

Are We Merely Divine Puppets?

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Self-identified denizens of the Absolute (hereafter mystics) declare that reality is an indivisible whole, and there are experiments in quantum physics that support the assertion. The whole referred to is what I think of as Source (a.k.a. God). It follows from this view that if one is an aspect of an indivisible whole, then one is not, indeed, cannot be separate from that whole. If one is not separate from the whole, then mystics say there cannot be any choices or actions that do not arise from the whole. In short, there can't be separate "doers." I think I understand this argument and agree with it up to a point. In fact, I sometimes say that "Ego is the mask God hides behind while pretending to be you," which I think captures the point the mystics are voicing; i.e. Source is ultimately behind everything. I agree that should one reach a state of resonance with Source (Self-realization), then one experiences "oneself" to be the Divine behind the mask. However, most people experience compartmentalized or egoic consciousnesses and are not in resonance with Source.

Here is an illustration to make more concrete the idea of being a "doer" when not in resonance with Source. The human body is a living, organic whole. If some cell not in resonance with the body launches off on its own and tries to become independent of the whole, what is the result? Cancer. Thus, we might say that the mass of humanity that is ignorant of the whole and often acts in a manner that is not congruent with Source are like cancerous cells who have declared their independence from the whole and launched their own program. Therefore, one might say that egoic consciousness is like a cancer cell and Self-realization is like a spontaneous remission that turns a cancer cell back into a cooperative aspect of the living body and in the process contributes to an improvement in the immune system. Would we say that a cancer cell has no independence of action? Would we say that it can't be a "doer" of independent actions because the living body is an organic whole? I don't think so.

A compartmentalized consciousness absent Self-realization is an egoic consciousness. So, how does an ego (I prefer fictive-self) come about. It is produced by resistance to Source or to pure being. Such an ego consciousness makes choices and pursues its own agenda in the world. Perhaps from an Absolute perspective the world is not real, but that has no relevance to ego or the fictive-self. To explore this I'll use a metaphor to represent a human life and the world. Imagine waking up and finding yourself in the cockpit of an airplane in flight. There is no one else in the cockpit or in the plane. What are you to do?

You could realize that you are not a pilot and just sit back, relax and leave things to the autopilot. In short, you could just *be* and enjoy the ride and see what happens. However,

the idea of placing your trust in the airplane's autopilot begins to make you anxious. You imagine all the awful things that could happen if the autopilot should fail and you can't control the plane. Fear arises. Thus, fear motivated, you begin to read all of the instrument labels and study the guidance mechanisms. Further, after getting some idea about the function of various mechanisms, you turn off the autopilot and begin to experiment in an attempt to take control of the plane. Some of this exploration results in things that almost panic you, some don't appear to have an effect, and some make changes that you are comfortable with. As your explorations continue, you begin to feel more and more like you are making good choices and are gaining control of the airplane. You begin to view yourself as a pilot and are excited about flying. You make a couple of successful landings and takeoffs. You are now confident in yourself as a pilot and are at ease.

However, the truth is that you are in a flight simulator that is so good that you can't tell the difference between it and a real airplane. You are not actually in an airplane. You are not actually flying. You can't really crash. You are not actually making any real choices, good or bad. You are not really in control of an airplane, and you certainly are not a real pilot. It is all virtual reality. A virtual airplane, virtual choices, virtual outcomes, virtual control and virtual piloting. In short, it is all unreal. It is just a simulation, but you have failed to recognize it as a simulation. However, you have acquired some of the skills necessary for piloting an aircraft.

When some mystics say that there is a “dream/illusion with no doers,” the implication is that the world as we know it, which includes life, is a simulation. I prefer the metaphor of a computer simulation to dream or illusion, but it isn't a difference that makes any real difference. According to these mystics, the simulation we call the world is actually on autopilot, but almost every one of us goes through a process similar to the one described above and resists going with the flow, i.e, just *being*. Resistance results in the autopilot being blocked, an ego or a fictive-self created and behavior directed at control of the immediate aspects of the simulation undertaken. Most people are confused by the claim of mystics that there actually is no world, no people, no choices, no one doing anything, etc. Confusion arises due to a failure to recognize that the claim is intended to convey that it is all a simulation (a.k.a. dream or illusion) and not real in the sense that most people tend to think about reality.

