

Research Essay

Doing, Thinking & Being

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Abstract

“I think, therefore I am” - contemporary Western society remains essentially Cartesian in its belief that an individual essentially is an autonomous and absolute self that is the source of an individual’s intended thoughts. We embrace a Freudian belief in consciousness as a rational and willful psychic essence, constantly threatened by subconscious desires, urges, fears and unresolved conflicts. But as discussed in this paper, the ordinary activities of routines, habits, learning new skills, performing learned skills, social conversation and mindful meditation indicate that the conventional Cartesian and Freudian models of self and consciousness are flawed beliefs and not based on factual observations and logic reasoning. Contemporary neuroscientific theory suggests that consciousness is the causally determined functioning of neural processes, analogous to, though exponentially more complex than, the causally determined functioning of the other biologic systems. Contemporary philosophical theory suggests that the self is not an existential being, but rather a psychic construct that emerges from the restructuring of disparate moments and experiences into an enduring identity.

This paper suggests that there are three distinct states of consciousness. Neural Consciousness is causally determined neural functioning that determines beliefs, values, choices and preferences. I Consciousness is the sentient experience of sensory sensations, including emotions and thoughts. Furthermore, I Consciousness is capable of Critical Logic Reasoning, which can penetrate ordinary causally determined reasoning to reveal the individual’s causally determined beliefs and assumptions. Awareness Consciousness is the Being of presence, a transcendence that reveals the eternal Now. Perhaps the most significant point in the paper is that an individual’s beliefs, values, ideological identifications, associations, biases and prejudices are no more the product of objective reason than are her aesthetic and epicurean preferences. All of these are causally determined by the complex interactions between an individual’s genetic inheritance and environmental experiences. The Enlightenment project of replacing religious belief with reason has been subverted by this biological condition, as secular ideology has become the new faith.

Keywords: Neural Consciousness, I Consciousness, Awareness Consciousness, enlightenment.

1. Introduction

With a beginning, four irreducible forces causally determine the immutable laws of nature that causally determine all material forms, substances and phenomena.

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The myth of Eden identifies the human capacities for knowledge and moral judgments as the essential distinction between human being and animal being.

Modern mathematics and science, the Tree of Knowledge's bounty, have decoded the blueprint of material reality and endowed human beings with the ability to harness the forces of nature to serve human needs and desires. In contrast, philosophy and logic have failed in their enlightenment quest to identify a universal basis for determining moral truth. Worse, philosophy and logic have been corrupted and manipulated so as to cloak belief and rhetoric with the appearance of reason. Contemporary Western civilization hubristically proclaims its allegiance to logic and truth, but willfully ignores its devotion to causally determined beliefs, ideologies, assumptions, traditions, prejudices, and biases.

The end of the post-war boom presented new fundamental challenges for contemporary Western civilization. Thus far, society's intelligence and imagination have failed to produce effective strategies for meeting those challenges. People are increasingly losing faith in the government, corporations, media and all other institutions.

During crises throughout the Age of Religion, individuals sought reassurance and comfort from priests and prophets. In contemporary Western society today, individuals are seeking hope and direction from political ideologies and demagogues. Scapegoats are identified, promises are made, and results are guaranteed. Inconvenient facts are ignored, context is distorted, and unsubstantiated rumors, prejudices and judgments flavor the potion.

Individuals increasingly confuse ideological values with factual truths. Pragmatism is being replaced by a judgmental and self-righteous faith. Reasoned inquiry and reasonable disagreement are being outshouted by the zeal of inquisitorial condemnation. Opponents are vilified as heretics, apostates and sinners. Doctrine and dogma, the attributes of religion, are being resurrected in the Age of Reason.

Reason and truth are casualties of contemporary ideological evangelicalism. Enlightenment's ultimate value is falling victim to the mob's need for reassurance and certitude. Individuals prostrate themselves before golden calves because they crave certainty, but truth is indeterminate.

In this essay, I will illustrate that the nature of human consciousness is threefold:

Consciousness exists as the causally determined biochemical processing of neural programs.
Neural Consciousness.

Consciousness exists as the experience of sense sensations and the sense of self. I
Consciousness.

Consciousness exists as the being of presence. Awareness Consciousness.

Neural Consciousness is similar to the instinctual nature of animal behavior. It is the processing of external and internal sense sensation stimuli through neural programs that causally determine programmed behaviors and actions.

Spontaneous behaviors and actions occur without any prior sentient knowledge or awareness, much less intention or willfulness. Neural Consciousness is unmediated causality that absolutely determines an individual's inherent personality, beliefs, preferences and values.

I Consciousness is the state of being that most individuals mean when they refer to human consciousness. I Consciousness is the sentient experience of sense sensations, and the accompanying sense of self as the one who is experiencing. The functions of reasoned thinking and logical analysis occur in association with I Consciousness.

Awareness Consciousness is a now-presence. Neither doing nor experiencing, it is a realization of being that affects a discontinuity in the causality of Neural Consciousness.

2. Neural Consciousness

During the Age of Religion, Western civilization believed that a human being consisted of both an eternal soul and a mortal body. It viewed human nature as a tension between the moral imperative of the soul and the physical desires that tempted the flesh.

Modern Western civilization recast that essential duality of soul and body into a duality of conscious mind and body. The former is in the image of the essential spirit of being and cannot be reduced to physical materialism. The latter is the materiality of form and substance that cannot transcend determined causality.

It is amongst modern Western civilization's fundamental articles of faith that:

1. The existential essence of an individual is the conscious mind.
2. The conscious mind is rational and logical.
3. The conscious mind can willfully intend and determine an individual's behaviors, beliefs and values through the exercise of free will.

The modern model of human nature posits that an individual is both causally determined by biologic and biochemical fate, and free to create her own destiny by virtue of the absolute being that is her conscious mind. The causally determined body is a scientific fact. The willful autonomous mind is a belief in free will.

Most of an individual's behaviors and actions, including speech, occur spontaneously. That is, they occur without any prior consideration, intention or choice by a conscious mind.

For example, at dinner with friends, an individual participates in the free-wheeling flow of conversation without mentally preparing a script to recite. If an individual consciously tried to prepare and edit a story to tell or a point to make, the pace and rhythm of the conversation would move on and pass him by before he could say anything.

Ordinarily, an individual participates in social conversation by speaking without thinking about what he is going to say. He spontaneously tells a story or a joke, or responds to someone else's comment, in a manner that practically is involuntary. The individual blurts out a comment or remark without having experienced a decision to tell that story or make that comment. The individual does not know that he is going to speak or what he is going to say until after he says it. He lacks any privilege of prior knowledge as to the content of his speech.

