

Commentary

Commentary on Nixon's Three Papers

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ABSTRACT

On the First Paper, a relevant point not mentioned by Nixon is the existence of 'consciousness without experience'. This is the domain of the emergence of the primary mind or 'cognition'. On the Second Paper, I agree with Greg Nixon that Being, Awareness is unexplainable, but this does not imply that it is impossible to 'describe' mind--->matter and matter---> transformation in a 'relatively' closed inter-individual (interobjects-intersubjects) loop. On the Third Paper, I agree with Nixon that God in absolute sense is hidden and objectively unknown but definitely not beyond existence. This touches also the issue of the compatibility of evolutionism-creationism and has to do with the 'mental chemistry' of disconnection-connection.

Key Words: Panexperientialism, consciousness, hollows, mind, myth.

1. From Panexperientialism to Individual Self Consciousness

Nixon (2010a) put consciousness in a broader context. Consciousness is not only an interactive process exclusively for human beings but pertains to all beings in the universe (pan-experientialism). He makes a distinction between non-conscious, subconscious, preconscious non-subjective experience and conscious subjective experience. Subliminal experience and other phenomena are examples of non-conscious experience (21 indicators of non-conscious experience in the appendix). "Experience without consciousness — that is, experience as responsive interactions within an ecosystem or perhaps any complex system (as opposed to a culture) but without any sort of awareness of that experience. Experience is viewed as really consisting of a continuum from momentary flashes into existence of 'occasions of experience' to the boundaryless experience which blossoms into transpersonal awareness".

A relevant point not mentioned by Nixon is the existence of 'consciousness without experience'. This is the domain of the emergence of the primary mind or 'cognition'. You can't witness or experience your own birth at that very moment of birth, they don't coincide. One can think to the 'mind set' or person's cognitive process of "I" unaware to him/herself but consciously perceived as immediate experience by another person (mind-reading). Formally we can put this in a causal frame of "1st person cognition as cause" and "2nd person perception (subjective conscious experience) as effect" (Monteiro, M. 2009).

2. Hollows of experience

In Part I Nixon (2010b) examines: 1) the origin of conscious experience: symbolic communication and conceptualization growing out from identification; and 2) how our own consciousness came to be: the separation of subject and object. In Part 2 Greg Nixon examines the origin of experience itself: the ontological question of Being, Awareness. It is suggested that awareness is identical with creative unfolding to be considered ultimately unexplainable.

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I agree with Greg Nixon that Being, Awareness is unexplainable, but this does not imply that it is impossible to 'describe' mind--->matter and matter---> transformation in a 'relatively' closed inter-individual (interobjects-intersubjects) loop. To answer Greg Nixon's question 'how does any material entity create mind, consciousness, or even just experience?' is not a matter of creation, but mental unfolding what is already present in matter from the beginning (from strong force in the nucleus of atoms till strong love bond in persons).

I agree with Greg Nixon that "the brain is not a producer of consciousness but a transducer which focuses diffuse mental "energies" into individual experience.....and "any experience that precedes, exceeds, or transcends the brain is felt to be more real than the brain itself so the brain's reality can only be reactive".

However, brain's reactivity only holds in the context of stimulus-reflex. In case of the emergence of higher-order cognitive values, the brain mediates between merging of two lower-order percepts into a higher-order percept to outburst in cognitive value (fusion-fission).

I agree with Greg Nixon that subjectivity results from other persons through the internalization of the language process already used by them. However, from the second person perspective, not only language is relevant for conscious identity, but starts with normative role behaviour. I wonder therefore whether the statement holds of "all that is outside of language is non-conscious experience in a reality that is largely a construction of our biological human sensory and memory systems relating to the things in themselves".

Nixon (2010b) states "Another position derived from a combination of quantum physics and far from equilibrium thermodynamics sees experience of any sort creating experienced worlds from the chaos or semi-chaos of the unknown and non-experienced — the Kantian "things in themselves".

