

The Logic of the Esoteric
by
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Have you ever had your astrological chart done? Or perhaps had your tarot cards read? How about having been to a class on the structure of the Tree of Life or tossed coins etc., and used the I Ching to determine your future? Have you ever, even for 'fun', read the daily newspaper's Astrology section?

There are many today who have preferred to follow these 'esoteric' subjects rather than have to deal with the linear, dry, complex, clinical methods of Science. But how is it that, even when Science 'insists' that these esoteric subjects are factually 'wrong', do people continue to follow them, and, shock-horror, get 'meaning' (value) out of them?

The answer to this question is simple. The I Ching, Astrology, Tarot, Qabalah, etc are all metaphors. Specifically, they are metaphors (from the Greek meaning 'to transfer') that are used to describe the basic behaviour of our brain, and that is the identification of wholes, parts, and their aspects.

These esoteric models of reality come from an age where communication was not biased to serial and auditory methods but more to parallel and visual methods; a time where the concept of T'ai Chi ruled, rather than today's rulership of it's aspects - yin and yang.

As time went on, so the world of metaphor gave way to the world of the literal, and from this emerged the literal interpretations of metaphors; where the richly metaphoric nature of astrological personalities became literally linked to the stars. Mars is no more war-like than Venus is love-like, but as symbols for these traits they have served well. But how?

All of the more common esoteric typologies are founded on dichotomy; primarily those of fire/water and air/earth. But what is a dichotomy? Here is a dictionary definition:

"1. (logic) division into two classes, one positive, the other negative. 2. (botany) a mode of branching by repeated bifurcation"

(bifurcation meaning a branch into two).

In one of those 'dry', 'scientific-biased' papers ("The Sense of Dichotomy"), I have explained how the fundamental tool of science - Mathematics - is in fact derived from the use of dichotomy. Furthermore, this demonstrates that Mathematics serves to describe wholes and their aspects and thus all subjects within Science that have mathematical descriptions also have dichotomous roots.

The paper goes on to show how modern 'typologies', like the MBTI, also have dichotomous roots, and from this derives a template - a template for metaphors - which seems to have neurological roots; dichotomous analysis is not something we have learnt, it is an actual 'sense' that we apply to analyzing abstract information. (like the eye that analyzes visual info). (Carl Jung intuitively picked this up with his typology and attraction to ancient mythology and alchemy)

The template emerges from our tendency to use dichotomy to make maps of reality - maps of the earth or maps of the mind, the method is consistently used. The reason for this is that all maps that are intended for use by more than one individual require a degree of consensus in

their creation, and as a result we form dichotomies of extremes (left/right, land/sea, fire/water etc) that enable us to incorporate the slightly different methods of interpretations of individuals such that they get the same 'meaning' out of the one map e.g. X is West/Left/Above of Y.

As the map develops so the dichotomies become more specific, but the initial dichotomies set the overall context for all that follows.

If a map is highly developed, and thus metaphorically rich, then it is possible for the more literal-minded to take it as the territory rather than as a map. (many computer graphic systems are today generating highly 'realistic' images to the extent that one finds difficulty in distinguishing fact (territory) from fiction (map).)

Simply put, the diagram in figure 1, below, is the first three levels of the template for all dichotomously-derived metaphors. This includes Mathematics as well as the I Ching, Astrology as well as the MBTI.

These subjects are all methods of interpreting the same thing - wholes and their aspects - using dichotomous analysis.

