

Unifying Consciousness

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I gained a deep understanding of the nature of consciousness through an activity developed by PNC founder and director Dr. Michael Cohen during a Project NatureConnect gathering on San Juan Island. The theme for the week was "Consciousness and Natural Attractions," and when I went to nature with the question, "Are the attraction relationships that form reality conscious?" a simple truth became apparent:

ATTRACTIONS ARE CONSCIOUS.

Here's what happened. A bit hungry, I was attracted to a blackberry bush filled with ripe berries. When I asked it if it was 'conscious,' I became intensely aware of its multiple attraction relationships—"webloves"—giving rise to its existence in the present moment. Roots were attracted to water and minerals and gravity and burrowing. Leaves were attracted to air and sunlight as well as water from the roots so they could produce food for the bush. Berries were attracted to using the resources provided by the roots and leaves to produce seeds and sugary, moist seed containers as they attracted birds and humans for seed dispersal. There was simple *Be-ingness* in the present moment, no 'thoughts' of the past or worries about the future. Responding to attractions—and being attractive—was the focus of the berry bush in each succeeding moment. Was the berry bush conscious? It was using all its senses to register and respond to its attractions. In doing so, it was not only sustaining its own life, but also the Web of Life. However, the consciousness itself seemed to be in the reciprocal attraction relationships, in the sensory awarenesses responding and shifting. Who was the 'perceiver' and who the 'perceived?' Everything in the environment was being subtly modified by a great balancing Consciousness working through reciprocal, loving attractions. I, as a sentient entity in this environment, was also part of this weblove balancing act. My attraction to this bush at this moment in time was an expression of the global intelligence that sustains the Web of Life. The berries were attracted to me (a seed carrier) as I was attracted to them (nourishment). As we each responded to our natural attractions, our lives--and the Web--were supported by Global Consciousness.

I realized then that what we humans call personal consciousness is actually more than our unique experience. Could it be that consciousness is truly an element or result of the attraction itself--so that what we are perceiving in the moment is also conscious of the relationship as much as we are--that "our" (my) consciousness is really shared Consciousness that we egocentric beings claim as our own??? That the nameless, attractive, intelligent, loving force--as the source of the attractions--IS Consciousness, and we--as physical manifestations of this consciousness--experience a bit of this global consciousness too and we just claim it for ourselves?

Could it be that the personal, social and environmental atrocities of our species are a result of our disconnection from so many of our senses, which are our ‘connectors’ to Global Consciousness? Are we therefore unable to sense the attractions that would keep our lives and our earth in balance? Have we, who boast about being made in the Image of God and therefore assume we are the only truly conscious creatures, actually become the least conscious of all?

The lesson of my berry bush seems clear. The solution to the Earth’s plight is simple. Quieting the neocortex--so filled with humanity’s Disconnecting Stories—is a first step. Next, by becoming aware of and healing our neglected multiplicity of senses, we can increase our ability to access the global consciousness which registers in the Old Brain. The more senses we reconnect to nature, the more Consciousness we can experience. Trusting our senses, and following the attractions they register, will simply and naturally lead us to more Conscious, loving and Web-supporting behaviors.

The more I reconnect with Nature, the more I am able to incorporate the wisdom of natural systems into my life. Instead of the ‘disconnected stories’ of my culture, natural truths are increasingly guiding my life.