Chapter VII

How We Organize What We Know

The Unity in Modeling

In developing the model of the structure of knowledge, I embraced the risk of wandering off into the wilderness of marginal, perhaps inconsequential, modeling. This first part of the book addresses the structure of knowledge, whereas the second part deals with how knowledge grows, progresses, and advances. I had written several papers about how I believed human knowledge progresses. I had flatly rejected the evolutionary model of knowledge growth and progression. My views had congealed in the form of a different, clear, and consistent model.

The structure of knowledge was a different story. I had begun with some rough ideas of how knowledge begins and how it is structured. A constant companion has been my fear that I would end up with a duality rather than unity in the modeling of structure and progress of human knowledge.
This intellectual challenge resembled the digging of a tunnel into a mountain. One best approaches such an undertaking by starting to dig from both sides of the tunnel—in the hope that one’s calculations are accurate and the two teams will meet halfway exactly as planned. The emergent “clustering principle” in the structure of knowledge had to be in line with my model of progress which stresses cumulation. As I explain further in Part II, I am delighted to inform the reader that the two models meet exactly as hoped.¹

Structure and Balance

The key for the principle of clustering as the guiding principle of knowledge generation and its structure has been simplicity. This is a way of thinking about a complex phenomenon by taking the simplest approach. Albert Einstein presumably once declared: “Make everything as simple as possible, but no simpler.”² Einstein himself approached the problem of the aether (through which light travels) in the simple way of declaring that there was no such entity as the aether and that speed of light is a constant in the universe, regardless of the medium through which it travels or the position and motion of the observer.

One would assume that as knowledge is formed by continuous clustering, there would be some points along this process in which a balance would be attained. Such possible homeostasis would mean a period in which the knowledge generated up to that point can be functionally utilized, measured, and accessed without further additions or continuing clustering. This would be a situation similar to Gould’s notion of “punctuated equilibrium” in biological evolution: periods of evolutionary activity followed by periods of relative stability and equilibrium.

In my effort to exert unity in modeling between structure and progress of knowledge, I opted for the rejection of attempts to uncover, identify, and understand the existence of balance or situations of homeostasis in the generation and structure of knowledge. Rather, I started with the notion that there is no perceptible nor measurable balance in the continuous clustering of knowledge. “Continuous clustering” is enmeshed with “continuous cumulation,” which is the principle by which knowledge progresses. Within the unity in modeling, there is no room for an inherent phenomenon of balance.
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