

## Response to Commentary

### Response to the Commentary of Gordon Globus

Gregory M. Nixon\*

I must thank Gordon Globus for taking the time to comment on my first essay. I like that he notes that etymologically the term “experience” derives from a venturing out, an exploration, which seems to imply what early organisms had to do to gain experience of their environments and maybe what we still are doing in making our experience conscious to itself and thus amenable to alteration or expansion. He also sees the communal origin of the term “conscious” (*knowing together*), noting, “Such dislocations of original meaning attract the deconstructive eye as evidence of textual tension.” If I have succeeded in *attracting the deconstructive eye* or creating “textual tension” even for a glance, than I take this as high praise indeed.

Globus may well be correct that “no discernable progress” in consciousness studies has taken place. But could it not be that a “brilliant controversy” is an end in itself if it elicits deep and serious thought on the matter (or maybe not always serious)? This is so if the role of conceptualization in forming experience is finally understood. The role of language and concept in reality construction has always been taken seriously in phenomenology, so I quite agree with Globus that a bringing forth of the Heideggarian concept of *Existenz* would helpful in sifting the real from the delusional.

However, I simply do not agree that the somatic experience of blindsight patients of victims of Anton’s syndrome can be explained in any way but as non-conscious or unconscious responses, and Globus’s own more scientific (read: conventional) explanation does nothing to convince me. If the experience is *dimly conscious*, as he alludes, then it is on borderline of becoming a conscious experience, simple as that. I do not quite equate conscious experience with reportability, as he notes, but I do with conceivability. So if someone can vaguely conceive of their situation but cannot put it into words, they may still be conscious. However, if their situation is literally inconceivable, they are still experiencing but, I would insist, they would be experiencing without being conscious of doing so. So, in this sense, I believe that distinguishing experience from conscious experience to be quite on the mark.

#### References

Globus, G. (2010) Brief Commentary on Nixon's Three Papers. *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research*. 1(3): 350-351.

---

Correspondence: Gregory M. Nixon, University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, British Columbia, Canada  
Email: [doknyx@shaw.ca](mailto:doknyx@shaw.ca) Websty: <http://members.shaw.ca/doknyx>