

Miscellany26: On Symbols

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Commentary on recent news, reading and events of personal interest.

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On Symbols

With the publication of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, you hear a lot more about symbols than before (the protagonist of that novel / film was a professor of "symbology"). Symbols have always been important to philosophers. For example, consider the writings of metaphysicists / mystics René Guénon or Julius Evola. Symbols such as the cross, crescent, swastika, pentagram, or star of David may be considered simply as icons representing certain concepts, causes or beliefs, but they may also be considered to possess intrinsic magical powers (e.g., a Reiki symbol to assist healing; or use of a cross to protect oneself from an evil spirit, vampire, werewolf or chupacabra). From one viewpoint, a symbol may be defined simply to represent something, just as a letter of an alphabet, a number, a multiplication sign, a stop sign, or a no-smoking sign symbol has a specified meaning. From a metaphysical viewpoint, however, symbols may represent or embody much more than just definitions. A symbol may represent or embody power – power that may be accessed by one who understands the symbol, what it represents, and how it may be used.

This note discusses some aspects of symbols. My views on symbols derive from my views on metaphysics, and so before discussing symbols, it is useful to mention some of my views on metaphysics and ontology (the branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of being).

A Metaphysical Viewpoint / Ontological Paradigm

Modern physical science sheds no light on how biological life is created, develops, and functions. It has no explanation for the mind, or consciousness, or thought, or existence. One partial explanation given for the generation of biological life on earth is that the early oceans contained some basic inorganic chemicals, and a bolt of lightning caused the inorganic chemicals to combine into an organic molecule (amino acid) that started replicating itself, or "reproducing," and that, for some unexplained reason, chemical compounds are "motivated" to combine to form more complex compounds and structures (life forms), randomly changing until they eventually evolve into all of the life forms we see in the biosphere.

Spiritual science offers quite different explanations for how life is created, grows, and evolves. The explanations of spiritual science cannot be objectively proved in our five-sense physical universe, and so, from a physical-existence point of view, these explanations, which are varied, conflicting, and inconsistent, can be viewed simply as hypotheses – alternative candidate models of physical reality / existence, if you will.

I have read a considerable amount of material on metaphysics and ontology. In this brief note, I will not attempt to list or summarize any of the countless paradigms for existence, but simply sketch one version that appeals to me.

Although the universe appears to be comprised of many disparate parts, it is in fact a single entity, in the sense that all parts, or aspects, of it are, in some fashion, interconnected. The various parts of the universe vary in their level of awareness, or consciousness, or ability to perceive, or understand, or “sense”; and in their power, or ability (or capacity) to act (to do work, to do anything (e.g., think, imagine, dream, feel emotions), to create). Human beings have a certain level of awareness (which varies, e.g., the awareness of the five senses of the conscious mind, flashes of sixth-sense insight, the awareness while in a trance state, the awareness while daydreaming, the awareness while sleeping), lower animals have another, plants have another, rocks have another, atoms have another, quarks have another, and souls have another. Human beings are able to think and to move. They are unable to create physical matter or (physical) energy, but they can control it to an extent (basically by their ability to reason and to move matter (their bodies and other objects), and thereby, to direct energy (e.g., shine a flashlight (torch) on an object) and cause matter to change to energy (e.g., by smashing pieces of uranium together to cause a nuclear explosion)).

This exposition of my metaphysical views is just a sketch, and so I am not going to try to define the various terms that I am using. They are generally consistent with to standard dictionary definitions, perhaps with some embellishment. The term “human being,” for example, includes all (whether “real” or apparent) that is necessary to enable the human being to think and act. This includes not only the physical body but also whatever additional components (artifacts, aspects, manifestations, representations) are necessary to enable it to think and feel as it does (e.g., a mind, a spirit, a soul).

I shall define “God” to be the entire (unitary) universe (not just a subpart of it). (I will not go into the reasons for doing this here – for more discussion of this point, see my article, <http://www.foundationwebsite.org/ChurchofNature.doc> .)

