

Towards a Science of Consciousness

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Abstract: Psychology has reduced itself from being a science of the soul to a science of human behaviour and latterly to a science of the brain. Yet through the brain we cannot explain phenomena such as prenatal memories, past life experiences or telepathy. It appears that something important has been removed. . It is for this reason that we should review the concept of consciousness: What does consciousness mean in terms of experience? And what would happen if a great number of scientists underwent such experiences? This paper looks at the implications for physics and philosophy, of consciousness-expanding experiences, and postulates the possibility of applying the experimental designs of positivistic scientific methodology to mysticism in order to establish a common ground between the two.

“Consciousness” certainly is a many-faceted term. As I am going to use it as a transpersonal psychologist, perhaps I should introduce you briefly to the work that I do. So let me share an experience with you. Recently a client came to see me, a woman who looked so worn that she had the appearance of a 40 year old, when in fact she was only 28. She was a native of the high Andes in Peru, born in the area of Lake Titicaca in South America, an Andes Indio woman for short. She is married to a German man and lives in Germany. She had attempted suicide three times and was diagnosed as severely depressive.

Apparently she had never had a chance to freely speak about herself. When we met for an introductory interview she talked constantly for four hours, from 6 pm until 10 pm, and continued the next morning for further three hours, from 9 until 12 o’clock, again without a break. On both occasions a flood of suppressed information gushed forth, a tale of family cruelty, cultural oppression and terrorist horrors, told with tears and emotions throughout. No therapy yet! Just listening. All I had to do for seven hours was nod my head and say “continue”.

There were no lack of traumatic aspects to her life. Her mother considered frequent whippings to near-unconsciousness as a cure-all for any educational problem. She underwent five abortions. Her first suicide attempt was at the age of 8, two more were to follow. Her married life was a benevolent form of sexual slavery in exchange for her husband having “saved” her from the horrors of her village by marrying her and taking her to Germany. Yet despite all that she did not look upon herself as a victim. Instead she saw herself as someone who kept being at the wrong place at the wrong time, and how could that be possible? Why was her life the way it was? That is the question to which she wanted to find the answer.

It transpired that she was replaying the trauma of other people in her own life, specifically the trauma of her relatives. Three phrases kept appearing in her account. One phrase was: “I have no power for it.” The second: “I’m like gone”. The third: “I can’t feel anything”.

Together these three phrases formed a negative program patterning my client’s life. Whenever she could stand up to hold her own (formerly against her parents or her disloyal boyfriends, now against her suppressive husband), whenever she could take the chance to make things happen in her favour, “she has no power for it”. During intense confrontations with

oppressing forces when the will of another person is forced on her, she goes momentarily unconscious and feels “like she was gone”. This can extend to her not experiencing any physical pain. Her body doesn’t seem to be there to receive the pain, so truly “she can’t feel anything”. She can for example pick eggs out of boiling water.

The obvious question was: How was this pattern formed? What sort of experience had impressed this on her mind?

She was asked to recall incidents associated with these negative program phrases. Eventually she ventured to say something which so far she had kept back out of fear I might consider her mad: that she, during the more severe whippings by her mother, had left her body and, as a spirit (or a soul, if you like), had looked upon her own punishment from above.

From her own viewpoint, given her upbringing in the Indio culture of the Andes mountains, this was not remarkable at all. People leave their bodies at times, that’s nothing to be worried about, except when they don’t find their way back, in which case there are rituals to call them.

That she did not receive any comment or criticism on this from me encouraged her further, and eventually brought the resolution of this case. She confided that since childhood she had repeatedly seen a horror video clip on her mind’s “television screen”, of how her grandmother sat locked up in her kitchen with some other women whilst her son was taken away to be executed. This my client knew as a fact. A band of Sendero Luminoso terrorists had raided her grandmother’s village in the 1980s. At that time my client was 7 years old. She hadn’t been told the story directly, rather she had picked it up from the whisperings and rumours when visiting there. She only knew about the fact of the execution but no further details. Those details however, details she couldn’t possibly know, kept appearing on her mind’s screen, over and over again, for all her life. When she attempted to ask questions about this she was called mad – by her grandmother, her parents, her husband, also recently by two psychotherapists. Thus she was driven into isolation and despair – she was up against her mind with no assistance.

After some hours of work she arrived at a complete description of her uncle’s execution (he is the son of her grandmother and the brother of her mother). She saw the memory images and felt the pains and emotions originally recorded by grandmother and uncle. These data had entered her mind though what might be called “telepathic downloading”.

This way the source of her negative program phrases was finally detected. One source was her grandmother. Locked up in the kitchen, knowing that her son was about to get shot, she fought like a lioness to get out. With her fingernails she clawed at the wood of the door until her fingers were bleeding with splinters, yet “she had no power for it”, and broke down in despair. My client felt the pain in her own fingers during the session.

