

Bright air, brilliant fire - on the matter of the mind

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Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On The Matter Of The Mind by Gerald M. Edelman

But as he does so only in a scientific, biological way, Edelman for me finally fails. Edelman argued that the mind and consciousness are purely biological phenomena, arising from complex cellular processes within the brain, and that the development of consciousness and intelligence can be explained by Darwinian theory. Are we more than our brains? None the less, his strictly biological approach is a valuable first step.

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Edelman has the clearest ideas about the structure of this computer, but he denies that the metaphor of the computer is valid.

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He is dismissive of those who think physics important to understanding consciousness.

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No two brains have the same experience, no two brains are alike. While this is something I'd feel reservations about recommending friends to read, it's something I'd like all of my friends to have read. But, also, consciousness in the brain is associated with evolving structures that in no way resemble the point-to-point wiring systems in computers.

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A sample of brain tissue the size of a match head contains about a billion connections, and if we consider how these neuronal connections might be variously combined, the number of possible permutations becomes hyper-astronomical — in the order of ten followed by millions of zeros.

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But in wanting to have a science of mind based upon biology, I would argue that his reductionist approach leaves many questions unanswered. He attended public schools in New York, graduating from, and going on to college in where he graduated magna cum laude with a from in 1950 and

received an from the in 1954. How to relate the importance of social interaction in development and throughout life? He thinks he can identify those brain structures and processes associated with human consciousness.

Bright Air, Brilliant Fire; On the Matter of the Mind.

He, like Rosenfield, sees the emergence of a primary consciousness possessed by birds and mammals? This contrasts starkly with Platonic essentialism, which requires a typology created from the top down.

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