An individual may be embarrassed or even horrified at what he says. Perhaps he inadvertently discloses a secret with which he had been entrusted. Perhaps he tells a joke that makes fun of facial tics, and then notices that one of the individuals in the group has that characteristic. Maybe he condemns a political party or advocacy group and then realizes that one of the individuals at the table is a loyal activist. Maybe he says his ex-wife's name while referring to his girlfriend.

The individual did not intend to speak as he did. He had no prior knowledge that those words were about to pass through his lips, or he would have choked them off. It is not conscious mind, but rather apparently causally determined body that is the source and cause of spontaneous speech.

But the world does not distinguish between speech or behavior that is produced by the causally determined body and speech or behavior that is intended by the conscious mind. The world holds an individual responsible for both types of speech and behaviors without distinction and judges him accordingly.

Just as spontaneous speech occurs without conscious mind intention or knowledge, so too does an individual's spontaneous emotional behaviors. Laughing (or blushing) at a dirty joke, snickering at a clever ridicule, rolling one's eyes at a dumb comment, dropping a squadron worth of F bombs when the opposing team hits the game winner at the buzzer, weeping at the sight of bruised, battered or abused children, slamming down the phone when customer service is incompetent – each of these and thousands others are spontaneous emotion reactions that are not intended, chosen, or caused by conscious mind. Even if the conscious mind afterwards is repelled by or ashamed of the emotion behavior or action, even if one's conscious mind sincerely and resolutely pledges to never repeat that emotion behavior or action, it generally seems that conscious mind is powerless to prevent a reoccurrence of the same or similar emotion behavior or action when the same or similar circumstances arise.

Consider a father who repeatedly yells at his son who daily delays doing his homework until after midnight because he plays hour after hour of video games. The father hates losing his temper, hates yelling at his son. He promises his self that he will control his temper. But the very next time that he checks up on his son and finds him playing video games with his homework undone, his frustration rises, boils over into anger, and finally explodes in rage. Again.

The father feels like a hostage and a victim of his temper, his personality, his causally determined emotion behavior. Others judge him as the willful source of his behavior, and he

feels shame, sorrow, guilt and embarrassment even though he does not consciously intend such behavior or action.

The conscious mind requires time in order to intend a behavior or action. For example, at a restaurant, an individual can willfully choose her meal because she does not have to order until she is ready to do so. An individual can plan to ask his co-worker out on a date the next day when he sees her at the water cooler (but conscious mind cannot prevent a spontaneous case of nervousness that leaves him tongue-tied and stammering). An individual can channel surf for as long as she wants before willfully deciding what to watch (or until the person next to her on the couch threatens to kill her or leave her, whichever occurs first).

Intentionality is a slow speed function that requires an opportunity for consideration and determination. In contrast, spontaneity functions at instantaneous speed. Spontaneous behaviors or actions occur without prior intention or knowledge by conscious mind.

Like spontaneous behaviors and actions, routine actions also are performed without conscious mind focus or participation. Consider the routines of putting on one's socks and shoes, pouring milk from the container into a glass, or riding a bicycle. The first few times a child tries to perform these actions, he must consciously focus on each discrete sequential step. He concentrates on each hesitant and clumsy movement. But over time, the action becomes routine and can be performed automatically, that is, mindlessly.

Once the action becomes routine, the individual performs it without the focus of conscious mind. Conscious mind is free to focus elsewhere. For example, with only rare exceptions, an individual's conscious mind is not focused on the toothbrush strokes when the individual brushes her teeth. Usually, conscious mind is listening to music or planning the day's activities or enjoying a fantasy while the toothbrushing occurs. The toothbrushing occurs without the individual experiencing the toothbrushing because the individual is experiencing the music or the planning or the fantasy.

Indeed, conscious mind is so uninvolved in the performance of simple routines like shoelace or necktie tying that the individual might find it difficult to describe in detail the discrete steps involved in making the bow or knot. An individual can tie his shoes and necktie with his eyes closed, but his conscious mind may not be able to describe how to do it. The individual can perform these routines even though he may not consciously 'know' how to do them.

Individuals perform not only relatively simple routines without conscious mind focus, but also complex routines. Indeed, the conscious mind is inherently ill-suited for attempting to direct and control complex behaviors given its apparent limitation of being able to intend and control only one specific physical movement at a time. Behavior and actions that involve a multiplicity of discrete physical actions that occur simultaneously can be performed only as a programmed-like routine.

Consider swinging a baseball bat. For most children, this is an innate action, a basic instinct. They pick up a bat and swing. But some children lack that instinct and need to be taught all of the mechanics involved. Teaching the batting stance is relatively simple: hold the bat in your

hands like this, put your feet here, point your toes in that direction. But the actual swinging of the bat, which seems simple when done instinctively, in fact requires a complex sequence of multiple muscular and skeletal movements involving the arms, shoulders, wrists, waist, hips, knees and legs. The numerous discrete movements of the different joints, muscles and skeletal structures must be choreographed and coordinated with different parts moving in different directions at the same time.

If the conscious mind focuses on the arms cocking back the bat as the pitcher goes into his wind-up, it cannot focus on torquing the knees and waist at the same time. If the conscious mind focuses on the knees and waist rotating forward towards the incoming pitch, it cannot focus on snapping the elbows and wrists in order to drive the bat into the ball.

After clumsy, tedious and frustrating repetition, sometimes focusing on this movement and sometimes on that part of the swing, a child eventually executes a swing that is a composite of stiff, halting, distinct movements, as conscious mind focus scrambles from one discrete movement to another. Continued commitment to bat swinging practice eventually melds the many into one – the performance of many discrete body movements as one integrated, now ‘natural’, even ‘instinctive’, swing, which occurs without conscious mind focus.

Repetitive practice of swinging the bat does not so much teach an individual how to swing a bat as it produces a neural bat swinging program. The bat swing becomes “natural” or “instinctive” in the sense that it is performed without conscious mind control or guidance. The body develops a bat swinging neural program that functions in a spontaneous, routinized manner.

Indeed, any self-conscious attempt by conscious mind to control the swing only interferes with the bat swinging neural program. The conscious mind’s attempt to control the bat swing produces a clumsy self-conscious effort and prevents the fluid coordinated swing of a programmed routine.

The conscious mind optimally functions as a targeting device that maintains a steady focus on the baseball as it leaves the pitcher’s hand and spirals towards the plate. The conscious mind should not try to even direct the bat towards the ball -- the batter is more likely to hit the ball if the conscious mind merely provides visual data to the neural system and allows the bat swinging program to process the visual neural data and adjust the bat swing spontaneously.

