Moving Symbols

Radical Change in Psycho-social Energy Possibilities?

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This exploration arose from an experience of "religious" symbolism, described below, and initially was distributed under the title: Moving Symbols: Radical Change in Religious Psycho-social Energy Policy?

Context: role and degradation of symbols
Summaries are provided elsewhere of the role of Communication through symbols and the challenge of the Degradation of symbolic forms.

Rotating psychoactive symbols: traditional and future?

For the purposes of this exploration a distinction might usefully be made between rotation and revolution. Technically rotation is a movement of an object in a circular motion, essentially upon its own (internal) axis of symmetry. In so doing, as with the rotation of the Earth, different facets may be exposed in some way in succession. Revolution is the circular motion about an external point, as with the orbital movement of the Earth about the Sun. The question is how a significant cognitive distinction might be made between the rotation and the revolution of symbols, given that some symbols might both rotate and revolve (as with the Earth).

The examples offered here are deliberately comprehensive to facilitate further consideration of what exactly is of significance in any such movement as variously understood.

Rotated symbols:

Rotated symbols (participative): The best known moving symbol is that of the Tibetan Buddhist prayer wheel where movement is ensured by one or more practitioners spinning the wheel clockwise. Other traditional variants exist where the movement is ensured by water, fire or wind. Newer variants are moved by electricity or as animated images on websites.

The rosary or circlet of mala beads (japa mala) is both a symbol as a whole and through the significance associated with each component bead as it is pulled through the hand by the fingers (Designing Cultural Rosaries and Meaning Malas to Sustain Associations within the Pattern that Connects, 2000). This may be primarily mnemonic as an aid to remembering parts of a prayer. In the form of "worry beads" (komboloi or kompoloi), however, it is highly questionable whether they should be
consider as having a symbolic function -- although it might be argued that only the user could distinguish its use from that of a rosary (which might itself be used as "worry beads").

In some Christian countries that follow the tradition of silencing church bells at Easter (for the period between death and resurrection, when the "bells go to Rome"), their sound is replaced by a (death) rattle (crécelle, cuqlajta) which may be designed such as to be operated by rotation.

**Rotated symbols (alternatives):** At Georgetown University (USA), in response to various understandings of Georgetown's Catholic and Jesuit Identity (15 February 2008):

The University has placed a wide variety of crosses and crucifixes, with descriptions of their particular significance, in all Main Campus classroom buildings, with the exception of the Bunn Intercultural Center, where there are rotating symbols of the various faith traditions represented on campus.

**Implicit rotation of symbols**

**Symbols of implicit rotation (fundamental):** The Buddhist symbol variously known as the Bhaavakra, the Wheel of Life, the Wheel of Existence, the Wheel of Becoming, the Wheel of Rebirth, the Wheel of Samsara, the Wheel of Suffering, and the Wheel of Transformation takes the form of a mandala. In its representation of a cycle, it implies movement but the symbol is not itself rotated. More generally, the Wheel of Life is common to the dharmic religions (Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism) as the continuous cycle of birth, life, death and re-birth to which unliberated beings are subject. Again it is not rotated.

Although the symbol of the swastika does not rotate, concerns about an implied rotation are associated with use of the (destructive) mirror image of the "swastika" symbol sacred in both variants to Hindu culture. As the traditional counter-clockwise swirling solar cross the Onote Manji represents love and mercy, whereas the Uva Omoje represents strength and intelligence and was the clockwise rotating symbol associated with Ganesh.

The Tarot of the Egyptians (Thoth Deck) has symbols represented which are explicitly said to be revolving, notably that of the Tetragrammaton. Seeming contradiction between symbolic elements is understood to be only the opposition necessary for balance, through their implied revolving movement. As a representation of the expansion implied by the 'the sign of the cross', the letter Tau is symbolized as four-fold through the revolving symbol of the Tetragrammaton.

The seven human chakras in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions are understood as energy wheels associated with different levels of the spine. Each is held to be a spinning sphere of bioenergetic activity of different complexity and function. They are typically represented by mandalas implying such rotation.

**Implicit rotation within symbols (systemic):** Many systems diagrams are static representations of circular movement, although the rotational and circular motions are seldom highlighted by the structure as a whole -- even when presented to wider audiences.

Potentially more interesting is the enneagram as applied to personality, as a kind of systems diagram which takes the form of an asymmetric circular mandala (see below). Its greater interest may lie in its psychoactive significance (see Psychoactive Text Warning: enneagram of precautionary attitudes, 2007). Its significance has been extensively studied (A.G.E.Blake, The Intelligent Enneagram, 1996).

The eight trigram symbols of the Ba Gua, commonly arrayed symbolically as a circle, are of fundamental significance to Chinese Taoist cosmology as a means of tracking change processes. Many of these changes could be considered as following a circular sequence thus implying a form of rotation. In a more complex form, the 64 hexagram symbols of the I Ching, when also arrayed in a circle, could be considered as implying a form of rotation.

Representations of the zodiac, initially for astronomically purposes, but now primarily for astrological and symbolic purposes, typically take circular form. The set of symbols of which they are composed identify a sequence of movement that may be understood as a form of rotation. In Chinese astrology, the 12 "earthy branches" of the sexagenary cycle are typically represented as a circular set.

**Symbols engendered geometrically through rotation:** It is appropriate to note how many symmetric geometric structures, fundamental to sacred geometry, are in fact engendered by rotations and revolutions of simpler structures (cf R. Buckminster Fuller, Synergetics: explorations in the geometry of thinking, Macmillan, 1975/1979). The fundamental Platonic and Archimedean forms are then to be understood as dynamic rather than static forms. It may well be that their dynamic basis is what renders them symbolically significant even though there is little conscious recognition of this.

**Symbol rotation "for effect"**

**Symbols rotated for aesthetic effect:** Although mandalas are "rotated" or "revolved" for aesthetic effect, there does not appear to be any spiritual significance attached to such movement. As screen-savers, for example, they are promoted as inducing a soothing trance-like state. The swastika may be considered a form of mandala whose rotation is implied, as noted above.

Beyond fascination, and any hypnotic trance-inducing function (see Visual stimulation devices, 1995), the question is whether
the elements of the symbol have any psycho-active significance.

**Rotation of symbols for motivational effect.** Such use is most evident in advertising especially that employing the latest media technologies. The objective is the cultivation of a cognitive bond disposing the person to actions with which the symbols if associated.

