

INTERVIEW WITH NOLBERTO SALINAS NEUROMETAPHYSICS AND CONSCIENIOLOGY

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Nolberto Salinas Vucina, lawyer, chilean. Master in Philosophy of Science by the University of Santiago of Chile with the thesis *Neurometaphysics. The Explanation to the Hard Problem of Consciousness* (2013). Advocate and writer on Critical Thinking. Author of the book *Crossing to Vulcano* (2011). Salinas developed a new paradigm called Neurometaphysics which consists in the analysis of the philosophical and metaphysical aspects that derive from the modern postulates of Neurosciences about the phenomenon of the perception and of the mental. He addressed a conference in the 1st Interparadigmas Colloquium called “Window Effect – The perceptive error that has hidden consciousness”.

Question: Can you define in a few words the “Window Effect” and what does it mean its deceiving character (i.e., what is that character)?

Answer: The Window Effect is the impression that every human being experiences and makes them assume that the world observed is seen through their eyes as if it were seen through a window. That is to say, we have the impression that we are confined inside the head and the eyes are windows through which we see the external world. Its deceiving character lies in that Neuroscience, the Physiology of Vision and even Ophthalmology show us with indisputable proof that the vision is an internal phenomenon; i.e., the eyes act as a videocamera, just the opposite of the impression that they resemble windows.

So, the big question is:

Why do we experience the phenomenon of “seeing” as a process “from inside towards outside”, while science demonstrates that it is a phenomenon working from outside towards the inside? The explanation to this question destroys the deep-rooted notion of believing that we live in a material universe that contains both of us, where you or me are ontologically independent.

Q: What is Neurometaphysics?

A: It is a new philosophical and metaphysical paradigm arisen from the statements of Modern Neuroscience and the philosophical and phenomenical contradictions that are derivated from its postulates.

Neurometaphysics solves the contradictions of Neuroscience and delivers a new way of understanding what consciousness is.

What is that great contradiction? I will show it with a syllogism:

1. All that I perceive (according to Neuroscience) is a mental representation produced in my brain.

2. I perceive my body, my thoughts, my brain, the planet, and all the other individuals.

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3. My body, my thoughts, my brain, the planet and the other individuals (according to Neuroscience) are a mental representation of my own brain.

Therefore we see how a classic science, objectivist and materialist, leads to the most absolute mentalism as well as subjective, relegating matter as a simple belief... A mere scientific dogma of faith.

Q: As an investigator, how do you epistemologically position yourself concerning Neuroscience?

A: I position myself with prudence and neutrality, since the same Neuroscience through its postulates, like it or not, aware of it or not, destroys the objective epistemology on which science is based. It is a “snake biting its own tale”.

For that reason I developed a new epistemology that takes charge of the absolute subjectivity deriving from neuroscientific proposals.

Simply put: when Neuroscience postulates that the universe is a personal cerebral representation, it destroys the notion of living in a common universe: there are as many universes as the number of existing brains... Whatever is that “brain”, since if it contains within itself the whole universe perceived by me or that I am able to perceive, I have no access to know it.

Q: How does Neuroscience consider the altered states of consciousness (as out-of-body-experiences)?

A: As an expectable and predictable possibility, since Neurometaphysics postulates that the location of the “Observer” (the *entity that verifies an event of consciousness*) is only “functionally” located inside an “avatar” (the *person that we call physical and social, for example: Alexandre or Nolberto*).

As it is only a functional arrangement, it’s not strongly necessary and is perfectly feasible to suppose events of consciousness without an avatar.

What can never be lacking is the Observer, since it is what gives sense to the existence of an event, and the one that could be aware of it.

Thus if we understand that consciousness is not some kind of cloud of thought and ethereal images produced inside of the physical head, and instead of it we realize that this “physical” head together with the body and all of the surroundings are parts of the consciousness, we break up with this wrong belief that the consciousness is confined inside of a brain. In my opinion, this perceptive error (believing that the head I have upon my shoulders generates the consciousness) is the worst perceptive error in human history.