The baseball bat swinging example indicates how repeated practice can transform even a complex physical behavior or action into a routine that can be performed without conscious mind control or guidance. Moreover, an action performed as a routinized neural program will be significantly more consistent, i.e. effective, than if the program is compromised by the variability that is unavoidably associated with the conscious mind’s attempts to control or guide the behavior or action.

Consider basketball free throw shooting. After hundreds of hours of practice, a genetically predisposed player can develop a free throw shooting neural program that results in the basketball going into the basket 75%-85% of the time. 75%-85% of the time, the knees, legs, shoulders, elbows, wrists, hands and fingers bend, elevate and snap in essentially the same

manner and rhythm. The optimum role for conscious mind is limited to visually locking in on the rim and not thinking a thought.

But in the last two minutes of a championship game with the score tied, or in the schoolyard with a \$500 bet on the line, free throw shooting accuracy decreases significantly for most players. Why? Because conscious mind experiences pressure and stress, and self-consciously tries to control and guide the shot. Instead of trusting the neural program, which is impervious to stress and will not be affected by the stakes at risk, conscious mind interferes with and disrupts the processing of the program. The result is that the programmed form and consistent result is replaced by the variability of conscious mind-directed action.

One may object that it is not so impressive that the body can shoot free throws without conscious mind focus or control because the basket is a stationary target and there are no factors that can affect the shot other than the shooter's mechanics. Hitting a baseball may be somewhat more impressive given that the exact location and speed of the baseball varies and cannot be predicted, but that variation occurs only within a limited time and space.

However, one cannot deny that the ability of the body to drive a vehicle without conscious mind focus and control is indeed impressive. The road is an unpredictable chaotic environment. Other drivers do things that can make a bald man's nubs stand on end. Driving requires the variable performance of numerous different movements and maneuvers – i.e. accelerating, braking, steering, changing lanes, slowing down, etc. Yet probably everyone has had the experience while driving of suddenly becoming aware that he is driving and realizing that his conscious mind focus has not been on driving the vehicle for an extended period of time.

Imagine an individual leaving his home in the morning to begin his daily commute to work. He backs out of the driveway, proceeds out of the neighborhood and accesses the highway. He drives along the same route as always - and then suddenly, out of nothing, as if springing awake from a dream, he sees he is about to hit the stopped car in front of him. He slams on his brakes and with a screech just avoids an accident.

He looks around and sees that he is at Exit 41 on Highway 3. He realizes that he must not have been mindful of his driving for an extended period of time for some unknown number of miles. He searches his memory and remembers being on Highway 1 in the left-hand lane stuck behind a driver who was crawling along at barely the speed limit. He remembers his impatience, frustration and indignant self-righteousness, and then his triumphant satisfaction when finally, he is able to pass the vehicle, flip the driver the bird, accelerate to a speed of 75 and cruise down an empty stretch of asphalt.

He has no conscious memory of having driven four more miles after that on Highway 1, taking an exit to Highway 2, driving two miles on Highway 2, going through a bridge plaza, crossing the bridge, exiting to Highway 3 and then driving six more miles to the spot where he slammed on the brakes.

What was the focus of his conscious mind during those twenty minutes? He squeezes his memory and begins to recall that after accelerating past the turtle on Highway 1, his attention was drawn to the stereo which was playing an exquisite live jam from a 1971 Dead show at the

Fillmore. He remembers intently listening to the individual notes of Jerry's masterful solo dance, skip and hop down a simple highway not made by the hand of man, and then thinking that contemporary popular music lacks the artistic and spiritual transcendence that infuses the music of his youth.

He further remembers that he then wondered whether he just was getting old and whether today's youth would have the same prejudice about the music of their formative years being better and having greater value than the music to which their children would listen. (These were familiar thoughts that he had enjoyed experiencing numerous times before, and probably would enjoy numerous more times again.) He also recalls that he then began to think about getting older, and then about his 96-year-old father, and then about how his father's death would impact him.

As he scrutinizes his memory, he realizes that he didn't actually hear the Dead jam for very long, perhaps because he got lost in his thoughts. Finally, he remembers that his contemplation of his father's inevitable death was instantaneously disrupted by the alarming sight of red brake lights only three feet in front of him and closing fast.

At this point, he stops trying to remember the past and his conscious mind focus again returns to the present. He sees that traffic is beginning to move. He deftly slides right through two lanes of traffic, rolls off the exit ramp that leads to his office and waits at the red light. He becomes aware of fluffy white clouds adrift in the deep blue sea and is content.

The phenomenon of suddenly becoming aware of traffic conditions and realizing that one has not been mindfully focused on driving for an extended period of time is not that unusual. Nevertheless, it seems extraordinary, given the complexities and unforeseeable conditions that driving entails, that the causally determined body can perform this activity without conscious mind guidance or even focus. Yet the apparent capacity of the body to develop and process neural programs for even the most complex of activities seems to be practically without limit.

The development of neural programs that execute behaviors and upgrade skills can occur without conscious mind focus and does not occur only during the period of willful practice or effort. Neural program development ordinarily occurs over extended periods of time, including even while the individual is sleeping. Consider an individual who is studying for an exam or preparing a business meeting presentation. After working late into the night, she goes to sleep frustrated that her efforts have not been sufficiently successful and her performance is inadequate.

But when she wakes in the morning, she finds she has a command of the material that she did not have when she went to sleep. While she was sleeping, the body apparently continued processing neural data and developing a short-term neural memory program.

Similarly, a long frustrating day of bat swinging practice that evidences no sign of improvement can be followed the very next day by a significantly increased level of bat swinging proficiency. The improvement seen the next day reflects the improved neural program that the body processes continued to develop throughout the night.

Continued practice and experience provide an individual's neural system with additional and more detailed neural data that the body uses to fine tune and improve neural programs. When a teenager first begins to drive, his conscious mind focuses on and controls the driving at all times. He constantly checks the lane markings to see whether the car is within the lane. When he has to pass between two large trucks, he holds his breath, tightens his grip on the steering wheel and reduces his speed as he seemingly just barely squeezes through.

However, eventually most drivers stop consciously concerning themselves about whether the car is within the lane markings. Without even realizing it, they merely glance at the middle of the lane occasionally, and the vehicle follows their focus. Experienced drivers can readily tell whether there is room to pass a double parked moving van on a one-way narrow city street without getting out of the car to eyeball the passage width. As an individual's driving experience increases, his neural driving program becomes increasingly proficient, and the need for conscious mind focus and guidance correspondingly diminishes.

