The Three A´s of the Mind: Artifacts, Archetypes, and Atavisms

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Abstract. In his seminal book "Code Biology. A new Science of Life", Marcello Barbieri points towards the continuity of codes and a "code theory of mind" claiming that feelings and instincts are manufactured artifacts rather than spontaneous products of the mind. João C. Major takes on Barbieri´s concepts and develops from a practicing Psychologist´s perspective the concept of "behavioural shortcuts elicited in (arche)typical situations" that are "activated in conditions of behavioural ambiguity" and allow humans to connect in a code-based manner inherited behavioural patterns with certain situations during daily activity. Atavisms describe mainly the anatomical reappearance of traits in individuals of a species where such features are not generally expressed, but can be found in supposed phylogenetically earlier species as common feature. As a biologist, I would speak of behavioural atavisms in the same way when concerning actions and certain affective behaviour that appear anachronistically in a modern-day context.

Keywords: Mind, Artifact, Archetype, Atavism, Code, Marcello Barbieri, João C. Major

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1 Background

M. Barbieri started the development of his "Code Theory of Mind" in his 2015 book (Barbieri, 2015) to which recently J.C. Major added the idea of archetypes as a component of coded relations (Major, 2021). In short, Major hypothesises "*that archetypes are biological programs inherited from our evolutionary past, makes human behavior understandable, especially in situations of high emotional density in which we act according to old rules or patterns.*" In this respect, I ask if not much more behavioural responses can be interpreted from a code-perspective and put forward here the concept of structural and regulatory behavioural codes. As atavisms describe the reappearance of anatomical traits expressed anachronistically, or out of (species) context within individuals, they may very well fit into the context of archetypes. The reappearance of some anatomical traits is often based on certain epigenetic events during embryonal development leading to the presence of e.g., vestigial tails. Whereas a mapping to code-based mechanisms is principally possible for such occurrences, the same fundamental code-like mechanism may be applied for interpretation of certain, if not all human behaviour. Whereas archetypes as presented by Major mainly refer to established behaviour reproducibly elicited in defined situations, atavistic behaviour may be more obscure and reveal the epigenetic mechanism of the mind.

2 Claim

Both, men and women have anatomical nipples, although for men they will have no function during their lifetime, yet they are in their body plan. This developmental vestige in men may have behavioural complements, or behavioural atavisms in general. There are, so to speak traits, archetypes, or signs anchored as structural behavioural codes in both sexes, yet are subjected to differential regulatory codes. Infanticide, the killing of offspring of other males is observed e.g., in lions. Yet, the same "puppy" or "baby" scheme can lead to protective behaviour, in case of their own offspring. We see here not only the arbitrariness of codes in that a sign may connect to different behavioural programs, but also

a contextual regulation of such behaviour that accounts for self vs non-self distinction. There may also universal archetypes for female and male sex, present in both sexes each. Mating behaviour can be considered structural or static, in that it follows certain rules, yet the context which triggers it and the direction towards which sex (male/female) it emerges, may be subjected to ontologically individualised code connections rather than (un)conscious choice. Protective behaviour can also be considered conservative and static in that it follows certain movements, and aggression towards others, whereas its directionality is regulated by self vs non-self codes. Even animal mothers can be aggressive against the litter of other conspecifics, despite the puppy scheme should apply for those as well. Interestingly, biology describes the phenomenon of "displacement behaviour" which could be described as mis-mapping and mis-coding of an unknown set of cues to a unforeseen situation not yet encountered during the phylogeny of the species.

Codes are suitable to explain the above-described types of behaviour in addition to the archetypes suggested by Major. Even for this type of action, a differentiation between structural and regulatory codes is possible, as shown in Figure 1.

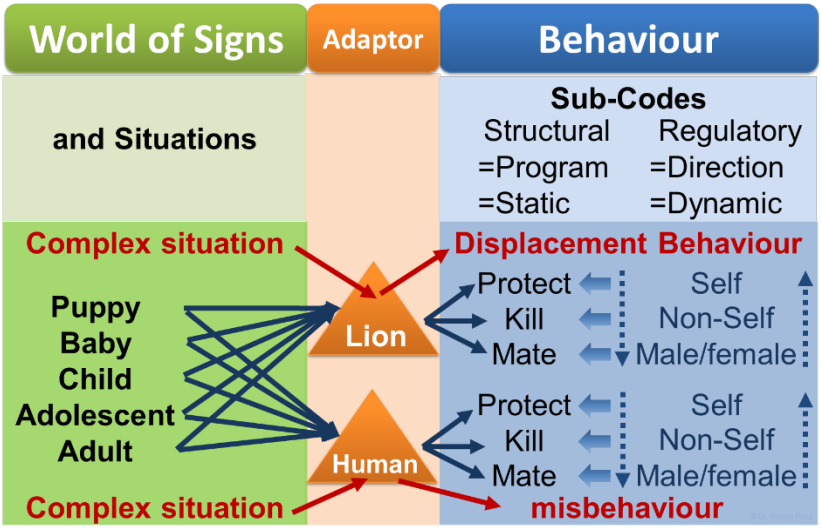

Figure 1 Semiosis, Behavioural Mapping, and Archetype Codes. This visualisation indicates that any paedophilic behaviour, infanticide, or sexual choice may be the result of phylogenetically anchored and ontologically differentially regulated codes instead of "simple" (conscious) choice.

3 Competing Interest

The author has no competing interest.

4 References

Barbieri, M. (2015). *Code Biology - A New Science of Life*. Springer. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-14535-8

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