**Symbols rotated for "magical" effect.** The initiatives of Ramon Lull (1232-1315) to construct devices that rotated sequences of letters such that patterns of significance emerged could also be considered in this context (see Martin Gardner, Logic Machines and Diagrams, 1958; Yanis Damberg, Mnemonic Arts of Blessed Raymond Lull)

**Symbols rotated in gambling:** Wheels (as in roulette, or "wheels of fortune"), with a degree of symbolic design -- possibly extravagantly illuminated -- are the central focus of many gambling experiences. They acquire this significance by being rotated to enable chance to come into play when betting. As such they may also bear some relationship to representations of the Wheel of Life (discussed above)

**Explanatory symbol rotation**

**Symbols indicative of mundane rotation:** As noted in the Guiding Principles of Rotary, the name 'Rotary' was chosen at one of the early meetings. It aptly conveyed the original plan of the members to meet "in rotation" at their various places of business. The emblem was then based on a plain wagon wheel, a symbol implying rotation.

**Symbols rendering rotation evident:** The best example is perhaps the sundial. This renders comprehensible the rotation of the Earth about the Sun. Significance may be attached to different periods of the day and the activities appropriate to those times. More complex is the case of the astronomical clock having special mechanisms and dials to display astronomical information, such as the relative positions of the sun, moon, zodiacal constellations, and sometimes major planets. Similarly an orrery is a mechanical device that illustrates the relative positions and motions of the planets and moons in the solar system in heliocentric model. In the case of the armillary sphere (or spherical astrolabe), it models movements of celestial objects thus constituting a model of the celestial sphere -- although the movement is typically ensured manually. Chinese astronomers developed armillary spheres driven by clockwork.

**Generative symbol rotation (topological):** Perhaps the most significant, and extensive, approach to the rotation of symbols is that sponsored by the Meru Foundation into an unexpected geometric metaphor in the letter-sequence of the Hebrew alphabet and into the Hebrew text of Genesis that underlies and is held in common by the spiritual traditions of the ancient world. This metaphor models embryonic growth and self-organization. Rotating models are accessible from the Meru website. The metaphor is applied to all whole systems, including those as seemingly diverse as meditation practices and the mathematics fundamental to physics and cosmology. Unfortunately, given the claims for its potentially fundamental significance, the work is systematically copyrighted (and aggressively protected) such as to restrict its widespread appreciation and development -- in the modern era of open source exploration of vital new thinking. As such the manner of its dissemination provides a useful warning to future developers of integrative symbols and how their value may be marginalized (see discussion in Future Coping Strategies: beyond the constraints of proprietary metaphors, 1992)

**Ensymbolment through movement**

**Ensymbolment through circumambulation:** Many religious traditions encourage practitioners to engage in walking a circular path. This may be around a mountain (as with pilgrims around Mount Kailash) or around an atrium as in many closed religious orders. The Athenian school of philosophy founded in a sacred grove by Aristotle, and its students, acquired the label of Peripatetics owing to the habit of walking about the grove while lecturing.

The circular pathway may be looped upon itself to form a readily comprehensible or a highly challenging labyrinth. However it is as a prayer labyrinth or meditation labyrinth -- one of the oldest contemplative and transformational devices -- that the symbol might be understood as embodied through walking. The prayer labyrinth, as an enfolded structure, might be considered as enabling a form of self-reflexive meditation.

A variant of significance in classical times, as described by Frances Yates (The Art of Memory, 1966), was the use of a designed space to hold a sequence of memories which were effectively consciously "planted" on the objects in the space (such as statues) allowing the practitioner to subsequently walk the space in order to recover and enhance those memories. This was known as the method of loci. The spaces used for this purpose might also include memory palaces and memory theatres.

**Ensymbolment through circle dancing:** Various forms of dance enable a distinction to be made between rotation and revolution of symbols. The classic Sufi whirling or spinning, in which the practitioner spins, presumably enables a process of rotational ensymbolment. Various circle dances, with "orbital" movement around an empty, virtual centre might be seen as the ensymbolment of revolution. Numerous classic dances of couples offer examples of "binary" revolution -- as with binary stars. Although where such dances involve a dominant male with a dependent female presumably this embodies the kind of orbital movement of a moon with respect to a planet, or a planet with respect to a sun.

**Symbols enactivated by rotating configurations of people:** People may gather (or be gathered) into "formations", notably for military or sporting ceremonies. Typically their movement may be linear, as with marching over a square. However it may also be circular such as to constitute a rotating symbol from the pattern of movement.
In addition to the sense of chakra discussed above, it may be used to describe a circle of people. Some Hindu rituals provide for different cakira-sadhana in which adherents assemble and perform rites. According to the Niruttaratantra, chakras in the sense of assemblies are of 5 types -- presumably associated with the lower chakras.

**Activation of symbols within circular spaces:** Where arenas are designed as a circular space, the movement within them -- whether races, movement of animals, horseback riding -- could be considered as a form of rotational ensymbolment. Of particular interest is the participatory role of the observing audience in engaging supportively with those active in the arena, and possibly with distinct contenders where the activity is competitive. The arena serves as a symbolic container for such contrasts.

**Movement of symbols:** Symbols are often a key feature of ceremonies and processions, especially of religious processions that are common to most faiths. Many processions may follow a circular path, such as round a town or round a mountain. As a focal symbol of the Olympic Games, the Olympic Torch is now ignited several months before the opening celebration of the Olympic Games at the site of the ancient Olympics in Olympia, Greece. The Olympic Torch Relay ends on the day of the opening ceremony in the central host stadium of the Games. The torch is typically taken around the world.

**Engendering symbolic movement**

**Musical forms as symbolic cycles:** Certain compositions are deliberately designed to embody cycles of symbolically transformative significance -- as with Richard Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. This is of even greater significance when enacted in operatic form.

Chants may be of corresponding significance, especially in a religious context.

**Symbolic composition of a life cycle:** Conscious efforts to order the cycles of daily, monthly or annual life -- or the life cycle as a whole -- may be considered as the ensymbolment of that life to give it another order of significance. Examples are the cycle of canonical hours as practiced in various forms in intentional (monastic) communities. A secular example is offered by Mary Catherine Bateson (*Composing a Life*, 2001). How indeed are people able to make a symbol out of a day in their lives -- to render the day of symbolic significance?

