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Reply I.D. apwp

The Realm of Consciousness, Pt 2. : Spirits & Levels of Complexity by Nate A. Lindell, created 24 March 2013

Last I heard, scientists are still not aware of what dark matter consists of, or even if it does exist vs. being merely a field of some sort (e.g. a gravitational field) of other detectable mass. Otherwise, in one way or another, scientists can detect all matter, even anti-matter (positrons), down to quarks that make up electrons, neutrons & protons. Science can detect these forms of matter because matter influences matter, even the tiniest bit of matter, such as a stream of electrons beamed at a substance by an electron microscope, which is why quantum physics are indeterminable; scientists alter the behavior of quantum particles simply by observing them, because the photons, x-rays, electrons or other matter that they must bounce off quantum particles to observe them "push" those particles. Every action has an equal & opposite reaction.

If spirits can influence matter, such as a human body, they must consist of some type of matter, which will be detectable by matter. I don't look forward to the day when someone will be able to tell me what type of matter spirits are made of because I don't believe such a day will come. Further, we don't need to assume the existence of an immaterial (or weirdly material) spirit to explain the phenomenon of consciousness.

Why people, even intellectual giants such as Carl Jung, believe in mysterious spirits & spirituality as strongly as some do is an intriguing question, which I found well answered in Gustave Jahoda's The Psychology of Superstition. It seems to me to be a case of not seeing the trees for the forest. People see the macro-effect of micro-components of consciousness, which, if not deeply considered, can seem... magical.

Consider this : ◦

Now this : ◡

Now this : ◉

Now this : ◉

Now this : ◉

Now this:



(skipped a couple levels of detail.)

"Ahh, it's an eye!" and I could keep adding levels of detail until you see a cool portrait of The King, Elvis, but then you'd have no reason to look for it in my soon-to-be-published collection of art & essays, available from www.PrisonsFoundation.org (buy a copy so I got the stamps to keep blogging!). My point is, each level of detail added to an observable event/phenomenon, such as the activity of an organism's nervous system, especially when you are dealing with high levels, creates an overall effect that seems magical, even though each component of the phenomenon is... boring:



When we interact with each other & even ourselves, we do so, typically, at a macro level. We interact with all the motivations, urges, etc. that compose a person. We tend not to think of them as a package of micro-components, but one, whole, indivisible person, which can lead to the "I-can't-believe-he/she-did-that!"¹ experience. After so long of doing this, it's hard to even imagine that there are many upon more components to one person (see post #99, "The Ingredients to our Personalities" for clarification).

M.I.T.'s Marvin Minsky, at pp. 86+87, inter alia, in his The Society of Mind, is responsible for really solidifying my understanding of the various levels/points of view that constitute our consciousnesses.

Because there's no spirit for us to blame consciousness on, I am certain that it is the product of neural activity. Even worms have neural activity, and amoebas have something like it. We can deem worms & amoebas conscious — hold on with your stakes & fire! — but obviously not to the degree of complexity found in some (sorry, not all) humans. Still, I do wonder if worms & amoebas are "happy" with their simple consciousness. Apparently so — ain't yet heard of alcoholic, junkie, suicidal, or crazy worms or amoebas. The more complex something is, the more are the ways that it can break.

f.n.1 Of course we can't believe he/she did that! Not only do we necessarily oversimplify our conceptions of people, because a complete conception would consume all the "space" in our minds (or more), We also blur their true nature with our own fantasies, projections, etc.