

Review of: "Consciousness, Neo-Idealism and the Myth of Mental Illness"

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Review by Clinical Psychologist - Ashleigh Daniels

I enjoyed the authors style of writing and was immediately interested and invested in the article. However, it was not quite clear until later into the paper what stance this article was taking in relation to Szasz work and that of neo-idealists - i.e. what was the intended purpose and in what way would this be explored. Perhaps some early clarity in this regard would be beneficial.

In a similar vein of thought, It is only a quarter of the way through the article that the author pins down a core purpose: *A core aspect of this speculative thesis is that we do not know enough about the nature of the physical to argue – as dualists since Descartes and most post-Cartesian philosophers have held – that the physical and the mental are irrevocably distinct and irreconcilable.* Whilst reading, I found myself unclear as to what point the author was building toward, making the argument and reasoning more difficult to follow meaningfully. A clearer outline of purpose earlier in the paper would be helpful in enabling the reader to follow the argument and reasoning, and discover their own thinking in relation to the topic. The article reads as cohesive and very well written, but perhaps missing the golden thread which ties it all together. It could be useful for the author to weave their **golden thread** more thoroughly.

Given that Szasz could not have known what we know now, as the author states, *"The prior ontological status of consciousness as suggested in the work of Hoffman, Kastrup and McGilchrist is not something that Szasz could have conceived of. Similarly, the importance of the neuroscientific research on the divided brain was not available to Szasz, and it can be seen to throw important light on the key arguments about the sociological and cultural origins of mental illness."*, I do query the usefulness of the article's focus on Szasz's work in its current form (as of 02/06/2023). The author comments on fascinating and fruitful topics within the context of contemporary psychology and understandings of mental illness, and perhaps this focus is a more generative point.

When the author comments on *"manic depression becomes bi-polar disorder caused by imbalances of neuro-transmitting chemicals, even though there is very little empirical evidence to support this thesis and growing evidence that the use of pharmaceuticals may actually worsen the health of patients diagnosed with depression or psychosis (Whitaker, 2010, pp.66ff) "*, I would encourage adding more references to support this point. I would also be hesitant to term a 2012 interview with Robin Murray "recent".

An interesting premise, which could be expanded upon and written cohesively under its own subheading: *"then the*

disturbance of functioning observed by clinicians might be re-interpreted as interferences in the the connections between individual conscious minds and universal consciousness which is the ground of all experience." This point brings to mind the idea of quantum entanglement within the field of quantum physics, and the use of the idea of quantum entanglement in light of psychopathology and relationships. Perhaps this would be helpful to consider.

Continuing on the note of headings and subheadings or subsections, I would suggest clearer headings and subheadings within the core discussion, and encourage the author to discuss the psycho-therapeutic approaches and new ideas under other separate headings, rather than under the conclusion.

The author presents and accounts for an impressive range of of thinking within the domains of philosophy and physics in relation to the core purpose of the paper, and presents interesting ideas on the classification and understanding on mental illness in light of the theories of interconnected consciousness. An enjoyable and stimulating read overall.