ask how does symbolic reasoning relate to subjective deference. The short answer is that the conventionalization and consolidation of semantic responses needed to effectively utilize symbols is the first step toward more large scale deferment of first-hand knowledge.

It has been illustrated above that humans possess a unique ability to conform their environments into hypothetical models (programs), and some of the reasons how and why this is accomplished were presented (the subjective deferment contained in imitative social practices that counteract deficiencies in human physiology and conserve caloric energy expenditure in the brain associated with levels of anxiety). Here, an attempt will be made to detail exactly how the environment becomes objectified through the distribution of cognitive energy in the form of symbols, allowing human groups the most efficient navigation of their environments.

Edwin Hutchins (1995) argues that, like language, cognition is not a private affair. Hutchins advocates an understanding of cognition that is contingent upon contextual mediation. The process of mental computation is more readily observable in the organization of social activity than the nebulous synapses of the individual's brain. Hutchins offers a cogent argument for how utilizing environmental elements (e.g., lighthouses, trees, compasses, other people) allows human cognition to be "outsourced" beyond the individual brain.

Hutchins' cognitive ethnography of Western naval procedure extensively describes the charts and instruments used to determine the relationships between

physical bodies on the landscape. To contrast this naval methodology, he outlines contemporary Micronesian navigational techniques, which include concepts such as moving islands and phantom islands -- concepts poorly envisioned by Western audiences. In highlighting the diversity of navigational methods that are capable of safely piloting a vessel to its destination, Hutchins builds his case for the incorporation of cultural phenomena into cognitive computation. He writes that, "in the Western tradition, artifacts become repositories of knowledge, and they are constructed in durable media so that a single artifact might come to represent more than any individual could know." Here, Hutchins is describing artifacts like compasses, maps or astrolabes, but he is also indicating how we use objects to orient ourselves and plan/predict our next movements/actions accordingly.

The cognitive ethnography that Hutchins conducts aboard a U.S. naval vessel reveals that, in addition to the tactile cultural artifacts that we use to orient and project our immediate actions (compasses, site-finders, telescopes, etc.), the most visibly influential environmental elements of cognition are human interlocutors. As the sailors Hutchins studies interact with the various tools of navigation to complete calculations, so too do they interact with their peers. Through the distribution of information among both a group population and its cultural tools, cognitive computation may be performed more or less outside the depths of the brain, that is, beyond the subjective variability of individuals. The organization of cultural artifacts and human interlocutors transforms a complex task like piloting an aircraft carrier into a simple product of the sequential ordering of automatic tasks. Herbert Simon writes, "solving a problem simply means representing it so as to make the solution transparent (1981)."

As motivators for solving complex problems, distributed cognition (desubjectified cognition) and the consolidation of reality, seem extremely useful. It is easy to see how populations that are best able to distribute their cognitive prowess would possess substantial adaptive advantages (Dawkins 1976), when faced

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with a severe ecological or economic problem. It is impossible for any single sailor to guide an immense aircraft carrier from one port to another, however through social interaction and collaboration this task appears, if not easy, then at least programmable.

Through interaction, the computational apparatus that allows the transformation of cognitive processes into cultural processes becomes constructed. The cultivation of relationships and roles on a naval ship, or in any social setting, is similar to the charts that Hutchins details, in which the most effective maps are those that express the most relationships between environmental features. “The number of relationships on a chart is a measure of the knowledge contained in the chart...There may be more knowledge on the chart than was put into the chart (Hutchins 1995).” While Hutchins is referencing landscape relationships on a map in this quote, the statement may be applied to social relationships as well. The more objects (including people) upon which an activity or problem may be distributed, the more accurate the resolution of the task appears. The website Wikipedia, demonstrates the power of distributed reality editing.

An organism cannot successfully navigate its environment without being able to act on environmental data in an advantageous manner, and for humans this data is most effectively computed through distribution and interaction in groups. Hutchins’ research concerns how the use of cultural symbols aids in the navigation of the landscape -- physical and social -- and how this process requires collaborative cartography, and vigilant editing of the social map. By ascribing a symbolic meaning to all the elements of the environment, that is, by naming things, including people, we objectify them. Subsequently, inconsistencies in a symbol system are edited out to reflect a more entrained population.

Conclusion

Objects are easier to predict than experiences. Subjective individual experiences prove too unreliable, in comparison with the aggregate knowledge of a large population. The use of symbols in our interactions is a result of the adaptive benefit of predictability**.** The semantic resonance of our cultural symbols certainly evolves over time, on a day to day basis, our symbolic vocabulary is very predictable -- we largely know what to expect when someone utters the phoneme “car” or “bicycle.” In evolutionary terms, the degree to which an individual or society is capable of predicting the behavior of the system within which it resides, the greater the likelihood of survival for that individual or society. I believe this hypothesis provides the highest resolution model for the origins for language and the motivations for social interaction, and marks a fundamental property that influences the structure of civilization. Further, understanding these key concepts answers several questions about the development of human behavior, in all its complexity.

Essentially, dexterity in predicting the behavior of a system correlates with success at modeling the future. In large part, the social sciences are engaged in understanding one of the most complex systems we encounter -- human behavior. Economics, psychology, and to a lesser extent, anthropology ultimately strive toward describing human behavior in such a manner that it is replicable. There are systems of such complexity that we have not been able to program predictability into them to a satisfactory extent. Obvious examples of this are the climate, economic fluctuations, and the neural networks that compose the brain. Given the overwhelming complexity of these systems, the strides we have made at predicting them are very impressive.

Language-users tacitly accept that all elements of their environment are containers of meaning. Because of this, all environmental elements possess a use-value, not quantitatively, but relationally. As discussed above, the relational value of a lighthouse that helps us navigate our environment is substantial, while the

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relational value of one tree among a forest is rather marginal. However, by possessing a differential use-value both lighthouse and tree are environmental objects.

The more people/objects that can verify information, the more accurately this information is perceived to mirror an idealized perfect reality. Of course there is no perfect reality, it is simply an abstract concept, like circle or soul-mate, towards which symbol-using populations strive. The theoretical conclusion to a "perfected reality" is a reality completely detached from subjective influence -- the consolidation of reality into an object, as opposed to an experience. While progress in social freedoms such as same-sex marriage are welcome, the fact that all love must be unified by the symbol of marriage to be validated (in the eyes of some) is an unfortunate reality which ultimately serves to objectify the experience of love.

The point of this exploration is by no means to offer potential lines of investigation that are capable of rendering a more predictable appreciation of human behavior. If anything, from the standpoint of this author, total objective predictability is an outcome to be cautioned against. Instead, this paper would like to illuminate the trend that symbolizing creatures such as ourselves gravitate toward predictability in our environments, in hopes that being conscious of this trend would allow us to foster a more equitable appreciation for individuality and interaction.

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