At the same moment her son sat on the nearby football field on one chair in a row of seven or eight chairs. The chairs had been taken from the adjacent school house. On each chair a man was tied, behind him stood his executioner. Villagers watched and were kept at a distance by armed terrorists. The terrorist leader gave a speech to the effect that an example had to be set by this execution. Then the men were killed by a shot in the neck. My client’s uncle, being considered the leader, was spared till last, and was given special treatment. A hand grenade was put in his hand, the trigger was pulled by the executioner, the hand grenade went off. Where before there had been a body on a chair there was suddenly nothing.

The uncle had managed to keep his calm until this last moment. As a spirit he had already left his body and watched the scene from further up. Yet after his body had disappeared he went into a state of shock. "I'm gone", he realized, "I can't feel anything". No body, no feeling.

So it appears that the phrase "I have no power for it" was coined by grandmother in a moment of despair, the two phrases "I'm gone" and "I can't feel anything" were the thoughts of my client's uncle at the moment of his violent death. All three phrases were telepathically downloaded by my client, probably due to her intense affinity with her grandmother. The traumatic experience of those two persons, her relatives, determined her life, making her unable to run her life according to her own will.

The total session time was 25 hours, completed over five days. At the end of those 25 hours my client felt that she had come to terms with her past. She felt capable to face the present with all its unresolved problems, and began making realistic plans for her future. (The factual correctness of my client's recall was confirmed after the session through an intense phone conversation with her grandmother.)

So what does this story have to do with the subject of consciousness, you may wonder? Well, the problem of my client was essentially a lack of consciousness. She was not conscious of the images stored in her mind. Therefore these images could act on her "from behind" as it were, they could influence her cognitively, emotionally and somatically. All that was needed, in effect, was to assist her in becoming conscious of her mental images.

The lesson to be learned here is this: people absorb other people's trauma and repeat them in their own behaviour. By telepathic contamination traumatic material can be passed on indefinitely into the future. There is plenty of session evidence for this. Clouds of generation-old traumatic material appear to be circulating, engulfing this globe, putting human societies and cultures into the shape they keep being in throughout the millennia. In this way repetition of traumatic material is enforced on all levels of society.

As this informational energy field appears to be "shape-giving" it would rightfully deserve the name "morphogenetic". Carl Gustav Jung rather intuitively termed it the "collective unconscious". Quite a fitting term, because unconscious it is indeed! If this collective unconscious was made conscious, if it was turned into collective *consciousness*, its power would be defused. Because once one has become fully conscious of something it can no longer cause harm. Peace could reign on Earth! No further repetitive enforcement through suppressed trauma which lie concealed in the deeper recesses of the collective mind! No individual or group dramatizations of ancient traumatic material! No bad politics, insane decisions, global violence. No point watching the evening news any more. Peace on Earth.

In brief, the conclusion I have to draw after 25 years of transpersonal psychotherapy is this: People suffer from suppressed and therefore uninspected memory images of traumatic incidents. Those images may be based on their own experiences or on those of others, it works either way. Once foreign stuff has been telepathically downloaded people will suffer from it just as much as from their own. They will suffer cognitively, emotionally and psychosomatically. This can be proven case by case.

Let us now turn to a discussion of consciousness outside the realm of psychotherapy. Let us look at it in terms of ability, as the ability to become aware of something. For consciousness, in my understanding of the term, is another word for awareness.

Awareness depends on the amount of attention one is putting out. Through putting attention on our environment we become aware of it. Attention is the basis of perception, psychologically speaking.

Words with the ending “-ness” refer to states, to physical, emotional or mental states, like for example fitness, sadness or faithfulness. Consciousness is also such a state. It is experienced in degrees on a sliding scale between “a lot of” and “very little of”. There are degrees of consciousness, such as there are degrees of fitness, sadness or friendliness.

Now if there is anything to prove that we can be a lot more conscious than we ever considered, that things can happen “beyond the brain”, it is the Remote Viewing research of the 1980s headed by the physics professor Dr. Harold Puthoff and the psychic Ingo Swann. Sponsored by the CIA it served to spy out Soviet military basis through means of telepathy. The correctness of the findings was confirmed after the end of the Cold War. <1>. Puthoff discovered most astonishingly, that a great number of people are capable of performing such feats. It appears that here lies hidden a vast untapped ability that may deserve to be developed.

But doesn't science prove that consciousness emerges from the brain as a product of neuron activity? Certainly, it is possible to construe such a position -- but does this truly account for the whole breadth of experience connected with consciousness? Also, recent neurological studies on the “plasticity” of the brain indicate that the brain *expresses* rather than “produces” consciousness. It has been found that the degree of development of certain brain regions corresponds directly with the way a person leads his or her life. To give an example: London taxi drivers with 30 years on the job have higher developed orientation areas in their brains than new taxi drivers. Couch potatoes have degenerated brain areas which with mentally active people, are in full bloom <2>.

