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A Short Case Study about where Human Consciousness Originates and Whether Love Sustains it

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Abstract
Where does human consciousness come from? Science and religion have not answered this question; physics and neuroscience often disagree. This paper asks what one Swedish scientist-turned-mystic, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), reported after 27 years of journeys between physical, spiritual and heavenly worlds. His answer is direct: *We do not make life, we receive it, and love is the life we receive.* He is the only scientist I know of who experienced, and documented, complex and daily dual consciousness (versus Near Death Experience). Thus I asked three Artificial Intelligence systems (Claude, Gemini and ChatGPT) the same question about his answers. I then tested their point against his own texts. All three agreed on the substance of his experiences. I also explored his theistic cosmology and what he says about love between two people. Finally, studies about human infants, elders, chimpanzees, elephants, and killer whales suggest that they fare poorly without loving bonds, even when their basic needs are met. These studies cannot prove Swedenborg right, and his account rests on his own experience, not on laboratory evidence. However, they point in the same direction. Love may not be an optional extra. It may be precisely what keeps us conscious and alive. Hence the human obsession with finding a "love partner" albeit the Love we require is Life sustaining, not romantic.

Keywords: Consciousness, Love, Swedenborg, Dual Consciousness, Near Death Experience (NDE), Golden Rule

1. Introduction

Instead of earthly, married love, Swedenborg, a Lutheran scientist from the eighteenth century, was graced with ecstasies during the last 27 years of his life. His experience of dual consciousness as actual daily journeys between the physical, spiritual and heavenly worlds, launched his mystical writings. His lifetime of explorations, studies and extraordinary giftedness (from science to philosophy, anatomy, nine languages, engineering inventions, poetry, music, travel and managing copper mines for Sweden), may not have allowed for a "traditional" marriage, even before his dual consciousness. If he had married, happily or unhappily, he may never have achieved his life purpose: An epic legacy of revelatory and revolutionary journeys to the beyond and back, meticulously documented in Latin. Swedenborg described his otherworldly ecstasies as similar to those a devout person would find in a happy marriage: *This love in a mortal body whereof I then was full was like the joy a chaste man has at the very time when he is in actual love and in the very act with his mate; such extreme pleasantness was suffused over the whole of my body and this for a long time lasting all the interval of waking, especially before I went off to sleep and after sleep, half an hour or hour* [1].

Where does consciousness come from? Physicists, neuroscientists and philosophers have passionate and educated theories, yet none has settled it. Stephen Hawking took the basic machine approach: The brain is a computer that stops working when its parts fail [2]. Others, such as the physicist Bernard Carr, think the brain filters a consciousness that exists on its own [3]. Mystical writers reached similar conclusions to Swedenborg: Saint Gregory the Great came from a wealthy Roman senatorial family, but gave up his status to become a Benedictine monk in the sixth century. He wrote that love itself is a form of knowing (Latin: Amor ipse notitia est) meaning that it is above ordinary reason [4, 5].

I trust people who have first hand experience. Emanuel Swedenborg had his first intense journeys at the age of 57. For decades he reported complex journeys between the physical, spiritual and heavenly worlds, and then recorded them immediately [6]. At approximately the same age, I had repeated NDEs and out-of-body experiences (virally and medically triggered), but not daily, dual consciousness. It is one reason that I took him seriously. Greyson, a sceptical psychiatrist who

studied NDEs, without a religious agenda, reports that people often re-live their lives from the point of view of those they affected [7]. This supports the Golden Rule: *Treat others as you want to be treated.* The case study asks two questions. Where does human consciousness originate, according to Swedenborg? And does love sustain it? I tested his answer in two ways. Firstly by asking three AI systems the same question and comparing what they said against Swedenborg's own voluminous works. Then I set his answer beside what researchers have found about infants, elders, and three other mammals, who require loving care to survive. Finally I examined his basic beliefs, nature, and what he says about love between two people.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Design

This is a case study of one person's account, not an experiment. It examines what Swedenborg wrote about the origin of consciousness and the role of love, cross-checks that reading with three Artificial Intelligence systems, and compares it with published research. No people were recruited. The animal, infant and elder studies are published work, and the elephant story is my own account of a personal encounter in South Africa.

2.2 The question

I asked each system the same words: What Swedenborg reported about where consciousness comes from and what role love plays. The three were Claude (Anthropic), Gemini (Google) and ChatGPT (OpenAI) on Saturday October 24, 2026. Their full answers are attached in Appendix A. No extra instructions or conversations were added. Appendix B was added Thursday October 29, 2026 comparing humans to three mammals, using Gemini (Google) input.

