

CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT DIALOGUE

SEARLE'S MASTER INSIGHT AND THE NON-DUAL SOLUTION OF THE SIXTH PATRIARCH: SORTING THROUGH SOME PROBLEMS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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ABSTRACT: *The Platform Sutra, which dates back to the seventh century C.E., is one of the classic documents of Chinese philosophy and is the intellectual autobiography of Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of Ch'an Buddhism. In the Platform Sutra, the Sixth Patriarch demonstrates that the spiritual and intellectual problems of consciousness stem from a false adherence to the dualistic standpoint. The Sixth Patriarch utilizes ingenious arguments to demonstrate how one can escape the problems of dualism. An example of a constructive engagement between Chinese philosophy and Searle is to compare and contrast the arguments of Hui Neng with those of Searle. The Sixth Patriarch and Searle both reach a rather similar solution to the problem of dualism—to stop counting. In the case of the Sixth Patriarch, his solution possesses the goal of enabling the reader to achieve a spiritual liberation. Searle, in contrast, addresses the troubling epistemological problems of dualism. Searle proposes a causal monism: he claims consciousness is a state of the brain, that it is caused by processes in the brain, that it is a feature of the brain, and that it is all these at the same time. This article aims to highlight Searle's arguments and impressive insights; it also aims to show the connection between Searle's master insight concerning the non-duality of consciousness and the Sixth Patriarch's realization that the difficulties of understanding consciousness stem from the formulation of the description itself.*

Keywords: *The Sixth Patriarch; Searle; casual monism; property dualism; irreducibility of consciousness; conceptual reductionism; qualia; emergence; the Platform Sutra, Hui Neng*

In my original paper, I quoted an illustrative passage from Searle's works which suggests a very constructive engagement with the Chinese philosophy elaborated by the Sixth Patriarch in the *Platform Sutra*. Searle's passage is as follows:

Once you see the incoherence of dualism, you can also see that monism and pluralism are

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just as mistaken. Dualists asked: “How many things and properties are there?” and counted up to two. Monists, confronting the same question, got as far as one. But the real mistake was to start counting at all. (Searle 1992, 26)

Here, Searle is stating his opposition to dualism (and monism) and expounding an insight into the very reason why dualism is the source of numerous philosophical problems. To start to count—that is, to start to divide into ‘discrete entities’—is what Searle terms, the real mistake. This particular insight is very close if not identical to the insight offered by the Sixth Patriarch: The very act of counting is the source of the problem. This great insight of Searle’s, I shall call his ‘Master Insight’. The act of not-counting, is precisely the position of non-dualism. The position of non-dualism is the position of the Sixth Patriarch.

In the *Platform Sutra*, the Sixth Patriarch’s critique of dualism is revealed in the poem of the young to be Sixth Patriarch, which itself is a critique of the poem of the senior monk, the heir apparent to the Fifth Patriarch’s seat of authority. When the monks/spiritual philosophers are asked to compose a poem that signifies their understanding of enlightenment, the senior monk writes (Hui Neng 1930, Chapter 1):

Our body is the Bodhi-tree,
And our mind/ A mirror bright.
Carefully we wipe them hour by hour,
And let no dust alight.

In contrast, the young Hui Neng has a different interpretation which reveals to his, Master, the Fifth Patriarch, Hui Neng’s understanding of non-dualism. It is because of this understanding that the Master appoints him his successor, for Hui Neng pens the following stanza (*ibid.*):

There is no Bodhi-tree,
Nor stand of mirror bright.
Since all is void,
Where can the dust alight?

This stanza of Hui Neng’s states the position of non-dualism. There is neither object (mirror) nor subject (dust=qualia). It is the division into two that is the source of the problem. Although Hui Neng is primarily interested in the ethical goal of teaching his audience how to realize enlightenment by losing the ego and Searle is primarily interested in solving a vexing epistemological problem, the solutions posed are the same. One is reminded of the same sort of parallel between Hume’s eighteenth-century argument against the existence of a mind and the Buddhist argument against the existence of a mind.

What remains for us to do, because this is a response to Searle’s reply to my original essay, is to illustrate how this position of Searle’s would indeed solve some of the vexing epistemological problems that his analysis brings in its wake. In a way, Searle’s continuous analysis of the brain-consciousness problem reflects the gamut of

issues that are perplexing when one chooses to remain outside of the non-dualistic perspective. It is the very act of counting, as Searle rightly says, that is the source of the problem.