Since the universe is unitary, everything is connected in some way to everything else. I shall refer to this universal interconnectedness as “universal consciousness.” In order for something to be a part of the universe, it must be connected to the rest of the universe – i.e., it must be perceived in some fashion by the rest of the universe, and it must respond (sense or react) in some fashion to the rest of the universe. Some aspect of the rest of the universe is “aware” or “conscious” of it. For something to exist, it is necessary that “universal consciousness” be aware of it. Universal consciousness is the “support” for everything that is manifest in the universe. It follows (by definition) that universal consciousness is aware of itself.

There may exist physical universes alternative to the one we perceive; those universes may have physical properties different from ours, and the physical beings that exist in them may have different physical senses and levels of awareness.

Every part of the universe has some level of awareness (of self or other-than-self). This assertion may not be obvious. If something existed that was totally unaware of the rest of the universe (such a created object that had total unawareness of anything else), then it would not respond in any way to anything else. But something cannot be observed without responding (asserting or proving or evidencing its existence) in some way (this agrees with the view of modern physics – an observer cannot observe something without changing it in some way).

If something exists, there must in some way be evidence of its existence (e.g., self-awareness). In other words, if universal consciousness exists then a manifestation of it exists. Universal consciousness and manifested existence go hand in hand. One does not exist without the other. If universal consciousness is viewed as the “Creator” or the “Prime Mover,” and manifestations of it are viewed as “Creation,” then the two go hand-in-hand. One does not exist without the other; they are mutually dependent. The Creator did not exist initially, independently of Creation, i.e., with no manifestation. Both occur / exist simultaneously.

The term “consciousness” is somewhat ambiguous. I will refer to two different types of consciousness: (1) the “being” consciousness, or awareness (both self-awareness (sense of self, existence, or identity) and awareness of other-than-self), of a human being or animal or plant or other subpart of the universe; and (2) the “universal” consciousness that supports all physical existence (e.g., a rock or an astral body or a soul). Which type of consciousness (the consciousness of a “conscious” or sentient being, or the universal consciousness underlying all being / existence) I am referring to will clear from context, or I will distinguish.

I use the terms “awareness” and “consciousness” somewhat interchangeably. Either term may refer to the perception by or of a subpart of the universe (e.g., a rock or a human being or a soul), or to the entire universe (“God,” universal consciousness).

While it may seem helpful to view the universe as consisting of two major parts – e.g., Creator and Creation, or the Spiritual Universe and the Physical Universe – the use of such “dualistic” views may cause difficulties. The difficulty arises when discussing spiritual concepts or constructs, such as spirits and souls. If they are viewed as manifestations of universal consciousness, or “objects of creation,” then they are very similar (in status) to objects in our familiar physical universe, and it is not clear why they should be considered so very different from physical objects. We have a high level of awareness of a plant, but it has only limited awareness of us. Both are just as “real” in the physical universe (or even as viewed from our level of awareness) – there is no need to consider them as radically different. A similar relationship holds between spirits and physical human beings. They have a high level of awareness of us, but we have limited awareness of them. (By the way, these examples do not require you to believe in spirits any more than they require you to believe in plants.) The difficulties are removed if the objects of the universe are characterized mainly by their levels of awareness of other objects. (This concept is the “density” concept set forth by Laura Knight-Jadczyk.)

I may use the word “existence” to refer just to the familiar physical five-sense universe plus the familiar spiritual universe (viewed as separate from universal consciousness, even though they are not), or I may use it to refer to the complete universe (physical five-sense universe plus spiritual universe plus universal consciousness, viz., God). Which meaning (“real” existence or “total” existence, where “reality” includes both the physical five-sense universe plus the spiritual universe, but excludes the universal consciousness supporting them both) is intended should be clear from context (if not, it may be necessary to define some additional specialized terms). (Some would define “reality” exactly the opposite from what I have done here – reality being the universal consciousness and illusion being its physical and spiritual manifestations. I will not argue over this, since I view either specification of reality simply as co-dependent reflections of each other.)