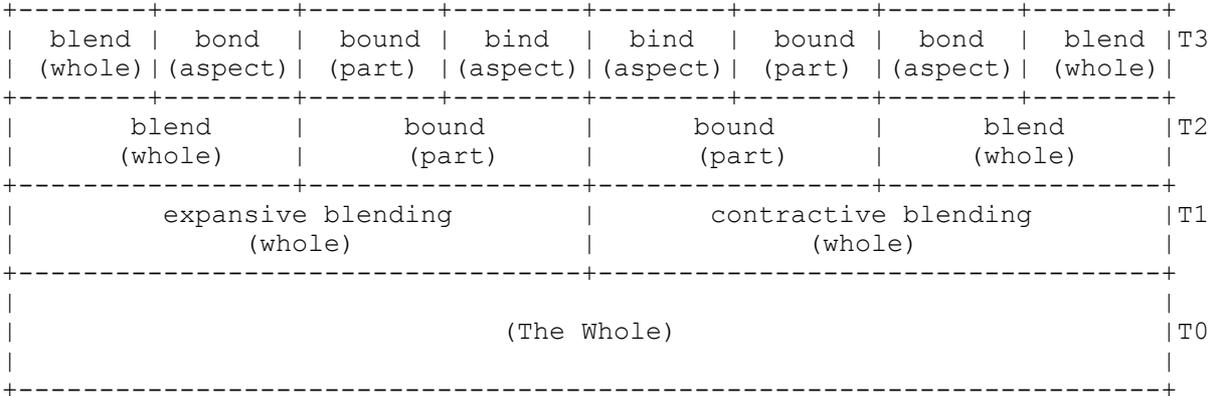


Figure 1. The mixing principle expand/contract dichotomy template.

This principle says that any cell in any of the below maps will be described using terms analogous to the above template terms. For example, contractive bounding means the distinction between things - them/us, and the contractive bias emphasizes inwards movement.

In the MBTI this cell is labeled SFJ and is also known as "Conservators and Protectors" (part of the overall concept of security seeking). In the I Ching it is symbolized by the trigram of The Abysmal (Water). In Mathematics it is linked to (negative) rational numbers, and in Astrology it is linked to Scorpio.

The template terms stem from considering how many ways can I mix two things (yin/yang)? The 'generic' answer is four:

- Blend - make a new whole. (whole)
- Bond - one is 'tied' to another. (aspects - static relationships)
- Bound - one is distinct from the other, a boarder exists between. (parts)
- Bind - one influences the other at a distance. (aspects - dynamic relationships)

Thus, whenever I discuss 'wholeness' (or lack of) I will more often use words linked with the concept of 'blending'. (seeking 'oneness')

Whenever I discuss 'relationships' I will more often use words linked with the concepts of 'bonding' or 'binding'. The subtle difference is that in binding the objects under consideration appear 'seperate'; for example, being 'tied' by a contract where one party seems under the influence of another. In bonding there is a distinct, observable, 'join'.

Whenever I discuss 'parts' I will more often use words linked with the concept of bounding - forming a boundary; a distinction. Of note is that parts can be seen as wholes in their own right and so we see the presence of hierarchy and the influence of context.

Generally, we will use these words 'intuitively' since it is the template that generates the 'feel' which we then put into words.

This system allows humans to make analogies across disciplines often considered 'unique'. In fact it can translate the general characteristics of any dichotomously-derived discipline into the terms of any other. (and thus analogy can be too easy and confusing at times). In simple terms, things 'resonate'.

Here are some of the 'maps' layed-out on the template:

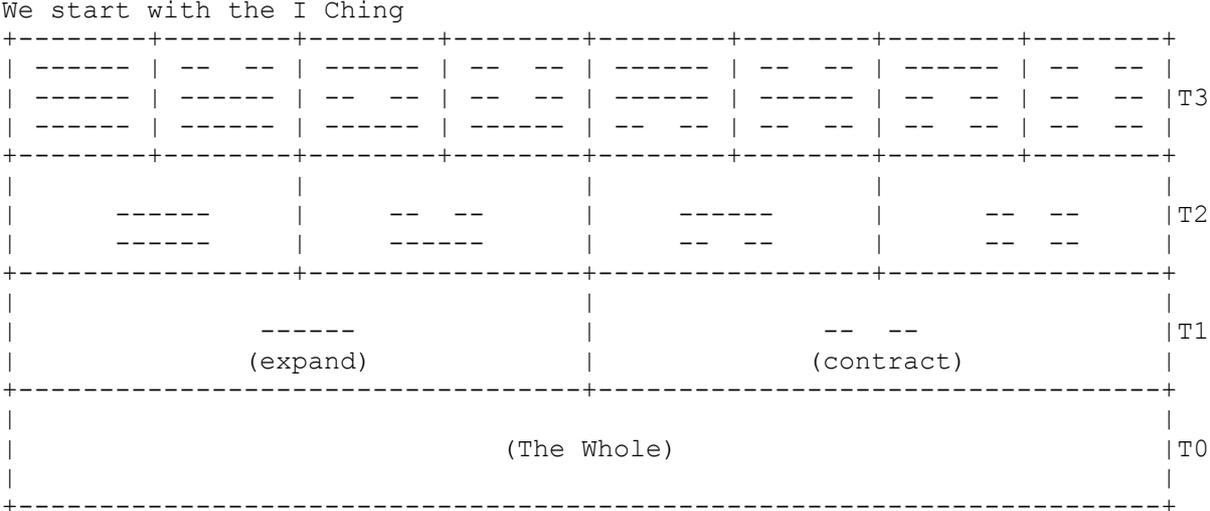


Figure 2. The generation of I Ching trigrams bottom-up.

