



*Journal of Advances and
Scholarly Researches in
Allied Education*

*Vol. VII, Issue No. XIV,
April-2014, ISSN 2230-7540*

EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS- A LONG JOURNEY

AN
INTERNATIONALLY
INDEXED PEER
REVIEWED &
REFEREED JOURNAL

Evolution of Consciousness- A Long Journey

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Abstract – *One view of consciousness that has long appealed to a minority of philosophers and cognitive scientists is to view the brain like a radio or television set. These appliances emit sound and/or visual imagery, but of course the information presented in the sounds and sights is not determined by components within the device itself. The information is carried within electromagnetic waves. A radio or TV is simply equipped to transduce this energy into sound or images. In the same way, according to this minority view, the brain does not produce consciousness through its activity, but acts as a kind of receiver of signals from outside the brain that are the real source of consciousness. There is as yet no evidence for any kind of consciousness field, analogous to an electromagnetic field that could act as the source of our brain-derived experience of consciousness. But my point here is that, properly understood, individual human consciousness results from a process not that much unlike that underlying radio or television. Rather than a field of consciousness that can exist independently of individual humans, there is a social consciousness that is created by interactions between individuals, in large part through language. The individual brain is able to transduce this social consciousness into an individual form of consciousness.*

Keywords: *Evolution, Consciousness, Long Journey, Information, Components, Determined, Electromagnetic, Produce, Experience, Individual, Human, Independently, etc.*

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INTRODUCTION

A functionalist like Koch should eagerly embrace the idea that large, complex human societies could become conscious, indeed are likely to be in the process of becoming so right now. Not only do they fulfill the basic properties demanded by IIT even more clearly and fully than do individual brains, but we know that the most important features of consciousness are social properties, which can't be understood at an individual level. At the very least, Koch should realize that the kinds of organization of information that are associated with human consciousness are not at all limited to the human brain. They must include social interactions. Why do Koch and so many other scientists and philosophers resist this conclusion? I said earlier I felt it was an expression of a deep prejudice. What exactly is the basis of this prejudice? I think it's an unwillingness to accept that there may be multiple levels of consciousness all existing within a single system: conscious cells, conscious organisms, and conscious societies. The notion that we could have consciousness's or voices inside of us that we are completely unaware of is repugnant to most thinkers. It suggests a chaotic situation that would make it impossible for us to function with a more or less stable identity. And how could society be conscious without our being aware of this? Yet we know that multiple forms of consciousness do exist within a single individual. Studies of split brain patients

have long demonstrated that the two halves of our brain have very different perspectives of the world, and can come into conflict under certain conditions. And the left brain-right brain division is actually very simplistic. Anyone who has observed himself very deeply through the process of meditation will learn that we are in fact composed of multiple selves, most of which are not very aware of each other. Even the non-meditator will confront this situation every time she has a serious internal conflict, such as presented by a very difficult decision in life. Such conflicts are at root battles between different selves.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

It was not so long ago that many people, including some very eminent scientists (such as Henri Bergson), believed that the secrets of genetics would never be revealed by biochemistry because there was something inherently non-reducible in life's coding system, something akin to supernatural vitalism. But this turned out to be spectacularly wrong when Francis Crick and James Watson discovered the double helix structure to DNA and how four basic building blocks, adenine, cytosine, thymine and guanine comprise the fundamental language in life's evolution... Is it conceivable that the mystery of consciousness may also have an informational solution similar to the genomic revolution? I'll pass over the description of Bergson as an "eminent

scientist", except to say he wasn't. The general point Lane is making which has been made by many other scientists and philosophers is that consciousness will ultimately be explainable in terms of material processes, just as other phenomena have been. But all these other phenomena have been found to exist in multiple levels within a single system. Thus while humans beings grow, reproduce, and adapt, so do single cells within their bodies. Individual cells don't have language in our sense, but they do communicate. They don't have immune systems, but they defend themselves. There is no conflict whatsoever in the existence of these processes at multiple levels. On the contrary, the ability of individual cells to grow and reproduce not only does not interfere with the ability of whole organisms to do the same, it's an essential feature of the latter.

So why should consciousness be any different? If growth, reproduction, adaptation and communication among individual cells in our bodies is in fact the basis of our own growth, reproduction, adaptation and communication, why can't consciousness of individual cells constitute the basis of consciousness of the whole organism? If we accept the Panpsychism view of consciousness as a fundamental property of matter, the complexity of consciousness that we observe in ourselves would be explained in very much the same way that we explain the complexity of our biological processes—by the interaction of a very large number of simpler processes. Just as macromolecules result from the interactions of small molecules, and cells result from the interactions of macromolecules, and human beings result from the interactions of cells, our ordinary consciousness, in this view, results from the interactions of consciousness of cells, and consciousness's of cells perhaps results from the interactions of conscious macromolecules.

CONCLUSION:

Postmodernists like Derrida present a major challenge to spiritual transcendence by arguing against traditional features of God or higher consciousness like immortality and timelessness. Fundamentally, the postmodern argument is directed against the notion of an absolute. The best documented examples that we have of transcendence, however, as it occurs throughout nature, do not involve, indeed cannot involve, an absolute. Understanding spiritual transcendence in the same way as these natural examples suggests that it involves identification with a higher form of life that while existing on a physical and temporal scale far exceeding of individual humans, nevertheless avoids the problem of an absolute. While it may be difficult coming to terms with the possibility that a human being could transform into identifying with a much more complex form of existence such as the entire planet, understanding spirituality in this way does enable us to escape the postmodern arguments, and begin to conceive of the process in a way that is consistent with our understanding of the natural world.

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