

Forrer K

Retired school principle, Australia

Correspondence author*Kurt Forrer**Retired school principle
26 Parkins Reef Road Maldon 3563 Vic
Australia

Submitted : 5 May 2021 ; Published : 15 Jun 2021

Abstract

Consciousness is still the most contentious subject at the present. There are researchers who actually cherish an open hatred against consciousness because they feel the idea interferes with their belief that the world is decidedly nothing but a material construct. However, they forget that without them being endowed with awareness they could not be conscious of the fact that there is such a thing as matter. One of these protesters wrote that it was quite easy to imagine a world having developed without consciousness to arrive at what it is now. He, like all such students of the world, forgot that one cannot imagine anything at all without the presence of consciousness. He, like all his fellow students, are like the group of men who, after crossing a dangerous river wanted to make sure if everyone had crossed the waters safely. They all counted the number of the members of the group and found to their horror that there were only nine members who made it safely across. Panic struck them and they all mourned the loss of the tenth man.

It is actually quite surprising how easily one can forget the 10th man, the centre of attention. Equally easy it is to follow others blindly instead of with open eyes and original thought. A typical instance of such 'blindness' is our willingness to accept the perspective of others. A typical example is the belief that there is such a thing as an objective point of view, with everybody accepting this faulty perspective, not realising that a report is done by a subject and that, to boot, objects have no point of view.

The quotes (op. cit. in the main text are from the book entitled 'The Secret Life of Plants' by Peter Tomkins and Christopher Bird.

Consciousness**23/4/2021**

Science is getting gradually closer to the mystery of consciousness. The latest article I read on the Web is now showing a return to *panpsychism*, a word that was coined by Francesco Patrizi in the 16th century. It meant to indicate that the notion of a soul or mind, consciousness in other words, was not limited to humans, but was to be encountered in *all things* worldwide. This, of course, goes against every aspect of consciousness as it is generally understood and imagined in our present society and especially in science.

For one thing, the majority of scientists still believe that consciousness is *generated* in the brain. This is now definitely seen as an error, as the experimentation with psilocybin, for instance, has conclusively demonstrated. The evidence for this emerges when a subject is imbibing this substance and experiences an oceanic expansion of consciousness, from which one naturally would infer that the brain's output of consciousness must have increased considerably. Surprisingly, measurements of output reveal the opposite, indicating a thwarting of brain activity. An article in "Nature" (23 Jan. 2012) reports that psychedelics are thought of 'mind-expanding' drugs, *so it has been commonly assumed that they work by*

increasing brain activity", says Nutt.

"Surprisingly, we found that psilocybin actually caused activity to decrease in areas that have the densest connections with other areas. The largest decreases were observed in the medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC) and the anterior and posterior cingulate cortices (ACC and PCC, respectively.) The scans also showed a reduction in functional connectivity between the mPFC and PCC, so that their normally synchronous activity was desynchronised." (1)

Clearly, the brain does not generate consciousness. In fact consciousness is not generated at all. Instead it is 'self-existing', always has been and always will be, for it is a manifestation, if you will, of eternity. This is the main reason for the incapacity of science to capture it and put it in a box. There are no boxes large enough to confine and define consciousness.

However the illustrations given by the author mentioned are nevertheless useful so long it is understood that consciousness is not generated by the neurons, but instead passed *on by them from the source of consciousness.* In that analogy we need

to imagine that the activated neurons are simply reacting to a 'charge' of consciousness analogous to an electrical charge coursing through a wire. The report in "Nature" made it quite plain that a powered down brain allowed for greater intensity of consciousness experience.

Of particular interest is here how we as humans draw from the universal consciousness. According to Hinduism, or more precisely to its most recent incarnation and guru, Sri Ramana Maharshi, the all-pervading consciousness enters the human body through the Hrit or hart on the right side of the breast, from where it rises to the brain along invisible nadis, or nerves.