With regard to Searle's reply to my initial essay, I pose a few questions. Searle attributes the view of Cartesian assumptions and categories to me. I am not aware how he derived this attribution. My purpose was to examine his thought system respectfully, not to elucidate my own. All I was alleging was as Searle states in his reply: "... I [Searle] say that brain processes cause conscious states ..." (Searle 2008a, 168). *This very view of Searle's* appears to be a case of Cartesian dualism despite his later explanations of causality that would lead one to consider that he does not have causal dualism in mind. Under no circumstances was I presenting a view that the brain causes consciousness, but rather was offering an exegesis of Searle's own position as he describes it in his own words.

Searle states that my paper: "... contains very serious misunderstandings of [his] views". (Searle 2008a, 168) In order to dispose of these misunderstandings, I have found it necessary to explain that these "misunderstandings" are the result of what I have defined as the problems that are the logical implications of what I shall define as Searle's 'causal monism'. I believe that instead of 'not counting', Searle has opted for monism rather than dualism. The putative paradoxes that result—such as Searle's assertion that I am attributing the views to him that when I think about my grandmother, she, that is, the image or thought of her, must be inside my brain, or that the brains of dead people must be conscious—are seemingly caused by the implications of *his* causal monism. The reason why I am attributing the thought to him that "would make grandmother [*sic*] into a sparkplug," is a result of the logical consequences of causal monism, not a misunderstanding of Searle's position. If consciousness is not a 'separate stuff', as Searle frequently states that it is not, then how do we ontologically differentiate between a brain state and a conscious thought? Do the neuron firings display an observable difference when we think of grandmother or sparkplug?

Searle states:

... one cannot point to a single synapse or neuron in the brain and say "This one is thinking about my grandmother". As far as we know anything about it, thoughts about grandmothers occur at a much higher level than that of the single neuron or synapse ... (Searle 2008b, 2)

There still seems to be a lack of any identifying marks to enable us to distinguish between higher level neuronal activities that are coded to thoughts of grandmothers and those that are coded to solutions to the mind-body problem.

To be perfectly clear, I do not hold that dead people must be conscious. It is not that I hold a position that my grandmother must be inside my brain. What I was seeking to point out with my comments was that these are the sort of paradoxes that result from Searle's causal monism, or, to put it in another way, his sophisticated brain-mind identity thesis. For example, the same neuron firings, that take place when

I think of my grandmother might take place when I think of a sparkplug. Thus, observable brain patterns do not enable us to differentiate between the content of thoughts; e.g., a grandmother or a sparkplug. These puzzles result from Searle's attempt to escape from dualism by replacing it with a form of causality that does not require the temporal priority of the cause or the separation of cause and effect. This solution seems to reflect monism, not non-dualism, and results in the complicated paradox I was outlining.

Searle states his position regarding objections to his solution to the mind-body problem with great succinctness in this passage:

But, at present, from the fact that we do not know *how* it occurs, [the relation between neuron firings and conscious states] it does not follow that we do not know *that* it occurs. Many people who object to my solution (or dissolution) of the mind-body problem, object on the grounds that we have no idea how neurobiological processes could cause consciousness. But that does not seem to me a conceptual or logical problem. That is an empirical/theoretical issue for the biological sciences. (*Ibid.*, 4)

I would argue that there are conceptual and logical problems here that empirical science cannot sort out. In my response to Searle's reply to my initial essay, I hope that what follows demonstrate that no amount of experimental testing can address these conceptual and logical problems.

In the interest of clarity, I have chosen to divide Searle's arguments against brain-consciousness dualism into different classifications. Searle himself does not do so. In what follows, I attempt to demonstrate that while on the one hand, Searle wants to hold that the brain (a word that normally connotes an observable physical organ) causes consciousness (a word that normally connotes a subjective experience), thus implying in ordinary language usage that there are two discrete realities. On the other hand he endeavors to utilize the concept of causation in a manner that veers into monism and creates the forms of paradoxes that non-dualism attempts to remove.

In this response to his reply, I intend to show the progression of his conceptual moves, herein referred to as conceptual progressions. Searle does not refer to them as such nor does he treat them as progressions. This structuring is of my own devising and is only offered in the interest of clarification. These progressions do not necessarily correspond to the narrative order found in Searle's writing, but rather they represent a logical classification of his methods of removing causal dualism from his account of causality. I wish to point out that the numbered order of Searle's variations on his primary claim that the brain causes consciousness is my own philosophical invention and does not necessarily follow Searle's own chronological order. Searle does not number or explicitly differentiate among his differing accounts of causality. The conceptual progressions overlap in some cases but nonetheless afford epistemological clarity by observing them in logical isolation from each other.

