13. April 6. How did you come to be the person you are with the style you have? What is "creativity"? What leads us to say some work is "good" or "great"? Is there something in our brains that guides these conclusions? What can we say about the brain's role in judging literature? Why do we do literature at all?

I. Holland, YMoM, ch. 13. "Why Are There Styles?" Online. 32pp. What is style? We each have personal styles of writing and reading--what does that tell us about us?

a. Review feedback governing feedback. One's physiology and the hypotheses one gets from culture are elements of style. But the big element in the individuality of style is identity. Relationship is not additive but (perhaps) multiplicative.

b. Styles come from the loops, physiological, codes, canons. Style is always within a period, genre, etc. Codes and Canons. Lower levels and higher levels.

1. Hasson and the Clint Eastwood experiment. Similarity at low levels; individuality at high levels.

2. Those low levels are, in varying degrees, shared. They are less individual so far as style is concerned. The uniqueness of style comes from identity. Humans combine an individual organism with the group.


d. What is the evidence for identity?

1. Observation of everyday life. Also, things like parody.

2. Analyses of people: Fitzgerald, Shaw, Reagan, H.D., etc. About 21 of these.

3. Authority: Lichtenstein; Maturana & Varela; Damasio (conatus); Grigsby & Stevens; Modell; Panksepp; Schore.


f. One can think of identity as a reading/interpretation/construct of another person, as in the mind of the beholder. Or one can think of identity as a feature of the person being interpreted like height, weight, coloring.

g. If instilled, how is identity instilled? Genetics. Early childhood. "Being the baby for this particular mother." First couple of years we are pre-verbal, but inconceivable that experience at this time is not written into the rapidly developing brain. Amygdala active before hippocampus.

h. Where is identity in the brain?

1. Panksepp: emotions originating or terminating in PAG.

2. Schore: early experiences laid down in right hemisphere. 2 phases:

i. Can one escape one's "style"?


2. To what extent does this idea of identity or style deny free will?

II. Holland, YMoM, ch. 14. "What Is `Creativity'?" Online. 15pp. Why do some people feel compelled to make literature? What are the issues?
a. Creativity and madness? Amn writers who are drunks or suicides are legion. Still, no clear association. A Beautiful Mind, the movie about the schizophrenic mathematician. The one does not cause the other. Rather, the brain conditions that favor creativity also favor bipolar.

b. Is all creativity the same? Scientist and artist? Mathematicians often use aesthetic terms. Connecting unconnected ideas. "Edge words." Fair amount of agreement about that.

c. Compulsivity. NNH says (no evidence): medium gets involved with identity, the early corticolimbic pathways described by Schore (see "style"). One creates with a certain style.
   i. Recurrence of psychological themes suggests early involvement of identity.

d. Creativity = regression. OK. Does regression = divergent thinking? Loosening of connections among modules? Loss of boundaries?

III. Creativity and the brain--

   a. Creativity and brain structures:
      1) associated with right hemisphere.
      2) wider interconnection of modules?
      3) reduced frontal lobe inhibition. [hence less locus coeruleus, less norepinephrine]

   b. Creativity and neurotransmitters
      Heilman: less norepinephrine! = less arousal
      Less frontal lobe activation = less locus coeruleus - less nor epinephrine

IV. What do we mean by creativity? Includes both inner process and outward actions (agent, marketing).

   a. To what extent does "creativity" presuppose a value judgment? Creativity involves valuation from outside by others.

   b. Behaviorist view.

   c. The ultimate mystery. How can one person's identity make something somebody else can re-create their identity on?


   a. If value satisfies "interests," then the act of evaluation interferes with Kant's disinterestedness and the full experience of the work. If I'm sitting there, asking myself, 'Is this good?" . . .

   b. "Intrinsic" value vs. "extrinsic." Literature as a good in itself or as good because it leads to some other thing that is good.
      2. Art for art's sake. Wilde, aesthetic movement end of 19C.
      4. Extrinsic: moral and social effects of literature. Release, catharsis, etc. Most people agree that literature has an ethical influence. Query, query! This leads to to the evolutionary psychology position.

b. Great is what will please many & please long. A prediction that people will be able to do
the self-stimulation thing. Will be able to "make sense," "make it 'go home" likw the call girl.
c. Stock market analogy. An attempt to predict the behavior of others who are in turn basing
behavior on their predictions of others. Infinite regress.
i. Many things in life (beauty, glamor, charisma) present same problem.
d. What is literary "greatness"? I don't know. Could anybody have predicted Casablanca?
Perhaps this is one of those questions for which there is no answer.