Trigrams (level T3):

I divide the influences into top/bottom. Thus a trigram (three-line symbol) in an upper position of a hexagram (a hexagram is a six line symbol and would emerge at level T6) has a slightly different bias then when in a bottom position. This stems from using the refinement bias in the I Ching (we move up from a gross state to a refined state):

Traditional	Bottom (INNER)	Top (OUTER)
The Receptive minded)	Devotion	Trust (double-
Keeping Still	Self-restraint	Discernment
The Abysmal	Containment	Control
The Gentle	Cultivate	Influence
The Arousing	Enlightenment	Awareness

The Clinging	Guidance	Direction
The Joyous	Self-Reflection	Intensity
The Creative minded)	Perseverance	Confidence (single- minded)

The main context here is persons. Naturally when considering abstract concepts (time/space) then the top/bottom 'meanings' change content but not form.

In hexagrams these can be read as "with comes " thus hexagram 2, which can be interpreted as having the trigram of the Receptive in both positions, is read as "With devotion(BOTTOM) comes trust(TOP)". We can read these as doublings of 'meaning' or more a 'concentration'. Thus 'perseverance' doubled leads to 'single-mindedness', and so on.

The next map is that of the number system:

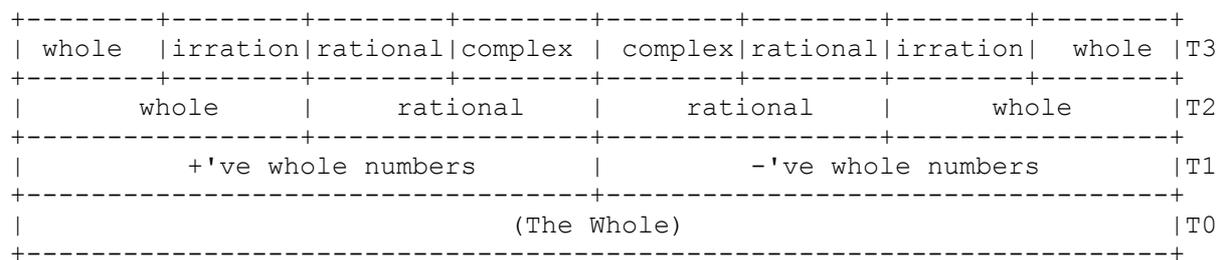


Figure 2. The generation of the traditional number system.

Whole numbers - i.e. prime numbers since they are 'uncutable' and what these maps reflect is the process of 'cutting'; dichotomizing. wholeness has an emphasis on balance; on being 'one'. Within whole numbers we also have composite numbers that are made by 'mixing' prime numbers.

Rational numbers capture the concept of parts of the whole. All the rational numbers are in the harmonics series:

$$1/2, 1/3, 1/4, 1/5 \dots 1/51 \dots \text{etc}$$

This series is basically a list of all the possible parts I can cut the whole and so is a list of aspects or harmonics.

Irrational numbers capture static relationships of the whole. Pi, e, phi, sqrt(2) etc. These are not 'numbers' in that you dont count with them (as you cannot count with complex numbers), they just show aspects of a whole. Pi, for example, symbolizes a part_to_whole aspect of diameter (part) to circumference (whole) of a circle. Irrational numbers can be shown to be made-up of lists of parts taken from the harmonic series; they thus reflect static relationships made-up of the grouping various parts or even of other static relationships.

Imaginary numbers capture dynamic relationships, for example(sqrt(-1) (i) etc). These show the transitions (cyclic change) and transformations (morphic change) of dynamic relationships. (and thus their use in electronics and other areas of Science involved with any form of oscillation.). We can also include complex numbers in this group but they are more 'composites' in that they combine imaginary with reals.

These different types of numbers have similar overall 'meanings' to the trigrams that are in the same positions at level T3. For example, complex numbers associate with The Arousing and

The Gentle, the trigrams that deal with transformations and transitions. Both thus associate with the concept of binding (like the rotation of the earth around the sun; a 'hidden' but dynamic tie easily linked to concepts like 'transformation', 'transition', and 'oscillation').

