Summary: Meaningful History Selection

The theory of "meaningful history selection" aims to explain how events that would be unlikely under normal circumstances can become *more likely* through a person's action. This notion is a part of many spiritual traditions, and has been popularized in a number of media presentations. However, it's scientific basis remains mysterious. Through careful analysis of personal experiences of synchronicity, and comparison to the principles of modern physics, a theory has been developed in its initial version with the aim of providing a sound scientific basis to a group of currently unexplained phenomena.

The basic principle is that all the possible futures you can get to from this moment exist in a mathematical space of possibilities. This is not a "many-worlds" idea where there are other versions of you living other lives, but rather a mathematical space of *potentials* that have not been actualized. The *actual* world is defined from each individual's point of view, and the events that individual experiences become actualized when they actually experiences them, not before. Any two individuals that meet will agree on the things they observe in common, and hence our world has the appearance of being consistent and predictable.

The key difference is that events fall into place *only as needed* for an individual. We might say, "things don't actually 'happen' when they happen." By this it is meant that if you run into a close friend accidentally at the grocery store, clearly that person had to leave their house a few minutes earlier in order to arrive at the store and bump into you. Yet the event of "friend leaving home to go to the store" didn't become actualized until you bumped into them at the store. Hence, the event didn't become actual until long after you would typically say it happened. Until the actual connection at the store, many possible outcomes were still available to fall into place.

With this in mind, consider that everything around you is part of what we call your environment. The future of your environment looks like a branching tree. Whenever two things in your environment meet, the tree branch splits to accommodate the various possible ways that interaction can end up. If you yourself interact with one of those things, you select a particular branch of the tree to become actualized, and the others get trimmed away.

We can now discuss meaningful history selection. Imagine that we look into the branches of the tree representing the future. Let's say we could compare each of those branches to a particular outcome we wanted to occur, and label each future as "hit" or "miss," depending on whether we achieved the desired outcome. This still doesn't allow us any way to *pick* the one we want. We can next ask what happens if an individual climbs out to one of the branches of the tree that had *more smaller branches which achieved the desired outcome*. In other words, we don't go all the way out to the leaves, but just move from the trunk to a branch one level smaller. But we choose that branch carefully: we choose a branch which has more than its share of positive outcomes. We have increased the likelihood of landing on one of the desired outcomes. We have trimmed a bunch of the branches off of the tree, *life paths that we didn't take*, and the likelihood of the desired outcome in the remaining branches goes up.

How does this work for real? We need the new idea that a conscious Being has the capability of grouping all of the available outcomes in an uneven or "meaningful" way. The conscious Being can adjust the branches of the tree such that the desired or intended outcomes are grouped together. The effect is not large, but nonetheless the conscious Being can sort the future outcomes. You might feel like this is a reasonable proposal if you notice that one of the main properties of living creatures is to increase the organization of their surroundings. Hence conscious Beings may be able to bring organization to the tree of possible outcomes.

We define the "meaning" of an individual's action as "how well the being is able to group the branches of the tree in a meaningful way." Specifically, any grouping which is *uneven* is meaningful. So if a poker player is able to group the many possible outcomes of a poker hand into one group (of possibilities) which has more than the average number of possible 'hits,' and a second group (of possibilities) which has less than the average number of possible 'hits,' then this is a meaningful grouping, because the groups are not alike: they have different numbers of 'hits.'

Once this is done (to even a small degree), we can now use the mathematics of conditional probability to ask "what is the likelihood of a winning hand?" Imagine you are an ant sitting on a tree branch, at a point where it divides in two. If there are many brown leaves and just a few green leaves on each branch, and you wanted to know the probability of finding a green leaf, you would use conditional probability. The chance of a green leaf is just the likelihood that you choose to walk on branch 1 times the likelihood that that branch has a green leaf, plus of course the chance that you instead choose to walk on branch 2, times *its* likelihood for a green leaf.