**Mnemonic, cognitive and meditational cycles as rotating symbols:** These may be variously valued as enabling emergence of a higher order of significance. Examples include rote learning, notably using cycles of mnemonic triggers (as in the case of the rosary).

Of potentially greater significance are meditative cycles as notably explored by the commentaries of Carl Gustav Jung on a classic Chinese book of meditation (*The Secret of the Golden Flower*). The meditator recognizes the energy path associated with breathing as similar to an internal wheel vertically aligned with the spine. When breathing is steady, the wheel turns forward, with breath energy rising in back and descending in front. Bad breathing habits (or bad posture, or even bad thoughts) can cause the wheel not to turn, or move backward, inhibiting the circulation of essential breath energy. In contemplation, one watches thoughts as they arise and recede.

**Rotation in natural systems**

**Natural systems as symbols embodying rotation:** Many systems within nature, notably ecosystems, are characterized by forms of rotation. This is most obvious in the rotation of the seasons with which people may deeply engage, as articulated by ecosophy. Some of these systems, or portions of them may acquire symbolic status through designation as World Heritage Sites.

The cycle of seasons, and other natural cyclic relationships, may be embodied into fundamental philosophies, as with various 4-element systems (air, earth, fire, water) the Chinese 5-element system (*Wu Xing*).

Of potentially profound significance is the circular movement of the circum-global great ocean conveyor. This can be associated with common deep cultural symbols (*Global Conveyor, Rainbow Serpent and Ouroboros*, 2007).

**Crop rotation as a human symbolic construct:** Human agricultural activity may intervene to order natural systems into a pattern of rotation as in a cycle of crop rotation. This may acquire significance as a pattern in its own right through which harvests are sustained over the years -- with all that that symbolizes (as honoured in harvest festivals, etc). As a metaphor, crop rotation may itself be treated as a symbol (*Sustainable Cycles of Policies: crop rotation as a metaphor*, 1988)

**Rotation of rights to symbolic property**

**Rotation of rights to land:** Land held to have great symbolic significance for two or more groups is the continuing source of violent conflict. Currently rights to that land are typically held by the group occupying it. There is clearly a possibility of rotating occupancy between the groups claiming those rights. In such terms, whether understood as ownership or as occupancy, the symbolic property is rotated between the claimants. This formula has been articulated for widespread use as "timeshare" -- in the case of houses and apartments. In the case of land, aspects are evident in the formula of coregency or condominium of which there are a number of examples. The latter has been proposed as the basis for resolution of the Middle East crisis (cf John V. Whitbeck, *Sharing Jerusalem: the condominium solution*, *Common Ground News Service*, 3 May 2007) amongst many other under-debated possibilities, as summarized by Howard Cort (*Alternative Approaches to Palestine-Israeli Coexistence*, 11 May
2007). Curiously the fundamental role of mathematics has been neglected in identifying possibilities of rotation appropriate to the complexity of that situation (cf And When the Bombing Stops? Territorial conflict as a challenge to mathematicians, 2000).

Of particular interest in reviewing such possibilities is the manner in which use of portions of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is allocated to different Christian denominations, or shared between them under different conditions -- and the involvement of Muslims in its administration. This followed a lengthy period during which control of the church oscillated between the Franciscans and the Orthodox, depending on which community could obtain a favorable firman from the Muslim Sublime Porte. In 1767, the latter issued a firman that divided the church among the claimants. This was confirmed in 1852 with another firman that made the arrangement permanent, establishing a status quo of territorial division among the communities. In common areas, times and places of worship for each community are currently strictly regulated.

Rotation of rights to cultural artefacts: As with land, cultural artefacts claimed by one group as of great symbolic value may be held by another. The most obvious example is the Parthenon marbles from the Parthenon in Athens held by the British Museum in London. Many works of art are lent for exhibition in other countries. This "rotation" might be developed into a notion of ownership or "fractional ownership". The winners of international sporting competitions may hold a trophy cup in rotation -- as with the Copa América for football and the America's Cup for yachting. A complex variant of some interest is that of the winner of the international cricket series The Ashes -- supposedly associated with transfer of an urn containing ashes. However, whichever side "holds" the Ashes, the urn normally remains in the Marylebone Cricket Club Museum at Lord's. Since the 1998-99 Ashes series, a crystal representation of the Ashes urn has been presented to the winners of an Ashes series as the official trophy of that series.

Rotation of rights to symbolic office: The nomination and election of office holders (symbolically) significant institutions, notably international institutions such as the United Nations, may be rotated between continents or countries of origin of the office holder. This may follow unwritten rules. Rotation in office, or term limits, is a feature of the constitutions of many countries and organizations. There may be cases where rotation is between domain of expertise, gender, or sectoral representation.

Rotation of tenure between symbolic positions (job rotation): The development of skills in a complex organizations may be ensured by job rotation whereby an individual is moved through a schedule of distinct positions. This may necessarily be of less symbolic significance than rotation of rights to office, although in this case it is the individual who is rotated whereas in the other case it is the office that is rotated between countries.

Rotation of location of meetings: As with the case of Rotary (noted above), the periodic meetings of national and international bodies -- considered symbolic events in their own right -- may be rotated between members cities or countries.

Displacement of symbols: Flags are a very common device by which to bear symbols. Trivially it might be argued that they are "moved" by the wind and it is this simple function which is most "moving". Flags have been considered highly significant as a rallying point for military activity, possibly in leading troops into battle. More significant with respect to rotation are the range of patterned activities associated with what is termed "colour guard" (outdoors) or "winter guard" (indoors), notably including flag twirling (or flag spinning) as a discipline.

Removal of symbols: Another limit case is the destruction or removal of "moving symbols" as exemplified by the destruction of statues of Buddha by the Taleban, or the theft of sacred vessels from churches.

Significance of rotation: cognitive entrainment?

The question in all the above cases is what change of awareness does rotation enable -- whether deliberately or inadvertently? Such a question might be fruitfully asked within the cognitive explorations of enactivism and of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (Philosophy In The Flesh: the embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought, 1999). Should the literature on embodiment also be seen as offering understandings of ensymbolment?