1. FEATURISM

Searle's first conceptual account of the concept of causality, we shall label, featurism. Featurism conflates the causal relationship between the brain and consciousness with consciousness as a feature of the brain: "Mental phenomena are caused by neurophysiological processes in the brain and are themselves features of the brain" (Searle 1992, 1).

Searle's exposition of featurism distinguishes between "a feature of the brain" and "a part of the brain" by referring to the existence of different levels of the brain. As he states at one point: "It is precisely because there are higher level *features* of systems that are not *parts* of the system that we need levelism in the first place. (Searle 1995, 217; emphasis his)

But, if the level of the brain that is consciousness is not part of the brain but its feature, then where is this level located? If it has a location, it is part of the brain. If it has no location, Searle could then be considered a Cartesian dualist.

Searle wants to opt for consciousness possessing a location specifically to avoid Cartesian dualism. He states that: "Consciousness is not a 'stuff,' it is a *feature* or *property* of the brain, in the sense, for example, that liquidity is a feature of water" (Searle 1992, 105). Just as liquidity is not a separate stuff from water; consciousness is not a separate stuff from brain. With the use of this example, Searle's first conceptual progression of causality into feature now slides into the second conceptual progression of causality, which is that of state. The problem presented with the concept of feature is that if feature has a location and is co-present, it cannot therefore, be an effect. If feature has no location, then we encounter dualism. Thus, we must turn to feature as state.

2. STATE

A state represents a changing condition. Searle uses the liquidity of water as an example of a state. Liquidity is one of water's three states. For Searle, then, when we say "water is a liquid" we are saying, "the brain is a consciousness." If liquidity is to water as the mind is to the brain, then Searle appears to be holding a mind-brain identity thesis *so long as the brain could change states as from solid (ice) to liquid and from liquid to a vapour (steam)*. Since the brain cannot change states in this sense, it is not clear how the mind could be a state of the brain. If the brain only has one state, then the brain is always a mind. *However, we do not say the brain is a mind (if we would say this at all) if the brain belongs to a corpse. But, water is always a liquid, a solid or a vapour whether it is biologically active water or water that is contaminated, that is dead with algae, bacteria.*

Furthermore, although the mind, or consciousness, is, for Searle, caused by the brain, liquidity is not caused by water. The use of the word 'liquidity' to stand for mind would become an inappropriate metaphor. Searle goes on to say that ". . . once you get rid of the idea that consciousness is a stuff that is the 'object' of introspection,

it is easy to see that it is spatial, because it is located in the brain. ... It might, for all we know, be distributed over very large portions of the brain" (*ibid.*). Here, consciousness has a specific location and sounds very much like something that is, in fact, distributed, e.g. a stuff. He deduces from this that "There is no 'link' between consciousness and the brain. . . .If consciousness is a higher level feature of the brain, then there cannot be any question of there being a link between the feature and the system of which it is a feature" (*ibid.*).

Featurism is an attempt to move away from duality. At the same time, it also must move away from involving a causal relationship between the brain and mental phenomena. Searle's version of causality allows for a causal relationship that does not require temporal priority for the cause: "My beliefs and desires, my thirsts and visual experiences, are real causal features of my brain, as much as the solidity of the table on which I work at and the liquidity of the water I drink are causal features of tables and water" (Searle 1983, 271). It is difficult to glean precisely what this means unless Searle suggests that my belief (for example, G-d is in Heaven) can cause a set of neurons to fire in my brain. But, how can the liquidity of water be a causal feature of water? Liquidity may be a state of water, but it cannot be a cause of water. These are the forms of paradoxes that seem to develop when one attempts to utilize a causal explanation without dualism.

Now we shall consider the question of a time gap. There was a time when the water was solid. At a later time, it became liquid. There is certainly a time gap that occurs between-the changing of a state from solidity to liquidity. The molecules have to alter from vibrating to rolling behavior. This requires the factor of time. All of the molecules do not alter from vibrating to rolling simultaneously. A time-span is required, however minute it might be, for a full roll of each molecule to take place. The liquid state is thus caused by a critical mass of molecules rolling at the same time but each single molecule still requires time for a complete roll-over on its own. This must be the sequence, for it takes time to change this state back again to a state of ice. The molecules must begin to reduce speed first. The very act of slowing down requires a time span. One could say that in a liquid state the entire set of molecules are rolling at the same time as the liquid but this is to ignore the time it takes for each individual molecule to roll.