VII. Tooby and Cosmides, "Does Beauty Build Adapted Minds?" Handout. 22pp. The evolutionary
question. Why do people "do" literature?

a. The assumption: 6.7: All features of cognitive architecture are either adaptations,
byproducts, or noise. Cp. later Pinker (not what you read) makes blanket assumption that
all features are adaptations. Query, query!
b. Did the ability to create or re-create literature (fictions) evolve? Is it innate?
1. 7.9 Fiction is a human universal.
2. 8.1 It seems intrinsically rewarding, no utilitarian payoff beyond itself.
c. If it evolved, then there must be innate, hard-wired systems for literature. What are they?
1. 8.9 Some brain systems treat literature as real; some not. Emotion systems vs. action
systems.
2. 9.5 Pretend play. Panksepp confirms. All mammals do this.
3. Out of play, we have evolved pretense (socially useful) & that allows us to enter
fictions.
4. But evolutionarily, we need to know what is true. We need to know when to believe
what. We have evolved brain systems for distinguishing truth from lies. Query!

VIII. What is the adaptive/evolutionary purpose of literature? 3 possible answers (as in I above):

a. If fictions have an adaptive/evolutionary purpose, then fictions must contribute to
survival+repro.
1. Perhaps fictions are accidental and functionless byproduct.
2. Perhaps fictions are the result of genes that spread by chance (noise).
b. 13.5 The properties T&C assign to fictions. OK.
c. 13.9 We have evolved so that we find rewarding those things that are adaptive (either
to outer world, body, or brain). This is the key assumption of ev psych.
1. 15.2: Every psychological adaptation has its own aesthetic (nnh- I think they mean
aesthetic pleasure). Remember Panksepp: "Energy is delight". Seeking =
consummation is pleasurable in and of itself.
2. T&C refer to the "organizational mode" of functions. Constructing brain machinery and
making it run well. They see literature as doing this. And that leads to its being
pleasurable.
3. 16.8 "Natural selection . . . seduces you into devoting your free time to these
improving activities by making them gratifying."

IX. Why are aesthetic activities "improving"? I.e., why do they confer ev advantage?
a. Humans use improvised behavior based on contingently true information. We need to sort out might-be-true, once-was-true, etc. 20.1.

b. Literature valuable because it teaches us scope syntax -- how to "decouple" sets of representations different kinds of true and false. We decouple "disorganizing" inputs, those that do not contribute to good brain organization. (nnh: are they saying that fiction is evolutionarily advantageous because it mixes real facts in?) Probably not. They are saying we learn from Cordelia's vs. the sisters' demonstrativeness and drop the medieval aspects. 23.9 The Lord Jim example.

c. 25.1. Strongest statement of their view.


a. I did not ask you to read her essay. A lot of it is summarized in YMoM ch. 16. Her strongest point is that T&C are dealing with the conventions of literature rather than the content.

b. Interesting that the arg becomes materialism (everything is cause-effect) vs. "human" and "consciousness". Only algorithms! Spolsky very devout.

c. Spolsky argues for a more flexible view: bottom-up (algorithm) plus top down. See my comments on Spolsky in YMoM ch. 16, Why Literature? She makes good points.

DO HOGAN NEXT WEEK.


b. Ev psych. 196.6. A good summary 282.3-4.
   1. No fossil record of functions.
   2. The political results! 198.9. Conservatism as belief in hierarchy. Trollope. 191..8 Sociobiology: a conservative doctrine. Why?
   4. Something's being universal does not show it is biological; it could be social.

XII. Hogan points to levels of explanation

a. 4 levels from inorganic matter to society. Temporal.

b. Transition from any level to next higher level is marked by an emergent property that is causally dependent on the lower level. He objects to mind/brain for same reason one would not speak of brain/atoms in head. See his diagram 204.1 for relation between basic and emergent structures.

c. Higher levels (structures) project downward to organize lower levels. (Cp. Spolsky.)

d. Therefore you need to know a lot about higher-level structure before you can use higher level to interpret lower level.

XIII. Hogan points to problems with ev psych explanation of literature

a. Hits Pinker out of ball park. 211.1-4.
b. 213.7 The ev psychers try to explain high-level structure by low-level structure without understanding the high-level structure. **Problem is not understanding literature.**

c. 215.9 Universal story structures reduces to a nonliterary issue: emotion prototypes.

d. 216.2 Hogan buys into the idea that literature has the virtues of simulation. NNH: Yes, simulation is good, but that doesn't justify fiction because we do simulation in all sorts of nonliterary circumstances.

e. 194.6; 195.2; 216.9 Hogan's best point: ev does not produce functions; it produces mechanisms (which Hogan & nnh say can be combined, enlarged, modified, whatever, into functions). Panksepp's SEEKING is such a mechanism. **Hogan very good here.**


Reading: