

unpublished VANCOUVER SUN, February 13, 2004: Dear Editor: Arts & Life

I do wish you'd change the name of your "Arts & Life" section. I'm interested in science, but reluctant to go looking for the "Science & Death" section, no matter how right critics of military research spending might be.

Sincerely

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The comment here is not just intended as a joke but has a simple, but deeper significance.

The idea that each of us is not a single self but is a composite of quasi-autonomous selves is a familiar one. One part of us is logical, can reason, and can use language, but other parts of us can't. These parts communicate with feelings or with bizarre symbols in dreams.

That there is more than one self mirrors to some extent the physical arrangement of our brains. By this, I am not suggesting that there are one-to-one relationships between selves and parts of the brain, although this might be to some extent true. What I am saying is that the human brain has evolved. And as a result of this long evolution, it is now, physically, an amalgam of more "primitive" brains plus an outer envelope that is more recent.

Very roughly, we can equate in the societal mirror, "science" with the leader of the selves and the public persona; the outer part of the brain. The analogy is badly expressed but stay with me even if you only weakly agree. We can also equate in the societal mirror, "art" with the inner selves, and the selves that have no language or reason, and are not in direct touch with the outside world.

The idea then that "art" is "life" is, to me, the idea that a real person is the core of the brain. I consider this nonsense. It is no more true than to say that a real person is the shell or envelope of the brain, that "life" is "science". "Life" is everything, art and science, and enjoying it requires a mind of many minds.