2.3 Triple Checking

AI summaries are not evidence of what Swedenborg said, so I used them only as a cross-check. I compared each point with his text. I was able to check *Divine Love and Wisdom* sections 1 to 6 [9] and *The Interaction of the Soul and Body* (also called *Influx*) sections 8 and 13 [10] in older translations available online. Quotes from other works come from my 2024 manuscript: *Love wants to love and it wants to be loved* [6] posted on academia.edu free of charge.

2.4 Other reading

Two more sources help understand his answer. I used an encyclopedia entry on pantheism [11] to ask whether his God is the same as nature, an essay by the psychologist Leon James [12] (who builds on Swedenborg's writing about married love), to ask about his view of love between two people as well as a quote from the Zohar (meaning "Splendor" or "Radiance" and the most important text of Kabbalah on traditional Jewish mysticism). I explained Swedenborg's theistic cosmology from James' book "Jung and Swedenborg on God and Life After Death" [13].

2.5 Comparing with research

I looked for studies that answer one question: What happens to younger and older mammals when they lack loving bonds even when food, shelter and medical care are provided?

2.6 Limits

Swedenborg's account rests on his experience. His loving family had a solid Lutheran background. These studies measure care and contact, not love itself. I interact regularly with a Swedenborgian library in Chicago, so I have tried to say clearly where his view, and the research, part ways.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 What three AI systems said in response to this question: *What Swedenborg reported about where consciousness comes from and what role love plays.*

All three agreed on the main issues:

- Life is received, not made. Consciousness comes from a spiritual source, not from the brain alone.
- Love is the life that is received.
- The mind has two parts: The will (what we love and want) and the understanding (what we think). Love gives thought its direction.
- What we love shapes who we become.

They differed in these ways:

- Gemini used a modern picture of the brain as a radio that tunes in, which is not Swedenborg's. It also added his spiritual sun, with Divine Love as its heat and Divine Wisdom as its light.
- ChatGPT was the most precise. It said Swedenborg saw the brain as the main bodily organ of the mind (each organ corresponds to a specific function), separated love of God and neighbour from love of self, and said plainly that this is a religious claim, not a scientific one.
- Claude named specific texts in Swedenborg's books (for example *Divine Love and Wisdom* 6 and *Influx* 13). It added that the same flow of life reaches animals.

3.2 What Swedenborg actually wrote

- We receive life. Swedenborg says a person "is not life, but is a recipient of life" (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 6) [9]. A person is "an organ recipient of life from God" (*Influx* 13) [10]. So consciousness does not start in the brain. The brain is where it shows up in the physical world.
- Life arrives on three levels. The soul receives life directly from God. The mind receives it through the spiritual world. The body receives it through the natural world (*Influx* 8) [10]. This is his dual consciousness: We live in the natural world and the spiritual world at once, but only notice one of them while we are alive.
- Love is the life. Swedenborg calls love "the life of man" (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 1) [9]. How much life we take in depends on the state of our love and wisdom, and if our love turns selfish, what we receive is what he calls death (*Influx* 13) [10]. In *Heaven and Hell* he writes that we grow warm with love and cold without it, and when it is completely gone, we die [14]. And in *Secrets of Heaven* 6872.3: *A person is entirely the same in character as their love* [15]:

Such as the Love
What anyone does from love
Remains inscribed
On his heart,
For love is the fire
Of life;
Of everyone;
Hence
Such as the love is

Such is the life;
And such as the life is,
Such is the whole man
As to soul
And as to body [8]

3.3 Animals receive life in the form of love too

Swedenborg says this flow of life reaches birds, beasts and even plants (Influx 13) [10]. It pertains to the following sections and Appendix B comparing three mammals to humans:

Is this pantheism? Pantheism is the idea that God and the universe are one and the same, with no separate creator standing outside nature. Spinoza gave it its fullest philosophical defence in his *Ethics*, finished in 1675, and some scholars count Plato, Lao Tzu and Plotinus among possible pantheists [11]. Pantheism is not the same as atheism. It is simply not the idea of a personal God who made the world and stands apart from it [11].

A related idea, panentheism, says the universe lies within God, but God is also more than the universe [16].

Swedenborg's God is different. God is Love and Wisdom itself, not just nature. The universe comes from God, but is not God. The clearest sign is the word "recipient." If we receive life from God, then we are not God, and God is not simply the sum of us (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 6) [9].

If consciousness is only part of nature, then nature, or the brain, explains it. If it comes from a God beyond nature, then it is received, which is what Swedenborg says.

