

The Conscious Being & the Problem of Consciousness: Implications for Theory and Practice for 21st Century Researchers

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ABSTRACT

Sense perception is certainly a sensible way in which we relate to the world, but thought tends to occur unconsciously. While some thinkers argue for the certainty of some mental states, others think that these mental states cannot provide sure foundations for certain interpretations of mental states which belong to other individuals. Consequently, it has been argued that due to the nature of the problem of consciousness, results obtained from empirical tests tend to lack the capacity to provide intrinsic road maps for future studies and understanding of consciousness. While adopting the traditional reconstructive methods of critical analysis in philosophy, the study analysed various attempts

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made towards developing test measures and theories aimed at providing operational definitions and a direction towards the understanding of the study of consciousness. Most tests and theories studied were identified as capable of providing ample evidence for the proof of consciousness in certain living and non-living organisms. Some flaws in these tests however, made laudable efforts in the study of consciousness amount to near nothing, thereby condemning thinkers to endless debates. The study recommends that thinkers of the 21st century resolve to adopting synthetic and pluralistic approaches in the formulation of theories as the road to future progress in the study of consciousness.

Key Words: Consciousness, Empirical, Mental States, Pluralistic, Synthetic, Theories.

1. INTRODUCTION

Some theorists (Chalmers, 1997; Nagel, 1974) uphold that sense perception is a conscious way in which individuals relate to the world while thought tends to occur unconsciously. The mind with all its functioning (in its thinking process) seems to be a different kind of mental activity from consciousness. It is as if there is a subjective state occurring when one deliberates, it is as if there is something it is like to deliberate or produce a thought which one can be aware of. But when someone steps on another's hand for instance, they feel pain. This is because there is something that it is like to be in pain since such experience has been had by, at least someone else before. On the other hand, there is something it is like to eat a plate of chocolate cake. Furthermore, one can tell the difference between being in pain and eating a plate of chocolate cake; the second is pleasurable while the first is not.

The whole idea seems pleasurable when it's applied to oneself and the experiences of their thoughts, deliberations and perceptions. However, the whole scenario becomes problematic when we try to claim consciousness for someone other than our selves. One might know what pain feels like when they are stepped on by mistake. They may also know what a good sensation is like when they eat a plate of chocolate cake. The question however is; what bearing do these personal experiences have on an individual? Perhaps one can never tell. An individual may have the sensation of eating chocolate cake when he is stepped on or they may perhaps, feel pain and wince when they eat a plate of cake. The real question here is "can anyone from the first person perspective, know about someone else's consciousness? Science can explain how the brain works but it cannot account for or explain, how individuals feels accurately at one point in time. If and when we treat other people as if we are certain about their consciousness or conscious state, we will be making misguided assumptions.

A renowned researcher who had written extensively in the area of consciousness is expected to know a lot about consciousness and how it relates with other people. But the truth is, all the knowledge about consciousness may never really arm us with the knowledge about what is going on inside the head of the researcher nor can he claim to know what is inside the mind of the other persons. This dilemma in philosophy is generally known as the problem of other minds (Chalmers, 1997). That one has the knowledge of what is going on in his mind is no premise from where such persons can claim to know or have any proper way of having access to the activities in the mind of others. The truth therefore is; we may never know for sure whether the people in question have minds or not.

Some studies (Chalmers, 1997) have advanced three steps towards the direction of ascertaining the conscious states of individuals. The first person-subjective experience for Chalmers has been conceived as the starting point for determining who has consciousness. (I can observe my own consciousness) as captured in the thoughts of Rene Descartes, *Cogito ergo sum* "I think therefore I am". Here an individual can observe their own awareness. The second person, one different from myself, is able verify that you are conscious by the applications and adoption of the same processes which aided other persons own confirmation. The hard and third step is the point where individuals can only assume that they are conscious. This is because they cannot know for certain that the other person is. When we make assumptions that other people are conscious, we do so based on indirect evidence: the fact that human beings have many things in common, our brains and evolutionary processes for instance, our DNA pattern etc, are all remarkably the same. With so much in common, why not have a consciousness that is common to all as well?

