

TOWARD THE CONCEPT OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS FIELD SOME REFLECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

After describing some basic concepts of this theme, such as consciousness, brain, mind and physical field, it is conjectured with some arguments: a) the existence of a consciousness field, which could be a characteristic of each human being, and b) the possibility of integrating all of the individual fields into a more complex and influential consciousness field.

According to the researchers cited on the paper, all the structure of matter, energy and information in our body, from the very beginning of the life, enfolds the universe in some way.

The basic conjecture is that the matter, energy and information from the universe activates the brain and nervous systems which in turn produce and overall experience in which memory, logic, sentiments, awareness, perception, cognition, and perhaps more processes, are combined in to a whole system of consciousness.

In this work some ideas related with the cognitive consciousness and the necessary field associated with this attribute of the human being are exposed

Finally, the potentiality of this unique field is suggested to help solving some individual and social problems to cooperate to the human evolution.

Keywords: field, cognitive consciousness, human evolution, enfolds.

INTRODUCTION

A lot has been discussed about the human being integrity and the discussions are generally centered in two very debatable questions: is human being only a handful of completely harmonized organs, and coordinated by one of them, to be developed in a world whose environmental conditions favor his existence?, or, is something more inside that system of organs, that although it is not detected by senses and/or scientific instruments, constitutes the individual's true essence?.

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A lot of people perceive that the individual exists as biological entity and, at the same time, it exists as conscious entity. The first one is known as body (external existence), and the second as psyche or being with consciousness (interior existence).

Since long time ago, consciousness has wakened up great interest among the most outstanding thinkers of all time and all over the world, so much in the religious field as, also, in the scientific field. It is in this last field that several researchers have been carried out investigations trying to elucidate many of the questions that many people have formulated about this important issue that affects all mankind.

Questions such as, what is consciousness?, which is its nature?, where is it located?, how is it acquired or is it developed?, how does it work?, how does it link with other consciousness?, does the field of consciousness exist?, does an universal conscience exist?, etc. Logical answers have been offered to these and other questions by philosophers, psychologists, biologists and studious people of this matter, but none of those answers are completely conclusive. Also, some theories have been elaborated on this topic but without arriving yet at a unique theory that offers satisfactory responds.

It seems to be that there are energy fields in the physical and non physical universe that continually are interacting with all real entities that are of the same nature that those fields. Indeed, the field idea arises to facilitate the description, in physical terms, of the influence that one or more bodies exercise on the space that surrounds them.

This way, it is had that "The physical notion of *field* is corresponded with a space endowed with measurable properties. In case it is to be a *field of forces* this has to be a region of space where effects of forces at distance are felt " (Solo Ciencia, 2008).

This definition leads to the idea that any physical field is an energy field and, going ahead, this idea can be transported toward other energy manifestations that don't correspond to commonly perceived as physical energy and, for further clarity, such a definition can be modified by saying that it is a field of influences or the space where influences to distance are felt.

CONSCIOUSNESS

Nobody still knows what consciousness is, what one knows with certainty is that in some part of the human being's interiority, in the interior, in the most intimate site, in their own intimacy, it exists a vigorous world of sensations, emotions, desires, ideas, thoughts, beliefs, intentions, etc, all of which is related to consciousness. Consciousness is studied in almost each discipline as Philosophy, Religion, Metaphysics, Psychology, Psychiatry, Health, among the most fundamental ones.

Consciousness is a term that, up to now, has not been established with enough clarity by scientists and specialists of this matter since its actual nature is still ignored. Thus, a unique definition is not available yet and, consequently, a general theory cannot be formalized.

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Actually two words are employed when treating with this theme in the English language: consciousness and conscience. In the Spanish speaking world, this concept is named conciencia and in very rather rare times consciencia. The most of this writing is referred to consciousness.

To be more clear, it can be distinguished two stances for consciousness: moral and cognitive, which are named conscience and consciousness respectively in the English language and conciencia in the Spanish language for both stances.

Concepts for consciousness

Several definitions or versions for consciousness have been proposed for different cases or situations and so, there are definitions given by dictionaries, encyclopedias, books and articles and, in general, versions given by philosophers, psychologists, theologians and studious people of this topic. Some concepts of consciousness are given below:

The Diccionario de la Real Academia Española (Encarta, 2005) establishes that: "1. consciousness is a property of human spirit of being recognized in its essential attributes and in all of the modifications that experiences in itself. 2. interior knowledge of good and evil. 3. reflexive knowledge of things. 4. mental activity which is only accessible by the own subject".