In a sense, what is commonly referred to as the “spiritual” universe (astral bodies, spirits, souls, angels, higher spiritual beings, lower spiritual beings) are simply manifestations (projections) of universal consciousness, in the same way that we denizens of our familiar physical universe

are. This point of view does not distinguish these familiar metaphysical spiritual bodies from our familiar five-sense physical bodies, except in their level of awareness of each other (the spiritual bodies are very aware of us, but we have a very limited awareness of them, but both are just as “real” from a higher level of awareness). Spiritual bodies are simply bodies that are perceived at a different level of awareness than five-sense physical bodies. Anything that can be sensed is a part of the universe – it may be considered as a part of universal consciousness or a manifestation (manifest reflection) of universal consciousness. Universal consciousness and what we perceive as physical (or metaphysical/spiritual) existence are simply different aspects of existence. (Note that there cannot exist something that is sensed only by itself. Everything in the universe must be capable of being sensed by something else in the universe, and hence, indirectly, by everything else in the universe. Under this concept there does not exist an “essence” of God, “seventh heaven,” “seventh density,” or Nirvana that can be sensed only by itself. This is not to say that an ontology cannot be defined in which this may be possible, e.g., by defining “sense” in a special way. It is just a quite different view from mine, in which “God” is defined to be everything.)

The word “spiritual” is a little ambiguous. In agreement with common usage, I shall generally use the term to refer to the familiar spiritual world / universe (astral bodies, souls, etc.), in contrast to our familiar five-sense physical universe. But I shall also use the word “spiritual” to refer to “universal consciousness,” and consider the familiar spiritual world as part of a generalized “physical” universe (i.e., the familiar five-sense physical universe plus the metaphysical universe). Unfortunately, my concepts are more refined than the familiar terms we use to speak about them, and I am reluctant to add to the confusion by introducing more terms (jargon). Someday, when things are better understood and more generally agreed upon, the introduction of additional, more descriptive terminology would be helpful. Part of the difficulty is that, in my view, the “complete” (or “extended”) physical universe (familiar five-sense physical universe plus the familiar metaphysical spiritual universe) is just projection of universal consciousness – it is not something separate. It is similar to an isomorphic representation, but an isomorphic representation is a separate construct (separate “set,” in mathematical terminology), and while the universal consciousness and its manifestations (projections into “reality”) may be considered different things, they are totally interdependent (one does not exist without the other). The paradigm is not {[familiar five-sense physical universe] + [familiar spiritual universe] + [universal consciousness]} = [God]. It is {[familiar five-sense physical universe) + (familiar spiritual universe)] is supported by (bound to, projected by) [universal consciousness]} = [God].

To summarize: Existence (physical or spiritual perceptions) is a co-dependent manifestation, of universal consciousness. Without universal consciousness, there would be no (physical or spiritual) existence. Without universal consciousness, there would be nothing at all. On the other hand, universal consciousness always has a manifestation. With no manifestation, universal consciousness would not exist. There is an apparent duality here, with universal consciousness and physical/spiritual existence seeming to exist independently of each other, but in fact universal consciousness and physical/spiritual existence exist as co-dependent reflections (or evidences, or assertions, manifestations, or essential supports) of each other. (I will not attempt to address the issue of why anything exists at all – no one seems to have any ideas about that! Existence is considered a “given.” My speculations here concern solely the nature of existence, not its foundation.)

Awareness may exist at different levels, for different “subparts” of the universe. A human being is aware of his existence and surroundings, through his physical senses, sentience and intelligence. An animal is aware of its existence, at a different, lower level (similar senses to the

human being, but lower intelligence). A plant is aware of its existence, at a still lower level. A rock is aware of its existence, at an even lower level. Full awareness of the entire universe may be considered as “God,” or “The One,” or “I Am.”

Physical existence occurs at different levels – different levels of physicality as well as awareness. Human beings are aware of one five-sense physical existence; some animals have the same five physical senses, but their sentience and intelligence differ. Plants and rocks have fewer senses than human beings. The various “bodies” of metaphysics (astral body, soul body, causal body, etc.) are all (generalized) physical manifestations of universal consciousness (many refer to these as “spiritual” bodies, but it is simpler to view them as manifestations of consciousness, and therefore as “physical” bodies, at different levels of awareness (“densities,” in the terminology of Laura Knight-Jadczyk)).