The human being is a conscious mind and causally determined body. Conscious mind does not intend or cause spontaneous and routinized behaviors and actions. The source and cause of this behavior (which is the majority of ordinary behavior), must be the determined causality of body.

That the determined causality of body is the source and cause of most ordinary behavior is not as surprising as it might seem at first blush. After all, no one denies that the determined causality of body is the source and cause of human biological functions. There is no dispute that breathing, digesting, and neural processing are causally determined and occur without conscious mind intention or control.

Infants are born with already-developed neural programs that enable them instinctively to suck and swallow without having to pass through a trial and error learning period that they might not survive. Similarly, babies reach, grasp, crawl, pull themselves up, walk, talk, learn, and decipher the forms and substances that are the world, all without any conscious mind intentionality, control or even involvement. Even adults see without looking, hear without listening, and similarly, smell, taste, and feel spontaneously as a result of unintended and non-mindful causally determined neural processing.

Indeed, even the behaviors and actions that individuals attribute to willful intentionality may actually be causally determined by the body's neural processing. In other words, what an individual experiences as free will intentionality may in fact be the experience of the causally determined processing of a specific behavior neural program.

Admittedly, there is as yet no direct biological evidence that establishes the existence of behavior neural programs that causally determine behaviors and actions that an individual attributes to free will intentionality. However, increasingly neuroscience research is producing data that appears to show that neural processing occurs prior to an individual's experience of a conscious intention to undertake that behavior. That data supports the hypothesis that the sense of free will intentionality is illusory.

Although there is a similar lack of direct biological evidence of neural mechanisms and processes that trigger and causally determine human biologic functions and babies' instinctive

behaviors, no one doubts the existence of such neural mechanisms and processes. At the very least, it seems apparent that despite the lack of biological evidence, there must exist neural programs and processes that cause and determine spontaneous behavior and routine actions without conscious mind intentionality. The lack of direct biological evidence cannot by itself refute the hypothesis that all behavior and activity is causally determined by neural programs and processing.

Conception bequeaths an individual with a set and range of genetic predispositions and propensities for certain fundamental emotion characteristics and states, including personality traits, emotions and behaviors. First as an infant and baby, and then as a child, an individual's continuous interactions with a myriad of environmental conditions produce an encyclopedic set of feedback that positively reinforces certain personality traits, behaviors and emotional patterns, and associates others with negative consequences. Over time, the original range of genetic dispositions is narrowed, modified, combined and synthesized. The random neural predispositions begin to develop into more complex neural programs that are causally triggered by certain environmental stimuli.

As a baby becomes a child and then a teenager, an individual's neural programs continue to develop. Some programs become deeply engraved into the neural system and begin to take on a permanent status. Other programs remain tenuous or unfinished, retaining a flexibility that allows significant modification in response to continuing environmental feedback. However, as the teenager becomes an adult, the neural programs become relatively set, and significant re-programming becomes ever more difficult and unlikely.

It is scientific fact that an individual's genetic inheritance as impacted by environmental conditions causally determines the individual's physical size, shape, and features. Similarly, science increasingly suspects that an individual's genetic inheritance creates biological baselines that render the individual susceptible to certain diseases and biological conditions, and resistant to others. It is reasonable to similarly suspect that an individual's genetic inheritance similarly creates biologic baselines that, as impacted and modified by environmental conditions, produce neural programs that causally determine the individual's personality, innate emotion and behavior patterns, and beliefs, preferences and values.

There is no dispute that most or all behaviors and activities of animal beings, including mammals, are causally determined by neural programs and processes. There is no dispute that the genetic inheritance of animal beings provides them with certain neural programs that causally determine certain instinctual behaviors without which individuals would not survive.

Just as animal beings have genetic causally determined instincts, so too individual human beings have instinctual beliefs, values, preferences and biases. For example, no one would argue that an individual willfully or logically chooses or intends her aesthetic preferences. Rather, an individual discovers the aesthetics that she inherently and instinctually prefers, i.e., she experiences aesthetic preferences that are causally determined by neural programs.

The reasons that an individual might offer to explain her aesthetic preferences are not the cause of her preferences but rather post-hoc rationalizations for her non-rational and arbitrary

preferences. Neither logic, reason nor rhetoric can persuade an individual to change her aesthetic preferences. An individual's aesthetic preferences are not the result of conscious mind determinations, but rather the result of genetic predispositions shaped and developed by environmental conditions into aesthetic neural programs.

Just as an individual has aesthetic preferences and values, an individual also has political, spiritual and moral beliefs, values, preferences, biases and judgments. The conventional understanding is that unlike aesthetic preferences, individuals rationally and willfully choose their beliefs, values, preferences, biases and judgment. But there is no factual evidence for that belief. In fact, an individual's political, spiritual and moral values and identity tend to exhibit the characteristics of beliefs sustained by faith rather than logical conclusions derived by facts and reason.

Study after study document that individuals who have strong ideological beliefs, values and opinions are reflexively hostile to conflicting assertions and rarely if ever even consider the facts, logic or substantive merit of contrary arguments. Such individuals spontaneously always reject contrary arguments as wrong.

If conscious mind rationally and willfully determines in whole or in part an individual's political values and identity, an individual should be willing to consider contrary arguments and change positions if the contrary position is more persuasive. But in fact, an individual's identity with his fundamental political values and beliefs is, with only rare exception, rigid and inflexible, immune to reason and logic. Just as an individual has emotion neural programs that produce spontaneous emotion behaviors in reaction to certain environmental triggers, an individual has political value and belief programs which produce spontaneous claims, assertions and arguments.

An individual's belief in a set of political values and policies is as immune from contrary arguments based on logic and reason as is an individual's belief in the existence of God. Indeed, a believer does not consider his faith in the existence of God to be a belief. Rather, he considers it to be the truth.

Belief is not subject to will or intention. An individual who desires to believe in the existence of God will remain riddled with doubt, no matter how sincere her desire to believe, until and unless the doubt spontaneously disappears, and her belief becomes true reality for her. Neither logic nor desire can dispel doubt. Intention is insufficient to create true belief. Faith is a matter of grace, i.e. the determined causality of neural processing.

Similarly, a political liberal does not choose his values or political identity any more than he chooses his aesthetics. He is a liberal because he believes in liberal values and policies as the truth. He did not reason his way to liberalism. Indeed, he cannot logically determine if liberal values and policies are better than conservative values and policies, because there is no objective truth or standard that can be used to logically prefer one to the other. Rather, he develops arguments that liberal values and policies are better, in order to justify and support his causally determined values and identity.