From what is known from NDEs, consciousness increases by a reduction of neuronal activity. The same would also be made apparent through higher states in yogic meditation. In short, the greater the absence of neuronal activity, the closer we will get to pure consciousness. Indeed, in Eastern spiritual practices neuronal activity would be referred to as the weeds in a pool of otherwise clear water, which latter would stand for consciousness.

In view of this, the best way to illustrate universal consciousness is by picturing a boundless ocean in which the entire creation is immersed, or by imagining that everything, the entire universe is dwelling in boundless space endowed with AIR. After all the breath of life is a primal symbol. God, as is widely known, supposedly breathed into clay figurines in the case of the first humans.

But since in my depiction of the world everything is imbued with life, this hypothetical space is filled with air that represents consciousness, which in turn represents life, since as I see it, consciousness holds the seed of life. In this way everything that exists is immersed in consciousness and participates to one degree or another in one form or other of life.

In this world environment everything, even rocks, participate in the universally distributed consciousness, with limitations determined only by the complexity or simplicity of their nervous systems.

But, however minimal the nervous system might be, everything, even those entities that have hitherto been considered inanimate, must now be considered to be living beings. As Bose, one of the pioneer researchers of the mysteries of plant life noted: *'The boundary line between so-called 'non-living' metals and living organisms is tenuous indeed, spontaneously moving from the domain of physics into that of physiology. Bose began a comparative study of the curves of molecular reaction in inorganic and those in living animal tissue. To his awe and surprise the curves produced by slightly warmed magnetic oxide of iron showed striking resemblance to those of muscles. (2) pg. 85-86.*

Sir Robert, one of the world's authorities on metals, praised Bose for his research saying, "I have all my life studied the properties of metals and am happy to think that they have life. (3) Op. cit. 86.

When we now progress from metals to plants, we soon find that their life is considerably more complex. During a trip to Europe in 1923, the year that saw the publication of Bose's detailed 227-page work, the Physiology of 'The Ascent of the Sap', the French philosopher Henri Bergson said, after hearing Bose lecture at the Sorbonne: "The dumb plants had by Bose's marvellous inventions been rendered the most eloquent witnesses of their hitherto unexpressed life story. Nature has at last been forced to yield her most jealously guarded secrets." Op. cit. 101.

By the entrance of the Bose Institute near Calcutta stands a luxuriant Mimosa pudica. Visitors are requested to pick a small frond from this compliant horticultural guinea pig and place it in one of Bose's complicated machines, which provides a schematic pattern of the vibrations of the plant on a sheet of paper. A visitor is then asked to place his wrist inside the machine and watch as a duplicate of the pattern is produced, demonstrating that mimosa is so sensitive it can pick up and faultlessly reflect individual human radiations. Op. cit. 312.

Clearly the plant world is far more sophisticated than What we humans dare to attribute to them.

Quotes (Op. cit.) from "The Secret Life of Plants", Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird.

Offered to Angela Roy 10/6/2021

In my article of CONSCIOUSNESS 2, I cited John Searle as having said in his essay, 'Theory of Mind and Darwin's Legacy' that "Consciousness does not have a function because we can easily *imagine* all of human and animal life going on as it does, only minus consciousness. We can easily *imagine* that we all existed as unconscious zombies but performed exactly the same actions that we now perform." From which he concluded, "*this shows that consciousness has no essential evolutionary function.*"

If Daniel Dennett of Tufts University together with some of his sympathising analytic philosophers of mind happened to chance upon Searle's conclusion, they would have rejoiced no end, for their own attitude towards CONSCIOUSNESS was very much in keeping with Searle's, since they "found the existence of consciousness such an intolerable affront to what they believe should be a meaningless universe of matter and the void that they declare it to be an illusion. That is, they either deny that qualia exist or argue that they can never be meaningfully studied by science."

The first dissonant chord, as it were, intrudes in this 'symphony' with the following observation: "The majority of scholars accepts consciousness as a given and seek to understand its relationship to the objective world described by SCIENCE."

This assertion, "*The objective world described by science*", is surely the best example to demonstrate how perverse the 'scientific' point of view can be. The first objection we are

compelled to make here is that science does no such thing. Science is not an agent of any description. Science is nothing more potent than the figment of our imagination. To be quite precise: Science is a projection that issues from our head. Both science and the world it professes to describe are purely SUBJECTIVE.