The physical existence of which we are aware, by means of our being-consciousness and our five basic physical senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste), is an artifact (manifestation, conjecture, representation, alternative isomorphic construction) of universal-consciousness.

Our familiar physical universe – space, time, matter / antimatter, energy, gravity – exists as a reflection of (universal) consciousness. The physical universe is a construct of consciousness that obeys certain restrictions, or “physical laws.” It exists, with its various properties, simply because universal consciousness posits it. The “laws of physics” are nothing more than the specification of universal consciousness – there is no “physical” reason why there are a maximum of two electrons in the first shell of an atom and eight in the second, or that ice is less dense than water (so that our oceans do not freeze from the bottom up) other than that it is the will of universal consciousness. We (i.e., the physical projection of universal consciousness) are in fact nothing more than a figment of the imagination of the “mind of God” (universal consciousness) – part of somebody’s (God’s, universal consciousness’s, the “Other Isomorph’s”) dream. But this does not mean in any way that we are the inferior part – both isomorphs (the universal consciousness and the projected physical universe of it) are mutually co-dependent, and do not exist without each other. A dream cannot exist without a dreamer, and a dreamer does not exist without a dream.

It is important to keep in mind the interdependence of the universal consciousness and the physical/spiritual. One does not exist independently of the other. The physical/spiritual universe exists as it does because it is conjectured, or formulated, or envisioned that way in the universal consciousness. Nothing exists or happens in the physical/spiritual universe without a correspondence in the universal consciousness. Nothing changes in the physical/spiritual universe without a corresponding change in the universal consciousness that reflects it. It is easy to think of the physical/spiritual universe and universal consciousness as a “duality,” but the use of this term may be misleading. The physical/spiritual universe and universal consciousness exist as a single completely interdependent entity. They in fact comprise a “unity,” but it may be convenient / useful at times to discuss the two aspects of existence (the physical/spiritual universe and its universal-consciousness reflection) as if they were two different (separate, independent) entities. They are not. They are two mutually interdependent aspects of a single thing (i.e., of the unitary universe, or God).

Note that although nothing exists in the physical universe without a corresponding aspect in the universal consciousness, there may be plenty of things that exist outside of our own particular physical universe (of our five senses). The universal consciousness may conceive and manifest many phenomena that are not perceptible to our five senses (souls, for example). These other manifestations are not part of our familiar physical universe – they are part of the “larger”

generalized physical universe that includes all manifestations of universal consciousness (not just our own familiar physical universe).

In some metaphysical paradigms, the “essence” of existence is consciousness (awareness, thought). Physical matter exists because consciousness posits it. The Hindus express this concept by saying that the physical universe is “maya,” or illusion. From this viewpoint, the essence of reality is the consciousness, not the physical manifestation of it. From the viewpoint I find appealing, universal consciousness and its physical manifestations are both essential – one would not exist without the other.

The concept is analogous to any human construct in which a human being builds or operates something. As an example, consider a puppet (marionette) show. The puppeteer, corresponding to the universal consciousness, directs the actions of the puppets, which correspond to the physical universe. Without the puppeteer, the puppets do not exist and there is no presentation. Without the puppets, there is no presentation. The puppet show requires both the puppeteer and the puppets. The puppets move if and only if the puppeteer wills it. Another analogy: If you move your arm, every cell in your arm moves. Your arm moves if and only if every cell of it moves. Your arm cannot move unless all of the cells move, and the cells cannot move unless the arm moves. The arm and the cells that comprise it are simply different aspects of the same thing.

Another example/analogy: A comic strip represents physical reality, and the creator of the comic strip represents universal consciousness. Without the author, the comic strip would not exist. On the other hand, if no comic strip characters exist, then there is no comic strip. The figures of the comic strip perform whatever actions the author specifies. In our reality, we are analogous to the characters in a comic strip. At our low level of awareness, we are simply physical props going through motions as directed by consciousness.

Our bodies are physically controlled by our brains, but it is consciousness that “tells” the brain what to “tell” the body to do.