It is most unlikely that there exist specific genes and neural programs for liberalism or conservatism, monotheism or atheism, or capitalism or socialism. However, there likely are gene types and personality traits that predispose an individual to be more attracted to, for example, order instead of randomness, rules instead of spontaneity, judgment instead of forgiveness, authority instead of consensus, individuality instead of community, and predictability instead of possibility. Depending on an individual's matrix of personality traits, behavior programs, emotion programs and aesthetic preferences, she is more or less likely to be attracted and predisposed to one or another moral, spiritual, political or philosophical ideologies.

The biological processing of neural programs that causally determine an individual's behaviors and actions, beliefs and values, and aesthetic, political and moral identities and preferences, without any conscious mind intention, control, or prior awareness, is referred to herein as Neural Consciousness. Neural Consciousness functions like an organic machine, or like artificial intelligence. An individual does not experience Neural Consciousness processing; the individual experiences only the resulting behavior or action.

The objection that "consciousness" should be reserved only for the sentient mental state that exists when an individual is experiencing a sense sensation or thought, reveals the conventional bias that mind is the essential being of an individual and body is only the biological vehicle that sustains mind. However, the Decartesian priority of mind over body lacks a rational basis. An individual is as much his body as he is his mind, if not more so.

Though the nature of Neural Consciousness does not include any sense of "I" or "me", it is an individual's fundamental nature. Neural Consciousness is an individual's fate, a causal determination with roots located in the individual's conception. An individual cannot avoid his fate. He is his fate.

3. I Consciousness

Neural Consciousness is the biological causally determined processing of neural data. At the neural level of being, the body's sense receptors transform sensory stimulation into neural data that is transmitted for neural processing.

I Consciousness is an individual's sentient experience of neural data as sense sensations. An individual's consciousness of experience is the phenomena of I Consciousness.

I Consciousness produces a sense that individuals identify as self - the being who experiences. The sense of self occurs subsequent to and is distinct from I Consciousness experience. The self is neither a state of consciousness nor an I Consciousness experience. The attempt to experience one's self, to reveal one's self to self, is futile. Self does not have an existence separate and independent from the I Consciousness experience of sense sensations.

Essentially, an individual's self is a conceptual construct that unifies and integrates otherwise disparate sense sensation experiences into a narrative. Instead of life consisting of disparate moments of now experiences, life becomes a story with a beginning and end, a before and after

in which the self becomes the lead character, the enduring, imagined identity of she who experiences.

Individuals ignore the discontinuity of the sense of self and instead conceive of their self as their essential being. The quest to apprehend one's self, to reveal one's self as one's unconditional, authentic being, is the stalking of a phantom.

Experience of sense sensations is actual, direct, unmediated and instantaneous. Experience cannot be repeated; an individual cannot step into the same stream twice. The experience exhausts the sense sensation; only a memory remains.

Sometimes, causally determined neural processes transform sense sensation experience into concept symbols and images that identify, name, describe, characterize and classify the experience. The conceptualization of sense sensation experiences transforms experience into information that can be stored (i.e., remembered), evaluated and analyzed. Conceptualization creates a virtual reality in which knowledge and understanding take the place of experience.

The sentient experience of sense sensations is distinct from the conceptualization of information. The former is being that reveals the spirit of creation, the latter is causality that transforms spirit into word. Experience is a phenomena that occurs in the instant of now and then disappears forever, never to be repeated. Conceptualization produces enduring images and symbols.

An individual's description of an experience cannot reveal the sensation of the phenomena. Words are not the sound of a symphony, the redness of a rose, the pain of sorrow, or the pleasure of orgasm. Words can only communicate the symbols that culturally refer to sense sensations.

Although individuals see, hear, taste, smell and feel, self is not the willful intentional cause of the sense sensation experience. Sense sensation experience ordinarily is a spontaneous phenomenon. Individuals see without looking and hear without listening. Moreover, one's sense of self arises only as a subsequent effect of the I Consciousness experience.

Instead of saying "I saw the tree", "I heard the tree fall", or "I smelled a pie", it would be more accurate to say "there occurred a sentient visual experience of that tree", or "there occurred a sentient auditory experience of the tree crashing to the ground", or "there occurred a sentient olfactory experience of a freshly baked pie." One's "I" is a sense that arises in response to the experience.

Just as I Consciousness experience of sense sensations give rise to a sense of self, I Consciousness experience of emotions also gives rise to the sense of self. Indeed, phenomenologically an emotion is no different than a sense sensation in that it is produced by neural data that causes a spontaneous sentient I Consciousness experience.

An individual says 'I feel happy' or 'I feel sad' as if he is a self that has a being independent of and prior to the emotion experience. As if his self can choose or prevent certain emotions. It

would be more accurate to say “there occurred a sentient experience of anger” or “there occurred a sentient experience of joy.” Emotion is an experience, not a state of being.

I Consciousness experiences of sense sensations and emotions do not occur as a result of mindful intentionality or willfulness. Similarly, the I Consciousness experience of thought does not occur as a result of mindful intentionality or willfulness. Rather, it is caused and determined by Neural Consciousness causal processing.

Thought is usually a spontaneous experience that occurs without the individual having had any intention at all of generating a thought, much less generating a thought about a specific subject. To more accurately reflect the ordinary nature of thoughts, an individual should say “there occurred a sentient experience of a thought about...”

Spontaneous thoughts occur constantly. An individual spontaneously experiences thoughts while walking down the street, driving a car, sitting in a business meeting, brushing her teeth, etc. She experiences thoughts constituting desires, fantasies, memories, reminders, plans, opinions and judgments -- all without prior intention, each spontaneously.

Even when an individual intends to think, such as to analyze a problem, a conscious mind does not intend or determine the substantive content of the thoughts that occur. An individual does not know the substantive content of problem-solving thoughts until she experiences the thoughts. The individual may experience thoughts that propose ‘this way’ to solve the problem, but not experience thoughts that propose ‘that way’ to solve the problem. In other words, causally determined Neural Consciousness generated “this way” thoughts but did not generate “that way” thoughts for the individual to experience. The individual could not have thought about ‘that way’ to solve the problem, because Neural Consciousness did not generate “that way” problem solving thoughts. An individual is a hostage to her neural programming.

A conscious mind does not cause or determine the generation of thoughts any more than it causes or determines the functioning of the heart or liver, or the generation of emotions. Nevertheless, modern Western civilization believes an individual’s “I” to be the individual’s essence because it is assumed to be the autonomous source of thoughts. “I think therefore I am” is the succinct statement of the Cartesian faith.