Under such circumstances, what are the chances of Christof Koch to find the *physical* FOOTPRINTS of CONSCIOUSNESS in place of the interminable philosophical discussions our ancestors indulged in that kept them entertained?

This intense focus on the physical is quite curious. We only need to recall what John Searle had said about it. It was sufficient for him to *imagine* that something existed in order to dispense with consciousness. But of course, he forgot, as I pointed out at the time, the 10th man. He forgot that to *imagine* something, it was necessary to be conscious oneself. Which, of course, meant that matter, the substance enabling the imprint of the footprints of consciousness, needed consciousness for it to become what we would take it for. Put another way, matter is nothing but an emission of consciousness, one of its manifestations.

A parallel of such a process is the thought process from which is derived the concrete configuration of a particular idea. Thus, when Searle said, it was easy to *imagine*, he really said, imagining is a thought on the way of becoming the thing it imagines, its progeny.

Clearly, Daniel Dennett's fury against the existence of consciousness is difficult to understand in light of the fact that without consciousness there can be neither matter nor illusory voids. He clearly doesn't realise that he is himself the lamp that shines on the 'intolerable affront', he complained about. He too, is mourning the 10th man that was never lost.

These examples all show how surprising the presence of consciousness is. Indeed, its presence is so astonishing that we look for it everywhere except where it really is. We tend to look for it particularly in matter. Matter was created first, we all crow. And from matter evolved the world and its wonders.

Perhaps it is a measure of our crudeness that we look first in matter for its existence. This was certainly so in the case of the article Christof Koch (June 1, 2018) penned entitled "What is Consciousness?" beginning with the down to earth observation, "Consciousness is everything you experience," these experiences, occasionally referred to as qualia, have been a mystery since antiquity. The majority of scholars accept Consciousness as a given. From there on they mainly look to the brain for answers. The hope is, of course, that the organ in question will yield the appropriate answers.

The first thing in the firing line in such a task, are the neurons, or the *minimal neuronal mechanisms*. This is of course, because it is surmised that consciousness is generated in the brain. But that proves to be largely a waste of time. From these initial

attempts the usual progression is to explore the cerebellum since it sports the brain's most glamorous neurons. But it also has by far the most neurons, four times more than to be found in the rest of the brain. Around 69 billions. (Koch)

Of crucial interest is the fact that there is very little loss of consciousness when someone has a stroke, for instance. Even being born without a cerebellum has little effect on the consciousness experience. The cerebellum is functionally divided into hundreds or more independent computational modules. (Koch)

Stimulating the posterior hot zone can trigger a diversity of distinct sensations and feelings. Removal of even small regions of the posterior cortex, where the hot zone resides, can lead to a loss of entire classes of conscious content: patients are unable to recognise faces or to see motion, colour or space. (Koch)

So it appears that the sights, sounds and other sensations of life as we experience it are GENERATED by the regions within the posterior cortex. AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, ALMOST ALL CONSCIOUS EXPERIENCES HAVE THEIR ORIGIN THERE. (C. Koch)

As you read this paragraph, you naturally are drawn to the conclusion that the brain as a whole must be the generator of consciousness. It looks so obvious and convincing that one is easily seduced to forget the fact that the true source of consciousness is in one's own head, the light and awareness provided by the 'forgotten 10th man'.

Indeed, the true source of consciousness has now been identified in a crucial, definitive experiment with *psilocybin*, a drug that induces a distinct sensation of widening the ambit of consciousness while at the same time intensifying its power, although the brain's output of consciousness has been clearly thwarted, all of which has been confirmed by a targeted study undertaken and reported by the journal 'Nature', dated 23rd January 2012. As Nutt reports there: "Surprisingly, we found that *psilocybin* actually caused activity to decrease in areas that have the densest connections with other areas. The largest decreases were anterior and posterior cingulate cortices (ACC and PCC, respectively.)