Work on the cognitive significance of mathematics and its symbols offers pointers towards further exploration (George Lakoff and R. Nunez, Where Mathematics Comes From, NewYork, Basic Books, 2000; A. Watson, P. Spyrou, D. O. Tall, The Relationalship between Physical Embodiment and Mathematical Symbolism: The Concept of Vector. The Mediterranean Journal of Mathematics Education. 1(2), 2003, pp. 73-97; Rosana Nogueira de Lima and David Tall, Procedural Embodiment and Magic in Linear Equations, 2006). In the latter case, "moving symbols" is understood to be a kind of "magic" through which the correct solution is obtained.

Potentially at least, symbols are associated with a transition or transformation of modes (or levels) of understanding. This may be framed in terms of "invoking" or "evoking" otherness of some kind.

A key question is whether the movement of the symbol, or implied by it, does effectively encode meaning or suggest how meaning should be mapped onto it. Of some relevance is the manner in which a succession of elements in the rotation may blur into one another - - as with frames in a film -- to engender a larger (emergent) pattern of significance. The design when static may mean little, or may distract from any larger significance, but acquire a different meaning when rotated. How might this relate to the controversial technology of subliminal messages, notably in advertising?

In distinguishing how meaning might be encoded or projected onto such symbols, it is possibly helpful to recognize patterns:

- without distinguishing features, implying only flow without recognizable phases
- where phasing is associated only with orientation and geometry, namely the degrees of rotation
Boulding’s statement might be fruitfully rephrased as:

With respect to the ensymbolment associated with multi-axial rotation, where

where the phases are marked, as with rosary beads, but not otherwise distinguished except in what is projected onto them

where the phases are distinctly marked with imagery or otherwise

where the phases may be marked in some way, but their significance only emerges through their rotation and the larger pattern so created

where a degree of engagement other than observation is required for the significance to become apparent

where the pattern, and its distinct phases, only becomes significant through being embodied

Although vigilance is required with respect to attaching significance to any

Of particular interest is the extent to which people identify with the static

It might then be hypothesized that the core symbols of different religions, as statically presented, are different perspectives on such a

Of great interest is the question: about how many axes should a symbol rotate (or imply rotation) to hold significance of requisite complexity?

So some seeming "static" symbols could perhaps be better understood as standing waves, namely patterns emerging from a rotation of a more complex symbol that may have been lost to awareness or seldom accessible to it. Multi-axial rotation of a complex object in a multi-dimensional (cognitive) space might then be understood as enabling the emergence of a range of simpler standing wave aspects of it in a lower-dimensional (cognitive) space -- as "static" symbols.

Is there a fractal aspect to such patterns? Given the prevalence of fractals in nature, would such an artificial pattern have more "life", more psycho-social energy, than those more geometric patterns we usually see in artefacts? Contrast modernist architecture with both that of Gaudi and the multi-levels of detail we see in Gothic - the people's preference for the latter two could well be because of the inherent power of such patterns - it 'grand architecture' a subconscious recognition of that? As we scan a complex pattern does the saccadic eye movement cause a strobe like resonance or a pleasing standing wave within the brain? Do graceful dancers (particularly the Eastern ones) also generate such effects by their movements?

Of particular interest is the extent to which people identify with the static form with possibly only the weakest intuitive understanding of the dynamic form that engenders it -- despite the potential of dynamic identity (Emergence of Cyclical Psycho-social Identity: sustainability as "psyclically" defined, 2007). Furthermore, whereas symbols may indeed be defined as intellectual property, often they are of considerably more significance to the identity of a person or a group as "cognitive property". As such any conflicting claims they may elicit call for a much more complex understanding of the "space-time continuum" -- the symbolic space -- in which they co-exist (Einstein's Implicit Theory of Relativity -- of Cognitive Property? Unexamined influence of patenting procedures, 2007).

An interesting test case is the range of heraldic devices that represent the distinct collective identities within a given culture. Is it the case that it is the dynamic multi-axial rotation of an underlying form that engenders them all, whether or not there is any conscious awareness of that single, generative, multi-dimensional form?

Although vigilance is required with respect to attaching significance to any metaphorical use of symbol, the remark of Kenneth Boulding, author of Image (1956), is relevant:

Our consciousness of the unity of self in the middle of a vast complexity of images or material structures is at least a suitable metaphor for the unity of group, organization, department, discipline or science. If personification is a metaphor, let us not despise metaphors -- we might be one ourselves. (Ecodynamics: a new theory of social evolution, 1978).

With respect to the ensymbolment associated with multi-axial rotation, where it is an "individual" or a "collectivity" that is so symbolized, Boulding's statement might be fruitfully rephrased as:

Of great interest is the extent to which people identify with the static form with possibly only the weakest intuitive understanding of the dynamic form that engenders it -- despite the potential of dynamic identity (Emergence of Cyclical Psycho-social Identity: sustainability as "psyclically" defined, 2007). Furthermore, whereas symbols may indeed be defined as intellectual property, often they are of considerably more significance to the identity of a person or a group as "cognitive property". As such any conflicting claims they may elicit call for a much more complex understanding of the "space-time continuum" -- the symbolic space -- in which they co-exist (Einstein's Implicit Theory of Relativity -- of Cognitive Property? Unexamined influence of patenting procedures, 2007).
Identifying with a moving symbol -- an experiment in revolution or rotation?

Arguments in support of such identification have been explored elsewhere (Emergence of Cyclic Psycho-social Identity: sustainability as "psychically" defined, 2007; Psychology of Sustainability Embodying cyclic environmental processes, 2002). Exploration has also been made of how a tabular set of categories might be more appropriately presented on a torus or, better still, on dynamically intertwined tori (Comprehension of Requisite Variety for Sustainable Psychosocial Dynamics: transforming a matrix classification onto intertwined tori, 2006).

Assuming now that any such categories are necessarily the "windows" through which the world is globally sensed, then the challenge is how one identifies with such a dynamical cylindrical symbol. As the archetypal challenge of the classical Ouroboros, how do the "serpentine" dynamics "work" and how are they appropriately disciplined as a moving vehicle of awareness -- one directly engaged with its environment? The categories can be imagined as the variegated colouration of the "serpent" through which one then variously senses.