This study therefore is a critical analysis of studies and attempts to capture the meaning and essence of consciousness among individuals, animals and inanimate objects with the view to ascertaining how this reality influence the wellbeing and development of the individual in his environment. The study also considered critically, certain step (tests) and theories which have been taken and proposed in the past to test or ascertain the degree of consciousness in animate and inanimate beings.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY AND THE NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Explaining the true nature of consciousness for thinkers today is one of the most important and perplexing areas of philosophy. Consciousness is a subject of much research in philosophy of mind, psychology, neuroscience, cognitive science, cognitive neuroscience and artificial intelligence. There are broadly two competing school of thought in the philosophy of mind which have done extensive study towards understanding the nature of consciousness. These two schools of thought are captured in the *dualist* and the *materialist* theories propounded by them. Studies (Butler, 1863; Shieber, 2004) conducted by both schools of thought tend to raise more questions than answers. Questions in this class include: Is there a relationship between consciousness and science? What are the neutral correlates of consciousness? To what extent is the human mind different from that of the animal? Can any machine, given the right programming, become conscious? (Marcus, 2002).

The history of Western philosophy contains a rich collection of literature which goes back to the time of ancient philosophers on subjects such as the human nature, the soul and the mind. Sophisticated works on the nature of consciousness have been found in the works of Aristotle, (Caston, 2002:715-815). The works of Rene Descartes in the early modern era however, placed the subject of consciousness and the relationship it has with the mind and the body on the centre stage. For Descartes, he argued that the mind was a nonphysical substance different from the body. He also did not believe that conscious mental states also exists (Descartes, 2008). G. W. Leibniz was also known to have believed in the immaterial nature of mental substances which he called "*monads*". He more importantly tried to distinguish between perception and apperception, that is (outer-directed consciousness and self-consciousness) Gennaro (1999).

The most important and detailed theory of mind is associated with the works of Immanuel Kant. His main work: *A Critique to Pure Reason* captures to a large extent, his studies on the nature of consciousness and the mind body relationship. Kant had thought that an adequate account of phenomenal consciousness involved far more than what his predecessors were willing to accept regarding the nature of consciousness. He believed that there were mental states which were presupposed in the conscious experience. Consequently, Kant presented an elaborate theory to capture what these structures are. These positions correlated with the claims of Leibniz who saw the need to postulate the existence of unconscious mental states and mechanisms in order to provide an adequate theory of mind (Kicher, 1990; Brook, 1994).

Apart from the attacks and banishment which the study of consciousness suffered in the hands of behaviouralist psychologist (Skinner, 1953), others from psychology were known to be deeply interested with the study of consciousness and the various methods proposed for investigating it and how it affects the mind. Other notable thinkers whose works had advanced studies on this subject include: Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and the works of Sigmund Freud. The works of Freud brought about the near universal acceptance of the existence of unconscious mental states and processes.

Let us note that the few names mentioned above did not have much scientific knowledge about the workings of the brain in detail. The advancement we now have today is attributed to the recent studies in neuropsychology. We have reason to believe that present researchers in this area are partly responsible for the unprecedented interdisciplinary advances made in the areas of consciousness since the 1980's. Consequently, several journals have been devoted to its study for example: *Consciousness and Cognition*, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, and *Psyche*. There is also an entire book series dedicated to the study of consciousness: *Advances in Consciousness Research*, published by John Benjamins. Others who have notable works in small introductory text include: (Kim, 1996; Gennaro, 1996b; Block et al., 1997; Seager, 1999; Chalmers, 2002), to mention but a few.

3. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness have been defined in various ways; first as a subjective experience, as an awareness, the ability to experience "feelings", wakefulness, the understanding of the concept "self", or the executive control system of the mind (Fathering, 1992). It is also an umbrella term that may also refer to a variety of mental phenomena. (Van Gulick, 2004). Although human beings realize what every day experiences are, consciousness refuses to be defined. Consequently, Searle (2005) made the following deductions:

1. Consciousness is a state or condition of being conscious.
2. Consciousness is a sense of one's personal or collective identity, including the attitudes, beliefs, and sensitivities held by or considered characteristic of an individual group.
3. A special kind of awareness or sensitivity: class consciousness, race consciousness
4. The kind of alertness or concern for a particular issue or situation: a movement aimed at raising the general public's consciousness of social injustice.

These standard definitions shall guide our study in this text.

