

Uniqueness as a mechanism for maintaining epistemic health



It is common to consider, explore, and evaluate knowledge in terms of availability of informational resources, unrestricted access to humanity's intellectual production, and freedom of thought and speech. However, the existence of the above is not a sufficient condition for knowledge to find its place in a system (be it person or social structure) and contribute to its overall health and economy. In a context of informational overabundance, discernment and discarding have been evolving into an art form in their own right, ensuring a certain degree of epistemic purity, reliability, and health.

The main reason for the discrepancy between information and knowledge lies in the very nature of the latter. Knowledge is organised, meaningful, timely, appropriate information in context. As such, it interacts with pre-existing meanings, structures, and means-whereby, negotiates with them and finds its mutually agreed place within an organic arrangement. Therefore, knowledge – as opposed to information – is a personal construct that is unique, specific to each individual, and entwined with their subjective experience of/interplay with the world. Furthermore, new knowledge is always and only acquired on the basis of meaning making processes, which take into consideration the good functioning and wellbeing of the organism in its entirety and which are, thus, time and energy consuming. The overflow of unfiltered, largely irrelevant, and often unsolicited information thwarts rather than enhances the creation, evaluation, and assimilation of new knowledge and can only result in the habitual reproduction of irrelevant, out-of-context, possibly false material which undermines uniqueness, clarity, and good health. What is, therefore, needed in order to navigate the highly complex world of information networks is an inner compass that can quickly and safely indicate what is relevant and help discard that, which is not compatible with what is understood and accepted as meaningful. Such compass mechanism exists, it is called intuition, and its good functioning relies upon uniqueness and the order of repetition.

Uniqueness and repetition are understood and discussed here as vehicles of emotional organisation across time and space. In other words, as carriers of information regarding our emotional history, our current needs and quests, and the “entries” that are marked as unexchangeable and that can only be repeated in past, present, and future, never substituted for other entries. Their role in meaning making was extensively explored and discussed during the RENEWABLE FUTURES 2017: ECONOMIA conference (Benco Enrico, Vivelì Dimitra, 2017, *Exchange vs. Repetition: a call for balance through economy and art*),

with particular reference to the inhibition of habitual responses and the functioning of the body. Summing up the main points, it was argued that the growing demand for fast, short-term, measurable efficiency and instant reward has substantially displaced the concern for the nurturing qualities that stem from the good functioning of the heart (uniqueness, repetition, emotional organisation, love, beauty) to the advantage of habitual, set, and meaningless behaviour patterns with no real value to the formation and maintenance of a true, consistent, and meaningful personal identity. This lack of inner clarity impairs trust and mutes the voice of genuine intuition, which offers a reliable way out of the indefinitely complex landscape of today's information realm. At the same time, it is reflected on the functioning of the physical body, which is pushed into a shrinking, eroding position that compromises good health.

Although growing back into a state of clarity, innocence, and uniqueness is not an overnight venture, it is still a feasible journey made possible by responsibility, determination, and a yearning for the peace found in clarity and innocence. Discarding irrelevant information, habits, and pursuits is always a good place to start and experimentation is certainly a tool that can prove really useful in pursuing meanings that have never been pursued before. After all, a personal journey is always a journey that has never made before.

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