

Are We Conscious?

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Ever since intelligent beings started becoming "intelligent" they have been searching for the answer. Now it has been brought up into the recent minds like never before. Questions once confined to the theological speculation and only late night dorm room discussion sessions are now at the forefront of cognitive neuroscience. With some modicum of consensus has taken shape but, with some of the others, puzzlement is so deep that they may never be resolved.

The brain is composed of about 100 billion neurons. Different neural connection bring about different emotions and depending on which neurons get stimulated certain connections may become stronger and others weaker. Modern neurological experiments has proved that stimulating certain parts of the brain with certain fixed voltage bring about the same emotion in the patients every time. Thus creating a illusion of conscious ness when in fact we may never be in control of our actions.

The holographic principle for example, a property of quantum gravity and string theory theorizes how the entire universe can be seen as an information structure of only two dimensions. If that's the case then our whole reality is an illusion, let alone our consciousness.

Recent neurological experiments suggested that when we are not self aware most of our thoughts and actions are impulsive and the idea of randomly reacting is extremely frustrating. The brain resolves this by creating explanation for our behavior and physically rewriting it into our memories through many reconsolidation making us believe that we were in control and thus creates the illusion of consciousness of being aware.

If our consciousness is fabricated then concepts such as life and death which are mere intellectual constructs and any spiritual ideas of an after life takes place in a realm where the rigid mathematics underlining this reality comes to an end, is also fabricated.

The questions bought up by the research on consciousness puzzle the minds of physicists and neurologist alike. Will this question ever be answered? Maybe the day we understand consciousness is the day we learn the meaning of life. As Rene Descartes once told, "I think, therefore I am."

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