3.1. The Oxford Companion to the Body (Oxford Companion, 2000) captures the twentieth-century British Psychologist; Stuart Sutherland who once defined consciousness as:

... a fascinating but elusive phenomenon: it is impossible to specify what it is, what it does, or why it evolved. Nothing worth reading has been written about it. Consciousness is indeed hard to define, but most people have an intuitive idea about what it is. It encompasses two different concepts: the notion of a *self* and the feeling of which the self is aware, especially *qualia* – our raw sensory experience.

3.2. Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia (Britannica 2004) captures consciousness as:

The quality or state of being aware, as applied to the lower animals, consciousness refers to the capacity for sensation and usually volition. In higher animals this capacity may also include thinking and motion. In human beings consciousness is understood to include "meta-awareness", an awareness that one is aware. The term also broadly refers to the upper level of mental life of which the person is aware, as contrasted with unconscious processes. Levels of consciousness (e.g., attention vs sleep) are correlated with patterns of electrical activities in the brain (brain waves).

3.3. The Home Library Health Psychoanalysis Dictionary (HLP Dictionary, 2004). Records shows that this dictionary, in an attempt to define consciousness, made great defence to most of Freud's ideas (Freud, 1900a) where he made the following remarks:

In psychology, consciousness is the subjects of immediate apprehension of mental activity. Although Freud thought that conscious processes are "the same as the consciousness of the philosopher and of every day opinion" and "a fact without parallel, which defiles all explanation or

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description” He argued that they could not be considered the “essence” of mental life. Rather consciousness has a fugitive quality and does not “form unbroken sequences which are complete in themselves” (p. 157). “The physical, whatever its nature may be, is in itself unconscious and probably similar in kind to all other natural processes of which we have obtained knowledge” (p. 283) Freud however still stressed that consciousness still plays an important role, indeed it is “the one light which illuminates our path and leads us through the darkness of mental life” (p. 286).

The work of the psychoanalysis, as Freud saw it is “translating unconscious processes into conscious ones and thus filling in the gaps in conscious perception” (HLP Dictionary, 2004:286). Consciousness from this perspective is the qualitative perception of information arising both from the external world and from the internal world: an external world that is unknowable to itself and to which we have access only via subjective elements collected by our sense organs and an internal world that consists of unconscious mental processes and what we are aware of solely through sensations of pressure / displeasure and revived memories. In Freud’s own words, “A person’s own body, and above its entire surface, is a place from which both external and internal perceptions may spring. (HLP Dictionary, 2004:25).

4. PHILOSOPHIC AND SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES TO CONSCIOUSNESS

The hard problem of consciousness formulated by Chalmers in 1996 deals with the issue of how to explain a state of phenomenal consciousness in terms of the neurological basis (Dennett, 2004:375). Access Consciousness (A-consciousness) is the phenomenon whereby information in our mind is accessible for verbal report, reasoning and the control of behaviour. So when we perceive, information about what we perceive is often access conscious, when we remember information about the past, such as something learnt in the past, it is often access conscious. In Chalmers’ opinion, access consciousness is less mysterious than phenomenal consciousness. This is why it is believed to pose one of the easy problems of consciousness.

Phenomenal Consciousness on the other hand is simply the consciousness associated with experience (Block, 2004). It is moving, coloured forms, sound, sensations, emotions and feelings with our bodies and responses at the centre. These experiences considered independently of any impact on behaviour are called *Qualia*. The hard problem of consciousness as formulated by David Chalmers in 1966 deals with the issue of “how to explain a state of phenomenal consciousness in terms of its neurological basis (Dennett, 2004:375).

Philosophical responses to the subject of consciousness from thinkers such as Malebranche, Thomas Reid, John Locke, David Hume and Immanuel Kant all vary. Descartes and Malebranche for instance agreed that human beings were composed mainly of two elements: Body and Mind and that conscious experience resided in the latter. David Hume and Immanuel Kant also differed from Descartes in that they avoided mentioning a place from which experience is viewed. Other philosophers such as George Berkeley have proposed that the content of consciences are an aspect of mind and do not necessarily involve matter at all. This is a type of idealism. Yet other such as Leibniz, have considered that each point in the universe is endowed with conscious content. This is a form of *Panpsychism*. Panpsychism is the belief that all matter, including rocks for example, is sentient or conscious.

