



In a brief report published in a recent issue of OMNI, biologist Lynn Margulis makes a strong case for the existence of consciousness in single-celled organisms. A long time observer of bacteria, Margulis describes what she sees as: "A microscopic theatre with thousands of beings all interacting, dying, killing, feeding, excreting and sexually provoking each other-- all activities most people think of as specifically human." Her conclusion? "The idea that only people are conscious makes me laugh."

Having no wish to be burned at some academic stake, Margulis makes plain that the consciousness she speaks of is less than that experienced by, harumph, humans. Others are less certain.

The idea that consciousness might extend to organisms smaller than human children is no shock to microbiologists and biochemists who commonly observe the simplest organisms behaving in ways that point to, not just knee-jerk self awareness, but also to keen sensitivity to changes in the biochemical soup in which they live out their less than human comedies.

If plants scream electromagnetically when torn from the ground, if trees release chemical distress signals to their fellows when attacked by disease, and if dolphins are at least as intelligent as half the humans in the local pub, how irrational is it to wonder if the sperm following the chemical scent of an unfertilized egg might not be in love?

The line between sentient and nonsentient life is erased entirely at the interface of quantum reality (that which is) and deep reality (all that might be but isn't).

The universe we observe is froth on the unmanifest sea of probabilities that underlies every object and event. In order for there to be anything, all possible somethings but one must disappear. The one that remains is the real world. The question naturally arises, what causes the collapse of probabilities into reality? What is it that triggers the creation of something from nothing?

Von Neumann's Proof, which has withstood logical assault for sixty years, shows that whatever it is that collapses what might be into what is, it isn't part of quantum reality. Which is to say, it is not part of the universe of objects and events. Von Neumann, who wrote the book commonly referred to as the quantum Bible, concluded from this that it is consciousness that draws the potential of the universe into form. Without consciousness, there is no difference, without difference, there are no observables; without observables, there is no empirical reality.

It is no great leap from Von Neumann's Proof to the suspicion that space/time itself is a pattern, or metric, overlaid onto the pregnant nothing of deep reality. The universe we observe thus becomes the fingerprint of consciousness, the result of deciding there should be light.

Given this, one needn't be sitting in a hot tub at Esalen to wonder if the orderly lattice of a crystal is less conscious of a sunrise than we are. Or if a black hole might not be aware of its place in the scheme of things, might not even enjoy stripping matter and energy apart. If Von Neumann's Proof is true, and no one has shown it is not, then consciousness is the common ingredient of all that is.

One further step can be taken. One of the fundamental principles of the universe as we know it is summed up in the term isotropy. An isotropic universe appears the same regardless of one's position in it. If you were stargazing from a small planet in the Crab Nebula, what you would see would be, with small statistical fluctuation, just what you would see from here. The same laws of physics would also apply, meaning that, had Von Neumann thought about the collapse of probabilities there, he would have come to the same conclusion.

So we come finally to the notion of point consciousness. If individual quanta arise, at each coordinate of space/time, from consciousness, and if the universe is isotropic, then it arises everywhere from consciousness. And if the universe arises everywhere from consciousness, it must be, at all points, conscious.

None of which makes Rush Limbaugh any easier to explain.



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OCA WATCH

The OCA sponsored a fundraiser in late August at the airport Holiday Inn, where Senator John McCain from Arizona was met at the airport by more than 30 protestors. Security and police officers escorted McCain out a side door and into an unmarked police car. They then drove him to the hotel where he was met by 30 more protestors.

"For a Republican like McCain to help an organization that is the most divisive in the state and the most divisive in the Republican Party is a real slap in the face" said protestor Lee Colman, a member of Log Cabin, a group of gay Republicans.

While McCain spoke more than 80 protestors were holding a candle-light vigil outside his office in Tucson.

OCA Chairman Lon Mabon said he hoped to raise more than \$3000 from the event and announced that the money would go toward strengthening the group's legal expertise so it can "take on the ACLU whenever they attack our values." Mabon said McCain had told him during Monday's visit that Senator Phil Gramm, R-Texas, had sent "his best wishes to the OCA" and would be coming to Oregon at a future time to address the group.

Currently the OCA is moving ahead with its City and County initiatives (nine of which recently were passed) even though they are not enforceable due to the passage of HB 3500.

The OCA is also continuing their recall efforts against anyone who dares to oppose them. Currently they seek to recall... basically everyone. Some examples include the entire city council of Medford, Albany's mayor, 14 House members, and the Governor. A word of warning: the "Coalition" seeking to recall Governor Roberts is calling itself "The Oregon Voters Club", but this "Coalition" includes the OCA.

Finally, The OCA has submitted a new ballot title for their statewide initiative. Once approved, they will have until June 1994 to gather 89,000 signatures needed to place it on the November ballot.



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