The problem here is one of perspective. From the perspective of the mystic, the world and everything in it is virtual and therefore not real. No thing really exists and nothing ever happens. However, from the perspective of most human beings, both things and events are real. There are choices and outcomes. There are actions and actors. Each, from his or her own perspective, is right in terms of the reality they perceive. That one perspective is relative and the other absolute means that each talks past the other and each is certain they have the Truth and perhaps one does.

One must wonder why, if the “enlightened” have the Truth, they think telling others about their phenomenological Truth will have any effect. Conceptual communication can't capture phenomenological Truth. Of course, the refrain one often hears is that their conceptual communication is a pointer, but it might also be a subtle way of elevating oneself. The ghost of ego past? Personally, I find the “no doer” view no improvement over the deterministic view of causation posited by scientific materialism. What's the difference between being a mechanistic robot at the mercy of simple determinism and lacking free will* or being merely a puppet dancing to the tune of a divine puppet master?

The risk is that the ignorant believe the mystics. The ignorant would then still live in a relative world but believe in the absolute perspective. It is important to recognize that they believe, not that they know from their own experience. Thus, believing that they live in a simulation, indeed that they are a simulation, and that they don't have any real choices and can't take any real actions, they stop taking the simulation seriously. I am reminded of a quote from Fred Davis' web site, “So long as it "feels" like there are choices, its important for us to make skillful ones.” What happens to the ignorant if they stop taking choices in the relative world seriously and fail to make skillful choices?

Further, I would ask, might there actually be a reason for the simulation? Might encouraging people, virtual or not, to believe that interacting with the simulation is pointless actually be detrimental in some manner? Looking at the matter from a human perspective, one must ask, why would Source, Cosmic Intelligence, the Divine, God or whatever label one wants to apply, manifest a simulation like the world, if it serves no purpose and the activity of the avatars within it pointless? Is what we call the world merely a cosmic soap opera created by Source for meaningless amusement?

Many, including myself, reject the idea that Source has no purpose and the simulation is meaningless. So, why is there a simulation? As hypotheses about such things go, I find the hypothesis offered by Tom Campbell, in his trilogy My Big TOE, as likely as any other that I've heard. Campbell makes the assumption that evolution, as a process, is implicit in the nature of things or a core aspect of the whole. It applies not only to life, as we experience it but also to Source. The driving goal posited for the evolutionary process is reduction of entropy. He suggests that a simulation is the method used by Source to decrease its entropy and thereby evolve. All of the compartmentalized consciousnesses employed in the simulation are evolving toward a reduction in entropy. Perhaps Source is employing something akin to parallel processing to more efficiently reduce the entropy of the whole. When a compartmentalized consciousness embodied in an avatar arrives at a level of entropy within the simulation that can make a contribution to the whole, the simulation is transcended, in a manner of speaking, and one continues to progress with greater awareness of being an aspect of the whole.

This perspective is one that has something meaningful to say to the avatars in the simulation (a.k.a. the world). It says they have a purpose and they can make choices and take actions that are meaningful within the context in which they operate. Indeed, they can affect their own state of compartmentalized consciousness by lowering their entropy through those choices and actions. This breaks down their resistance to just being and can bring them to a point where they are available to the Absolute and are in resonance with Source. This in turn serves Source by decreasing the entropy of Source. Perhaps, some or all mystics might argue, based on their experience, that Source is perfect and has no need to evolve. However, why should one believe that the understanding of mystics, still living in the simulation through a fictive-self (even though greatly diminished), is itself complete and perfect. It seems unlikely to me but then who am I but an ignorant puppet compelled by the Divine to write this meaningless essay that speaks to no purpose?

* *Free Will and the Evolution of Consciousness* at: (<http://davidcenter.com/Brink.php>)