The next map is the MBTI (R) :

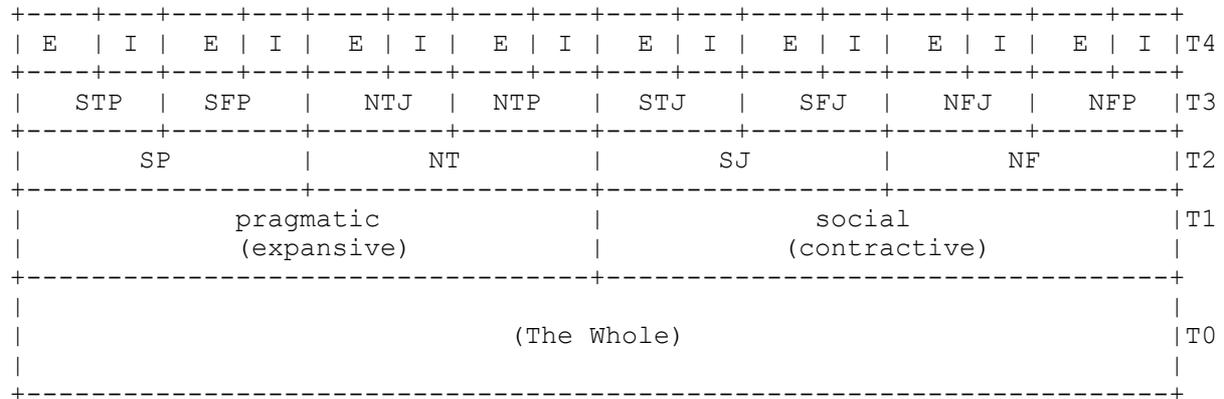


Figure 3. The generation of the MBTI (A modern day personality typology)

This is a 'typology' originating with Carl Jung and 'formalized' into the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) in the 1950's.

The letters stand for I/E = introvert/extravert
 N/S - intuitive/sensing
 T/F = thinking/feeling
 P/J = perceiving/judging

Keirsey has labelled these symbols (here found at level T3) with more 'meaningful' terms:

- NFP - Advocates/Disciples (at T4 - Questors & Enthusiasts)
- NFJ - Mentors (at T4 - Psychics & Ringmasters)
- SFJ - Conservators (at T4 - Protectors & Providers)
- STJ - Monitors (at T4 - Trustees & Administrators)
- NTP - Engineers (at T4 - Philosophers & Inventors)
- NTJ - Organizers (at T4 - Scientists & Strategists)
- SFP - Players (at T4 - Composers & Entertainers)
- STP - Operators (at T4 - Artisans & Negotiators)

In the context of the I Ching, for example, Advocates/Disciples correlate with the trigram of The Receptive - "with devotion comes trust".

Note that if you start to derive a map 'logically' then the links do not occur. These maps are initially induced cognitively. Logic follows cognition in that cognition is awareness/openess (expansive bias) and logic is ordering (contractive bias). For example, we could form the MBTI map into two 'logical' halves - one for extraverts and one for introverts. It doesnt work due to the fact that those are traits that exist WITHIN the context of other traits and those other traits must come first in the hierarchy; in hierarchy everything has it's *correct* place.

The next map is based on Astrology:

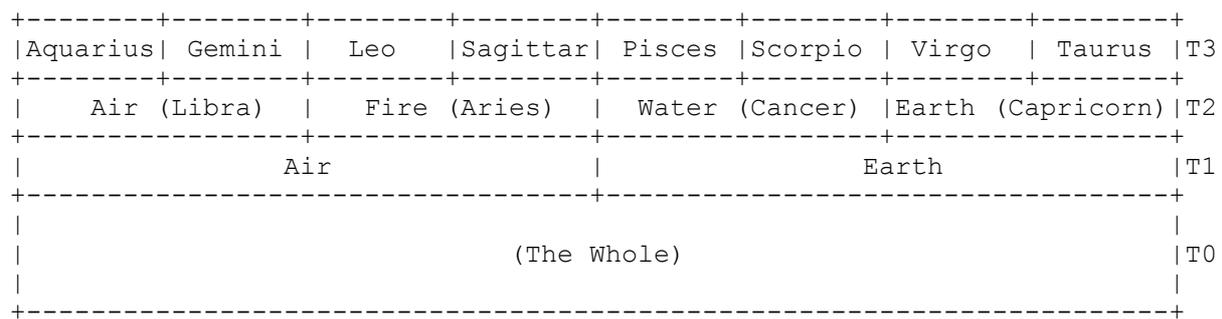


Figure 4. The generation of Astrological symbols.