Swedenborg's theistic cosmology is best summarised by Leon James in his book [13]: "…specifies that the first phase of creating the universe was the coming into being of the spiritual sun, which is the first Divine Proceeding (or outgoing) and the source of all further creations. God created the universe by means of the spiritual sun, which contains love-substance in infinite variety, and truth-substance in the form of wisdom and rationality. These two uncreate and eternal substances in God are continuously streaming out of the spiritual sun and thereby create and sustain the atmospheres and spaces of the two worlds. Swedenborg points to the correspondence between the physical sun or stars, being the origin of planet earth and all its matters and atmospheres, and the spiritual sun being the origin of the spiritual world and all its mental objects and contents. But while the physical heat and light of the natural sun are inert, lifeless, and purely material existing in space and time, the spiritual heat and light of the spiritual sun are purely substantial existing apart from physical space and time. That which is created with material substance in physical space and time is called natural, material and temporal, while that which is created with spiritual substance apart from time and physical space, is called spiritual, substantial and eternal."

3.4 Love between two people from three perspectives

"The Zohar teaches that before God sends souls into the world, they are formed into pairs. The pair is separated and each person is born in his or her time. The Zohar goes on to say that these souls are rejoined at the right time into one body and one soul. The unfolding of creation is the process of a continuous struggle between opposite poles: Light and dark, give and take, up and down, right and left, life and death. God constantly mates couples of opposing natures, hard with gentle, talkative with quiet, outgoing with ingoing, so that the world can preserve its balance. The very complaint you have about your mate could well be the essential quality that has drawn you together. Therefore the Zohar's primary advice is that every time you are looking for your soul mate pray with all your heart because the entire purpose for existence, and the mystical aspect of relationships, is to elevate the consciousness of the world. The way we work together to do this is one of the great mysteries of creation…so we pray not only to find each other, but to gain enough understanding to appreciate the nuances that truly lift us and the world to a new state of awareness." Soulmates excerpt from David Cooper's book, God is a Verb [17].

Psychologist Leon James working from Swedenborg's *Married Love*, turned this into three models [12]:

- ***Dominance:*** Traditional marriages, "till the husband decides to divorce his wife." The wife obeys, and society allows men to mistreat women.
- ***Equity:*** Modern marriages, "till death do us part." The two negotiate on equal rights, and the husband helps at home. But he can go back to dominance whenever he chooses.
- ***Unity:*** Spiritual marriages, "till endless eternity in afterlife." The husband chooses to act from his wife's preference, not his own, so the two become one "conjoint self" that continues after death.

James answers the obvious question: *Why should the man be the one to surrender?* It is not about giving up power, but about cooperating. The husband already has the power physically, socially, financially and culturally, and he keeps it, even under the unity model. He must choose not to use it. The wife never gains power over him [12].

A "conjoint self" is Swedenborg's idea. *The love in marriage joins two souls, and therefore two minds, into one.* Swedenborg, Love in Marriage 158. [18] It suggests that consciousness, like married life, may be shared, and not a lonely or solo journey. The Zohar suggests a union of opposites, James puts the responsibility on the husband (who traditionally does carry the most power), while Swedenborg's wording applies to both partners:

Reciprocal Love
In Heavenly marriages
There is no predominance;
For the will of the wife
Is also the husband's will
And the understanding
Of the husband is also
The wife's understanding
Since the love of each
Is to will and think
Like the other,
That is,
Mutually and reciprocally,
Thus they are conjoined
Into one. [8]

Note: "**Marriage Love or Conjugial Love (1768)** is perhaps Swedenborg's most controversial work. Following up his consistently maintained theological stance that angels are not a separately created race of genderless beings, Swedenborg avers that gender characteristics inhere in spiritual substance and thus survive death. In contrast to most Christian thinkers, he asserts not only that there are

marriages in heaven, but that such unions involve supremely pleasurable sexual experiences. Here marriage is linked to the deep substructure of the universe by correspondence (Swedenborg's system of interaction between the spiritual and the material) and achieves a preeminence rarely accorded it today. For example, in Swedenborg's view, chastity is an attribute that can be possessed to a greater degree by the married than by the celibate." The New Century Edition (NCE) [19].

Author's Note: In any marriage the choice of partner may be influenced by Cupid, family, culture, need etc. Anthropologically, the different perspectives could be tested by observing long and "happily" married couples interacting, under specific conditions.

3.5 Science has not solved it

Because brain science has not yet explained consciousness [20, 21], Swedenborg's idea is not ruled out. It is also not proven.

Love in early and later life

Swedenborg's claim, that we die when love is gone, has an observable counterpart during our infant and elder years. *Love wants to love and it wants to be loved* [6] sums up this section.

