

## Response to Commentary

### Response to the Commentary of Roger Cook (Something Far More Deeply Interfused)

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I'd like to thank Roger Cook for his kind words about my prose. He has also brought attention to an aspect of my own thought I have in recent decades tended to shy away from. But he has me dead to rights when he notes that I repeat the key phrase "more deeply interfused" from the lines of Wordsworth: "a sense sublime/ Of something far more deeply interfused, /Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns". Instead of focusing on the way I differentiate human conscious experience from nonhuman animal experience, he grasps that, yes, I am suggesting that what we have is not enough. We have left the garden/prison of instinctual impulsion and replaced it with greater freedom in a world based in communally recognized symbolic expressions, but he also notes that I still see our symbolic immersion as somehow a loss of *élan vital*.

The above suggests to me that there may be a way for us to reunite with the living universe, not only experientially but consciously, transcending the limitations of culturally constructed selfhood. I do not refer to a regression to the immediacy of animal experience but a realization that our enclosed human minds are nested within larger systems of awareness. Such an awakening would be the awareness of, say, our planetary ecosystem that contains many sub-systems of consciousness within it. I want to affirm that, yes, in my heart of hearts there is a bow tightly strung with an arrow that aims at transcendence (not atavism) – but not a transcendence to anywhere else but the here and now that is everywhere and everywhen. I suppose this makes me a sort of pantheist or animist to top off my panexperientialism, but if that is so, so be it.

I apologize to Cook for going so far afield into rarified linguistic realms from the more down to earth realms he might prefer, but, as he himself understands, I believe consciousness (that is, self-consciousness, all we know of consciousness of any kind) is framed by language. The very way we speak of consciousness has an effect upon the way we are conscious, since we are, essentially, our own conception. And, as noted by Cook, it seems likely to me that we began to become that which we now know ourselves to be within the spontaneous processes of our own emotionally inspired visions, images, and mythmaking. But if this is so, who is to say what we shall become tomorrow? What dare we imagine? What dare we experience?

#### Reference

Cook, R. (2010) Nixon on Conscious and Non-conscious Experience. *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research*. 1(3): 346-347.

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