The sign associations stem from the fact that each element has a 'cardinal' sign which is the more 'stable'. The other signs are called 'fixed' and 'mutable'. Using this method of classification we find strong correlations with the other maps as well as the template. What is implied in this is that the signs at T2 are more 'global' than the refined ones at T3. All of the signs at T2 are considered the 'leading' signs in their specific sign group. There is some question, however, to the positions of the cardinal/fixed signs. Since we move from the 'whole' and a state of equilibrium (T0) to increasing levels of complexity and change the more 'unchanging' signs should be at level T2 rather than the 'leading' sign. For fire signs this is the Leo/Aries dichotomy. Any ideas?

Comparing with the other maps, Aries (T2), for example, links with the NT types in the MBTI (Engineers, inventors, designers etc) and with the trigrams of The Arousing and The Clinging in the I Ching and overall with the concept of bounding and binding. At T3, the more 'refined' levels link Leo with The Clinging (I Ching), Organizers (MBTI), and Bounding (group, boundary). In maths this links with rational numbers (parts). Sagittarius, on the other hand is more binding oriented (The Arousing). BOTH have traits of Aries, the 'root' of the fire symbols.

Combining the mixing with the I Ching trigrams we have:

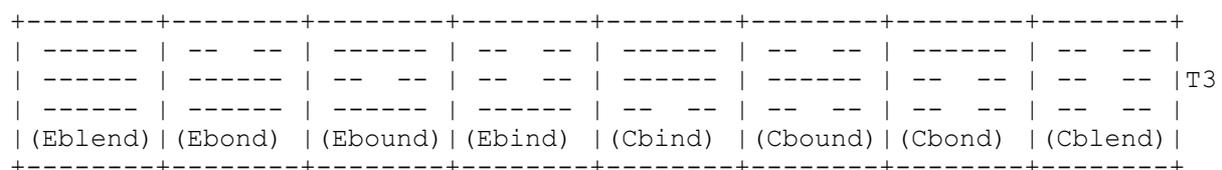


Figure 6. The generation of I Ching trigrams within the template.
 In this diagram, E = expansive and C = contractive.

It is possible to 'map' another typology, the Enneagram, once we recognize that it is made up of 8 psychological types and one sociological type - type 3. What few recognize is that the I Ching has it's roots in 'nineness'. But that part, which symbolized no change, is excluded (using the yarrow sticks, we take 50 and then remove 1 to use 49. This 1 symbolizes no change.) In tradition, the turtle that came out of the water with the trigram markings on it's back (which Fu Hsi used) had a position with no marking (the centre) meaning no change.

The same types of maps can be made for the Tarot, Qabalah, Numerology etc., in fact ANY system based on dichotomy (e.g. air/earth, fire/water) will in some way fit onto the template.

What I am suggesting (elsewhere) is that the template has neurological foundations and is the brain's way of dealing with wholes and their aspects through dichotomous analysis; a very useful tool for map making.

As our culture has become more 'precision' oriented, these ancient but metaphorically rich esoteric systems of classification have been condemned in that they have been interpreted literally rather than metaphorically. Science, through Mathematics, may have developed a high degree of precision in categorizing the outside world but these maps are just more refined than the esoteric maps; both systems metaphorically describe the same things - wholes, parts, and their aspects. This 'fact' explains the continued existence and acceptance of esoteric maps in that they work, and give a sense of 'value' to those who use them.

Furthermore, being strongly metaphoric, they have a degree of 'feel' that, to many, the weakly metaphoric Sciences seem to lack. Thus I will find extreme difficulty in using the Tarot to describe the detailed flight path of the Voyager spacecraft, but I will have no problem in describing the emotional stresses of a current relationship - as long as I know my stuff, and recognize the metaphor where, for example, the suite of Swords is all sensation seeking and linked to Air and overall deals with attempts to integrate outwards (wholeness).

In the context of wholeness, note that as you add more and more levels to the template, so a continuum emerges in the horizontal axis (T3 being a rough model, T6, where the hexagrams of the I Ching are, is more 'precise'). In the context of the I Ching, the 'whole' emerges in a sequence of :

whole : static relationships : parts : dynamic relationships :: dynamic relationships : parts : static relationships : whole

One 'pole' is negative and the other positive.