The WordWeb dictionary (2008) says for **conscience ("sense of right and wrong")**: "1. motivation deriving logically from ethical or moral principles that govern a person's thoughts and actions. 2. Conformity to one's sense of right conduct. 3. A feeling of shame when you do something immoral". And for **consciousness ("awareness")** it says: "1. An alert cognitive state in which you are aware of yourself and your situation. 2. Having knowledge of"

The Wikipedia free encyclopedia (April, 2008) treats consciousness in three environments:

- In the psychiatric environment: "consciousness, understanding, interior world, constitute a group of functions of the brain that are associated with concepts such as cognition, mind, psyche, perception, reasoning, intelligence, learning, creativity and many other cognitive processes. It is the immediate knowledge that each one possesses of its existence, its acts and the external world."
- In the psychological environment, "consciousness is understood as the present schematization of the reality both internal and external to individual, and some appraisements associated with the constituent elements of that reality." "It is the immediate knowledge that each one possesses of their existence, its acts and the external world"
- "In philosophical environment, consciousness is the ability to decide and become a subject, i.e., actor of their acts and responsible for the consequences that come from them, according to the perception of right and evil"

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There are two extreme stances about consciousness, a monist one with two versions: materialist in which it says that consciousness is matter, what means that body and consciousness are all matter, and the second monist version, where it is considered consciousness as an implicated order beyond the matter and energy which is manifested in human beings. Another stance is the dualist in which consciousness and body are formed by substances of different characteristic, so that they behave in a different way.

Another way of visualizing consciousness is suggested by two groups of philosophers, cited in Blue González (2005), one group denies the intentionality of consciousness and the other one accepts such an intentionality as an innate property.

The first group conceptualizes consciousness as an object with real, independent and individual existence, formed by a substance different to which all other objects are formed. It behaves as a holder that is “filled with external impressions that, when associating, give place to perceptions, sensations, thoughts, images, emotions, memories, ideas and desires, which constitute the base of all knowledge” Blue González (2005), and it doesn't possess any intentional address. Under this optics, consciousness is known as nervous currents in the brain; therefore, it is purely a materialistic and monistic entity. So, due to these reasons, consciousness is defined as a property of the matter, the brain in this case, considering this conception what distinguishes man from animal which being mainly instinctive lacks consciousness.

The second group conceives consciousness as a non material substance, contrary to the body, for that reason “the cognoscente (the being who knows or who is conscious) is contemplated as the holder of the ideas or sensations” Blue González (2005), and its innate characteristic is the intentionality, considering this last concept as an intentional psychic act, i.e., it always refers to something different as something is thought, something is felt, something is wanted, something is loved, something is hated, etc.

Within the monistic-materialistic postures it might be considered David Bohm's proposal (1980. P. 249), in their theory of the implicated order: “Consciousness (which we take to include thought, feeling, desire, will, etc) is to be comprehended in terms of the implicate order, along with reality as a whole. That is to say, we are suggesting that implicate order applies both to matter (living and non living) and consciousness, and that it can, therefore, make possible an understanding of the general relationship of these two, from which we may be able to come to some notion of a common ground to both.....”

However, the understanding of the relationship between matter and consciousness is very difficult due to the great difference of detected qualities by human experience, v.g. “Descartes described matter as an *extended substance* and consciousness a *thinking substance* and relationship between the order of these two substances was too difficult that he proposed the idea that such relationship is made possible only by God” (Bohm, 1980. p 250)

In the English speaking world, it is considered consciousness has different constituents, what gives place to **phenomenal consciousness** which is subjective experience and **access consciousness**, which refers to the availability of information to processing systems in the brain, (Wikipedia free encyclopedia April, 2008). The first one as subjective experience

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and the second as global control of the spoken or written manifestations; phenomenal consciousness is being something and access consciousness is being conscious of something. Almost all of specialists in the matter coincide in recognizing self consciousness as the consciousness of having consciousness.

Consciousness in metaphysics

In the metaphysical circles it is said that "the man's consciousness is composed by everything he knows, what has been in contact with through the acquired experiences during its life time and under three aspects of the same consciousness: sub consciousness, where all the experiences of the past are obtained and which lie deeply buried influencing their inside nature; consciousness that embrace present experiences and super-consciousness, or superior development, whose acquisition man is fighting for." (la conciencia, 2008-06-23)

Other aspects for consciousness

Another vision of consciousness is given by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, (2004) when playing with conscious and consciousness to give place to creature consciousness and state consciousness.