In the Age of Religion, the “I” was believed to be in the image of the divine, absolute and unconditional creator. Although modern Western civilization no longer attributes the natural phenomena of the physical world to a discretionary intentional divine will, it still retains an egoistic deification of the I as a conditioned but not determined being that autonomously and willfully intends and chooses both thoughts and actions.

That thought is usually spontaneous and unintended, and its substantive content unknowable prior to the experience of the thought, indicates that the source that generates and determines the substantive content of thoughts most likely is the same determined causality that is the source of spontaneous behaviors, routines and emotions – i.e. Neural Consciousness. This hypothesis, that thoughts are causally generated and substantively determined spontaneously by causally

determined neural processing, is further supported by considering the experience of concentration meditation.

Concentration meditation generally involves a sustained I Consciousness focus on the breath (or any other object) without disruption or distraction. The individual intends for her breath to be her only experience, and to remain aware of her breath as her I Consciousness focus.

Thoughts threaten sustained specific I Consciousness focus because they tend to distract the I Consciousness focus and lure it away from the intended focus. Accordingly, an individual doing concentration meditation intends to not generate any thoughts and intends to not focus on thoughts if they do arise.

However, almost immediately for beginners and even eventually for experienced practitioners, there occurs a moment when the individual realizes that she is experiencing thoughts and not her breath. Repeatedly during the meditation practice, the individual becomes aware that she not only is experiencing thoughts and not her breath at that moment, but that she apparently has been experiencing a chain of thoughts for an extended period of time during which she was not aware that her I Consciousness focus was not on her breath. She cannot necessarily identify the moment when it happened but realizes that there must have been a moment when her I Consciousness focus changed.

Despite an individual's intention to not generate thoughts, thoughts are continuously generated. An individual's I Consciousness focus repeatedly is attracted to a thought like a fish to a lure. The I Consciousness focus sneaks a peek at the thought, takes a nibble and is hooked on a line of thoughts that reels it far away from the intended focus.

If an individual's conscious mind was the willful source of thought, how is it possible that thoughts continue to be generated even though the individual willfully intends not to generate thoughts. Why can't the conscious mind prevent thoughts from occurring? Further, if the conscious mind determines the focus of I consciousness, why do unintended thoughts become the I consciousness focus. The seeming impotence of conscious mind in the face of unintended thoughts evidences that conscious mind is not the source of thought.

Is the role of I Consciousness "merely" that of passively experiencing sense sensations, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and values? No.

First, there is nothing "mere" about the sentience that is I Consciousness. I Consciousness transforms being into creation that can be sanctified. In the absence of I Consciousness, being would be as if it were not, the proverbial tree crashing to the ground in a desolate forest.

I Consciousness experience can -- and should -- be a source of wonder, awe and gratitude. It is a sin -- perhaps the only one -- that human beings too often take being and I Consciousness for granted. Throughout the ages, true spiritual teachers have manifested authentic, unadorned and profound appreciation and gratefulness for the blessing of being. Without being, even nothing cannot be.

Second, although I Consciousness processing is too slow to initiate or determine spontaneous behavior and action, I Consciousness has the capacity to exercise a veto over drives and urges that seek expression or satisfaction through non-spontaneous behavior or action. An individual may experience a desire to eat a second dessert before bedtime, quit his job and try to write a novel, drive to Vegas and bet it all on one spin of the wheel, go out partying instead of studying for the next day's exam, spend money he doesn't have to buy a sports car, get divorced, or have an affair with his secretary. I Consciousness nurtures deliberative reflection and consideration of whether such urges and desires should be enjoyed only as fantasies but not realized in action.

Similarly, sustained I Consciousness focus can help solve problems, develop strategies and make plans by identifying optimally beneficial choices concerning short, intermediate and long-term goals and alternatives. Sustained I Consciousness focus can evaluate the costs and benefits of alternative possibilities, make choices, and plan the actions necessary to achieve those choices.

Perhaps most importantly, I Consciousness functioning provides human beings with their unique capacity to determine truth.

Science depends on the scientific method to establish material facts and truths. The scientific method requires a statement of hypothesis, design of experiments, recordings of observations and data, confirmation of the reliability of data, analyses of data, analyses of proposed conclusions, and publications for peer review. This process helps prevent factual, procedural and analytic errors, and optimizes the likelihood that experiments are appropriately designed to obtain reliable data, and alternative explanations for experimental results are identified and evaluated.

As the Enlightenment looked to science to reveal material truth, it looked to logic to reveal moral truth. Logic depends on Critical Logical Analysis ("CLA") to establish non-material facts and logic truths. CLA requires that each purported assertion of moral truth be based on verifiable facts and reasoning that is untainted by logical flaws.

An assertion of purported moral truth is not true if its purported factual basis is, in whole or in part, an assumption, belief, opinion, value or cultural prejudice. Similarly, an assertion of purported moral truth is not true if its reasoning is circular, involves bootstrapping, confuses correlation with causality, relies on insufficient inductive reasoning, contains factual inaccuracies, or fails to accurately distinguish between some, most and all, or sometimes, usually and always.

An individual's neural programs spontaneously generate thoughts that contain causally determined assumptions, beliefs, biases, judgments, and other categories of opinions in the guise of facts because that is the nature of neural thought programs. Neural programs generate data, and at the neural level there is no distinction between fact data and belief data. Data is data. Thus, an individual ordinarily cannot avoid experiencing these thoughts as facts.

An individual's casual review or evaluation of the substance of his thoughts spontaneously re-processes the same spontaneous neural programming that designated various opinions, beliefs and values as facts in the first instance. Expecting the same neural programming that generated

assumptions and beliefs in the guise of facts to distinguish those assumptions and beliefs from fact brings to mind Einstein's definition of insanity.

To be able to determine if she erroneously has experienced opinions or beliefs as facts, an individual must sustain an I Consciousness focus to objectively evaluate the thoughts spontaneously generated by Neural Consciousness. A sustained I Consciousness focus can force the processing of thoughts through non-spontaneous CLA programs. In other words, sustained I Consciousness focus can uplift thoughts from ordinary neural program spontaneous processing, to considered, analytic CLA processing.

Mere casual review and evaluation of causally determined reasoning will replicate the neural processing that caused the reasoning errors and flaws in the first place. Logic errors and flaws can be revealed only if the review and evaluation are a considered, deliberate activity of sustained I Consciousness focus.

The too-often unappreciated and unrealized potential of sustained I Consciousness focus is that it is the basis of the essential human capacity to subject Neural Consciousness spontaneity to the demands of logic and reveal moral and other qualitative truths.