The Significance of Symbols

Symbols are codes. The dictionary definition of “code” is: “A system of symbols, letters, or words given certain arbitrary meanings, used for transmitting messages requiring secrecy or brevity” (American Heritage Dictionary). A symbol may mean whatever is intended by a user of the symbol, and the meaning may vary from user to user. For one person, a swastika may signify an ancient peace symbol; to another it may represent Nazi Germany. For one person, a cross may represent the life and death of Jesus Christ, or Christianity, or the Trinity or the Holy Ghost; for another, it may represent a symbol of Roman execution, power and authority. For one person, and Egyptian ankh (ansate cross, cross with a loop at the top, symbol of life) may simply be a pretty piece of jewelry, of no special significance whatsoever. To another, it may possess mystical powers.

A symbol is an abbreviation for a more complex object or concept. Its meaning is whatever is defined (specified) by the user. To a mathematician, a triangle symbol, for example, may simply denote an arbitrary geometric triangle. To a physicist, it may represent three-dimensional manifold / space. To a mystic, it may represent a range of powers or effects specified by him or by someone else. The meaning of the symbol is whatever meaning is intended by the user. It is a shorthand representation of a complex object or process. Different beings may associate different meanings (powers, effects) with the same symbol. For example, Beings A, B, and C

may all have associated different meanings with a triangle. Someone may contemplate a triangle, and invoke the meaning of (specified by) Being A, or B, or C.

A symbol does not have to be a physical object – it may be a sign drawn in the air, or a chant sung, or a drumming rhythm, or a dance movement. If the symbol is associated with certain powers or effects, and the perceiver of the symbol is aware of those powers or effects and knows how to invoke them, then they are his to command. This is the power of magic and spells, or of Reiki, Voodoo, Juju, or other type of Shamanism.

A seed is a symbol. It is a coded representation of a biological life form – the code is the DNA molecule present in all biological life on Earth. If someone wishes to develop the plant or animal that the seed represents, he invokes the seed to become a plant by going through the appropriate actions (in this case, planting the seed in suitable ground). The seed then develops only in response to the pattern formed by universal consciousness. It is the consciousness that determines the physical form – nothing in this physical universe exists without a corresponding counterpart in the universal consciousness. Universal consciousness “fleshes out” the image corresponding to the pattern that has been specified in the seed. (Universal consciousness can create any kind of manifestation, at will. It is not at all necessary to have a seed or pattern. The seeds are included in this physical existence simply as a physical counterpart image (coded representation) of the being they represent, to provide physical creatures a physical means of initiating and modifying biological life (e.g., domestication of wild animals, selective breeding of animals and plants, genetic engineering, eugenics, cloning).)

DNA is the most ubiquitous and significant symbol in our physical existence. The symbolic or code nature of DNA is not generally perceived. DNA is not some magic molecule that automatically reproduces in a fabulously systematic way to form all of the cells and organs of our bodies. Rather, it is a code, pure and simple. The various parts of the DNA string are symbols of the code, and they possess meaning the meaning that has been ascribed to them (associated with them, impressed on them) by universal consciousness. They describe physical features of a physical being. But those features have nothing at all to do with the physical structure of the DNA chemical molecule. By itself, DNA cannot “evolve” into anything. The features that are associated with a DNA molecule (i.e., the cells, organs, and beings that result from a single cell containing the DNA molecule) are those features that have been impressed on the molecule by the universal consciousness that created it. Without the encoding – the association made by universal consciousness of specific biological characteristics with specific “snippets” of code – a DNA molecule would not develop into anything (except perhaps replicated copies of itself, such as in the case of recombinant DNA). The meaning associated with a segment of DNA code persists, so that it is possible for human beings (or extraterrestrial visitors) to do “genetic engineering,” or “gene splicing,” to replace one segment of code (corresponding to a known physical characteristic) with another, and obtain predictable results.

DNA is analogous to a pattern used by a tailor. A person may present a pattern (cf., the seed, containing the DNA) to a tailor (cf., universal consciousness), and the tailor can/may produce a garment in accordance with the pattern. Or the user may modify the pattern, and the tailor can produce a correspondingly modified garment. Or the tailor may choose to modify the pattern at his whim (which might correspond, for example, to a cosmic ray smashing a gene on an ancient African, at which point and by which physical sign universal consciousness introduces the genetic trait of sickle-cell anemia, which makes the inheritor tired but protects him from malaria).

