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A Comparative-multidisciplinary approach to the concepts of “consciousness” and “behaviour” in terms of human-animal resemblance and dissimilitude

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Abstract

The concept of "consciousness" is placed at the center of various researches from early historical periods despite being named after alternative terms. After numerous attempts to clarify the concept by adopting different viewpoints by different disciplines, the term is lately being addressed by a multidisciplinary partnership formed by a number of areas such as evolutionary biology, evolutionary psychology, neuroscience, comparative cognition apart from other ones. Since consciousness is originated from nervous system- especially from the brain and body-mind wholism- it comes to existence as a result of neuroanatomic and neurophysiologic constructions and functions/processes. Moreover, both mind/nervous system/mind-body wholism and consciousness are being shaped by an integrated genetic-environmental determinism. It is known that structure and function are always connected and function together harmoniously. One another important point is the connecting link between "consciousness" and "behaviour" which can be defined as "reactions exhibited by living organisms to the surrounding environment and/or changes of the environmental conditions". All living beings act pursuant to biologic adaptation to their own surrounding environment in order to provide the continuation of life and behave according to this purpose. All behaviours emerge as a result of electrochemical processes of nervous system - especially the brain. Brain and consciousness are the products of evolution. Modern science reveals that living creatures exhibit an evolutionary relationship of structure and function, have evolutionary, epigenetic, bodily/cerebral/mental grounds, mental properties/functions such as thoughts, emotions etc. result from the integrity of primitive-developed constructions/functions and conscious-unconscious processes and animal cognition studies indicate that animals exhibit low-grade mental/cognitive abilities that were previously attributed to only human beings. In this study, it is aimed to evaluate the concepts of "consciousness" and "behaviour", the relationship between these two terms as well as the conclusions of these determinations from a comparative-multidisciplinary perspective by taking human-animal similarity and dissimilarity into consideration.

Keywords: Consciousness, behaviour, animal, evolution, comparative, neuroscience

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