

Peer Review

Review of: "Growing Confidence and Remaining Uncertainty About Animal Consciousness"

Hany Akeel Al-hussaniy¹

1. University of Baghdad, Iraq

Louis Irwin's review, *Growing Confidence and Remaining Uncertainty About Animal Consciousness*, offers a comprehensive and balanced synthesis of the current landscape in comparative consciousness research, articulating areas of emerging consensus alongside enduring theoretical challenges. The article is particularly strong in clarifying definitional and ontological benchmarks—highlighting awareness, unity, qualitative content, mental causation, and selfhood as core phenomenological features—while grounding these in evolutionary and neurobiological frameworks across vertebrates and select invertebrates. Its integration of major theoretical models, including the Dynamic Thalamocortical Core, Global Neuronal Workspace, and Higher-Order Thought, demonstrates scholarly breadth and intellectual neutrality, acknowledging both convergences and empirical tensions. The evolutionary argument for multiple independent origins of consciousness is thoughtfully presented and supported by comparative neuroanatomical evidence. Importantly, the paper does not overstate conclusions; instead, it identifies three persistent gaps: defining precise neural correlates, bridging mechanism with phenomenology, and identifying the “monitoring” or filtering mechanism of conscious access. While largely conceptual rather than empirical, the review succeeds as a state-of-the-field benchmark that is rigorous, cautiously framed, and valuable for guiding future interdisciplinary research in neuroscience, philosophy of mind, and evolutionary biology.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.