The categories might be experienced as various modalities of engagement through which one might shift according to circumstances:

- the epistemological languages of the Rg Veda as explored by Antonio de Nicolas (Meditations through the Rg Veda: four-dimensional man, 1978) or understood through other endeavours to articulate epistemological modes as reviewed elsewhere (Systems of Categories Distinguishing Cultural Biases, 1993)
- more conventional understandings of languages (perhaps English, Russian, Chinese, Spanish) as "primary" colours; other languages as "secondary" colours according to their significance
- the various kinds of intelligence as distinguished by Howard Gardner (Intelligence Reframed: multiple intelligences for the 21st Century, 1999)
- the range of "skins" through which a web browser may be configured to interact with cyberspace

Comprehension of the dynamics and challenges of movement so enabled might be enhanced through recognition of other contemporary uses of the serpent/snake metaphor as associated with:

- the European Currency "snake mechanism" established in 1972 and ensuring its stability
- the management of snake-like phenomena in plasma during efforts to achieve viable nuclear fusion in toroidal tokamak containers

Their significance in achieving a degree of dynamic integrity is to be distinguished from "straight" forms (as "projects" based on linear thinking) that do not require the capacity to twist and turn in response to strategic challenges and obstacles -- and associated feedback from learnings during the process of movement (Twistedness in Psycho-social Systems: challenge to logic, morality, leadership and personal development, 2004). It is in this sense that the regularity of the dynamics associated with rotation and revolution emerge -- constrained by the topology of the serpent form at any time.

The modes of engagement with the environment -- the variegated colouration -- might also offer an understanding of the "pattern that connects". The serpentine form is then a dynamic embodiment of that pattern. It is the interface for global engagement -- through which the environment of "otherness" is globally encountered (Personal Globalization, 2001). It might also be the minimal interface through which integrated engagement can be achieved.

The sense of identification with such a form is further enabled by:

- the dynamics of the serpent as modelling those of the shifting dynamics of moment-by-moment attention
- the connectivity recognized within features of the environment
- the responsive "dancing" interaction with features of the environment
- the sense of potential in envisaging and exploring possibilities

As people increasingly choose to tattoo their skins with strange symbols and patterns -- reverting to traditional tribal practices of self-identification -- the "skin" of the serpent might be further understood as marked (and covered) by ideograms of symbolic significance.

Suggestive of mysterious, unexplored potential, they might be understood as sets, such as:

- the alphabets of sacred scripts (as with Hebrew)
- ideograms, such as the set of runes or the hexagrams of the I Ching

As a variant on the archetypal Ouroboros, the challenge of sensing the movement and significance of the serpentine form might be fruitfully compared to that of the Rainbow Serpent (Global Conveyor, Rainbow Serpent and Ouroboros, 2007), especially in the light of how it is traditionally understood in many cultures as encircling the globe: Shesha (Hindu), Jörmungandr (Norse) -- as discussed by Jeremy Narby (The Cosmic Serpent: DNA and the origins of knowledge, 1999).

More accessible, as a moving symbol of fundamental cultural importance, is the Chinese dragon, especially in the dragon dance (characteristic of Chinese festivals), typically involving two such dragons interweaving (each with a team within). Each mimics the supposed movements of the river spirit in a sinuous, undulating manner. The decorative art of China, including temples and traditional folk dances, focuses extensively on the theme of two such dragons -- usually depicted facing one another in the air in eager pursuit of a spinning pearl floating like an iridescent bubble between them. This theme was a mark of books issued under imperial auspices. The pearl in this context was of great symbolic significance to Taoists.

In identifying with such a serpentine symbol, however, the degree of self-reflexivity implies that its forms and dynamics are partially to be understood in terms of the dynamics of a hypersphere. This may be an implication of intertwining tori (as noted above). The form and its dynamics are then internalized as the "Rainbow Serpent within" -- in anticipation of individual capacity to hold the shape archetypally exemplified by the Ouroboros and to identify with it. This is partially discussed elsewhere (Climbing Elven Stairways: DNA as a
macroscopic metaphor of polarized psychodynamics, 2007)

As noted above, the contemporary global significance of the dynamics of the Rainbow Serpent, and its analogues, has been compared elsewhere to that of the Global Ocean Conveyor - potentially menaced by disruption and reversal as a consequence of climate change. The challenge of the Ouroboros form has also been explored in relation to parallels with the potentials of nuclear fusion (Cognitive Fusion through Myth and Symbol Making, 2006).

The experience of a rotating symbol of identity can be usefully distinguished in terms of:

- visual engagement with symbols of rotation, such as those identified above. This tends to focus on their circular form and any distinct phases that it may represent
- sensing, other than visually, the implications of its movement through identification. This tends to involve some sense of identification with the axis around which rotation is then felt to take place. It is associated with some kind of ability to "look" down that axis, beneath or beyond what is immediately visible

These two senses can be usefully distinguished in the case of coiled DNA for example. Looking at any cross-section of the coil offers an example of the first sense. But sensing down the coil through which any such cross-section can be taken gives a necessarily more comprehensive understanding of its various conditions.

In the case of the first sense, the rotation of the Earth on its inclined axis causes the interface between the lighted and unlighted surfaces to form together a pattern which, on a cylindrical map projection, is strikingly reminiscent of that of the Tao symbol. However the experience of this shifting daily contrast only remotely implies the change associated with the annual revolution of the Earth around the Sun. The first is a matter of directly sensible experience, the second is a matter of indirect experience involving knowledge, memory and a capacity for representation.

This suggests that rotation and revolution, involving as they do shorter and longer term aspects of identity, are somehow intertwined in any more fundamental, dynamic sense of identity (Emergence of Cyclical Psycho-social Identity: sustainability as "psyically" defined, 2007). This is implied by traditional spiral symbols such as the caduceus and their association with both DNA and the spinal chord. Early interest in the armillary sphere appears to have included a psychological dimension -- suggesting that the sphere as a whole (with its movements) constituted a symbol of identity with which it was possible fruitfully to identify. Given the interest of Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) in the armillary sphere, it is probable that its movements were intimately related to his identification with the "planets within" (Composing the Present Moment: celebrating the insights of Marsilio Ficino interpreted by Thomas Moore, 2001).

