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CONSCIOUSNESS

Thinking about consciousness is just as intriguing as thinking about other intractable mysteries of the universe (as they've been referred to for millennia)..Our experience of consciousness is so intrinsic to who we are such that we tend to forget the profound questions that are staring us in the face ; What's consciousness? What's the source of consciousness? Why would any collection of particles in the universe be conscious? .We all know intuitively what consciousness is, yet there's nothing as hard to explain as consciousness.This has made some scientists, philosophers and religious leaders to conclude that the human brain might have a "cognitive closure" towards some subjects and consciousness might just be one of them .. The same way birds can't solve calculus might just be the same way human beings might never be able to unravel the mystery behind consciousness. Some have concluded the human brain might have only evolved to tackle problems impinging on our survival and not to delve into the mysteries of the universe. However much dissapointing it might be to conclude the impossibility of ever unraveling the mystery that sits right at the core of consciousness, it is human nature that we still need to find answers.

One of the biggest questions that has been there for millennia is the hard problem of consciousness ; How would experience arise from a mere configuration of matter (brain)? Consciousness here is used to refer to the definition coined by philosopher Thomas Nagel which states that consciousness is what it is like to be you at the moment.It's experience in its basic form..It's an undeniable fact that we're made up of the same chemical composition as stones and chairs, but what puzzles us is why would the lights turn on when matter is configured into a human being but still be off for stones and chair despite having the same chemical compounds? When exactly does consciousness enter the human brain..? Is it at conception or immediately after birth? Is there something that it is like to be a human being? The answer would definitely be yes.Why would the answer be no when the same question is asked about a rock, a book or a table?

Some scientists and philosophers have described consciousness as a fundamental part of the universe that transcends the brain, a fundamental part of the building blocks of nature. This means that consciousness is universal and exists independent of the brain. It sounds a little bit counterintuitive that this inherent experience that is only manifested by a brain would exist without it. It's a big claim to make but those that support it have likened it to the eye and UV rays . In this is example, UV rays represent consciousness that is a fundamental part of the universe and the eyes represent the brain. They go further to suggest that the brain acts as a filter of universal consciousness in the same way that eyes act as filters of universal UV rays. The brain therefore keeps us in a constant illusion of the self and personal experience. It tricks us into perceiving a false duality of self and others yet we're not separate from other aspects of the universe but an integral part of them . The same way an eye would "die"and UV rays still remain as a constant part of the universe is the same way à brain would die and consciousness still exist as a fundamental part of the universe. This leads to a more counterintuitive conclusion that" people become more conscious when they die " because our consciousness becomes part of the vast universal consciousness. It transcends the subjective human experience and becomes a fundamental part of existence. The view is known as panpsychism that rather than consciousness being a unique feature of human subjective experience, it's a fundamental part of the universe that's present in every single particle

Let's take a break from panpsychism and revisit the 1st definition of consciousness which states that consciousness is what it is like to be you at the moment. It suggests that consciousness is experience in its basic form . Such a view will need a brain and therefore behaviour to define consciousness. Do we really need behavior to define consciousness? No, might just be the most suitable answer. A perfect example to debunk this 1st definition of consciousness, is in bodily imprisonment conditions such as anaesthesia awareness in which a patient becomes conscious in the middle of general anesthesia . The patient might live out the nightmare of the procedure without the ability to move or communicate that they're fully awake and can feel the pain of the procedure. This in itself suggests that consciousness would exist without behavior and therefore without experience .

If behavior and brain have failed to define consciousness, does this give room for panpsychism? Panpsychists would claim that for consciousness to exist in a whole organism let's say human beings, there must have been some basic form of experience in the subatomic particles that form the human body. It could be described as the most basic form of consciousness. This is to say that consciousness might be viewed as an emergent property of experiences of all subatomic particles that collectively form the human body. Emergent properties are features of an ensemble that cannot be deduced by studying single components of the collection and this clearly explains why we can't look into an electron in search of experience.

The fact that conventional theories have failed to efficiently(if not at all) describe consciousness opens doors for more radical and controversial theories such as panpsychism despite being unfalsifiable by our current scientific methods. Some facts are important and so counterintuitive that if they stay for long they'll permeate our reality and become a foundation for our new ways of thinking, panpsychism might just be one of them. We are stuck between two options, whether to follow the definition of consciousness as experience that requires a brain to define or use one of the main guiding principles in scientific research, Occam's razor (theories that need less explanations) , and become Panpsychists, but for sure the mystery at the core of consciousness will be unraveled someday.