
JUDEX 2: The Vibrating Spirit

- But why would so many clever people adopt this mechanistic view of mankind?

A good question, and perhaps a little science-fiction story might help answer it:-

Let us imagine a race of giant aliens looking down at your home town as if your town was a laboratory culture-dish. They are from a distant galaxy, and their eyesight happens to pick up metal far more clearly than anything else. The giants see thousands of cars and vans of different sizes and colours swarming along a network of roadways, and they observe, quite rightly, that these cars show all the attributes of intelligent life. Each is busy on its own errands; it is purposeful and independent, finding its own way and navigating around obstructions, and yet co-operating with other vehicles in an elaborate pattern of behaviour clearly intended to avoid collisions and keep the flow of traffic moving.

The giant scientists might use a microscope to take a look inside one of these busy little creatures while it was stationary at night (*'asleep'*, they might call it), or they might even dissect one that had been parked for a long time (*'dead'*, they might think). Inside the metal creature, they would find a whole series of controls that seemed to determine how the car behaved: the steering wheel, the brake, the accelerator, the gear lever, the light switches and so on, and they might easily come to the conclusion that this complex of systems was the actual intelligence that directed the little car-creature. Because of their weird eye-sight, the giants cannot see the living people who climb into the cars and vans each morning, start them up and go about their business, cursing the rush-hour traffic.

Our imaginary giants might test their theory by snapping off the brake pedal of one of the little cars while it was *'asleep'*. They would then see it rush off as normal the next morning, but then bump into something because it could not stop. Or perhaps they might jam the steering wheel instead, and observe that the car is now only able to go round in circles.

However, the giants have just damaged the car, not the driver. They have not blinded the driver or broken the driver's leg, and mentally the driver is just as competent as before. Nevertheless, the unfortunate motorist now finds, to her dismay, that she is unable to control her vehicle, which behaves in wild and crazy ways, no matter what she does.

Perhaps our giant scientists, dissecting our cars under their microscopes in ever more detail, might discover, with great excitement, that deep within the maze of wiring, are hidden tiny silicon chips and microprocessors. Surely, they would say, these near miraculous devices are the ultimate source of the little creatures' intelligence.

The giants' error, in confusing the car's control system with the intelligence that actually drives the car, is quite understandable since they cannot see the human driver. However, in my

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view, important sections of the Western scientific establishment have made the same fatal error, as they try to understand the human organism.

You are the Registered Owner/Driver of a human body, but under normal circumstances, you are invisible. Here on Earth, we human beings can never actually see each other, we can only see each other's bodies. We cannot *see* the Spiritual Being that drives around in the human body, but the driver is there all right. It skilfully uses the brain to steer, brake and accelerate, and it uses it to communicate with all the other Spiritual Beings who are piloting bodies about out there.

Scientists cannot see the driver either, and so many of them have assumed that all the driver's skills, desires, intelligence and creativity are somehow created by the computerised control system which the driver uses to pilot the body. They believe that the personality, the individual identity of a person, is merely a reflection of the way the cells of the brain are configured and programmed. We are told that consciousness is an electro-chemical phenomenon, and nothing more.

Neurologists, using brain scanners, are developing ever more sophisticated maps of the brain, and their findings are often used as evidence that life and consciousness are simply physical phenomena. For example, a test subject is wired up to the equipment, raises his arm, and the instruments show a particular fold of the brain springing into life and buzzing with electrochemical energy. The scientists then expose and probe his brain, and electrically stimulate that same segment of grey matter. Quite involuntarily, the subject's arm shoots up. The scientists conclude that the body can be made to perform without 'the consciousness' being involved. Fair enough. So it can; and in the same way, a car can be rigged-up to move without anyone driving it. However, similar experiments have led to less straightforward and logical conclusions.

By brain-scanning religious people as they meditate, it has been discovered that the parietal lobe, at the top of the brain, shuts down during spiritual experience. It has also been established that people who have suffered damage to this part of the brain have problems orienting their bodies in physical space, and are less aware of themselves as being separate from their environment. These sensations mirror the sense of oneness with the universe, and the falling away of the sense of self, that come to us during a transcendent spiritual experience (McNamara, 2009). However, I have seen these observations used, quite seriously, to 'show' that religious experience is therefore *probably* merely the result of a temporary anomaly in the functioning of the parietal lobe. Hmmm...

The same scientist (not the author of the book I have cited) might look at a horse and cart and come up with the theory that the cart was *probably* pushing the horse along.