If it were the case that consciousness were a timeless feature of the brain in the sense in which gravity holds the table to the floor, the consequences of this view would be hyperparadoxical. For Searle, it appears that some causes do not precede effects. It seems he suggests that the neurons causing consciousness belong to this type. He argues that: "The fact that the table over there exerts pressure on the floor is due to the force of gravity, for example. But 'gravity' does not name an event. And it is an enduring feature of the universe, not something that always happens just before its effects" (*ibid.* 230). If this were the way in which neurons caused consciousness, then neurons would be producing consciousness all of the time just as gravity produces its effects constantly and consistently. If, as Searle states, gravity is not temporarily prior to its effects, but co-existent with them, then just as all of its effects (all tables in the world exerting pressure on their respective floors), were

continuously existing, all neurons would be continuously co-existing with their thought effects. How then would we account for the appearance of new thoughts?

The conceptual progression of feature into state does not seem feasible. We understand what it means to say that water exists in certain states because we can observe it change from state to state. We can boil water, and turn it into steam and we can condense it back to water. Do we understand what it means to say that consciousness is a state of the brain? *It seems we cannot condense consciousness back into brain matter.*

To distill Searle's explanation, basically it appears he is endeavoring to say that consciousness is a state of the brain (again, this present author's terminological description) in the sense that liquidity is a state of water. We must be prepared to face the fact that water does not actually cause liquidity. If we are to conceive of consciousness as a state, the relationship between the brain and consciousness cannot be not a causal one. Water is another name for this kind of liquid. 'Consciousness' is not another name for 'brain'. Water and this kind of liquidity are words that refer to the same kind of thing. But the word 'brain' stands for a visual, tactile physical object that is surrounded by a skull; the word 'consciousness' refers to inner, subjective experiences. If we insist that consciousness is a state of the brain we are equating two separate kinds of realities. We could make such an assertion, but what sense would it make? In any case, it cannot make sense as a causal relationship in the sense that water is a liquid. Water does not cause liquidity. We can choose to describe the relationship between the brain and consciousness as liquidity stands to water, but this then is not a causal sequence. We can choose one description or the other. But we cannot choose both.

3. FUNCTIONALISM

The third conceptual progression of causality is that of function. In Searle's writings, mental events appear as something the brain does much as digestion is something the stomach does.

In Searle's writings, consciousness is: "a higher-level feature of the brain in the same way that digestion is a higher-level feature of the stomach..." (Searle 1999, 52).

I can, know, more or less, what I mean when I say that the stomach digests food. It breaks it down with its acid. The function of digestion is a feature of the activity of the stomach. In this sense, digestion is something that the stomach does. We know this because we can put food in the stomach and can watch it through scans being digested. *We cannot put thoughts in the brain and watch them being cogitated.* What we see in the brain are actual neuronal activities. What we see in the stomach are bits of food. *We can measure the amount of food we put in our stomach and measure our excretions. We cannot measure the electrical impulses of the brain and arrive at the ontological argument.*

Consciousness as a function of the brain as digestion is a function of the stomach is different from consciousness as a feature of the brain. To gain clarity we can attempt to unpack the meaning of conceiving of consciousness as a function and

determine if functionality could be a synonym for causality. It seems that by the word ‘function’, we are committed to a separation of the object from what it does. There must be a stomach first before it can perform the work of gastrointestinal digestion. There is a duality here that cannot be gainsaid. If we use the term ‘function’, we are nonetheless still referring to a causal relationship in which there are two partners, the stomach as cause, digestion as effect.

This being said, while we can understand that a physical stomach with physical acid can break down physical food, there is a disanalogy with the idea of a physical brain turning physical impulses (neuron firings) into non-physical realities (qualia). Qualia are not experienced in the third person. To liken the brain’s production of consciousness to the stomach’s productive work of digestion does not appear analogous because what is produced is of an entirely different kind.