Consciousness creature includes three important concepts: "**Sentience**. It may be conscious in the generic sense of simply being a *sentient* creature, one capable of sensing and responding to its world (Armstrong 1981)"..... **Wakefulness**. One might further require that the organism actually be exercising such a capacity rather than merely having the ability or disposition to do so. Thus one might count it as conscious only if it were **awake and normally alert**. In that sense organisms would not count as conscious when asleep or in any of the deeper levels of coma.... **Self-consciousness**. A third and yet more demanding sense might define conscious creatures as those that are not only aware but also aware that they are aware, thus treating creature consciousness as a form of *self-consciousness* (Carruthers 2000)".

State consciousness includes four important concepts: "**States one is aware of**. On one common reading, a conscious mental state is simply a mental state one is aware of being in (Rosenthal 1986, 1996). Conscious states in this sense involve a form of *meta-mentality* or *meta-intentionality* in so far as they require mental states that are themselves about mental states.... **Qualitative states**. States might also be regarded as conscious in a seemingly quite different and more *qualitative* sense. That is, one might count a state as conscious just if it has or involves qualitative or experiential properties of the sort often referred to as "qualia" or "raw sensory feels".... **Phenomenal states**...The phenomenal structure of consciousness also encompasses much of the spatial, temporal and conceptual organization of our experience of the world and of ourselves as agents in it.... **Access consciousness**. States might be conscious in a seemingly quite different access sense, which has more to do with intra-mental relations. In this respect, a state's being conscious is a matter of its availability to interact with other states and of the access that one has to its content".

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Postulates of consciousness

In the early years of the twenty century, a group of philosophers, under the philosophical current called **Phenomenology**, they established a series of postulates to formulate models in carrying out studies about consciousness. Diaz J.L. (2007). These postulates are temporal, activity, unit, intentionality, quality, subjectivity and ownership.

Temporal: Consciousness is temporal, i.e., it is unwrapped along the time. This phenomenon is known as stream of consciousness, a revolutionary metaphor which changed the notion of consciousness from being a substance into an informative and cognitive process. Diaz J.L. (2007)

Activity: Consciousness is active in the sense that its states and contents are changing, i.e. they have an own dynamics according to which they arise, develop and vanish." Also, "the conscious activity has a direction, a goal or objective which is the realization of life through specific channels in agreement with circumstances". Diaz J.L. (2007).

Unit: Consciousness is always referred to a total situation of experience, i.e., it behaves a unitary set. Since a functional standpoint the experience should be considered as a constant coordination instead of a concatenation of disperse elements.

Intentionality: The Intentionality characteristic is referred to that the contents of consciousness are always about something. Consciousness would be, as a metaphor, "the brightness of mental space in which objects and events elapse, that's to say, particular sensations, thoughts, images, wishes". Diaz J.L. (2007).

Qualia (Quality): Some philosophers of the mind have called *qualia* to the quality of each sensation either be visual, or auditive, or smell, etc., since each of them is different and each object of the experience is endowed with diverse intrinsic qualities.

Subjectivity: This term is really the crucial point for the definition, since admitting the character subjective, consciousness could not be approached from a scientific viewpoint. In this sense, consciousness studies have been based on first person's stories.

Levels of consciousness

In *La conciencia viviente*, Diaz J.L. (2007), it is treated the four levels of consciousness proposed by many researches: 1) dream, 2) wakefulness, 3) self-consciousness and (4) ecstasy. The last two levels are the most characteristic for human being, something can be said about them:

Self-consciousness consists on the capacity of unfolding of consciousness in such a way that it can attend to the contents consciousness. The controlled attention and the introspection are the mechanisms that define it and the capacity has been called reflection, self-consciousness or interior vision indistinctly" Diaz J.L. (2007)

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"Such a capacity..... constitutes the possibility to be aware that we are aware of observing the mechanisms of the own mind.....The reflection state by means of which consciousness is able to observe its own contents is based on the voluntary attention and the introspection process." Diaz J.L. (2007).

The **ecstasy** known as ecstasy states, ecstatic states, mystic experiences, altered states of consciousness, they include episodes of exaggerated alert, infinity, ineffable ecstasy, cosmic unit or depersonalization, fundamental understandings, immense enjoyment, modifications in perception, corporal outline and breakup of the notion of the I" Diaz J.L. (2007).