Infants: In 1945 the psychoanalyst René Spitz compared babies in a foundling home with babies in a prison nursery who were cared for by their mothers. Both places gave food, hygiene and medical care. The foundling-home babies fell behind, caught more infections and died more often [22]. This was an observation, not a controlled trial. Stronger evidence came later. In Romania, abandoned children randomly placed in foster families did far better than those who stayed in institutions, especially the youngest [23]. And in a World Health Organization trial in five countries: Tiny newborns held skin to skin with a parent from birth, survived more often than those in incubators, even though both groups received similar modern medical care [24].

Elders: The same pattern shows up at the other end of life. In a review of 148 studies and more than 300,000 people, those with strong social ties were about 50% more likely to survive than those without [25]. A later review found that living alone raised the risk of dying by 32%, social isolation by 29% and loneliness by 26% [26]. The effect was stronger in people under 65, but it did not disappear in older people [26]. Grief can act rapidly too. In a study of 373,189 older couples, the death of a spouse from almost any cause raised the survivor's own risk of dying [27]. Abuse and neglect add to death rates. Older people seen by protective services for mistreatment were far less likely to be alive 13 years later (9%, against 40% of other seniors) [28]. Those who stopped looking after themselves were almost six times as likely to die within a year [29]. One later survey found no link between abuse and early death, so the evidence is mixed [30]. None of this proves that love is the cause. But it agrees with what Swedenborg says: When love is gone, life withers.

Author's Note: I volunteered at a home for infants in San Francisco California (1987-1989) whose mothers were unable to care for them. In addition, the babies were ill from birth due to their mothers' addictions and/or mental illness. Those who bonded with a loving adult caretaker thrived, against all odds. After the sudden and tragic death of my only son (2010), a cardiac emergency room nurse suggested that the odd sensation in my heart was due to: Broken Heart Syndrome (medically known as Takotsubo cardiomyopathy or stress cardiomyopathy). This is a temporary heart condition triggered by extreme emotional or physical stress that causes a sudden, reversible weakening of the heart's main pumping chamber (the left ventricle). [31] It did not show up on an EKG (or ECG) which stands for electrocardiogram, a non-invasive medical test that records the electrical activity of the heart.

3.6 Social mammals compared with humans

The Cambridge Declaration concluded that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates of consciousness [32]. If love, in the sense of lasting affectionate bonds, matters for consciousness in humans, similar dependence should appear in other socially complex species.

Three mammals are examined below and in Appendix B:

Chimpanzees: Goodall's long-term study at Gombe provides more than 50 years of demographic data. Stanton and colleagues analysed 247 chimpanzees and found that males orphaned at any point before age 15, and females orphaned before age 10, were significantly less likely to survive than non-orphans. Females orphaned between 10 and 15 were no more likely to die [33]. Mothers therefore matter well beyond weaning, though how they do so is still unclear [33]. The best-known single case is Flint. At about eight years old, after his mother Flo died, he died about three weeks later, which Goodall judged to be of grief [34]. That is one animal and Goodall's interpretation, so it illustrates the pattern, but cannot support it by itself.

Elephants: Elephants live in matriarchal families, and a female may know as many as 100 other elephants, communicating through body language, vocalisation and smell [35]. Their low-frequency calls travel beyond the range of human hearing [36]. When a matriarch named Eleanor collapsed and died in Samburu, Kenya, in 2003, females from several families, most unrelated to her, tried to help her and showed sustained interest in her body [37]. Her six-month-old calf died within three months [37]. The authors argue that elephants show compassionate behaviour toward the distressed and a general awareness of death, though they do not claim human-like emotions [37].

Author's Note: At Buffelsdrift Game Lodge in South Africa I met three adult elephants orphaned as babies by poachers, and then raised by human handlers. The three siblings (two males and one female, the matriarch) apparently refuse to sleep in the bush at night. Instead they return to camp and the comforting closeness of their human handlers. The lodge claims: *None of our elephants have been taken from the wild for captivity. The three elephants were orphaned when the adults were poached. Our elephants come from circumstances that if we did not intervene they would not be alive today. We did not choose this life for them, but we rather chose to give them the best possible life within our means with the best possible love and care. All our elephant excursions have a most informative educational approach* [38].

Killer whales: Resident killer whales live in family groups in which sons and daughters stay with their mothers for life. In a long-term study, a male over 30 whose mother died was almost 14 times more likely to die within a year, and a female of the same age was just under three times more likely to die [39]. These were grown whales, not babies, so the bond seems to matter long after childhood. Another social whale, the sperm whale, talks in patterns of clicks

called codas. A study of 8,719 codas from about 60 whales found that the clicks are combined in ways the authors compare to an alphabet [40].