This present author is not committed to a Cartesian dualism; however, in order to offer an exposition of Searle’s writings on consciousness, I do not know how otherwise to explain the process of a stomach functioning as a digestive organ. In its work, it produces something of a like kind. There is no analogy here with the brain producing an unlike kind, namely, consciousness. The stomach (perhaps when emptied as in a colonoscopy) is not always digesting. However, it still does exist. Hence, digestion is different from the stomach proper. This appears to be the implication of Searle’s argument: the implication is a duality. Inner thoughts, qualia, are produced by the brain. This is precisely Searle’s idea, not mine; the analogy thus is his, not mine. But qualia are not tangible and do not possess extension as do the products of digestion.

In this case, one could not adopt the proposal below (6.) that neuron firings and pain are the same phenomenon looked at from two different angles, one as looked at by the physicist and one as felt by the subjective feeler of the pain.¹

4. EMERGENCE

Searle’s fourth conceptual progression is to define the causal relationship of which he speaks between brain and consciousness as a sequence that begins from a lower level of the brain and rises to a higher level of the brain. This concept of a cause from lower to higher also appears problematic because the ‘higher’ level is of a different reality, namely, once again, qualia. Thus, the problem seems to remain: how does the lower, third person physical level transform itself into a ‘higher’ first person experienced qualia level? The change from lower to higher utilizes a spatial metaphor, but this spatial transfer does not explain the change of state required. In any case, this imaginative and creative solution does not appear as evidence based. It is unclear where exactly the lower and upper regions of the brain are located in which this form of transformation occurs.

The sole advantage of the lower to higher metaphor is that it is consonant with Searle’s writings that the relationship between brain and consciousness is indeed a

¹ For an enlightening discussion, *cf.*, R.G. Collingwood 1942, 1-17.

causal one. This explanation thus is superior to any of the previous explanations of ‘featurism’, ‘state’, and ‘functionalism’. On the other hand, Searle describes this relationship as ‘emergence’ rather than specifically cause and effect. If something ‘emerges’ and is not caused by that which is spatially (or also temporally?) prior, then this too cannot be a causal relationship at all. It is a spontaneous arising. The word ‘emergence’ can only be grasped as standing for a relationship between two entities in which the emergent entity is not causally connected to its prior condition but spontaneously emerges or generates from its, in this case, lower state. Emergence can thus only be regarded as a case of spontaneous generation. Otherwise, one may as well conform to the cause and effect language and never introduce the concept of emergence. If emergence becomes identical with cause and effect, there is no meaningful reason to introduce this term ‘emergence’, for ‘emergence’ can certainly be understood as a self-caused phenomenon. If it ‘arises’, it cannot preexist. It cannot simply be a lateral movement; the lower would need to be prior in time.

We now have a fresh problem which is the problem of spontaneous generation. While not the same problem as causality, there is the question of why one kind of reality, the higher level of the brain, can or does spontaneously emerge from the lower level. We also encounter the same problem as we do with the causal explanation. Though we can conceive of lower and higher levels of a third person experienced entity, e.g., the cerebellum is located beneath the cerebrum, it is illicit to introduce a different kind of entity here, namely, consciousness, which is an inner experience and manifestly not identical to the grey cells of a brain.

Whether we use the explanation of causality or the explanation of spontaneous generation, it is not possible to assert why or how a substance of one kind can produce a substance of an entirely different kind. Defining the relationship between the brain and consciousness as one in which consciousness is understood as an emergence does not solve the problem; it appears to propound it. It is, in a way, a variation of the neuron firings causing consciousness. Only, in this case, consciousness emerges from, but is not caused by, the neuron firings. Both “explanations” appear to beg the question because the entire problem remains as such: how (and why) does the brain (neuron firings or lower level) produce consciousness? Asserting that it causes or that the later emerges from the earlier does not address this question; it is a *petitio principii*. It assumes what it professes to prove.

To escape these paradoxes of ‘causal monism’ (this present author’s term), Searle, at times, appears to digress into full dualism. In one of his recent books, he states: “Consciousness is entirely causally explained by neuronal behavior but it is not thereby shown to be nothing but neuronal behavior” (Searle 2004, 119). This statement sounds as if consciousness is something above and beyond neuronal behavior. Or, take for example an additional statement: “... the sheer qualitative feel of a pain is a very different feature of the brain from the pattern of neuron firings that cause the pain. Therefore, you can get a causal reduction of pain to neuron firings but not an ontological reduction” (Searle 1997, 31). Despite the disclaimer, this would make it appear that pain is an ontological existence distinct from neuron firings

5. CONCEPTUAL REDUCTIONISM

Searle's fifth conceptual progression of 'brain causes consciousness' leaves the field of ontological causation altogether and seeks to explain the problem as a purely conceptual one. It is important to remember that this is a totally different explanation and is not at all consistent with the notion that there is some kind of ontological relationship between the brain and consciousness. Let us examine the one in which he uses the example of six points in a football match to illustrate that although a score may be a six point spread, the result does not require any separation from the physical sport. The problem with this particular solution is that the six points metaphor carries with it a hidden partner, namely, consciousness.