When one understands this perceptive error, nothing can prevent us from assuming events of consciousness where the point of reference of the Observer gets independent from the avatar, and even the avatar could completely be another object to be observed.

One way of making people think about this is proposing the following mental exercise:

Suppose that I open the top of your skull, take out your eyes from the orbits stretching the optical nerve and from a distance of two meters I turn your eyes to you.

Where do you feel your essence is?

Behind the eyes or in the body you observe at a distance?

Q: What role does Neurometaphysics have towards the constitution of a science of consciousness?

A: The role to which it was built as a new paradigm... I say it clearly and responsibly:

Neurometaphysics solves the “hard problem” of consciousness and forces the creation of a new form of scientific epistemology to deal with it.

The dualism mind-body in its 21st century version, as physicalist emergentism or supervenience, etc... all pompous titles used to describe the problem stated by Descartes it’s been centuries, is solved definitely throughout Neurometaphysics. There is no mind-body duality... only events of consciousness.

Q: What do you think about Conscientiology from the perspective of your studies on Neurometaphysics?

A: That it is the most serious and massive effort known to me up to now to deal with something that has been so elusive like human consciousness is in its most internal aspects.

Neurometaphysics can even go one step further than Conscientiology, since it doesn’t consider subjectivity only the experience usually called “introspective” (as meditation, projection, personal study of anomalous or altered states of consciousness, etc...), Neurometaphysics asserts that all experience is introspective. What we call objective awaken states to Neurometaphysics correspond to unique and unrepeatable events of consciousness, although similar to dreams or imaginative wanderings.

It’s a thing to ask a Neuroscientist:

If he/she tells me that all I perceive as the world is a product of a simplified decodification of stimuli that exists only in my head, what real ontological difference are there from dreams, memories, ideas, induced mental images, hallucinations, lucid projections, etc.. ?

Neuroscience ultimately postulates that all known universe is mental and not just mental, but even personal and non-transferable. It is somewhat ironic that

the apple of the eye of the hard sciences of the 21st century is the death sentence to the notion of classic objective science that emerged from Galileo onwards.

Q: Which constructs from Conscientiology have raised more interest on you? Why?

A: The possibility of modelling methods that generate perceptive agreements, to deal with experiences normally understood as absolute and subjectively non-transferable.

The reason behind it is that according to the neurometaphysic perspective, even accepting with courage what neuroscience sustains, attaining only to its central postulate, *the reality called "world" and myself are a phenomenon that is produced in the brain of each inhabitant of the Earth.*

If Neuroscience is right, then I am confined inside my brain, in my own 3D universe and you as Alexandre, is confined in another 3D Universe inside your own brain.

These worlds seem common but they are not: there are diverse databases, diverse sensorial qualia, diverse languages, diverse attentions, distinct imaginative or intellectual associations, etc...

Thus what we have in reality is not a common universe, but different universes with synchronic aspects.

Therefore it is striking to me, since the efforts to communicate something that is introspective are part of communicating it all, because in the end, like it or not, everything is introspective.

The concept of THOSENE is also interesting as the basic unit of integral manifestation of consciousness.

This concept holds some parallel with the neurometaphysical concept related to the events of consciousness called by me HaN (Here and Now).

To Neurometaphysics, following close the philosopher David Hume when he defined individuals as a bundle of flowing perceptions, the person is not a continuum, but a succession of HaNs that present a common factor which is the somato-sensitive image in the individual's first person; it is to say, his/her so called physical and social person. But each HaN is a unit, an irreducible component of the Consciousness. The concept of thosene gathers a similiar idea maybe with the difference that the HaN as an event of consciousness comprehends all sensible, environmental, corporal, emotional and intellectual experience in a perception unit, hence it doesn't separate consciousness from the individual nor from the surrounding. All is a unit.