The question is then the nature of the sense of identity arising from an integration of the movements symbolized by rotation and revolution. Clues include:

- their interdependence for systemic stability, as with planetary rotation and revolution
- the manner in which, through interlocking, one may "drive" and/or be "driven" by the other (Comprehension of Requisite Variety for Sustainable Psychosocial Dynamics: transforming a matrix classification onto intertwined tori, 2006)
- the possibility that rotation and revolution are superficially experienced as distinct processes whereas, in their significance for a more fundamental sense of identity, they are aspects of a much more complex dynamic

There is necessarily a challenge to comprehension, experience and expression of such a more fundamental sense of identity. Hence the curious significance of the Ouroboros as an archetype. What indeed is the experience of a "serpent biting its tail"?

- is it the challenge of comprehending the topological dynamics through "rotation" and "revolution" are integrated ("joined") in a space-time of higher dimensionality?
- does it bear some relationship to the paradoxical topology of the Klein bottle -- here to be understood dynamically as explored by Melanie Purcell (Imperatives for unbiased holistic education: the Klein bottle, a universal structure: an archetypal image, 1999), notably through the symbolism of a pelican pecking at its breast, potentially to be associated with the Fenghuang, the mythological Chinese "phoenix" (and complement to the Chinese dragon)
- is the axis of identity then to be fruitfully associated with comprehension of such archetypes as Axis Mundi, Yggdrasil (Nordic), Mount Meru (Hinduism), or Mount Kailash (Buddhism) -- as the "deep time" of identity (Engaging Macrohistory through the Present Moment? 2004)
- is it to be associated with the experience of kundalini, notably as reframed as the Kundalini Syndrome -- and also associated with the two intertwined Chinese dragons in pursuit of a pearl?

Such questions point to the challenge of the kinds of connectivity that are meaningful and fruitful to higher orders of comprehension (see discussion in Theories of Correspondences -- and potential equivalences between them in correlative thinking, 2007). However they also highlight the potential experiential significance of higher orders of identity. To the extent that these involve a greater degree of embodiment of any sense of "deep time", possibilities include:

- some analogue to "mass", as variously sensed in terms of maturity, gravitas and dignitas (or illusions thereof!)
- some analogue to "energy", as variously sensed in its metaphorical use and in terms of charisma, Muslim use of Barakah, Hindu use of Darshan, Jewish use of hitlahavut (Martin Buber, The Goblet of Grace: Hitlahavut as the key to life. Parabola, 23, 1998, 2), as well as kundalini (or illusions thereof!)

With respect to any identity illusion, what connectivity is to be considered "moonshine" and what of primordial significance (Potential Psychosocial Significance of Monstrous Moonshine: an exceptional form of symmetry as a Rosetta stone for cognitive frameworks, 2007)
How people are "moved" by symbols

There have been many studies of the nature of symbol in relation to sign, notably building on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles S. Peirce (Collected papers, 1931-1935) regarding a theory of signs. Especially interesting, in terms of the triadic introduction to this current exploration, is the work of M. Burgin and Yu Miló (Existential Triad: a structural analysis of the whole, Totalogy, 1999, v. 2/3, pp. 387-406) followed by that of M. Burgin and J. H. Schumann (Three levels of the Symbolosphere, Semiotica 160 (1-4), pp. 185-202).

The diagrams of the latter are curiously reminiscent of the three-vaned symbols noted above in the introduction. As the authors note, in endeavouring to move beyond the perspective of Peirce:

This paper attempts to understand the coexistence of the material and nonmaterial aspects of our lives. By synthesizing ideas about structures, physical entities, mental phenomena, and symbolic relations, we argue that the nonmaterial can emerge from the material, and then the nonmaterial may mediate the production of material entities. Finally, this cycle is applied to notions of creativity and invention.

... Scholars have always debated the existence of material and nonmaterial worlds. The nonmaterial realm has generally been referred to as mind or soul. The former generally has referred to psychological or mental domains and the latter to spiritual aspects of life. The nonmaterial is difficult to account for, and therefore, it has been convenient for many scholars to take a reductionist stand that considers the only legitimate reality to be the material. In this paper, we attempt to reclaim the nonmaterial aspects of our existence.

The authors create a valuable context within which to ask the question as to "how symbols work" -- although seemingly failing to do so in their excellent description. Also of value is the work of Paris Ar mopoulos (Sociophysics: a general theory of natural and cultural systems, New York, Nova Science, 1992/2002) on a triadic paradigm providing an operational; method for synthesis of the natural and social systems -- combining both dialectic and synergic processes to create an eclectic integration and hierarchical configuration of a holistic world view. This abstract work calls for a next step in which it is applied to conditions in the present global system.

The challenge is to comprehend experientially how symbols work on the subconscious -- a preoccupation of depth psychology, and successors to Carl Gustav Jung, such as John R. Van Eenwyk (Archetypes and Strange Attractors: the chaotic world of symbols, Inner City Books, 1997). The latter seeks:

... to clarify how symbols work, how they accomplish what they do; it is about the mechanics of our interactions with them. These concerns are more than academic. Studying what symbols do, clarifies what symbols are. This, in turn, helps us to interact with them more effectively when they appear. And that, ultimately, helps us to manage the power they exert on us....

Analytical psychology and physical and mathematical science all employ virtually identical metaphors to understand particular phenomena, but this does not guarantee that they are accurate metaphors or that they describe the same phenomena. The evidence is growing, however, that chaos theory and analytical psychology are describing similar dynamics, albeit in very different realms.

In his exploration of the working of symbols in relation to Jung's concept of psychic energy, Robert Winer (The Science of the Threshold of Consciousness, 2006) argues that:

Unlike other psychologies, Jung conceives that the symbol's energetic and transformative aspects provide the key missing element in both the treatment of psychic illness and to help an individual achieve wholeness. In a 1956 revision to Symbols of Transformation, he included a discussion relating symbols to energy, feeling function, and archetypes, concepts he had not yet formulated in 1912 when the book was first published:

Symbols act as transformers, their function being to convert libido from a lower to higher form. This function is so important that feeling accords it the highest values. The symbol works by suggestion ... it carries conviction and the same time expresses the content of that conviction. It is able to do this because of the numen, the specific energy stored up in the archetype. Experience of the archetype is not only impressive, it seizes and possesses the whole personality, and is naturally productive of faith (Jung, 1956, para. 344).

Winer then concludes:

Through such descriptive passage, I understand Jung to relate this aspect of symbol to the religious function which arises from the relationship between ego and self. Jung clearly recognizes that such a relationship exists in two forms:

1. A mediated form in which such symbols work unconsciously through a collective religious identification;

2. An individual and unmediated form characteristic of the psychological individuation process. In this form, one consciously works with activated unconscious contents, generally as personification.
Various terms may be used to describe the psychological engagement possible with some symbols, or under certain conditions.