"The contact experience is underlined with a transcendent reality to the individual like one of the central characteristics of the ecstasy, the one which, in accordance with its cultural environment, it can take diverse manifestations. The contact is by definition, noetic and gnostic, it is worth to say, it provides knowledge, and the individual acquires a new and transcendental know to experience or live a wider and truer reality directly that the normal and familiar." Diaz J.L. (2007).

Functions of consciousness

Several functions are attributed to consciousness, the most remarkable of them is that of giving sense to the existence, sense in the meaning of direction, and coherence. Another function has to do with the capacity to establish and select goals by means of selecting various rules of motivation.

The cognitive functions are: planning of the design of behavior outlines; execution of plans (classification and evaluation of priorities according to circumstances); direction of the attention and recovery of memories.

A highly interesting function attributed to consciousness is the one of knowing, this is, to have experience or be aware of knowing something after having lived it. Thus, this quality is to fix the experience in terms of information and quality, or also, to deepen the events into experiences.

Another of the functions that are endowed to consciousness is update the long term memory. "In this sense, it can be said that a prospective function not only exists aiming to the future and another noetic one in the present, but a more, retrospective poured to the past, maybe with the same importance" Diaz J.L. (2007).

In the same way, it has been arising the idea that the communication of the social behavior can be considered to be one of the important functions of consciousness. "This way their function would be to enable individuals to provide to others, and receive from them information on the mental states." Diaz J.L. (2007)

Finally, Up to date many aspects about consciousness have been considered through philosophical currents, disciplinary groups and independent thinkers, all them contributing to a bigger clarification of consciousness, and especially of human consciousness.

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Theories of consciousness

In order to achieve a good definition that satisfies the different approaches for consciousness given previously, it is necessary to establish an integral theory. Many researches from all over the world, especially from oriental cultures, have been devoted to this task for long time, having achieved good advancements.

The Stanford encyclopedia (august, 2004) classifies consciousness theories into three big groups: metaphysical theories, physicalist theories and specific theories. Table 1 is to show such a classification and a brief description of each theory, whose content is adjusted from the mentioned encyclopedia.

BODY, MIND, CONSCIOUSNESS, SPIRIT

Brain, mind, and spirit are, without any doubts, the most important members of the human being. The brain as part of the body is of material nature, while mind, consciousness and spirit are of non material nature; however, the mind has already been naturalized in the material world by researchers of this theme, in such a way that the four elements can be contemplated forming two groups, one material and the other one, non material.

In any case, regarding these four elements, the most important thing is the way they are related, the functions each one of them carries out and the interaction mechanisms. This knowledge is not easy for science given the character no-material of three of the four elements, so it must elaborate a hypothesis or conjecture, more or less credible, in order to elucidate with certain veracity, the *raison d'être* of the four elements.

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Table 1. Theories of Consciousness

THEORY	SUB- THEORY	DESCRIPTION
Metaphysical	Dualistic	Some aspects of consciousness as falling outside of the realm of the physics
	Substance dualism	Asserts the existence of both physical and non physical substances. Such theories entail the existence of non physical minds or selves as entities in which consciousness inheres.
	Dualism of property	All such theories assert the existence of consciousness properties that are neither identical with nor reducible to physical properties.
Physicalist	Eliminativist	Deny the existence of consciousness or at least the existence of some of its commonly accepted sorts or features.
	Identity	Offers another strongly reductive option by identifying conscious mental properties,.
Specific	High order	These theories analyze the notion of a conscious mental state in terms of reflexive meta-mental self-awareness
	Representationalist	In these theories conscious mental states have no mental properties other than their representational properties.
	Cognitive	Its name reflects the fact that at any given moment content fixations of many sorts are occurring throughout the brain.
	Neurals	Neural theories of consciousness come in many forms, though most in some way concern the so called neural correlates of consciousness.
	Quantics Theories	According to such theories, the nature and basis of consciousness can not be adequately understood within the framework of classical physics but must be sought within the alternative picture of physical reality provided by quantum mechanics.

Source: Adapted from Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Consulting a Spanish dictionary (Encarta, 2005), the next definitions are given:

Brain: the brain is the supervisor center of the nervous system. It controls, regulates and coordinates behavior and the homeostasis

Mind: entity or substance different than the body that is supposed cause of the cognitive processes of the individual. It also said it is the intellectual power of the soul, intelligence, thought, and purpose. It is the energy that makes possible the unity of the being.

