

William James (1842-1910)

Introspection led him to the idea that the mind or consciousness is more like a stream than a clockwork of springs and gears. It was natural for a budding human consciousness to compare itself to a machine. Nowadays the computer is the popular comparison.

James conclusion is remarkable unless you grant the possibility that his mind/consciousness was a step or two more advanced than those who think that the brain has a locus somewhere inside that runs the show. The stream concept made a lot of people very uncomfortable. Still does.

James would have loved to have had the brain-imaging tools that Edelman uses. Here is an excerpt from the following source:

The race as a whole largely agrees as to what it shall notice and name; and among the noticed parts we select in much the same way for accentuation and preference, or subordination and dislike. There is, however, one entirely extraordinary case in which no two men ever are known to choose alike. One great splitting of the whole universe into two halves is made by each of us; and for each of us almost all of the interest attaches to one of the halves; but we all draw the line of division between them in a different place.

Original source: James, William (1892). *Psychology*, Cleveland & New York, World, Chapter XI.

Another important aspect in the above excerpt is the phrase 'no two men are ever known to choose alike'. Neither cogs and wheels, and no identical contents either.

[Net Link 1](#) A resource developed by Christopher D. Green, York University, Toronto, Ontario.

[Net Link 2 - Wikipedia](#)