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## Memos and consciousness: Friend or foe?

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### Abstract

Besides the renowned biologist, Richard Dawkins, Dennett is amongst the first to be cognizance of the importance of memes, making it central in the formulation of a Dennettian theory of consciousness. The importance of memes in Dennett's theory of consciousness lies second only to his heterophenomenological theory. This paper argues that Dennett's conception of meme and consciousness is flawed. It raises difficult and thorny issues that could not be easily resolved and hence discrediting Dennett's theorizing of consciousness generally.

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### 1. Introduction

Besides heterophenomenology, it is Dennett's deeply rooted belief that memes play an important role in yielding some kind of software that results in human consciousness. And as far as Dennett's theory of consciousness is concerned, without language, culture and memes, his theory would be like automobiles without wheels. Dennett believes that one of the most important innovations in evolutionary history crucial for the birth of Homo Sapiens and the spread of cultures and civilizations was the invention of language. Dennett argues that the dawn of language provides the ground for the onset of another wave of evolutionary revolution through the birth of memes. According to Dennett, along the evolutionary path of human acquisition of language, there comes a time when vocalization becomes an important component of communication, from which humans began to recognize the virtues of self-stimulation by talking and asking oneself questions, as if it is drawing and writing to oneself. This is important (innovation) as it advances new and novel ways in which cognitive systems could be enhanced through virtual wirings that weld up subsystems not hardwired in the brain [11]. These spread and creation of memes are, however, not possible without the invention of language. So, the discovery of both memes and language bestow powerful leverage that confers tremendous advantage of flexibility to the discovery of new design space, as well as accelerating by many order of magnitudes the rate of evolution of the human minds [12].

### 2. Evolution of Consciousness

Dennett's novel idea, however, is the incorporation of memes, language and culture into his theory of consciousness. The function of memes to cultural evolution is largely similar to that of genes to biological

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