Cognitive Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience under the scientific approach portray how consciousness as a research topic was strongly discouraged by main stream scholars because of the concerns of validations of both primary and secondary data. Today modern investigations into the subject of consciousness are based on psychological statistical studies and case studies of consciousness states. Early discoveries made in this area revealed that the mind is a complex structure derived from various localized functions that are bound together with a unitary awareness.

Consciousness and Experimental Philosophy: A new approach has attempted to combine the methodology of cognitive psychology and traditional philosophy to understand consciousness. These researches have taken place in the field of experimental philosophy which seeks to use empirical methods (like conducting experiments to test how ordinary non-experts think) to inform philosophical discursions (Knobe, 2004). The main aim behind this kind of philosophical research on consciousness has been to try to get a better grasp on how people ordinarily understand consciousness. For instance, work by Joshua Knobe and Jesse Prinz suggest that people may have two different ways of understanding minds generally (Joshua Knobe and Jesse Prinz, 2008). Other group of thinkers have argued that there is actually no such phenomenon as consciousness (Sytsma, 2009).

5. TEST FOR CONSCIOUSNESS

The fact that there has not been a clear cut definition of consciousness and the fact that there is no empirical measure that exists to test its presence, most thinkers have argued, is as a result of the problem of consciousness. This general problem of consciousness they believe, has made empirical test intrinsically impossible. This notwithstanding, several tests have been developed which attempt to provide operational definitions to consciousness. Some of these tests have been extended in the area of determining whether machines and non-human animals can demonstrate through certain behaviours - by passing certain tests - be elevated to the class of the conscious. We shall in this section of the study consider a few of the tests which top the chart in the study of consciousness.

The Turing Test

The Turing test, most often than not, has been conceived as a test for consciousness, or some kind of behavioural tests for the presence of mind, thought or intelligence in simple minded entities. The test (*Turing Test*) is named after a computer scientist Alan Turing who was the first to design the test. It is actually a test designed to prove whether computers could satisfy the requirement which will allow individuals ascribe

to them the quality of "intelligence". Consequently, the tests has often been cited in discussions of artificial intelligence. The test is simply based on "the limitation Game". A human conducting the experiment tries, via the aid of a computer keyboard, to communicate with two others, one a computer and the other, an individual who is presumed conscious. The mode of communications among the trio will be without voice such that none of the participants will know the person communicating at a point in time. If at the end of the conversation, the human is unable to identify who in particular made which comment or contribution, the computer is at this stage presumed to have passed the test (Turing test) thereby certifying the operational definition for intelligence and consciences.

It is important to note that this test has generated a great deal of philosophical debate. Daniel Dennett and Douglas Hofstadter have argued that anything capable of passing the test should qualify as conscious (Dennett & Hofstadter, 1985). On the other hand, David Chalmers and other have argued that since philosophical zombies could pass the same test, it still does not qualify them to the class of the "intelligent" or the "conscious". Others have considered the very questions "whether machines can think or partake in the quality called intelligence" a fallacious one which shouldn't have come up in the first place. To them, the same questions about the computers intelligence or consciousness is equivalent to asking "can submarines swim?"

The Chinese Room Test

John Searle, a *Philosopher* was known to have developed the thought experiment, The Chinese room argument which was solely designed to show the flaws within the Turing test (Searle,1980). In this experiment, Searle asked the reader to imagine a non-Chinese speaker in a room filled with Chinese symbols and a rule book to guide the none Chinese speaking person with the response he will need to make to the questions which will be passed on to him via a slot. The person is expected to respond by looking at the slot and with the aid of those Chinese symbols, he is expected to respond to the questions with correct replies from the rule book on the Chinese language already at his disposal. Now based purely on the input and output operations, the person in the Chinese room gives a clear understanding of the Chinese language. The truth however is that the person in the Chinese room understands no Chinese at all. He is only able to respond correctly because of the corresponding symbols which he has at his disposal. This argument has been the subject of many philosophical debates since the argument was first proposed in 1980, consequently, volumes have been written on the topic alone.

For want of space, we may not be able to discuss the **Delay Test** and the **Mirror Test** which are avenues designed to test the existence of conscious mental states in man and other non-human elements.

