

## Commentary

# Commentary on Nixon's From Panexperientialism to Individual Self Consciousness

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### ABSTRACT

Works of this type which help elucidate how we can come to misunderstand each other are important given that fact. While we seem unable to know anything directly about our own or others unconscious experiences, as Nixon shows there is plenty of evidence that it exists for organisms with brains and could exist as well as for all manner of systems throughout the universe. This leads naturally to some blend of panpsychism or panexperientialism and solves, or hopefully will one day be seen to solve, a host of problems in the philosophy of science as well as having wider socio-cultural implications ranging from support for strong or radical ecology or perhaps a new kind of non-human centered spirituality.

**Key Words:** Panexperientialism, self consciousness.

In this paper (Nixon, 2010) the author seeks to highlight the distinction between the terms 'experience' and 'consciousness' and show how it supports a panpsychist view. According to his use of these terms experience is the more fundamental of the two, and consciousness always includes the extra element of self experience. Some of us have used these terms differently. For instance in the reference to my work the author cites [Deiss, 2009 in the paper under review], he says that I use the two equivalently. That is true. However, I do distinguish experience and self experience or, equivalently in my case, consciousness and self consciousness.

There is lengthy discussion of how various philosophers have used or ignored this distinction, as well as dictionary perspectives, and the etiology of the word conscious. Some do not acknowledge that there can be experience that is not conscious (as in self conscious), others would allow for experience that has no subject. It was helpful to see these differing historical and contemporary viewpoints outlined. Nixon (2010) comes down clearly on the side of allowing experience with and without self experience.

There is a suggestion in the paper that consciousness has something to do with memory especially in the last paragraph. I would have liked to see this elaborated more since it is a key idea that I have promoted in the previous reference. I would like to see how others view the importance. There is also the claim that allowing for experience without a self opens the door to legitimization of Psi experiences. However, this seemed taken for granted rather than explained in detail, and I did not follow the connection myself.

The paper also has an appendix that recounts 21 things (experimental phenomena, and relevant theories) that support the case for distinguishing experiences that have or do not have a subjective perspective attached.

In the end we must acknowledge slight cultural differences in language use. The language police are understaffed and will remain so. Works of this type which help elucidate how we can come to

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### **References**

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