Author's Note: While living near Puget Sound on Vashon Island I watched sadly while an orca mother carried her dead baby for days as she swam. Elephants too, closely guard the bodies of deceased herd members while "grieving". Coincidentally, a Coastal Salish name selected for me, while learning Lushootseed (the language of Chief Seattle), was Qalqalaxic, Black Fish or Orca: Common in the Puget Sound, they are observed closely by researchers for their social behavior patterns.

Taken with the human findings, all three mammal groups show that survival depends on maternal bonds well beyond infancy, including strong social concern and awareness of death. The pattern strengthens the argument for relationship as a condition of mature consciousness, since the same species show complex communication, awareness of death and responses to loss. Scientists meeting in Cambridge (2012) concluded that humans are not unique in having the brain structures linked to consciousness [32].

Three limits apply:

- **First,** these are observational data, and a mother's death removes milk, protection, social rank and companionship together, so love cannot be separated from care.
- **Second,** "grief" and "compassion" are interpretations of behaviour, and the authors themselves are cautious about them.
- **Third,** none of this addresses consciousness after death. The comparison supports only the claim that affectionate bonds are a biological condition of survival and development across species.

Swedenborg says we die when Love is gone: The human and animal studies show something close to that: Mammals fed and sheltered, but without loving bonds, do not thrive, and may die. A scientist who believes the brain alone makes consciousness would explain it this way: A baby's brain grows through care, so a neglected baby's brain grows poorly. Swedenborg would explain it this way: Love is the life flowing in, so without it we wither. Both explanations match the same facts, so the studies cannot decide who is right. What they do show is that love is not optional for younger or older mammals, and that is where the two views converge.

3.7 Other forms of dual consciousness

Swedenborg is not the only person to report dual consciousness. Unlike his they were more fleeting. His decades of experience were not generated by an NDE, and he reported them while awake, not in dreams [6]. In a Dutch study published in *The Lancet* in 2001, doctors followed 344 people who had been revived after cardiac arrest in ten hospitals. Sixty-two of them (18%) reported an NDE, and 41 (12%) described what the researchers call a core experience. It was not explained by: How long the heart had stopped; medications, or fear of dying [41]. These accounts are brief, but there are many of them. Older traditions describe something similar. The French scholar Henry Corbin spent his career on Islamic mystics such as Ibn Arabi, who described an "imaginal world" between spirit and matter. He also studied Swedenborg, and remarked on how closely the two descriptions agree [42]. None of this proves Swedenborg is right. It means he is not completely alone, and even revered in respected circles, both past and present: *I admire Swedenborg as a great scientist and a great mystic at the same time. His life and work has always been of great interest to me and I read about seven fat volumes of his writings when I was a medical student…Swedenborg was a seer of unparalleled profundity, a scholar with superior intelligence.* Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) Swiss psychologist [43].

3.8 Sound or love you can hear

Swedenborg says love is carried by sound. In heaven, he writes, the tone of a voice shows the speaker's affection, and the words show the thought, so speech is "affection sounding and thought speaking" Heaven and Hell 236 [14]. He describes a hard-hearted spirit who wept when an angel spoke to him, because "it was love speaking" Heaven and Hell 238 [14]. As a young scientist he had already argued that life depends on motion, which he called tremulation [44]. Babies seem to know this. Mothers' speech to infants is music-like, and infants stay interested longer in their mothers' singing than in their speech [45]. In one experiment, singing kept babies calm longer than talking [46]. Swedenborg also says in section 241 that musical tones rise to a certain fullness when great themes are expressed. None of this explains the ecstasies Swedenborg describes, which rest on his own account. But it shows that tone of voice is one of the first ways love is felt. Two sample sound experiences are included (see Recommendations below).

3.9 Touch that soothes or heals

A small recent study shows how deep this goes. Researchers filmed mothers stroking their premature babies, and the mothers stroked at the speed that special nerve fibres in the skin respond to best, around 3 centimetres a second. Researchers describe parents doing this instinctively [47]. The babies' heart rates dropped, a sign of calming [47]. In other studies, babies stroked at that speed had calmer hearts and more oxygen in their blood than babies who were only held still [48], and showed less brain response to pain [49]. This was a small study of 53 stroking sessions, and it measured calm, not bliss. But it suggests that loving touch is not a nicety. The body is built to give it and to receive it. This excerpt is from a small, recent 2022 study by a team at the Technical University of Dresden, led by Ilona Croy.