Alternatively, you can imagine conditional probability by considering that your total chances of winning the lottery are found from the likelihood that you play Lotto times the chances of winning Lotto, plus the likelihood that you instead choose to play Scratchers times the chances of winning Scratchers.

When all is said and done, it turns out that *any* grouping of possible outcomes which is uneven (i.e. meaningful)
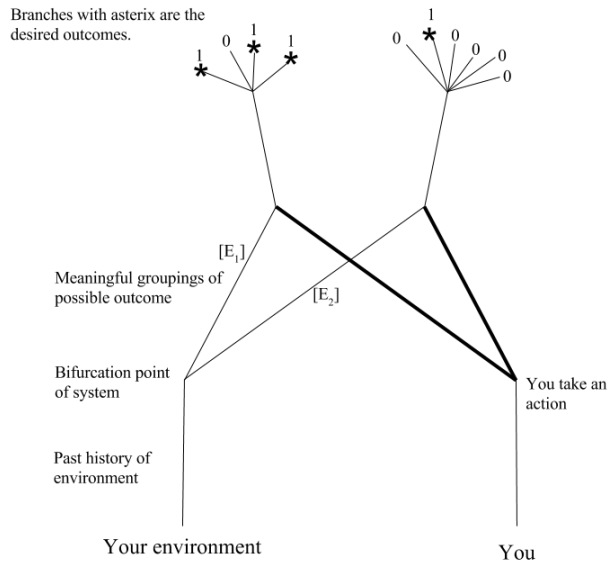
FIGURE 1: General example of meaningful history selection. If we don't group the histories above, we get $Pr(hit) = \frac{4}{10} = 40\%$, because there are four outcomes with stars and ten outcomes in total. If we *do* group the histories in an uneven or "meaningful" way, we get the conditional probability $Pr(hit) = P(hit|E_1)P(E_1) + P(hit|E_2)P(E_2) = \frac{3}{4}\frac{3}{4} + \frac{1}{4}\frac{1}{6} = 60.4\%$. The probability of the desired outcome has increased.

will result in an *increased* likelihood of achieving the "desired" outcome. So the ability to influence the outcome in a desirable way is related to an individual's ability to sort the available branches of the tree in a meaningful way.

While it is not clear what might affect an individual's ability to do this, it appears to be related to the state of 'flow consciousness' or 'open-aware-focus,' or something of that nature. It does not appear that individuals can manipulate this process to obtain a result, but rather that they are able to 'get into a zone' which allows these results to occur. Nevertheless, the model proposed here allows for the individual to affect the outcome of a circumstance (to a small degree) in a manner that is previously considered 'theoretically impossible.'

It may be that the belief structures of the individual have a role to play in this process. Specifically, beliefs represent limitations on what the individual thinks is possible. These limiting beliefs constrain the individual's ability to meaningfully sort the possible outcomes. When an individual is able to remove their limiting beliefs, this allows for a more effective sorting of possibilities, which allows "higher intention" to unfold. The higher intention presumably leads toward greater harmony and organization of the system as a whole.

Hence, synchronicity serves our best interest when our interests are aligned with the higher intentions of increased order, complexity and harmony in the world. Synchronicity can also work against us if our limiting beliefs are not made conscious. Synchronicity is therefore a neutral process which is at play all the time and depends on the circumstance, including the frame of mind of the individual.

This model seems well suited to any phenomena that relies on an improbable outcome of a system that contains randomness. In the placebo effect, the patient's open mind allows the elementary histories in which the patient's health increases to be preferentially grouped in one of the branches of the tree. This increases the chances of their health having (retroactively) improved. In precognition experiments, as the positive outcomes become more densely populated on the tree branch, an individual may be able to pre-sense when most of the available histories end in the same particular outcome. In the use of an oracle such as runes or tarot, when an individual makes their selection, the position of the more meaningful card or rune is determined at the last moment and the meaningful history falls into place. The possible outcomes are slightly ordered such that the meaningful outcomes are mostly in one branch of the tree. The meaningful cards or runes are then slightly more likely to appear in the individual's selection.

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