- **Evocative**: "Moving symbols" may be termed evocative, as in the definition of Sean Robsville (*Symbolism, Visualization and Ritual in Buddhism, Paganism and Christianity*)

Evocative symbols are interpreted by and affect the more subtle levels of the mind. Evocative symbolism is associated with art, architecture and poetry, especially where there is a spiritual aspect. Examples of evocative symbolism in the visual arts are icons, thangkas, mandalas, stained glass windows and statues of holy beings. Examples in architecture are stupas, mandalic temples, stone circles and the spiritually soaring structures of Gothic cathedrals. Examples in poetry are the 23rd Psalm and the Sadhana of Arya Tara.


- **Psychoactive**: This term may normally be used to explain the effects of some form of drug. It can however be used in the creation of a symbolic space as noted by James Lawley (*When Where Matters: How psychoactive space is created and utilised. The Model Magazine, January 2006*)

- **Ritual**: *How symbols work*

Symbols become holy -- they speak-- through handling in the power of the spirit. Using objects in liturgy lets us recognize their holiness. The tradition of tabernacle is a prime of example of setting something apart which has been handled. Handling symbol is fundamental ritual activity. We handle symbols in at least four ways: we let them sit, we carry them, we present them, we let them speak.

- **Meaning**: John Ciardi (*How Does a Poem Mean? Houghton Mifflin, 1959*)

… a symbol is like a rock dropped into a pool: it sends out ripples in all directions, and the ripples are in motion. Who can say where the last ripple disappears? One may have a sense that he at least knows approximately the center point of all those ripples, the point at which the stone struck the water. Yet even then he has trouble marking it precisely. How does one make a mark on water?

- **Architecture**: *The Symbolism within Rosslyn Chapel*: So how do symbols 'work'? ... symbol works on more than one level if we allow it to. Symbols generally work on at least four different levels:

  1. The obvious or literal level (general - obvious to all)
  2. The allegorical level. That is, not only is the symbol a 'window' but that can also be considered to be one that can be seen through - a window on the world etc. (general - can be understood in this way by most people)
  3. The personal level. This is specific to an individual who in addition to the above understands that the window provides an opportunity to glimpse and interpret another world. (specific)
  4. The mystical level. The symbol, now fully operational, allows the individual to experience the numinous. (specific)

Although divided into four levels it must be made clear that these are artificial divisions only to assist with the explanation. It is quite possible to appreciate some, or all, of these levels at the same time.

- **Dreaming**: Each night, dreams bring information from the unconscious into conscious awareness. To do this, dreams need to pack their messages into symbols layered with information. Symbols do not have just one 'correct' meaning. Rather, symbols can be layered with many different levels of meaning.

- **Archetypes**: Within the subconscious, from the perspective of depth psychology, there are features of the universe that people are capable of perceiving through the non-material aspects of their being. However in order for them to become sensible to the conscious mind, the subconscious has to assign a symbol to it. The symbol is not the archetype, rather it is the vehicle of the archetype -- as understood by mystics down the ages. Depth psychology created a scientific language for talking about such phenomena.

- **Omens**: An important symbolic variant can be seen in the role of omens, namely any specific phenomenon that is believed to be indicative of a future condition (whether good or bad) and therefore implying the advent of change.Omens may be auspicious or inauspicious and may be considered extremely significant. Typically omens are brought to awareness through movement -- such as coming unexpectedly and fortuitously into the field of vision. Their significance may be interpreted by professionals -- such as the augurs of classical Rome claimed read the future in the flight of birds.

It is however less clear what is "evoked" through the process of being 'moved' by a symbol, namely when the "symbol works". Symbols might indeed be fruitfully understood to function as cognitive attractors, as explored elsewhere (cf *Human Values as Strange Attractors: Coevolution of classes of governance principles, 1993; El-Attractor -- Timeless Complex Dynamic, 2007*).

Are rotating symbols then to be understood as a more powerful means of transforming psychic energy? (cf *Reframing Sustainable Sources of Energy for the Future: the vital role of psychosocial variants, 2006; Psychosocial Energy from Polarization within a Cyclic*).
It would be most interesting to discover that some form of "resonance" was at work through the function of technology as metaphor (Robert D. Romanyshyn, *Technology as Symptom and Dream*, Routledge, 1989; Robert D. Romanyshyn, *Metaphors of experience and experience as metaphorical*. In: R S Valle and R von Eckartsberg (Eds), Metaphors of experience and experience as metaphorical. In: R S Valle and R von Eckartsberg (Eds). The Metaphors of Consciousness. New York, Plenum Press, 1981, p.3-19). This would be especially significant if it was the maner in which symbols rotated in a field of polarized awareness that engendered psychosocial energy in some form -- paralleling the principles governing the operation of electrical generation and motors.

**Concluding summary**

An armillary sphere, endowed with appropriate dynamics, would appear to constitute the most complex moving symbol -- to the extent that it indeed functions as an evocative symbol and not merely as an intellectual model or a purely mechanical one. In particular it is its incorporation of differently oriented co-axial and multi-axial rotations and revolutions that renders it distinctive. As such it might serve as a form of generic template for moving symbols. Other "moving symbols", especially of the mandala type, could then be understood as compressions of this template and its movements into two dimensions. The set of chakras offers a particular example -- like a field of oil wells pumping psychic energy according to various rhythms.

Any such understanding of the armillary sphere as a symbol could indeed be informed by efforts to configure the organization of knowledge more fruitfully (*Spherical Configuration of Categories to Reflect Systemic Patterns of Environmental Checks and Balances*, 1994) and the related challenge of dialogue between seemingly incommeasurable domains (*Spherical configuration of interlocking roundtables: Internet enhancement of global self-organization through patterns of dialogue*, 1998). These possibilities are also relevant to any effort towards *Tuning a Periodic Table of Religions, Epistemologies and Spirituality: including the sciences and other belief systems* (2007) -- especially when any such "table" is understood as cognitively "wrapped around" the knowing perspective. Far more concretely however, given the symbolic role of money and its movement, is the implication for accounting of any kind (*Spherical Accounting: using geometry to embody developmental integrity*, 2004).