Consciousness is required to entertain the idea of the six points. The six points possess no ontological reality; they are a conceptual abstraction. This solution of Searle's pushes the problem back one step further. If the brain is like a football game, then its production of a six point spread is not the same as the brain's production of consciousness. The production of a six point spread is not really a production of the football game. It is a way of conceiving of what happened during or possibly after the game. In order to actually conceive of the six points, there must be a specific consciousness. This conceiving consciousness is not ontologically identical with the football game. This solution is a mixing of levels, of the physical action with the later logical description of what happened according to the conceptual rules of the game. This later logical description is a separate conceptualization and thus would require a separate act of consciousness in order to become cognizant of it.

Six points are not produced by the football match. The football match is a physical reality; the six points is an abstract conceptualization. The six points is how we choose to describe what happened; it is not an occurrence on the same level. The six points requires a separate act of consciousness to become aware of it. Six points can be reduced to a content of consciousness. But if we say that six points in the analogy stands for consciousness in the sense that the brain stands for the football game, then we are saying that consciousness is a conceptual abstraction. However, a conceptual abstraction cannot stand on its own. It requires an act of consciousness in order to conceive of it. Six points cannot stand for consciousness in the equation. Six points on its own is a free floater; it has no actual existence. However, consciousness as an inner, first person awareness possesses clear and distinct ontological reality.

6. SPINOZISM

Searle's sixth conceptual progression is to depart from the causal analogy altogether and to entertain a Spinozist solution: There is just the brain system, which has one level of description where neuron firings are occurring and another level of description, the level of the system, where the system is conscious and indeed consciously trying to raise its arm. (Searle 2014, 210)

Our conscious states are higher-level or system features of the brain, and consequently there are not two separate sets of causes – the psychological and the

neurobiological. The psychological is just the neurobiological described at a higher level (Searle 2004, 210): “Now, because mental states are features of the brain, they have two levels of description – a higher level in mental terms, and a lower level in physiological terms. The very same causal powers of the system can be described at either level” (Searle 1986, 26). In such special moments, Searle turns to a Spinozist position that the brain and consciousness are one and the same reality observed from two different standpoints. This is a worthwhile position that merits further exploration. It, however, does differ from Searle’s main position of causal monism. It does not seem feasible to hold such differing positions (Spinozist and Searlian) simultaneously.

In summation, the different conceptual progressions, except for the second and the fourth are not wholly consistent with either the claim that the brain causes consciousness or with each other. Each conceptual progression appears to be a blind alley or in Plato’s language an *aporia*. I have not undertaken to analyze the problems that attend Spinoza’s solution because this analysis and discussion would require a separate paper altogether to do adequate rendering. In any case, although mentioned by Searle, and hereby catalogued, by the present author, as the sixth conceptual progression, it is not a position that Searle consistently expounds or defends in his writings on consciousness.

7. CONCLUSION

What does all of this have to do with the engagement with Chinese philosophy? It is the understanding of the highly problematic nature of duality that led the Sixth Patriarch to the realization that the difficulties of understanding consciousness stemmed precisely from the formulation of the description. If one allowed that the formulation was the problem, then all dualistic description (even that of Spinoza), would be subject to error. The only solution would be to take up a non-dualistic description of consciousness in which the very ideas of brain and mind would be false abstractions that were a result of an attempt to describe the reality of consciousness with language. This solution, that in certain rare instances, in his consciousness writings, Searle himself notes would sort out some of the problems that emanate from the ingenious conceptual progressions that he proposes. This ‘solution’ or more properly speaking a dissolution of the problem may itself not be problem free, but its own problematic character (if it does possess one), is, as Aristotle frequently stated, is to be reserved for a further occasion. What we can say is that Professor Searle’s rare insight, his Master Insight, as termed by this present author, into the non-dual nature of consciousness, abstracted from his general line of argument, bears an astonishing similarity with the ancient wisdom of the Sixth Patriarch.

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