

# Review of: "Planetary consciousness incites probably transcendent feelings and deepens the polarization of worldviews"

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I am afraid to say that I do not think this hypothesis can hold together.

The authors draw on the CEMI field theory, which includes false assumptions. McFadden has claimed there is a unified brain EM field but there is not. The universal EM field has a unity in the sense of being one continuous dynamic element throughout spacetime but local subfields can only be considered unified to the extent that they have a unified interaction with some specific dynamic unit – for example the EM field that interacts with an aerial.

McFadden has claimed that all brain cells can pick up the global brain EM field 'in the way that mobile phones at different places can pick up the same signals'. This is incorrect. A mobile phone only picks up EM potentials in the domain of the aerial and only detects changing patterns in time, not space. If each cell in the brain can pick up an EM field, which it likely can, it will only be the EM field in its own dendritic domain.

Moreover, there is something back to front about the CEMI theory as I read it. It is intended to explain 'unity' of consciousness or binding. But if it were correct it would not produce a single unified subject, but rather many millions of cellular subjects all reading the same patterns. There is nothing wrong in that possibility but the theory sets out to demonstrate the opposite. Moreover, we can explain many cells reading the same patterns using simple neurone doctrine and axonal branching. Cells producing sensory signals selected for salience almost certainly have their signals sent to millions of cells downstream through axonal branching and relays.

There is no reason to think that brains are conscious, as a whole, in the sense of the whole brain supporting some unified event in which qualia are manifest. This is a popular intuition but popular intuitions about mind tend to be wrong. I do not think the authors have made a case for the world or indeed a brain having global sentience, awareness or consciousness.

Putting qualia aside there is an operational sense of 'consciousness' used to imply co-ordinated activity by a system of interacting parts dependent on representations of outside world events and inferences about useful responses for the system as a whole. In this sense plants would be conscious. It might be interesting to consider the developing network of electronic communication as such a system if it had a globally distributed representation of useful interactions between the whole and world. I am afraid I do not think the authors have made this case either. We might consider a time when all computers share representations of their collective selves, maybe like a parasitic ant colony living off humans but as

yet, fortunately, that situation does not seem to have arrived!