

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

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This is an innovative attempt to rehabilitate Szasz through applying a novel framework of panpsychism. It contains good descriptions of Szasz, panpsychism and the mind-body problem, then comes to some innovative conclusions about the nature of mental illness through applying panpsychism to mental illness. However, I felt there were many places where more details would be ideal. I felt that I could not see many of the links that were being made.

Main points:

Page 11: You say that "the disturbance of functioning observed by clinicians might be re-interpreted as interferences in the connections between individual conscious minds and universal consciousness". I feel this needs significantly more detail. What exactly is an interference? How might an interference come about? What makes schizophrenia involve an interference whereas normal people do not have an interference? Why not think normal people have the interference whereas schizophrenic people do not? What would constitute a good or correct way for an individual to relate to the universal mind? What exactly constitutes a failure, or bad or incorrect way for that relationship to occur?

Page 12: You say "the notion of failures in connection between individual and cosmic consciousness as potential causes of mental disorders". I feel significantly more detail upon what a cause is would be good here. How does one thing cause another if everything is part of one big universal mind? Also, how does this then relate to left and right hemispheres since they are part of the brain. I think brains are physical on your account (even if physical is based in mind) and therefore a metaphor. In what sense can metaphors things have causal powers on your account? Are brains actually instances of mental rather than physical causation? If so, how then do brains relates to other mental causation, whereby perhaps I could use my mind to causally impact my brain?

Page 11: There is a large move from our scientific accounts of schizophrenia not being based in neuroscience to schizophrenia then being a problem in living. Perhaps schizophrenia in reality is based in neurology even if science has so far not detected it. Also, even if it is not based in neurology does that then mean it is a problem in living. Perhaps it is a psychological difference rather than a problem in living, perhaps it is a social issue etc. More details upon why it is a problem in living would be good here.

Minor points:

Page 10: This notion of matter as metaphor needs elaborating upon. Something can be mysterious and/or complex without it being a metaphor.

Page 10: You say that changes in scientific notions are not based in good quality neurological or pharmacological data, so changes occur “as a result of different constructions by psychiatrists and therapists”. I am not sure what is meant by constructions here? Are constructions scientific or not? For example, lets assume our scientific notions are not based upon good neurological or pharmacological data, but they could be based on good quality statistical, psychological or phenomenological data. So I am unsure how your claims relate to thinking psychiatric diagnoses are or are not scientific.

Page 11: It looks to me like you associate autism and schizophrenia with both left and right hemispheres.