Thus, as we cut more and more, we get a very refined model of the whole. However, a property of dichotomy is that of incompleteness and this says that you cannot totally 'cut' the whole since in any dichotomy, each element of the dichotomy exists within the context of the other. Thus, all dichotomously-derived systems of categorization will be, in some way, incomplete. Lao Tzu emphasized the point in his Tao Te Ching (450BC). Godel emphasized the point in Mathematics more recently (1930AD).

As I have pointed out, much of this was created from an initially cognitive perspective rather than a logical perspective. Thus some of the patterns may appear logically 'incorrect' in that 'we have always done it this way' etc., but are valid in their descriptive character and that is what links all the maps together; the descriptive character stemming from the resonating template. (E.G. in the tarot 'map' we find that the symbol of Cups should be linked to Earth, not Water, and Pentacles/Disks to Water, not Earth. But the overall character of the two suites, water with money, business etc and Earth with love and devotion, is valid and 'slots' onto the template with all of the other metaphors. This suggests a confusion of symbols in the past and some tarot texts have raised the point of a 'dispute' about these specific associations which the template seems to resolve.)

The brain is tuned to respond to wholes and their aspects. This is at the neurological level - there is no 'thought' in this. At the psychological level we make maps - metaphors - to help distinguish and group the various types of wholes and their aspects. To make these maps we use dichotomous analysis that enables the maps to be understood by more than just the originator - this is called consensus mapping. One aspect of this is that the richer the metaphor

the more likely the possibility of confusing map with territory. Understanding this, as well as the template, can be useful in future map-making; especially those of the human mind.

If we wish to ponder on 'where does it all come from', the best answer I can give at the moment is that we are dealing with 'fermions' and 'bosons' all the way. By this I mean that since the initial context of anything can colour what follows, and since the origin of the universe is based on the interactions of two groups of fundamental particles, fermions and bosons, so following a path of development that is complexity-based, so our neurology and our minds 'mimic' these same interactions but at a more general and complex level.

This conclusion comes from the observation that the behavioural characteristics of fermions are like the characteristics of left hemisphere function in the human brain, as are the characteristics of bosons like those of the right hemisphere of the human brain.

Overall we have:

Fermions : particle bias in that they are each 'unique' and so independent forms. This feature is covered by the Pauli Exclusion Principle in that no two fermions can occupy the same space.

Bosons : wave bias in that bosons can share the same space in the form of superpositions. Emphasis on harmonics and 'virtual' waves and so 'illusion'.

Left Hemisphere : emphasis on independence, totalism, precision. pattern-matching is single context explicit relationships. Emphasis is on clarity and disentanglements.

Right Hemisphere : emphasis on dependence, aspectualism, approximations, pattern-matching foreground to background (multiple contexts) and so entanglements. (creating interference in the form of inhibiting or enhancing an object).

Note that the 'left/right' distinctions are to some degree 'false' in that we are dealing more with two threads that are woven together to make patterns; and so the front of the brain is more 'entangled' than the back of the brain. but since there is a path of development that comes from the back to the front, so the back serves as context and thus introduces behavioural biases.

In the context of wholes and their aspects, so the concepts of 'whole/aspects' can be seen to easily emerge from fermion/boson behaviours in that the initial 'random' patterns would set contexts that allowed for the emergence of more complex forms that still retained the 'base' characteristics. Overall we have the 'same' structure/behaviour but at different scales and this is traceable from the beginning of the universe as fermions and bosons to the functioning of our brains via the 'basic' neuron (fermion expresses by the soma/axon and boson by the dendrites.)

Over the billions of years of trial and error, so emerged humans and encoded in them were the same fermion/boson characteristics that would lead to the making of 'maps' based on whole/aspects distinctions. As each generation developed so the maps were added-to or else replaced by more 'precise' maps. But underneath ALL of these maps are whole:aspects encodings that allows us to generate senses of 'meaning'.

The alternative to this is that since we make maps of reality using analogy, and since the 'base' analogy is always to part or the whole of 'us', so the characteristics we perceive 'out there' are 'given' the same as 'in here'; this the fundamental particles 'out there' are unconsciously linked to the fundamental particles 'in here', namely the biases we see in the human brain.

Thus we have a choice of 'start' position, either all of our maps are 'rooted' in our neurology and no more, or else our neurology is rooted in fermion/boson interactions and so traceable back to the origins of the universe.

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