What I remember from our conversation was that the THOSENE was a dynamic concept because it added the energy factor to perception. So perception could not be conceived as something static, but as something that develops through time, similar to the concept of "flowing perceptions" from Hume. The flowing dynamics of the THOSENE is relevant because it would be very new to add to

a concept a factor of movement such as it is energy, because there are no concepts in ordinary language that are conceived like this, like an action. It's a concept-vector, a true originality.

Q: According to the interparadigmatic perspective, which effects from Conscientiology do you observe in your system of thought and reciprocally from Neurometaphysics on Conscientiology?

A: The main one is the empirical contribution, the serious, organized, massive and professional way it addresses a theme that has normally been handled and manipulated and normally attributed to a cheap esoterism.

In Neurometaphysics the study of dreams and lucid dreams have a great importance since when one comprehends they're not produced inside the head (as I pointed out before it's just a co-referential image product of consciousness), one also understands that dreams are part of other cognitive realms, other planes of reality that we need to investigate. The contributions from Conscientiology are valuable to understand these realities from Neurometaphysics.

Now the contribution from Neurometaphysics to the conscientiologists could be summarized in a crucial point: *consciousness is not "something" inside the body, the brain or the surroundings.*

The consciousness is the TOTALITY OF THE PERCEIVED from a specific point of view.

The consciousness "doesn't get out of body", the consciousness "doesn't travel" to other perceptive dimensions, because the consciousness is always the totality of the experience.

Let's not forget that the most basic notion of consciousness is "to notice something"... So, all that "you notice" is a part of the conscious phenomenon. This includes: your thoughts, ideas, memory, emotions, all that you feel, see, listen, taste, your body, head, the others, your friends, the mountains, the stars, etc...

I recommend to review and continue your investigations never losing sight of this assertion, since believing that "my consciousness" is something that is rooted inside my body, in a common universe, in which I encounter myself immersed with you, is an error of perception here and in any possible world.

Q: To conclude, could you give us a synthesis of your reflection since when you attended the 1st Interparadigmas Colloquium as well as the days you've spent at the Cognopolis Foz do Iguaçu?

A: I feel hopeful that at the Cognopolis the ideas of Neurometaphysics can be not only understood, but also assimilated in order to obtain new fruits from them. Because of that it would be very rewarding to me as neurometaphysist to go deep in the results of your experiences and in the methodologies employed, since you all have a serious, vast and systematic work never seen in this field, based on the principle of disbelief, what needs to be twice reinforced through a profound

treatment of the experimental doubt, since what is relevant are the facts that are discovered and the pragmatic methods to their use.

But it is necessary to be careful with the interpretation of those, because they constitute obstacles and there is no worst obstacle to consciousness than the barriers created by the consciousness itself.

I would love to review with more time and depth Conscientiology's developments and experiences, and above all try to help you all in your efforts, since if the neurometaphysical paradigm is correct it means that, similarly to what happened to neuroscience, is much more likely that some phenomena could have been misinterpreted by conscientiologists, mainly those that suppose a common objective dimension to the individuals or those that suppose a qualitative difference of consistency between the body or the mind's perception.

The facts are correct and probably correctly described, but we should review the perceptive interpretation about them.

It is to say, if you believe that your mind or consciousness is inside the head you have upon your shoulders you're making an error of perception. This error is presented in almost all current science.

But if you believe that your consciousness can project itself out of the body, you also make an error of perception, since this body and brain are parts of consciousness. What would be, probably, is a functional shift of the Observer point of view, getting further afield of its normal alignment in the avatar.

To Neurometaphysics the phenomenon can be real, believable and logically predicted, but we would be misinterpreting it.

Therefore, I recommend reflecting about the logical reasoning proposed in the answer to question number 2 and its conclusion. If that conclusion is correct, we must alter all of our interpretative system of perception and see to which new and unknown paths it can take us in the enormous challenge of understanding consciousness.

Translation: Alexandre Zaslavsky.

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