However, the autonomous non-experiencing thing or chaotic unrelated process and experiencing is the borderline between meaningless and meaningful to be incorporated in a philosophy or theory. The meaningless autonomy of a process (Ding-an-sich) must be the axiomatic starting point. The question is how to build the bridge between meaningless and meaningful experiencing: 1) one has to postulate accidental random material object interaction to generate or activate the mind (matter→mind); and 2) accidental random subject mental interaction to activate matter (mind→matter). Through interpersonal feedback, meaningful experiencing (perception) comes into being. The question is what happens in the non-causal gaps of matter→mind and mind→matter.

Nixon (2010b) also states "The creative person learns from the active unconscious. The creative phase of initial inspiration dilutes the separation of subject and object....." "[T]he creative impetus may be the ultimate source not only of consciousness or experience but also of all existence, pre-existing all realities as potential. "What creativity is, in itself, cannot be known.....until it manifests in things or processes of this world. To attempt even to imagine a pre-existent unity, being, or substance without its differentiation and manifestation into a many is animpossibility. We know and can know nothing objectively of creative potential or of a God who is beyond existence".

But I wonder whether we cannot say anything about creativity in general (human, God, evolution, etc.) only but in material manifestation. In a relatively closed inter-object- and inter-subject system, the antecedent and consequent conditions of creativity can be known: 1) the antecedent condition is the creative mental product (mental synergy of merging percepts into a higher-order percept). This process of mentalization (the bottom-up of 2-1 fusion into a higher order percept) takes place behind perception; and 2) the consequent condition is the emergence of a creative cognitive value to occur outside conscious experiencing (a person is at that moment not aware of his cognition as "I" and

concomitant value) and the manifestation of the creative material product (the top-down material synergy) by crossing the mind→matter threshold.

The domain of what happens unconsciously (behind perception) and preconsciously (cognition before perception), the postulate of a God as a creating-unifying force (CUF) holds. I agree with GN that God in absolute sense is hidden and objectively unknown but definitely not beyond existence. This touches also the issue of the compatibility of evolutionism-creationism and has to do with the 'mental chemistry' of disconnection-connection (Monteiro, 2009).

3. Myth and Mind

Nixon (2010c) states that “[m]y thesis that human conscious experience appeared suddenly, at one point in time....caused by an existential crisis crossing a threshold.... paving the way for myth, symbolic, self, creativity, etc.”

I agree that a breakthrough of human consciousness generating self-awareness, symbolic interaction, etc, which lower vertebrates lacks, but I wonder whether this is a sudden occurrence qua mechanism in evolution. Mentalization unfolding in the human being is a 2→1 fusion mechanism, which is operational from the beginning based on 2→1 fusion mechanism of materialization (wateratom→helium; photosynthesis, etc.) and the other way around. Materialization and mentalization goes hand in hand. However, one can state a 'crisis' or three-folded great leap between anorganic matter, organic matter and human specie.

Nixon (2010c) further state that “Intersubjectivity is a term open to many meanings but the way it is intended here is to imply something more than mere communication from isolated mental monad to isolated mental monad.” But If one tries to tackle the problem of inter-subject (or inter-object) behaviour it is prerequisite to start with what Nixon calls “the isolated mental monad (object/subject) to isolated mental monad”. This is the foundation prior to symbolic interaction, self concept, creativity, myth, etc.

To attribute to living organisms consciousness is generally taken for granted, but to state that atoms have a consciousness is another story. Can 'dark energy' be reserved as the source of consciousness as the basis to create matter through transformation or the other way around that through material annihilation matter/energy is transformed into consciousness (black hole)? A universal outlook is therefore prerequisite to start with a simple but abstract descriptive experimental social human process model which is also assumed to be valid down the evolutionary ladder of quanta. Greg Nixon joins the science community subscribing the universal mind and touches the issue of intersubjectivity. The problem concerns the 'homunculus' (Nixon: We experience through the self). In general, I agree with Nixon's articles, but the main points of discussion are the 'existence of cognition', the redundant construct of self (homunculus) and 'God's existence' as creating-unifying force (CUF).

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