

## ESSENCE OF MAN



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## DESACRALIZATION OF THE BRAIN

**T**his study discusses a particular approach in modern science that could be described as desacralization of the brain. Classical philosophy considered the brain an amazing work of God. The brain was seen as a source of rationality and memory and also as a sign of human greatness. However, the defects, observed in the brain during its study, denounced its value of a great triumph of evolution. A number of current studies charge the brain with a variety of serious faults. Thus, philosophy needs to reconsider such concepts as man, consciousness, brain and evolution.

The author refers to different neurological studies and tries to link their results with the philosophical-anthropologic insight. This study is the first to analyze the brain desacralization phenomenon. The author is critical of those researchers who intend to eliminate psychology and reduce all psychological processes to physical reflexes. He also disagrees with those who reject human free will relying on partly incorrect researches. Many of the problems introduced in this study require a more thorough philosophical study.

Since ancient times, the brain was treated as the seat of the soul. The soul understood as a subtle matter is able to travel through the brain faster than lightning. However, learning the functioning of this wonder of the universe was extremely hard for people. It was only in Renaissance that the Church allowed dissection. With a lancet, one was determined to penetrate the human brain and to disclose its mysteries. Learning the workings of the brain seemed to bring people on the brink of outstanding discoveries. Though

even in our times when science has studied almost every brain gyrus and ganglion, the mysteries of the brain remain unrevealed and the transcendent horizons do not expand. We are still amazed by the enormous speed of information flow in grey cells, still surprised by the number of thoughts that come to the vigorous minds of common earthlings, still fascinated by the depths of memory. The power of the brain, even of a sleeping one, is astonishing. The brain is the symbol of incredible discoveries, a storage center of an unbelievable range of ideas. The brain is at its best when creating something new and unseen.

However, the further progress in brain studies brought more and more disappointments. Those men of science who invented the lightning rod probably felt the same. At first they believed they could tame the lightning, but it never happened. The scientists appeased their enthusiasm and even suggested that fireballs possess rationality... Anyway, the belief that the brain is unique and untamable seemed to be undermined.

With the accumulation of groundbreaking knowledge on the human brain, its mystic aura began to fade. The magic disappeared as the brain turned out to be just another kind of machine, just another gadget. Though still regarded as powerful and fast, unique and capacious, with the invention of computers the brain was thought to be easily constructible. The conflict between brain and computer added some arguments for the significance of the brain. It has many inherent defects though at first view it seems to have perfect features. However, the brain is a rough sketch, a preliminary outline. It looks as if nature has been working hard to endow it with positive features but failed and lost all interest in its own miraculous creation.

Surprisingly, whenever a new discovery in neuroscience is about to reestablish the conviction in the holiness of the brain, it starts to resemble a powerful but defective machine that could even destroy humanity. Moreover, today the very process of studying the brain mysteries is devoid of that veneration which we observe on the faces of spectators, pictured in the Renaissance paintings of anatomy lessons. The brain is no longer a planet injudicious amidst the planets calculated. It no longer raises numinosity, for now it is treated as an object with quantitative and qualitative characteristics equally to any other physical object. Scientists mostly discuss brain clusters, biorhythms and structures. The magic turns into an engineering and neuroscience project.

However, today the idea of inherent and evolutionary viciousness of the brain surprisingly gains popularity. Actually, where does the belief in the reason and impeccability of evolution comes from? Indeed, today in neurospecialists do their best to demystify brain. They blame God as a universal designer who could not directly create a perfect mechanism that would be a worthy present to humanity. Whereas evolution implies incongruities, rejection and even extreme eccentricities. Evolution and preestablished perfection are incompatibles.

Further the article discusses the theory according to which consciousness is not necessarily a product of the brain. Stanislaw Grof doubts the logics of this conclusion, made by the mechanistic science. Indeed, other theoretic systems would interpret the given data differently. He illustrates it with a simple example of television. Only all the components working properly provide high-quality image and sound while any defect or damaged component brings a specific distortion.

Considering these arguments the discussion on the defects of the brain is almost dismissed, as it turns out that the brain is only a translator for the psyche and not its generator. Perhaps, our brain is not the perfect instrument to transmit information which rushes upon us from other sources. This would mean that the brain is not the source of human thoughts and passions. There are no grounds to attribute to it the astonishing discoveries, praised by poets and philosophers. Great mysteries are now divided from the brain, and it has lost its aura of sanctity and righteousness.

**Keywords:** brain, consciousness, human, memory, rationality, neuroscience, stupidity, physiology, psyche, intellect

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