The neurologist and psychotherapist Professor Les Lancaster of John Moore University, Liverpool, states rather thunderously: “There is no basis in current neuroscience for explaining how the macro properties, namely those of consciousness, arise from the known properties of neurons.” <3>

Let us now turn to some less trivial examples than those of London taxi drivers. A few months ago the news went around the world of an 80-year old yogi who had shown up at a hospital in India reporting that he hadn't eaten anything for the last 65 years. The case was investigated and found to be creditable. He claimed to use a certain yoga technique to survive. This technique can be found described in yoga books. The man was conscious of certain psychophysical mechanisms and had them within his mental control. So how is that for the application of certain rules, tenets and premises to a given situation, how is that for predicting a result on the basis of a given theory – isn't that scientific thinking in the truest sense? A science of consciousness indeed.

Or take the research on the Indian yogi Sai Baba by Professor Erlendur Haraldsson of the University of Iceland <4>. Sai Baba is known to produce unlimited quantities of “holy ashes” which flow from his sleeve, he also can produce objects like wrist watches and gold statues from thin air. Despite all the controversy around this man Haraldsson went to see him, studied the

matter, and concluded that he was not a fake. The wrist watches and gold statues were genuinely produced by Sai Baba out of nothing.

So here is yet another application of a science of consciousness. This man is conscious of certain mechanisms governing matter, and can control them mentally to good result. It appears that physics, understood as a science of consciousness, could be described as an understanding of matter "as seen from the inside". Which of course is different than looking at matter from the outside, by means of electronic microscopes, spectroscopes and particle accelerators, as is done traditionally.

Much as these yogic feats may appear superhuman, each of us can do them, at least to a degree. Imagine a diamond – good. So there is a manifestation out of thin air, you have created it yourself, didn't you? Now squeeze, condense it, make it appear more solid – good. At this point any half ways gifted psychic would be able to actually see the diamond you have created out of "mind stuff", and describe it to you. Which would give irrefutable proof to the existence of your mental diamond, and also conveniently demonstrate an act of telepathy.

But: does this diamond appear on the table in front of you? No? Well, you probably didn't squeeze hard enough. It didn't get real solid. That's the difference between you and people like Sai Baba. A mere matter of consciousness training.

Coming to the close of this paper we should ask: a science of consciousness, what would that be? How would it have to be designed? Most importantly it would set out to study man as a spirit, not as a body or a brain. It would do so with the full array of scientific positivism, such as double-bind experiments, operational definitions, repeatable experiments and a minimum of constructs. It would accept and reject hypothesis, build theories, find laws, rules and axioms. However, in contrast to the experimental designs currently used it would study the phenomena of consciousness explicitly from the vantage point of "mind over matter". Because the paradigm that man be a piece of matter is not by any means built into our scientific methodology. The reverse paradigm is just as likely to be gleaned from it. It is a question of intention or perhaps vision. "Whither do I research?", that is what it starts out with. Do I go for "mind over matter" or "matter over mind"? A methodology will always yield what it was designed for according to the investigator's intention.

Now imagine all of science and philosophy to engage in a coherent effort to understand the world through consciousness alone. The effects on culture and society would be stupendous. No further need to kill and dissect in the name of science, to smash, break up, atomize. Nuclear warfare, genetic manipulation technology, landing man on Mars would be off the agenda. Psychology would concentrate in spiritual self-realization rather than therapy. The necessity for organised religion would disappear. Medicine would engage in healing rather than cutting up with knives, burning out with lasers or dissolving through chemical treatment. Astronomy would explore the cosmos by means of deep meditation and telepathic intercourse rather than by space missiles. Physics would concentrate on levitation as a means of transport rather than invent the next-generation Jumbo Jet. And most importantly, the fear of death would disappear and we could die with a smile, knowing that death is not the end.

The prerequisite, though, would be personal spiritual development, awareness development, consciousness development. This is because our ethics cannot be greater than our compassion. Compassion again depends on conscious awareness. What we are not aware of, that we cannot

love. And what we do not love, and perhaps not even see as existing, we can destroy with ease. Yet the moment we are fully conscious of a person, beast or plant, the moment we have tuned in to his, her, or its aliveness, the moment we, with compassion, comprehend that creature's right to exist, we have attained the state of love. And what we love we cannot kill, mutilate or degrade.

We are here to create a better world. Let us start the project with researching man as a spirit, expand his consciousness and increase his capacity for compassion and love. Let us raise collective consciousness, and our own, from the level of us being meatballs to the understanding of us being children of the infinite. And let us sink that thought into the scientific community.

<1> H. E. Puthoff, *puthoff@aol.com*, "CIA-Initiated Remote Viewing at Stanford Research Institute"/in: *The Intelligencer / Journal of U.S. Intelligence Studies / Volume 112, Number 1 / 2001*. – Also see some Interviews with Puthoff on YouTube.

<2> Lecture by Prof. Dr. Hans Markowitsch at the Lindauer Psychotherapiewochen, Lindau, Germany, April 2010.

<3> Brian L. Lancaster, "Approaches to Consciousness", 2004, p. 32.

<4> Lecture given by Professor Erlendur Haraldsson at a conference of the Transpersonal Section of the British Psychological Society at Cober Hill, Scarborough, in 2004 >.