3.10 Tremulations

Swedenborg discusses the importance that vibrations (or tremulations) play in the world, from earthquakes to music. He places particular emphasis on the role of tremulations in our biological make-up (the beating of our hearts and pulsing of our nerves) and upon our sense perception (sound waves, light waves). He goes on to posit that: *As to what it is that really makes us living…this cause is motion…if common sense is followed, we will inevitably find that Rest can never have any part in that which is called Life; for rest and life are two contrary things, just as a dead state and a living state* [44].

Author's Note: During a long viral illness a cousin visited me with her ten month old baby and sang lullabies in her beautiful voice. Some of the songs were from my African home. I had chronic insomnia due to pain, over medication and Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD), but her voice put both the baby and me to sleep. I have since used sound

and gentle lymphatic massage to soothe insomnia, arthritis and PTSD.

3.11 Limits

- Swedenborg reports his own experience. It is a religious account, as ChatGPT said, and has not been shown scientifically.
- AI summaries are not sources. Every claim in this paper that matters must rest on Swedenborgian texts or on published studies.
- The studies measure contact and care, not love as a feeling. For example, a mother's death also removes food, protection and companionship all at once.
- None of these studies says what happens after death. On that, Swedenborg is the main source, joined by near-death research and older mystical traditions, and his account rests on his own experience.
- Swedenborg's God being more than just nature is only one reading of his word "recipient."
- James's models are a psychologist's view, offered without data, and he assumes that most husbands hold power over most wives.

4. Conclusion

Where does human consciousness originate? In Swedenborg's account, it is received from a source beyond us, through the soul, the mind and the body, and we are the recipients. Does love sustain it? In his account, love is the life we receive, and our character (whether here or in the hereafter) is made up of what we love. His God is personal and best explained by theistic cosmology. Between two people, love means wanting to be the other's, completely. Three Artificial Intelligence systems agreed on these findings. The evidence from human infants and elders, plus three other social mammals, converges with Swedenborg's account. However, we cannot prove it. If Swedenborg is right, then love is not the cherry on top of being alive. It is literally what we are made of and cannot live without. This is supported in a recent paper about people who had Near Death Experiences overflowing with Love: *What if death does not exist?* [50]. In that paper, the experiencers say they returned specifically to enlighten humanity that Love sustains spiritual and angelic Life, even after embodied life ceases.

5. Recommendations

First, check each Swedenborg quote against a modern translation, to find where he writes about influx and love. *Second,* ask researchers to test whether the quality of care, not just contact, predicts how infants and young animals thrive or not. *Third,* compare Swedenborg's account with first-hand reports of near-death experiences, especially life reviews. *Fourth,* look for studies of long-term marriages that could test whether the unity pattern goes with lasting, happy relationships. *Fifth,* look for Swedenborgian reports of long-term marriages in the afterlife that continue (or begin, in cases where no partner was found during embodiment). *Sixth,* the transformative power of sound can be researched and experienced in many forms. Two free links are included here for the convenience of readers: https://www.sacredacoustics.com/pages/free-download?_kx=V1m
David Hykes Harmonic Presence: Music of the Spheres of Being: https://www.harmonicworld.com/#albums

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Appendix A: Three AI responses

Since there is only one science-based person who experienced and documented dual consciousness for decades, AI feedback served as a triple check of Swedenborg's relevant work before writing this case study. The same question was put to each AI: *what Swedenborg reported about where consciousness comes from and what role love plays?* **Author's Note:** Swedenborg's original works can be explored first, before reviewing AI responses. The New Century Edition (NCE) is unique in Swedenborgian scholarship in that it's the first translation of Swedenborg's eighteenth-century Latin writings to be produced using a unified set of standards:

- https://swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/for-swedenborg-starters/

- https://swedenborg.com/new-century-edition/

A1. Claude (Anthropic)

Swedenborg said we don't make life, we receive it. He wrote that a person "is not life, but is a recipient of life" (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 6), and that we are "an organ recipient of life from God" (*Influx* 13). Life comes in through the soul first, then the mind, then the body (*Influx* 8). So consciousness doesn't start in the brain. The brain is where it shows up in the physical world. Love is the life that is received. He called love "the life of man," and wrote that how much life we take in depends on the state of our love and wisdom (*Influx* 13). In his view what we love sets our whole direction: our wants, our choices, and what we think about. A person's character is their love. He also wrote that this same flow of life reaches animals and even plants (*Influx* 13).

