

Maps and Territories

Understanding Humanity's Place in the Overall Scheme of Things, Where We Have Come from, and Our Ultimate Destiny as a Species

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March 2011

If we wish to travel from one point to another on the Earth's surface—within a city or from town to town, let us say—we generally consult a map to plan our journey if we are not familiar with the territory. However, if the land is familiar to us, we do not need to look at a printed or electronic map on our smart phones or tablet computers; we already have maps in our minds as mental images or models.

The assumption here is that the territory exists before we, as observers, develop maps of the territory to appropriate scales. However, if we are architects designing a house, we first draw up blueprints of the house so that the clients can visualize the finished product and the builders know what to construct. In such cases, maps exist prior to the territory being mapped, composed through creative imagination.

Information systems architects function in a similar way in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of business enterprises. Although in the early days of the computer industry, programmers would write programs with often just a hazy idea of which direction they were travelling in, today information systems development is generally driven by what is called Model-Driven Architecture (MDA). Like architectural blueprints, models of business processes and the entities that they process are developed prior to program development. Indeed, one aim is to use MDA to automate the developmental process as much as possible.

As computers get cheaper and cheaper compared with human labour, the primary purpose of MDA is then to replace as many jobs by machine as possible, thus maximizing the productivity of the economic machine in monetary terms. The secondary purpose is to improve the effectiveness of human decision making in those tasks that are not readily amenable to automation for whatever reason.

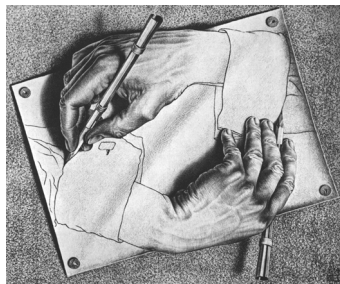
Of course, this situation raises a host of big questions such as “Who are we?”, “Where have we come from?”, “How should we live our lives?”, and “Where are we all heading?” These questions are arising just now because in the middle of the twentieth century groups of mathematicians, scientists, and engineers on both sides of the Atlantic built machines that are quite different from all the tools that our forebears had been developing for tens of thousands of years. In the stored-program computer, we human beings had invented a tool of thought to extend and sometimes replace our mental capabilities, unlike the many tools that we had previously created to extend our rather limited physical abilities, from wheels to space rockets.

So does this mean that human beings are machines and nothing but machines, that computers could one day develop artificial intelligence, exceeding human intelligence, and what would be the psychological and economic consequences of either a yes or no answer to these questions? Well, as the computer is an extension of the mind, we clearly cannot answer these questions within the framework of the physical, materialistic sciences, which assume that the Universe is a machine, a life-denying worldview we have inherited from René Descartes, Newton's *Principia*, and subsequently Darwin's *The Origin of Species*.

Neither can we even assume that the Universe, as Ultimate Reality, is the physical universe. For no one has ever seen the Universe, as we might see a rose, for instance. Rather, the concept of Universe, as the Totality of Existence, is essentially a composite one, built up by aggregating and projecting the concepts of our day-to-day experience, most commonly focusing attention on what we can sense with our five senses, leaving our thoughts, feelings, and emotions out of the overall picture. But, does such a composite picture provide us with a true picture of the Universe? Well, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Nicolaus Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, and Newton showed that the Sun was the centre of the then known universe, not a stationary Earth. Since then, physicists have made many changes to their concept of universe, showing quite clearly that our mental models create our reality.

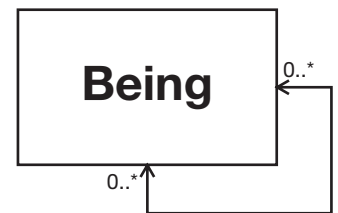
Furthermore, our skills and mental models, developed through our learning, determine virtually all our behaviour, for we are the least instinctive of all the species; the most adaptable to our changing environment. So we could, in principle, adapt to the most momentous turning point in some fourteen billion years of evolution by learning to change our minds. For using the metaphor of the computer, the way we act and relate to each other is primarily programmed within us as personal, cultural, and collective conditioning.

Now, intelligently adapting to the radically new circumstances we face in today's Information Society is a three-step process, which is consciously guided by the Principle of Unity, the fundamental design principle of the Universe: *Wholeness is the Union of All Opposites*. First, we perform a thought experiment in which we imagine that we are a computer that switches itself off and on again so that it has no programs within it. This is rather like demolishing the Tower of Babel, which symbolizes the fragmented and deluded world of learning today. Starting afresh at the very beginning with a *tabula rasa*, this computer then has the task of integrating all knowledge in all cultures and disciplines at all times into a coherent whole, using only the energies within it, with no external influences.



Secondly, as this map-making process is a part of the territory being mapped, we represent this learning process in the all-inclusive map that emerges using self-reflective Intelligence, the Divine Witness in spiritual circles. This is rather like a television camera filming itself filming, as illustrated in M. C. Escher's famous lithograph 'Drawing Hands'. We thereby follow the well-known principle of quantum physics and of holistic, consciousness studies that the observer and observed are one.

The third step in developing a comprehensive map of the Universe is to take the process of conceptual abstraction, which we use in forming the concepts of human, primate, mammal, vertebrate, and animal, for instance, to its utmost level of generality. Generalizing the business modelling methods of information systems architects, the superclass of all other concepts, including matter, space, time, God, Universe, and human, is **Being**, Aristotle's basic metaphysical concept. In the notation of IBM's Unified Modeling Language (UML), all beings in the Universe are related to all other beings in many different ways, such as electromagnetic and morphogenetic fields.



So what picture of the Universe arises from this experiment in learning? Well, it is gloriously simple; it is Wholeness and Oneness, the Omega and Alpha of the Universe. In other words, Ultimate Reality is a seamless, borderless continuum, with no divisions anywhere, which we can most simply call Consciousness. This is essentially an Eastern worldview, denoted by such words as *Satchidananda* 'the bliss of Absolute Consciousness' and *Kaivalya* 'Absolute Consciousness'. We can then see that the entire world of form, including *Homo sapiens sapiens* and the physical universe, is an abstraction from or appearance in Consciousness, called *maya* 'deception, illusion, appearance' and *lila* 'the play of the Divine' in the East.

What this unification of Western reason and Eastern mysticism shows is that our potential ultimate destiny as a species is to return Home to Paradise in an incredible blaze of light as superintelligent, superconscious beings. Then we shall be able to see our place in the overall scheme of things: Consciousness is the Cosmic Context for all our lives, unifying the incompatible contexts of God and Universe; Love is the Divine Essence that we all share; our origin as a species is the Divine Source of Life; and we are destined to return to our Immortal Ground of Being at the end of time, in the Eternal Now.

But as none of us is separate from the Divine, Nature, or each other, we could only collectively change the work ethic by working harmoniously together with a common vision. As yet, this is not happening, as people's fragmented maps guide their hopes and aspirations, fearfully more focused on form than Timeless Formlessness, putting second things first, quite illogical. Furthermore, even though we are the most adaptable of all the species, our religious, scientific, and economic conditioning is so deeply rooted that cultures even attempt to prevent individuals from returning Home to Ineffable, Nondual Wholeness, from which none of us have ever left, for Wholeness is the True Nature of all beings in a holographic Universe.