Consciousness: knowledge that man has of himself and his environment. It is the power to decide according to the perception of good and evil.

Spirit: immaterial being endowed with reason. Rational soul. Natural force and virtue that encourages and fortifies the body to work.

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Within the world of systems (Ordúñez and Badillo), it is well known there are no isolated or closed systems in the universe, namely, the universe is a **continuous whole** and that, to some extent, everything is related to everything. Thus, the human being is always influenced, to some extent, by everything that surrounds it, and in turn, influences their environment, also, to some extent.

Having like base the theory of the duality in the human beings, in which the individual is constituted in an everything with two elements each one with his own nature, to be external and to be interior, but forming a single individual, a single unit, a single entity: one is because the other one is it and vice versa, you can surmise the existence of two real fields of mutual influence (environments), one that corresponds to the external being and the other characteristic of the interior being, fig 1.

Based on the theory of duality in human beings, in which the individual is constituted in a two elements whole, each element with its own nature, outside being and inside being, but forming a single individual, a single unit, a single entity: one is because the other is and vice versa, one can surmise the existence of two real fields of mutual influence (environments), one that corresponds to outside being and the other characteristic of the interior being (self), fig 1.

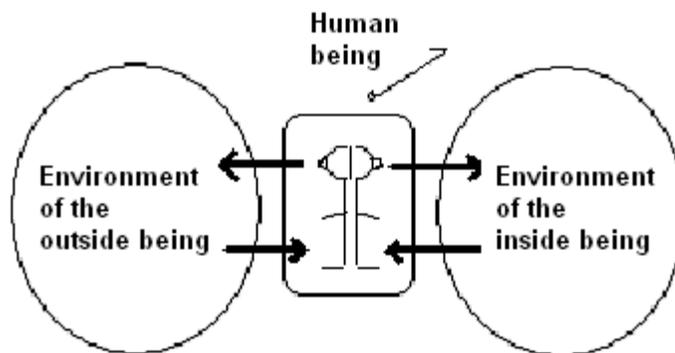


Fig 1. The two aspects of the human being and their environment

For their development, the human being takes information from its external environment (material world), then interprets it and makes it useful to understanding the surrounding world and after some cleansing; such information is now useful in understanding and participating in the internal environment.

To carry out this process, the human being's brain through corporal senses captures all kind of information; the mind receives such information and post-processing it is sent to the conscience for its interpretation and determination of actions to be carried out, therefore, under this perspective, mind is coprocessor for consciousness.

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As noted above, for many scholars mind is now within the mundane nature and, therefore, they claim that it can be studied by scientific methods, even though it remains a mystery what really is and how it relates with the rest of nature. Some thinkers believe that mind and conscience are a single entity; others suggest that mind and brain are composed of the same substance and therefore constitute a single unit.

COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

It is well known that if several individual consciousness unite, emerges another consciousness, collective consciousness, which is larger than the sum of the involved individual consciences, that is, it is created a system in which all consciousness are related to each other and individually with the collective consciousness.

This leads to certain statements: a) the field of collective consciousness includes all individual fields, b) the field of collective consciousness is a more powerful field than any of the individual fields c) the existence of mutual influences between consciences d) Any new consciousness, by its nature, joins the collective consciousness.

CONCLUSIONS

Each time takes more importance about the knowledge of consciousness and all that inner world which is part of the existence of every individual, that is, every day there is more certainty that the most interesting part of the individual is their internal world, since this world defines its behaviour with all other beings, which is responsible for all their feelings and that is the origin of the attitude that it takes for all circumstances of life .

This important concept that concerns every human being made its formal presence in the world for many centuries ago among the Greek philosophers, but given its intangible nature and little objective was soon relegated by scientists at a second plane, although this did not happen in other areas as the philosophical-religious. From the last decades of the twentieth century, this important issue has taken great strength among researchers.

Although consciousness, power of the human spirit, can not be totally defined, it is clear that man's transcendent feelings are originated there, which places man above all living entities on the planet. As a corollary there are many acts, as they do for the first time, which necessarily requires presence of consciousness .

What happens in that world of consciousness, which is a field as any other one defined by Physics and in which corporal senses can not act and entropy does not exist, it that consciousness do not disappear in any time and, in turn, it has to be stored along with other consciousness fields .

The important thing is that this "store", behind the physical reality, it is permanently being enriched, in such a way, that is an enormous treasure that could be used for the benefit of mankind in the process of overcoming the miseries in which it is submerged.

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