

Metaphysics of Consciousness



Are there *phenomenal states* that need to be explained, beyond playing an instrumental role in producing behavior?

no

yes

Are phenomenal states reducible to structural and functional aspects of physics?

yes

no

Is phenomenal consciousness a separate substance that interacts with physical reality?

yes

no

Is phenomenal consciousness not only irreducible, but is it all there is?

yes

no

Type-A Materialism

Consciousness as an explanandum beyond function and behavior does not exist. The only coherent use of the term would be as reference to specific brain functions, such as access to information or disposition for verbal reports. Insofar as mechanisms are relevant, they are only important with respect to explaining functions.

Positions

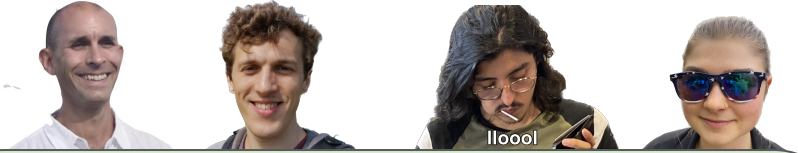
- Zombies / qualia inverts are not conceivable
- No explanatory gap

Theories

- Global Workspace Theory (?)
- Multiple Drafts
- Attention Schema Theory (?)

Proponents

- Daniel Dennett
- Keith Frankish
- Michael Graziano (?)



Type-B Materialism

Phenomenal states are a coherent explanandum in and of themselves, beyond their instrumental role in producing behavior. But they are ultimately reducible to physical mechanisms involving structure and function. Phenomenal states could be identified as certain functions or structure, even though conceptually they are different.

Positions

- Zombies / qualia inverts are conceivable
- Epistemic gap but no ontological gap

Theories

- Beast Machine Theory
- Phenomenal Concept Strategy

Proponents

- Anil Seth
- Daniel Stoljar
- Most neuroscientists (?)



Cartesian Dualism

Consciousness and physics are irreducible and separate entities that interact with each other. Consciousness does not follow the same rules as physics.

Positions

- Rejects closure of physics
- Potentially rejects determinism

Theories

- Abrahamic religions
- The Matrix

Proponents

- The Pope
- Anyone who believes in immortal souls



Idealism

Only consciousness constitutes base reality. Physics emerges from the structure of consciousness, but is reducible to pure phenomena.

Positions

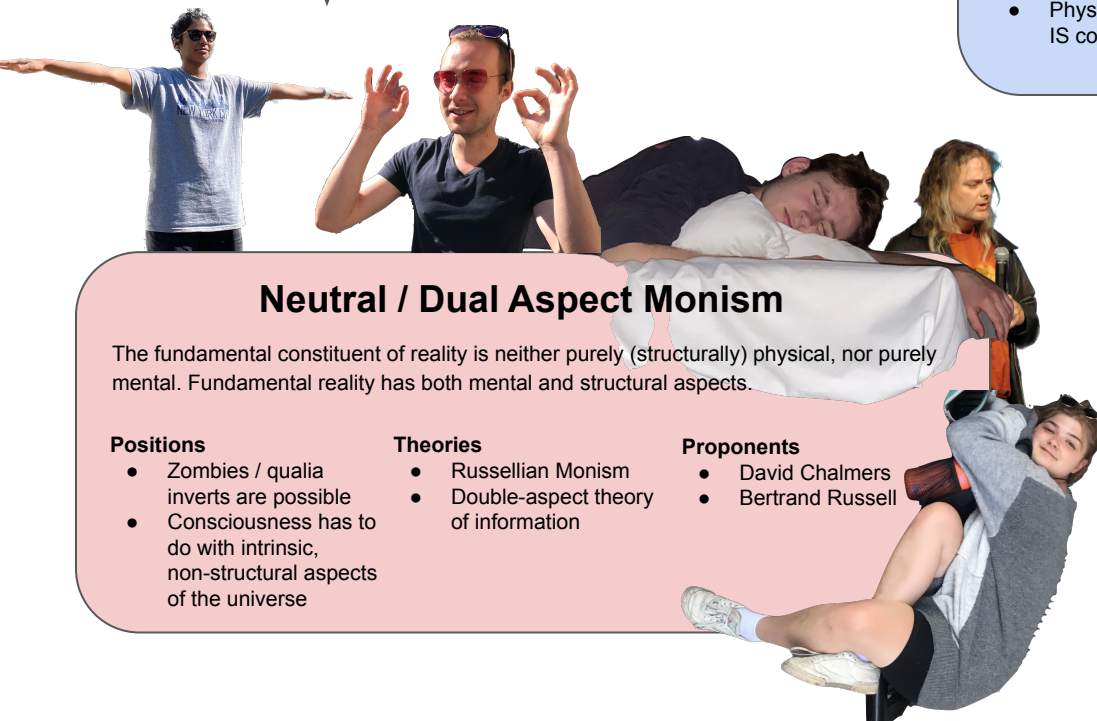
- Zombies / qualia inverts are not conceivable
- Physics in some sense IS consciousness

Theories

- Conscious Realism
- IIT these days (?)

Proponents

- Max Planck
- Donald Hoffman
- Giulio Tononi (?)



Neutral / Dual Aspect Monism

The fundamental constituent of reality is neither purely (structurally) physical, nor purely mental. Fundamental reality has both mental and structural aspects.

Positions

- Zombies / qualia inverts are possible
- Consciousness has to do with intrinsic, non-structural aspects of the universe

Theories

- Russellian Monism
- Double-aspect theory of information

Proponents

- David Chalmers
- Bertrand Russell

Qualiaheads Edition