A2. Gemini (Google), AI Overview

Emanuel Swedenborg reported that human consciousness does not originate within the brain, but flows into it from a spiritual source, with love acting as the foundational energy of all life. He claimed that the physical body is merely an instrument, and that consciousness is a continuous reception of divine life.

Swedenborg's system breaks down the origins of consciousness and the role of love into several core principles:

1. The Source of Consciousness

- **Divine Inflow (Influx):** Consciousness is not generated by matter or biological processes. It flows constantly from the spiritual world into the natural world.
- **The Brain as a Receiver:** The brain acts like a radio or an organ. It does not create the music (consciousness); it simply tunes in and translates the spiritual influx into physical thoughts and actions.
- **Two Faculties:** Human consciousness operates through two primary God-given capacities: the Will (the ability to feel and desire) and the Understanding (the ability to think and reason).

2. The Supreme Role of Love

- **Love is Life:** Swedenborg famously stated, "Love is the life of man." He argued that love is not just an emotion, but the actual substance and energy from which the universe is created.
- **The Driving Force:** What a person loves dictates their entire state of consciousness. Your deepest love defines your intentions, which in turn shape your thoughts and worldview.
- **The Blueprint of Reality:** In the spiritual world, Swedenborg reported that God appears as a spiritual Sun. The heat of that sun is literal Divine Love, and its light is Divine Wisdom.

3. How Love and Consciousness Interact

- **The Will Shapes the Mind:** Your choices and what you care about (your love) form the boundary of what you can comprehend. Wisdom or intellect without love is empty and cannot sustain true consciousness.
- **Spiritual Alignment:** Swedenborg observed that in the afterlife, people naturally gravitate toward communities that match their inner love. If a person's core love is selfish, their consciousness is restricted and darkened; if their core love is unselfish, their consciousness expands and brightens.

A3. ChatGPT (OpenAI)

Emanuel Swedenborg on consciousness and the role of love

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772). Swedish scientist, philosopher, and theologian who developed an unusual account of the relationship between the mind, the spiritual world, and human love.

His central claim was that consciousness is not ultimately produced by the physical brain alone. He understood human life as rooted in a spiritual reality, with the brain and body serving as the means through which our inner life is expressed in the natural world.

Swedenborg's ideas are especially interesting in the context of modern questions about consciousness: whether subjective experience can be reduced to physical processes, whether mind has a deeper origin, and whether love is merely an emotion or something fundamental to what we are.

One important distinction: Swedenborg presented these ideas as spiritual knowledge grounded in his religious experiences and interpretation of Scripture. They are significant in the history of philosophy and religion, but they have not been established as scientific explanations of consciousness.

1. Where does consciousness come from?

In Swedenborg's account, the answer begins with God as the ultimate source of life, rather than matter as a self-sufficient source. His 1763 work, *Divine Love and Wisdom*, develops this idea in considerable detail. His model can be summarized as follows: God, the source of life; divine love and divine wisdom; the human spirit or mind; will and understanding; the physical brain and body, the means of sensation, thought and action in the natural world. This is a simplified representation of Swedenborg's theology, not a scientific diagram of how consciousness operates.

Three aspects are particularly important:

- Life is received, not self-originated. Swedenborg believed that human beings receive life from God, although it feels as if life originates within ourselves.
- The mind is more than conscious thought. It includes the will, our intentions and affections, as well as the understanding, through which we reason and think.
- The brain and body have an essential role. Swedenborg did not simply dismiss the physical body. He described the brain as the primary bodily organ of mental life and the rest of the body as expressing that life in action.

In modern terminology, one might compare this with the distinction between the origin of consciousness and the physical mechanisms through which consciousness is expressed. But Swedenborg's answer is metaphysical: it rests on his belief in divine influx, not on experimental evidence that consciousness originates outside the brain.

2. Why does Swedenborg put love at the centre?

This is arguably the most distinctive part of his philosophy. Swedenborg did not regard love merely as one emotion among many. He treated it as a fundamental principle of life itself. In *Divine Love and Wisdom*, he connects two pairs of concepts:

- Will is linked to love: what we desire, value and intend.

- Understanding is linked to wisdom: what we think, comprehend and judge.

The distinction matters because, in Swedenborg's view, what we love determines what we want to do, while understanding helps us determine how to do it. Love gives thought its direction and purpose.

Consider a simple example. Two people might possess the same intelligence, education and knowledge. One consistently uses those abilities to help others; the other uses them to manipulate people for personal advantage. For Swedenborg, the difference is not explained by intelligence alone. It concerns their ruling love: what fundamentally motivates them and shapes their choices. That leads to a striking implication: becoming wiser is not simply a matter of accumulating knowledge. It also involves examining what we love and what we choose to serve.

