

Response to Commentary

Response to the Commentary of Ram Lakhan Pandey Vimal

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Right off the bat, I'd like to state that I am strongly attracted to Vimal's definition of consciousness, as elucidated in the *abstract*. I might quibble and ask for the word *psyche* instead of *mind*, which he uses, and I might suggest that for common useage the definition could be even more simplified, but really it stands as is. However, he does not mention conscious transcendence (or, better, *transcendent awareness*). Aside from this oversight (which is probably implied since Vimal has written elsewhere of higher states of consciousness), it is the most comprehensive definition I have seen stated in the fewest possible words.

However, in the series of unspecified quotations he attributes to me, I see, "Experience is divided into subject and object." Now I don't believe that experience-in-itself, *raw experience*, is divided into subject and object, so I can't conceive of me saying this except to explain how experience becomes conscious experience, which is precisely by sundering object from subject through linguistic syntax. If, for experience-in-itself, subject and object are one, then it follows that non-conscious functions and non-conscious experiences may also be identical. However, I might add that much non-conscious experiencing could in principle become conscious experiencing under the right circumstances with the right sort of symbols and cognitive tools. Non-conscious functions, on the other hand, might be expected to stay non-conscious since are often only the physical substrate for more subtle mental processes.

I really appreciate Vimal's carefully thought-out tables and charts. For many, they will clarify the subject of this discussion. I like to keep things simple, however, if only for the reason that trying to get others to give some consideration to this a new (yet ancient) way of thinking about consciousness means avoiding the complexity that will scare them away. This is certainly not to say Vimal is wrong; on the contrary, it is to praise him for going beyond what I have attempted. By making the picture more complex he is also clarifying it.

I can't agree, however, that non-conscious experience is the same as proto-experience, since, as in my 21 Indicators, real somatic experience (sensations, perceptions, and emotions) clearly happen even when the observing mind is not conscious of it.

Reference

Vimal, R. P.L. (2010) Consciousness, Non-conscious Experiences and Functions, Proto-experiences and Proto-functions, and Subjective Experiences. *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research*. 1(3): 383-389.

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