DNA is like written music, or a recipe. With a written musical score, it is possible to replicate the musical piece over and over and over again, and any orchestra may perform it. With a recipe, a

food dish may be consistently replicated, and produced by anyone. Or, the recipe may be modified by making slight modifications (cf. genetic engineering) by someone who lacks the creative skills required to produce the original dish.

In his book, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Jared Diamond observes that the genetic difference between a domesticated food plant and its wild progenitor is often very small, often involving but a single “tweak” in its genetic code (DNA). From the traditional viewpoint that it is something about the chemical structure of DNA molecules that causes them to mature into different finished products (organisms), this is a very remarkable observation. But from the “spiritual” viewpoint that the DNA is simply a code, all that is required is for a single gene to be designated (“coded”) as corresponding to a different characteristic of the final product – there is little correspondence or relationship between the chemical / physical structure of the DNA and the physical characteristics (traits) of the mature organism. The physical characteristic corresponding to the gene has nothing at all to do with the chemical structure of the DNA, and everything to do with just what trait the “universal consciousness” associated with the gene.

Similarly, modern science has no explanation whatsoever for the remarkable fact that embryonic cells containing exactly the same DNA can grow into quite different types of organ cells, such as nerve cells or muscle cells (still containing the same DNA), simply in accordance with their location in the body. Physical science is at a complete loss to explain this phenomenon. From the point of view that universal consciousness simply “fleshes out” the physical body of the material being in accordance with the recipe specified by the DNA, this is not remarkable at all. To understand how a single cell containing a strand of DNA can grow into a large, massively complex and diverse material being, the science of genetics should view DNA simply as a code or recipe book, not as a chemical molecule obeying chemical / physical rules. The idea / design of the being exists in the spiritual world, and is fleshed out in the physical world in a corresponding fashion. The DNA is simply a code that describes major features of the physical being.

For a creature to be content (happy, satisfied, comfortable), that creature’s soul must be “well matched” to its DNA. You do not see examples of a dolphin spirit in a human body, or a human soul in a dolphin. If a person’s soul is not well matched to its DNA, then that person will lead a miserable existence, always feeling “out of place.” Very few souls from other (parallel) universes incarnate in human bodies, because their souls differ too much from the DNA of the Earthian human species, i.e., their souls are not a good “match” to Earthian human DNA. Most human souls occupying human bodies now previously occupied human bodies on Earth, not on other planets or galaxies, or in other universes. At present, it appears that an alien race is “taking over” the human species on planet Earth, by abducting individuals, modifying their DNA (by genetic engineering) to match their own souls better than ours do, and then reincarnating in the progeny of the DNA-modified abductees. Like it or not, the current human race of souls will soon lose Earth to another hominid species, just as the Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons before it. Oh well, we never treated Gaia with much respect, so it is not surprising that we are losing her to another suitor.

(For more information about Laura Knight-Jadczyk’s ontological views (“densities,” alien abductions, Earth pre-history), see her “Cassiopaea” transcripts (of channelings from her “Cassiopaea” source). They are available from the “CassChat” Internet discussion group. To access them, proceed as follows: Navigate to Internet website <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/casschat> . Click on “files” and download the file sessions.zip (or click on sessions.exe if you don’t have a copy of the WinZip file compression program on your computer). See also her book, *The High Strangeness of Dimensions, Densities, and the*

Process of Alien Abduction (2004), available from her website, <http://www.cassiopaea.org> , or from <http://www.amazon.com> . For additional discussion of the alien abduction phenomenon, see David M. Jacobs: *The Threat: Revealing the Secret Alien Agenda* (Fireside / Simon & Schuster, 1998); *Secret Life: Firsthand Documented Accounts of UFO Abductions* (Fireside / Simon & Schuster, 1992); and *UFOs and Abductions: Challenging the Borders of Knowledge* (Edited by David M. Jacobs, University of Kansas Press, 2000).)