

Consciousness

General

Robt

"**Consciousness** at its simplest is "[sentience](#) or [awareness](#) of internal or external existence".^[1] Despite centuries of analyses, definitions, explanations and debates by philosophers and scientists, consciousness remains puzzling and controversial,^[2] being "at once the most familiar and most mysterious aspect of our lives".^[3] Perhaps the only widely agreed notion about the topic is the intuition that it exists.^[4] Opinions differ about what exactly needs to be studied and explained as consciousness. Sometimes it is synonymous with 'the [mind](#)', other times just an aspect of mind. In the past it was one's "inner life", the world of [introspection](#), of private [thought](#), [imagination](#) and [volition](#).^[5] Today, with modern research into the [brain](#) it often includes any kind of [experience](#), [cognition](#), [feeling](#) or [perception](#). It may be 'awareness', or 'awareness of awareness', or [self-awareness](#).^[6] There might be different levels or "orders" of consciousness,^[7] or different kinds of consciousness, or just one kind with different features.^[8] Other questions include whether only humans are conscious or all animals or even the whole universe. The disparate range of research, notions and speculations raises doubts whether the right questions are being asked.^[9]

Examples of the range of descriptions, definitions or explanations are: simple [wakefulness](#), one's sense of [selfhood](#) or [soul](#) explored by "[looking within](#)"; being a metaphorical "[stream](#)" of contents, or being a [mental state](#), [mental event](#) or [mental process](#) of the brain; having [phanera](#) or [qualia](#) and [subjectivity](#); being the '[something that it is like](#)' to 'have' or 'be' it; being the "inner theatre" or the executive control system of the mind.^[10] (Source [Wikipedia](#))

Spiritual consciousness

"To most philosophers, the word "consciousness" connotes the relationship between the mind and the world." (Source [Wikipedia](#)). But of course there exist many spiritual approaches to define consciousness. [Alice Bailey](#) and [Reshad Field](#) describing it as "the reaction of active intelligence to pattern!" This is a well formulated definition, which could be applied to many, something rather complex, other definitions. But in fact there are many definitions about spiritual or esoteric consciousness out there (See [Wikipedia](#)).

What is missing in the definition above is a definition of active intelligence. When we would be able to define what active intelligence means in a more or less scientific way, we would get a kind of common denominator of this topic. When it comes to science, consciousness and matter it could help to look at the [psychic force](#) of Jean-Emile Charon.

Directions of consciousness

Human consciousness can be interpreted in different eras or different directions. The key question is to be '[aware](#)' of what?, ones self, the physical or social world? The interpretations of what qualities human consciousness has, would differ slightly if one included the goal or focus of one's own consciousness.

Even more it would differ if ones compare consciousness about this world and the next world. In the articles '[Genesis and Metaphysics](#)' and '[Patterns of Human Evolution](#)' one can read about [Jean Gebbers](#) and [J.G. Bennetts](#) views about consciousness of the physical world, but also about consciousness about the unseen world or our true spiritual origin.



One can see in the graph the 'Cultural Human Evolution' increases the consciousness towards the creation of the physical world and on the other hand the so called 'Conscious Evolution' increases the consciousness towards our creator or our origin. In esoteric cycles the former is often called Lower consciousness and the latter [Higher consciousness](#). But one's should keep in mind that lower or higher can be situated in more than one dimension. E.g. each [life-force](#) itself has a hierarchy of lower and higher. The life of the messengers and saints are examples of human beings that have reached certain levels of consciousness in both directions. So to speak they have been examples of perfect [Human Being](#), which are, according to the Sufi tradition, humans that have both consciousness integrated in her bodies and life.

References

1. "[consciousness](#)". *Merriam-Webster*. Retrieved June 4, 2012.
2. Robert van Gulick (2004). "[Consciousness](#)". *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. *Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University*.
3. Susan Schneider; [Max Velmans](#) (2008). "Introduction". In Max Velmans; Susan Schneider (eds.). *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*. Wiley. ISBN 978-0-470-75145-9.
4. [John Searle](#) (2005). "Consciousness". In Honderich T (ed.). *The Oxford companion to philosophy*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-926479-7.
5. [Jaynes, Julian](#) (2000) [1976]. *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (PDF). Houghton Mifflin. ISBN 0-618-05707-2.
6. [Rochat, Philippe](#) (2003). "[Five levels of self-awareness as they unfold early in life](#)" (PDF). *Consciousness and Cognition*. **12** (4): 717–731. doi:10.1016/s1053-8100(03)00081-3. PMID 14656513.
7. [Peter Carruthers](#) (15 Aug 2011). "[Higher-Order Theories of Consciousness](#)". *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved 31 August 2014.
8. [Michael V. Antony](#) (2001). "Is consciousness ambiguous?". *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. **8**: 19–44.
9. [Hacker, P.M.S.](#) (2012). "[The Sad and Sorry History of Consciousness: being, among other things, a challenge to the "consciousness-studies community"](#)" (PDF). *Royal Institute of Philosophy*. supplementary volume 70.
10. [Farthing G](#) (1992). *The Psychology of Consciousness*. Prentice Hall. ISBN 978-0-13-728668-3.