3. Does Swedenborg mean that all love is good?

No. This distinction is essential. Swedenborg distinguishes between love directed toward God and one's neighbour, and love directed primarily toward oneself or worldly advantage. He believed that love for others becomes spiritually healthy when it expresses itself in useful, compassionate action. Conversely, self-centred love can distort understanding and lead a person to justify harmful behaviour. His concept of love is therefore broader than affection, romance or feeling happy. It concerns our deepest orientation toward life and the purposes we pursue. In this framework, love is not proved by how intensely someone feels. Its quality becomes evident in what that person consistently chooses to do.

4. What does this mean for consciousness itself?

Swedenborg's account raises three questions that remain philosophically interesting:

- Is consciousness fundamental or emergent? Swedenborg held that life ultimately comes from a divine source. Contemporary neuroscience, by contrast, investigates how conscious experience relates to brain activity; it has not established Swedenborg's spiritual explanation.
- Is intelligence sufficient for wisdom? His answer is no. Intelligence can supply the means for achieving an end, but the end depends on what motivates the person.
- Is love constitutive of the self? Swedenborg's answer is yes, in a deep sense. Our habitual loves shape our will, attention, reasoning and conduct, and ultimately determine the kind of person we become.

His position is particularly interesting because he does not treat consciousness as nothing more than the accumulation of information. In his account, the orientation of the mind matters as much as its capacity to think. That is a philosophical and theological claim, not evidence that love alone generates consciousness or that artificial intelligence could not become conscious.

5. Where to read Swedenborg directly

If you want to explore his original position rather than later interpretations, I would start with these sources. *Divine Love and Wisdom* (The Portable New Century Edition, Dole): best starting point for consciousness, life, will, understanding and the divine source of existence. *Heaven and Hell*: explores how a person's dominant loves shape their spiritual identity and, in Swedenborg's account, their life after death.

My overall reading: Swedenborg's central insight is that consciousness, intelligence and moral character cannot be understood separately within his worldview. Life comes from a deeper spiritual source; love gives the will its direction; and wisdom enables that love to find intelligent expression.

Appendix B: Gemini (Google), AI Overview

Question: *Chimpanzees, Elephants, and Killer Whales (Primates, Proboscidea and Cetacea) compared to humans:*

All three species nurse their young with milk. While their milks are tailored to very different environments—ranging from the high-protein milk of chimpanzees to the exceptionally rich, thick milk of killer whales (which is up to 50% fat so it doesn't dissolve underwater)—they all rely on mammary glands to rear their babies.

Beyond lactation, chimpanzees, elephants, and killer whales share a remarkable suite of advanced biological, ecological, and psychological traits:

1. Highly Complex Social Structures

Matrilineal Bonds: Both elephants and killer whales live in tight-knit, multi-generational matriarchal societies led by an elder female. Chimpanzees operate in intricate fission-fusion communities governed by intense political alliances and lifelong familial bonds.

Cultural Transmission: In all three species, survival skills are not purely instinctual; they are culturally taught. Mothers and elders pass down specific tool-use techniques (chimpanzees), migration routes to watering holes (elephants), and highly specialized hunting strategies or vocal dialects unique to their specific pod (killer whales).

2. High Intelligence and Brain Development

Encephalization: They possess unusually large brains relative to their body size, particularly in areas associated with memory, emotional processing, and social cognition.

Self-Awareness: All three have passed the mirror self-recognition test, a milestone indicating a sophisticated level of self-awareness shared by very few creatures on Earth.

3. Extended Lifespans and Slow Reproduction

Long Gestation: They all invest deeply in a single offspring at a time rather than having large litters. Elephants hold the record with a ~22-month gestation, killer whales gestate for about 17 months, and chimpanzees carry pregnancies for roughly 8 months.

Prolonged Childhoods: Because their brains require so much time to learn how to navigate complex social and physical environments, their young remain dependent on their mothers for several years.

4. Advanced Communication Systems

Vocalizations: Killer whales communicate using distinct family clicks and whistles, elephants use infrasound (low-frequency rumbles that travel miles through the ground), and chimpanzees utilize a vast lexicon of vocal pants, screams, and physical gestures.

5. Universal Mammalian Traits

As placental mammals, they also share standard anatomical and physiological blueprints: they are warm-blooded (endothermic), breathe air using lungs, and possess hair or fur at some stage of life (even killer whales are born with sparse whiskers around their snouts).

Note: This appendix is unedited Gemini output and has not been independently verified. Some statements may be inaccurate.