6. THE PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Irrespective of the potency inherent in the test discussed above, it is clear from the forgoing analysis that while some of the tests considered above in this study give ample reasons to infer consciousness in the test subjects under review, the same test when view from another perspective, gives convincing reasons to reconsider the initially held position on the subject under review. The argument made to affirm consciousness or intelligence in the Turing test was flawed in the Chinese room test. These tests therefore failed to offer the much desired platform for understand the intrinsic workings of sense perception.

The problem of consciousness in the field of psychology and philosophy becomes an equally divers project for the 21st century researcher who must find ways of explaining the phenomena which abounds in his every day endeavour. Not only do many aspects of mind count as conscious in some sense, each is also opened to various respects in which it might be explained or modelled. Understanding consciousness involves a multiplicity, not only of *explanada*, but also of questions that the pose and the sort of answers which they require. At the risk of oversimplifying, the relevant questions can be gathered under three crude rubrics as *What*, *How*, and the *Why*.

The main focus of the three questions is directed respectively at describing the features of consciousness, explaining its underlying basis or cause and explaining its role or value. Thinkers believe that the division among the tree are artificial therefore in practice, the answer one gives to each will depend it part, with what one says about the other questions. One cannot for example adequately describe the "what" question and describe the main features of consciousness without the "why" issues of its functional role in the system whose operations it affects. Nor could one explain how the relevant sort of consciousness might rise from non-conscious processes unless one has a clear account of just what features had to be realized to count as producing it. Those caveats notwithstanding, the three different questions provide us with the platform for articulating the explanatory process of particular theories or models of consciousness.

7. THEORIES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

While thinkers press towards offering explanations to the "What, How and Why" questions of consciousness, theories of consciousness have been formulated and directed at capturing the intricate nature of the subject matter consciousness. However studies reveal that not all theories of consciousness say the something. They vary not only in specific sort, but also in their theoretical aims. The largest division of most theories reviewed for this study tends to fall between two main categories: the *metaphysical theories*, which aims at locating consciousness in the overall ontological scheme of reality and more *specific theories* which aims at offering in some detail, the nature, role and feature of consciousness.

7.1. Metaphysical Theories

General metaphysical theories tend to offer answers to the conscious versions of the mind body problem. Questions in this class include: what is the ontological status of consciousness relative to the world of physical realities? Attempts made towards responding to these questions have resulted to the formulations of *dualists* and *physicalists* theories of consciousness.

7.1.1. Dualist theories

Proponents of the Dualist theories hold the view that the world consist of two fundamental entities such as mind and matter. Psychologically, the view holds that mind and body function separately without any form of interchange. In this wise, dualist theories regard at least some aspect of consciousness as falling outside the realm of the physical. This in turn has birthed more specific theories from the dualist school each explicating specific forms of thoughts in the dualist school with regards to the problem of consciousness. The further specific areas include: *Substance Dualism, Property Dualism, Fundamental Property Dualism, Emergent Property Dualism, Neutral Monist Property Dualism, Panpsychism*. The effort to address the problem of consciousness has evidently given rise to an array of theories each trying to capture certain specifics. Such theories therefore face the dilemma of providing answers to the hard problem of consciousness. They end up proposing a new theory or identifying another problem at the new steps taken towards addressing the problem. In all, a verity of argument have been given in favour of the dualist and other anti physicalists theories of consciousness which aims at reaching or making anti-physical conclusions about the ontology of consciousness from the apparent limits on our ability to fully understand the qualitative aspects of the conscious experiences through third person physical accounts of the brain processes (Jackson, 1982:127-136; Jackson, 1986:291-295).

Other arguments for dualism have been made on more empirical grounds such as those that appeal to supposed causal groups in the chains of physical causation in the brain (Eccles & Popper, 1977) or those based on alleged anomalies in the temporal order of conscious awareness (Libet, 1982:563-570). The problems remains that dualist arguments of both sort have been much disputed by physicalists such as (Churchland, 1983:156-181; Dennett and Kinsbourne, 1992:187-247).

7.1.2. Physicalists theories of consciousness

At this point, it is important to note that most metaphysical theories of consciousness are versions of physicalism of one familiar sort or another. Eliminativist theories for instance reductively deny the existence of consciousness or at least, the existence of some of its commonly accepted sorts of features. The radical eliminativists rejects the very notion of consciousness as muddled or wrongheaded and claim that the conscious /no conscious distinction fails to cut mental reality at its joints (Wilkes, 1984:223-43; Wilkes, 1988). They generally regard the idea of consciousness as off target to merit eliminations and replacement y other concepts and distinctions more reflective of the true nature of mind (Churchland, 1983:80-95).