However the armillary sphere template also points beyond itself to the possibility of representing more complex multi-dimensional, multi-axial symbols supportive of richer understandings of identity. The circular pathways of its movements might then be understood as indicative of the "songlines of the noosphere" -- notably for the individual, but also for any collectivity (*From Information Highways to Songlines of the Noosphere Global: configuration of hypertext pathways as a prerequisite for meaningful collective transformation*, 1996). Understood as cognitive "hyperlinks" within a "world wide web" -- again for the individual or for the collective -- the challenge is then how they are to be "sacralized" (*Sacralization of Hyperlink Geometry*, 1997).

Beyond the dynamic geometry of any such development of the armillary sphere is the magic of the aesthetic dimension -- especially dear to Marsilio Ficino. Any "songline" structure is then more reminiscent of the shifting imaginal patterns of qualitative connectivity and resonance within evocative poetry and music -- as moving symbols in which the underlying geometry is more implicit than explicit. However this structure and its dynamics are profoundly more significant when they are internalized rather than simply considered as externalities -- such as when projected onto topography, flora or fauna (including humans). It is a question of the landscape within -- just as Ficino's concern was with the "planets within".

In this sense the performance arts, such as dance and drama, might be understood as embodiments of moving symbols in which people or themes "orbit" variously around each other with different angles of orientation and according to different measures of cyclic time. These then function evocatively to different degrees in entraining engagement of attention, participation and identification. It is in such a sense that the individual hears, and identifies or themes. These then function evocatively.

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<tr>
<th>Engendering the locus of identity beyond time through moving symbols?</th>
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<td>Ursula K Le Guin (<em>The Real Uses of Enchantment</em>, 2008) cites Salman Rushdie (<em>The Enchantress of Florence</em>, 2008): &quot;...such occurrences being normal at that time, before the real and the unreal were segregated forever and doomed to live apart under different monarchs and separate legal systems&quot;.</td>
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### Radical Change in Religious Psycho-social Energy Policy?

#### Initial reflection addressed to a religious colleague

I have just returned from Australia via Frankfurt to Brussels. I was impressed on the flight from Frankfurt to Brussels to see the many new constructions overlooking small towns and villages on the route over Germany. In each case there may be not one, but several, overlooking the town.

Whereas such towns have previously had churches with distinct crosses (much smaller), emulated on a far larger scale by the cruciform Statue of Christ the Redeemer overlooking Rio de Janeiro, a new trend is distinctly apparent.

I note that there now seems to have been a distinct shift from cruciform to trinitarian constructions. This obviously is indicative of a profound theological shift. As with the Rio statue, what is especially surprising is how this evolution has progressed so rapidly -- in comparison with the historic construction of cross-endowed churches. Is this a new use of the traditional German Kirchensteuer (an attribution of income tax to the church)?

From a theo-technological perspective, it is intriguing that it is the movement -- seemingly exemplifying indecisiveness regarding the primary function of each element of the Trinity -- which is the key to the energy generation.

More problematic is the rate at which this circular movement occurs seems to vary in response to the wind -- even to be at its mercy (in an ironic twist to the theological
be arms are truly immense in proportion to the supporting base -- in contrast with the crosses on traditional village churches. However, most intriguing, is that the trinitarian or triangular ("cross") on a pillar now moves. This brings each arm into the superior position in succession. Is this a theological device to resolve the traditionally problematic distinction between the position of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost? Or is it an elegant 21st century response to traditional indecisiveness on comprehending their respective functions?

More intriguing is that whereas the cross was a "technology" in response to spiritual "energy", the church seems to have solved the problem of using such "trinitarian movement" to link into the local energy needs of the community -- bridging the gap between its needs for spiritual energy and the energy required to ensure the functioning of many conventional technologies.

Questions in response to comments by an anonymous religious authority

**Question:** But is it a question of vertical or horizontal, rather than one of vertical and horizontal? Surely the movement is a challenge to any attachment to an extreme and evokes the possibility of intermediary combinations and a continuity of transition between them? Clearly some may be attached to particular interpretations but their skills do not preclude the possibility of exploring others.

**Question:** Again any movement is a challenge. Architecture is necessarily committed to the static, delegating the dynamic to those who traverse a work or whose eyes are drawn to various parts of it. The situation is different with a mobile sculpture. What then of a mobile cross? And what of buildings that are mobile, even cross-like buildings, to follow that example? Children's imagination has been excited by the mobile architecture of the Harry Potter movies.

**Question:** Accepting these sentiments, as I do, my question would be why we have been unable to learn from "zooming" as a metaphor well-developed in the exploration of images. Is there a sense in which symbols could be "zoomed" to enable comprehension at "scales" ranging from complexity to simplicity -- embodying both extremes according to need, but above all ensuring the interrelationship between symbols at different "scales" of complexity.

**Question:** This is perhaps the nub of the matter. There is indeed a profound challenge to any dual relationship with all the risks that its binary nature will be used to sustain problematic dualism: "You are either with us or against us". When that relationship is one of consonance rather than dissonance, it may in turn be challenged by a third -- as in the Garden of Eden. How is any such third to be integrated into a dualistic harmony? And what of a fourth? A fifth? Does the theory of harmony in music offer us insights into such possibilities? Is a moving 3-armed cross a provocation to explore such possibilities and the many intermediary conditions that may arise in practice and challenge understanding?

**Question:** But with what form is such peace to be associated? A static form or a dynamic one? What if they are complementary offering different learnings? Is the moment of truth not associated with comprehension of the diversity of such manifestations?

**Question:** The white may fruitfully imply other colours. As in 'White Ecstasy' it may include, incorporate, embody or encompass them. However there is considerable charm to the fliers -- briefly sustained and transported by their rotation. As cherished in Japanese culture, it is the brevity of their flight which connects with the mysterious instaneity of time -- the truth in the moment.

Perhaps triangular crosses should be understood in a somewhat similar manner as "fliers" -- if only in that all technology has a half life. Should symbols be reframed and renewed in terms of planned obsolescence. Perhaps the cycle of rotation is precisely that process of renewal. A fixed cross, with its profound symbolism, is then a freeze-frame view, even an optical illusion, of a dynamic symbol in constant process of renewal?

**Question:** The convergence is the necessary focus of intelligent design. Perhaps symbols are then to be understood as patterns in potentia -- awaiting the possibility of expression in comprehension?

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