Facts are absolute and universal. Quantitative attributes are facts, the truth of which can be established and confirmed directly by measurement and calculation, corroborative documents, and eyewitness testimony.

In contrast, qualitative attributes are not facts. They cannot be measured or quantified. They cannot be defined or documented on the basis of absolute universal criteria and standards. Qualitative attributes are subjective.

Qualitative attributes are social constructs, that is, beliefs, values, preferences, and biases that human beings project and impose on the world. Beauty and ugliness, kindness and selfishness, art and entertainment, achievement and goodness, success and failure, good and evil - different societies and different individuals define, identify and conceptualize these qualitative attributes and values differently, according to their beliefs, preferences, biases and traditions.

Individuals assert their subjective evaluations as pronouncements of fact: 'this is a good movie;' 'that restaurant serves lousy food;' 'that guy is a hunk.' Transforming those opinions into facts would require individuals to attribute the asserted quality to their experiences instead of to the object of their experience: "I enjoyed that movie;" "I did not like my meal;" "I am turned on by that guy."

No quanta of facts or logic can transform a qualitative preference into Truth. For example, movie A may be an artistic, profound and nuanced view of how social conditions influence the thoughts and actions of the protagonist, and movie B may be an entertaining though silly cartoon. However, there are no universal criteria by which movie A can be determined to be "better" than movie B. Similarly, although haute cuisine provides a wider, more nuanced, subtle and exquisitely stimulating range of tastes and flavors than does home cooking, the opinion of individuals who think that home cooking is better is not wrong but merely different.

The propensity of individuals to confuse subjective experience preference and bias with factual judgment is without adverse consequence when it relates to movies, restaurants, or ballplayers, and indeed can provide a harmless form of social debate and entertainment. However, when that confusion and misunderstanding relates to morality, politics or public policy, the consequences are often more severe.

Perhaps the most important truth revealed by CLA is that disputes based on conflicting or contrary values, beliefs, biases, preferences and assumptions, cannot be determined on the basis of truth because values, beliefs, biases, preferences and assumptions cannot be logically determined to be either true or false. In such cases, the only appropriate role of logic is to clarify the points of disagreement by identifying and evaluating the contrary assumptions, projections, priorities and ultimate goals. Logic cannot determine the right alternative, the best alternative, or the alternative most likely to be beneficial. CLA can only illuminate.

‘Agreeing to disagree’ is not a civil politeness. It is an understanding of the limits of logic and reason, and a commitment to truth.

4. Awareness Consciousness

Neural Consciousness is causally determined doing. I Consciousness is the experience of sense sensation. Awareness Consciousness is the being of presence.

Awareness is direct, immediate and unmediated being. It is being as the instantaneous moment of ‘now’. The phenomena of now is not a sense sensation and cannot be experienced. It is always now, and Awareness Consciousness is being present in the instantaneous moment.

Awareness confounds identification; it can only be pointed to by way of example. For instance, imagine a charming alpine village with views of snow-capped peaks towering high above a glacial lake. Cobblestone streets are lined with shops and cafes. Musicians and street performers entertain around the plaza fountain.

One sunny morning, with puffy white clouds floating across the firmament and the aroma of fresh baked goods tantalizing the appetites of passersby, a woman walks down the street. She is oblivious to the sights, sounds and smells. Her I Consciousness is experiencing thoughts about a political issue, or perhaps a business project, or perhaps a favorite fantasy.

Suddenly, out of nothing, she is a now-presence. There is a discontinuity in her experiencing. She is aware of herself as being.

By being aware, her presence reveals the presence of the world. It is not possible to identify a cause for her having become aware. Nothing happened, but her being changed.

With a deep breath, the woman becomes Aware that her I Consciousness focus is on thoughts and is ignoring the sensations around her. Her I Consciousness focus changes and she begins to experience the sense sensations that the village offers. She is enchanted by the scenery, aroused by the aromas and delighted by the plaza performers.

Awareness is associated with a pause or discontinuity in the Neural Consciousness processing that causally determines an individual's I Consciousness focus. Through this discontinuity, an opportunity for beginning arises.

Awareness Consciousness can emerge for only an isolated instantaneous moment and then disappear without a trace, or it can recurrently punctuate the I Consciousness for some period of time, during which the individual's now-presence is sustained by its renewal. For example, imagine that the woman in the alpine village begins to experience the sights and sounds of the village. She experiences the sense sensations as particularly vivid and poignant, and she experiences appreciation and gratitude. She experiences the sense sensations, then has a moment of awareness, and then that sequence repeats.

But then she starts to think about the village's historical charm and compares it to the modernistic utilitarianism of her neighborhood back home. Those thoughts lead to other thoughts about the costs and benefits of technology and consumerism. All too quickly, her I Consciousness focus locks in on the causally determined stream of thoughts. She is not aware that she is experiencing only thoughts. She does not realize that her state of being has changed. She is no longer aware.

Loss of awareness correlates with the ensnarement of the I Consciousness focus by a chain of thoughts. Limited, isolated thoughts that drift into, and then out of I Consciousness focus do not necessarily disturb the recurring punctuation of the I Consciousness experience with the now-presence of Awareness Consciousness. However, when I Consciousness focus remains fixed on one thought after another, the chain of thoughts locks out the alternating cycle of punctuation and eliminates the individual's now-presence until some future moment when Awareness Consciousness again emerges from nothingness.

The I Consciousness experience of other sense sensations (i.e., other than thoughts) appears generally to be more compatible with Awareness Consciousness than it is with the experience of thoughts. In fact, the experiences of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching, sometimes seem fuller, more intense and more vivid when they occur in association with a state of awareness than do the same sense sensations experienced in a non-aware state.

Yet an individual does not become ensnared by the experience of intense and vibrant sense sensations as readily as he does from a chain of thoughts. So long as an individual remains present with these sense sensations and her I Consciousness focus does not become hooked on thoughts that conceptualize and evaluate the quality of these sense sensations, the individual remains aware of the continued punctuation of now-presence, a realization of being.

With regard to sustaining Awareness Consciousness, the difference between experiencing thoughts and experiencing non-thought sense sensations is perhaps due to the fact that awareness is a now presence. Non-thought sense sensations occur and are experienced in the instant of now, just like the temporality of awareness. In contrast, thoughts occur in connection with the non-temporality of conceptual virtual reality. Memories and judgments replay and evaluate the

past and hopes and fears imagine the future. There may be an inherent dislocation between the now-presence of awareness and the past and future focus of thoughts.

The grace of Awareness Consciousness can arise in two ways. In the hypothetical narrative above, the woman becomes aware without any intention to do so. One moment she is not aware and then instantaneously she is aware.