Most eliminativists are more qualified in their negative assessment. Rather than reject the notion out rightly, they take issue only with some of the prominent features that are commonly thought to involve issues such as *qualia*, (Carruthers, 2000) the self-conscious, (Dennett, 1992) or the so called Cartesian Theatre where the temporal sequence of conscious experience gets internally projected. (Dennett and Kinsbourne, 1992:187-257). Moe modest eliminativist, like Dennett, thus typically combine their qualified denials with a positive theory of those aspects of consciousness they take as real such as the multiple draft model. Other similar theories in this class include: *Identity theory, Type-type identity theory, Functionalist theories, and Non reductive physicalism theory*. In sum, the issues arising under the notion of consciousness remains under debate leading to yet more theories.

7.2. Specific Theories of Consciousness

Although there are many general metaphysical / ontological theories of consciousness, the lists of specific detailed theories about its specific nature are even longer and more divers. No brief survey could be close to comprehensive, however, six main types of theories were considered for review in this study. The study in this section could help indicate the basic range of options: *higher order theories, representational theories, cognitive theories, neutral theories, quantum theories and nonphysical theories*. For lack of space we shall only discuss two of such specific theories.

7.2.1. Representationalist Theory

Almost all the theories of consciousness regard it as having representational features, but so called representationalist theory are defined by the stronger view that their representationalist features exhaust its mental feature (Harman, 1999). According to the representationalists', conscious mental states have no properties other than their representational properties. Thus two conscious or experimental states that share all their representational properties will not differ in any mental respects. The exact force of the claim depend on how one interprets the idea of being "representationally" the same for which there are many plausible alternative criteria. Many other arguments has however, been made for and against representationalism such as those concerning perception in different sense modalities of one and the same state of affairs – seeing and feeling the same cube- which might seem to involve mental differences distinct from how the relevant state represent the world to be (Peacock, 1983). In each case both studies can muster strong intuitions and argumentative ingenuity. Lively debate continues.

7.2.2. Cognitive Theories

Philosophers and psychologists have in time past, offered models that were aimed at explaining consciousness in terms of cognitive processes. The most important philosophical example is the multiple draft models (MDM) of consciousness advanced by Dennett (1991). This theory

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combines the representationalist model with a higher-order theory but does so in a way that varies interestingly with the more standard versions of either. The MDM includes many distinctive but interrelated features. The name of this theory reflects the facts that at any given moment, content fixation of many sorts are occurring throughout the brain. What makes most of these content conscious is not that they occur in a privileged spatial mode or format, all of which the MDM denies. It is rather what Dennett calls "cerebral celebrity" i.e. the degree to which a given content influence the development of other contents throughout the brain, especially with regards to how those effects are manifest in the reports and behaviours that the person makes in response to various probes that might indicate their conscious state.

Dennett's MDM has been highly influential but has also drawn criticism especially from those who find it insufficiently realist in its view of consciousness and at best insufficient in achieving its stated goal to fully explain it (Dretske, 1994:41-58) Many of its critics acknowledge the insight and value of the MDM but deny that there are no real facts of consciousness other than those captured by it (Rosenthal, 1994:319-350; Van Gulick, 1994:443-456; Akins, 1996:1-43).

8. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In concluding this section, it appears that a comprehensive understanding of consciousness will likely require theories of many types. One might usefully and without contradiction, accept a diversity of models that each in their own way aims at respectively explaining the physical, neural, cognitive, functional, representational, and high-order aspects of consciousness. There is unlikely to be any single theoretical perspective that suffices for explaining all the features of consciousness that we wish to understand. Thus a synthetic and pluralistic approach may provide the best road to future progress in the study of consciousness.

Psychologists, thinkers and researchers in the area of rural development need to understand that awareness and sense perceptions in the rural and urban areas differ owing to various factors prevailing in the areas under focus. The wellbeing of the rural and urban dwellers in this 21st century can be achieved if researchers adopt the synthetic and pluralistic approach to the study of persons and groups in the area under focus.

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