Current Western science has been searching, and surprisingly still is, for the origin of consciousness in the structure and mechanism of the brain. It will have to make a sharp and uncompromising U-turn if it wants to find the secret of consciousness and solve its mystery once and for all. The East has always known that consciousness is not manufactured in any fashion at all and most certainly not in the brain or by the brain.

It has always been aware that consciousness was not confined to any particular place, but that it was to be found everywhere in the cosmos. Equally, it always knew that it was unlike any other entity, that it was not something created, but something that always existed and had no end to it. It was forever clear

to Eastern wisdom that consciousness finds its way into our Hrit or heart on the right side of the breast, from where it reaches the head along invisible nadis or 'nerves' in order to be distributed in the body according to need. (Talks 199 Consciousness=Self)

In the book, "Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi", consciousness is identified with the Self, which in turn is the centre of each living creature, which in fact is the centre of the Universe. Clearly, consciousness is not just the light of every human, indeed of every being, but it is the Self of all selves. From there, creation spreads out ad infinitum, embracing all that exists in one form or other. As Chuang Tzu declared, I and the universe are one, which includes, of course, all other beings. Or, as the Net of Indra in the Avatamsaka Sutra has it: Where each jewel is reflected in every other jewel and in fact IS every other jewel.

This clearly hints at the absolute unity of creation. It suggests that all that exists is really the Self, the centre of each and every being. In this context it is worth remembering that consciousness fills the entire cosmos like air does a room and that consequently every item, no matter what, is in touch with it and is enlivened by it according to its capacity, which is determined by its sensorial equipment.

Put another way, plants, for instance, who have a fairly sophisticated nervous system, partake of the surrounding consciousness to a much higher degree than a piece of metal or a rock, whose sensorial systems are comparatively elementary. But rocks and metals are nevertheless conscious and alive, as is the earth, the planets, the sun, the cosmos, and the universe, all and sundry expressions of various forms of the Self of selves.

To anyone not familiar with such a wide-ranging outlook, it may be advisable to get acquainted with literature as encountered in books like, "The Secret Life of Plants", of which John White of the San Francisco Chronicle, remarked, "Once in a while you find a book that stuns you. Its scope leaves you breathless. This is such a book."

It is such a book because everything that was plain, dead matter before, suddenly sprang to life. This awakening starts quite unintentionally symbolical. It begins with a man named Backster who is the officer in charge of keeping a watchful eye on the lie detectors of the police department. Because his secretary finds the office too bare and stark, she installs something green between the starkness of the walls. This something green turns out to be a broadleaf *Dracaena Massangeana*. It was the fate of this vegetarian Dragon to breathe new fire into man's relationship with the plant world. "Backster's antics with his plants", so write the authors in the first chapter of this book, "headlined in the world press, became the subject of skits, cartoons and lampoons, but the Pandora's box which he opened for science may never again be closed". (p.4)

Lie detectors register emotions elicited when a subject is

required to answer certain questions. During a lecture at his office he attached the lie detector on a whim to his Dragon, and to his amazement the plant registered a reaction that was typical when a human was connected to the detector. This was the beginning of a lengthy and turbulent relationship between Backster and the Dragon. He wisely didn't claim to have discovered some new scientific fact, for he knew only too well that the incident only recovered what at one time was common knowledge.

Backster wondered if the plant was able to read his mind, for part of his whim to connect the plant was the thought of burning the leaf he had attached to his galvanometer. He discovered that the plant knew whether or not he was serious. Soon he learnt that plants could read the minds of their human masters better than humans could. He realized quickly that the way our ancient forebears treated and understood their plants was far more enlightened than the way we understood and treated them.

In light of his new understanding of plants he also began to get a new appreciation of the customs of our early forebears. When he heard of the custom to have intercourse in the cornfield, which supposedly enhanced the fertility of the field, he was naturally amused by such folly. Today, having experienced the intelligence and sensitivity of the plants, he has a new understanding of the plant world, giving him a more realistic sense of appreciation. Having had a hands-on experience with plants has opened the door wide to the many other facets of consciousness to be still explored.