Alternatively, sometimes an individual willfully seeks to be aware. The difficulty in seeking awareness is that awareness is a not-doing. It cannot be realized by active doing, such as affirmatively seeking to prevent thought or seeking to control I Consciousness focus. Not-doing is a letting go, a surrendering. The being of not-doing is the being of presence.

Why would anyone care about being aware? What benefit or value can awareness offer?

Some individuals value awareness because sometimes they experience sense sensations more intensely and vibrantly when they are aware. They report that in comparison, non-aware experiences of sense sensations sometimes seem to lack a similar depth and brilliance. They further report that a now-presence sometimes makes their experiences more vivid, pleasurable and fun.

Perhaps this perceived difference between aware and not-aware sense sensation experiences is, at least in part, a result of the increased focus and concentration that occurs when an individual's I Consciousness focus is not distracted by thoughts. Often, an individual classifies, evaluates and judges sense sensations practically instantaneously with his experience of them. Those thoughts interfere with and distract the I Consciousness focus away from the sense sensation experience and towards the conceptualizing thought experience. In contrast, the state of Awareness Consciousness tends to be accompanied by a deeper and more sustained focus on the aesthetic sense sensation because there are no or at least fewer thoughts to distract the I Consciousness focus.

On the other hand, perhaps this perceived difference occurs because awareness somehow provides a kind of bridge between the being of the individual and the being of the world. A transcendent oneness of being momentarily becomes manifest, and perhaps it is this union that produces the greater-than-ordinary vibrancy and brilliance.

Some individuals value Awareness Consciousness because they are attracted to, perhaps even fulfilled by, the phenomena of the being of presence. These individuals feel more alive, more real or more "here" when they are aware. Some individuals identify the state of Awareness Consciousness as their essential being.

For these individuals, Awareness Consciousness is not a means to an end. They are not looking for Awareness Consciousness to provide them with happiness, pleasure, contentment or success. For these individuals, being aware is its own reward.

Some individuals may value Awareness Consciousness because in that state of being, they sometimes are better able to sense when their Neural Consciousness is processing a particular

emotion behavior program. As a more effective early detection warning, Awareness Consciousness provides individuals with a better chance of diffusing that emotion state and discontinuing that neural processing.

In the hypothetical narrative of a father who continually loses his temper when confronting his son who is playing video games instead of doing homework, the father's repeated attempts to control his temper and avoid yelling are futile, at best only temporarily delaying the emotional outburst. An individual's well-intended efforts to suppress emotional behaviors that are being processed by Neural Consciousness programs are usually doomed to fail because suppression requires constant I Consciousness resistance. When I Consciousness focus strays from the individual's emotions, as inevitably occurs, the I conscious resistance to the emotional behavior disappears and the neural processing is not blocked from triggering the emotional behavior.

Some individuals report that the now-presence of awareness sometimes affects a kind of discontinuity in their state of being that resets Neural Consciousness processing to a neutral state of being. It is as if the now-presence flicks a switch that grounds and dissipates the emotion current, as opposed to merely suppressing it. Of course, such a deactivation of the neural program processing may only be temporary. The same causal trigger that began the processing of the emotion neural program prior to the discontinuity can reoccur and reignite that same neural processing.

Finally, for some individuals Awareness Consciousness can provide a sense of spirituality. Some individuals report that sometimes the being of presence provides a sense of transcendence, in which the individuated being of the individual and the individuated being of material objects join, or seem to join, in a oneness that manifests the source of all.

The spirituality revealed by awareness is not a doctrine and dogma religion. It is not a revelation that can be conceptualized. The conventional good/evil duality is replaced by a being/nothingness polarity, where being is consecrated as holy. Awareness becomes a vehicle for transforming doing and experiencing into means of consecrating creation and redeeming being.

To attempt to experience and conceptualize Awareness Consciousness is futile. Awareness Consciousness does not have any attributes for I Consciousness to experience. Awareness Consciousness is never "there" and never "that". The attempt to experience and conceptualize Awareness Consciousness is I Consciousness tracking a phantom.

Since individuals do not and cannot experience Awareness Consciousness (which would be distinct from being in a state of Awareness Consciousness), identifications of and conceptualizations about Awareness Consciousness lack an actual factual foundation. An individual cannot know anything about awareness and can only have beliefs about awareness.

5. Afterward

Modern Western civilization has deified the human I as the autonomous source and cause of thought. Thinking is consecrated as an individual's realization of his human potential and manifestation of his essential self.

An individual can watch thoughts flow into and out of her I Consciousness, sometimes as a babbling brook sliding over smooth stones and sometimes as a raging river overflowing its banks. An individual experiences his thoughts and sometimes is carried away by his thoughts. But the self does not generate thoughts.

Compassion is not a moral quality. Unlike kindness or helpfulness, compassion's essence is not that of goodness. Rather, it is the rational recognition of each individual's causally determined karmic predicament. It is an understanding that an individual cannot act differently than he does.

Compassion often is misunderstood as tolerance or a forbearance of judgment. It is not. Compassion is an unconditional acceptance of the causally determined nature of reality.

To forgive may be divine; to be forgiven may be salvation. But perhaps individuals are more in need of acceptance than forgiveness. Causally determined individuals have no sins for which to be absolved, but rather shame and embarrassment from which to be relieved.

The 20th century offered Western civilization two different models of human being. One model was based on a rational, undetermined, conscious ego under assault from unresolved traumas and obsessions that haunt the depths of an individual's subconscious. The alternate model consists of a causality whereby behaviors are triggered by stimuli and determined by past experiences of rewards and punishments.

The former model proved a fertile field for dramatic, romantic and tragic creative productions that illuminated, inspired, entertained and titillated. The latter model was condemned as an enemy of freedom and individuality.

Modern Western civilization overwhelmingly embraced the drama of intention and shunned the science of stimulus/reflex conditioning. Despite the cultural success of Freudian theory, the effectiveness of Freudian treatment and therapy proved to be limited and is only rarely practiced in its classical form anymore. In contrast, notwithstanding the general disdain for behaviorism, today's cognitive treatments and therapies tend to reflect principles of behaviorism. Moreover, the more recent emergence of pharmacological treatments evidence that at least in part human being is determined by biochemical causality.

Human beings once "knew" that the earth was the center of the universe. Human beings once knew that famines, earthquakes and military outcomes were determined by divine judgment. Human beings once knew that human beings were specially created by a divine being in the image of the divine creator.

Today, human beings "know" that they have free will and undetermined intentionality. But what will human beings know tomorrow?