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<http://schwitzsplinters.blogspot.com/2012/03/why-tononi-should-think-that-united.html>

the splintered mind

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This is the fourth and probably last in a series of posts on why several major theorists of consciousness should attribute literal "phenomenal" conscious experience to the United States, considered as a concrete but spatially distributed entity at least partly composed by citizens and residents. Previous posts treated Dennett, Dretske, and Humphrey.

"I chose Dennett, Dretske, Humphrey, and Tononi as my sample theorists for two reasons: First, they represent a diverse range of very prominent materialist theories of conscious. And second, they are theoretically ambitious, trying to explain consciousness..."

"Tononi equates consciousness with "integrated information". "Information", in Tononi's sense, is abundant in the universe – present everywhere or almost everywhere there is causation. And information is integrated, at least in a tiny degree, whenever there are contingent causal connections within a system with a bit a structure –

"He says that "even a binary photodiode is not completely unconscious, but rather enjoys exactly 1 bit of consciousness" (2008, p. 236; cf. Chalmers 1996 on thermostats). Likewise, Tononi attributes "qualia" (that is, consciousness) to simple logical AND and OR gates (Balduzzi and Tononi 2009). On Tononi's view, what distinguishes human consciousness from photodiode consciousness, OR-gate consciousness, and speck-of-dust consciousness is its richness of detail..."

"It seems straightforward that residents of the United States also form multiple overlapping, causally connected complexes.

"In the comments section, Scott Bakker has kindly pointed me toward a new paper by Tononi. This paper seems to reflect a substantial change in Tononi's position with respect to the issues above. While I think the view above accurately captures Tononi's view through at least 2009, it will require substantial modification in light of his most recent posts

Wednesday, June 06, 2012

Why Tononi Should Allow That Conscious Entities Can Have Conscious Parts

my March interpretation of Tononi was out of date. More recently, (here [in note 9] and here [HT Scott Bakker and Luis Favela]), Tononi has endorsed what I will call an anti-nesting principle: A conscious entity cannot contain another conscious entity as a part. Tononi suggests that whenever one information-integrated system is nested in another, consciousness will exist only in the system with this highest degree of informational integration.

Tononi defends this principle by appeal to Occam's razor... But it's unclear why Tononi should put much weight on the intuitive resistance to group consciousness, given his near panpsychism.

Searls' comments on panpsychism apply here;

And what about the possible nesting of consciousness in the human body? The heart has been shown to be a seat of consciousness.

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